

Alaska Avalanche Hockey 101 Packet:

Introduction:

Welcome to the exciting world of hockey! Whether you're a player, a parent, or simply a fan, this packet will provide you with essential information about the sport. From the required gear to monthly ice bills, we've got you covered.

1. Gear Required:

Hockey is a physically demanding sport that requires specific gear to ensure safety and maximize performance. Here's a list of the essential equipment you'll need:

- a. Skates: Properly fitted ice hockey skates are crucial for mobility and balance on the ice. (Should be 2 sizes smaller than your shoe size)
- b. Helmet: A certified hockey helmet with a full face mask is essential to protect your head and face from injuries.
- c. Shoulder Pads: These provide protection to your upper body, including the shoulders, chest, and spine.
- d. Elbow Pads: Elbow pads shield your elbows from impact and prevent injuries.
- e. Gloves: Hockey gloves protect your hands and provide a firm grip on the stick.
- f. Shin Guards: Shin guards protect your shins from slashes and impacts.
- g. Jock or Jill: Protective cups are mandatory for male players, while female players should consider a jill for added protection.
- h. Hockey Pants: These padded pants protect your hips, thighs, and tailbone.
- i. Mouthguard: Wearing a mouthguard is highly recommended to protect your teeth and jaw.
- j. Stick: A hockey stick is essential for puck handling and shooting. Choose a stick length suitable for your height.
- k. Neck Guard: Provides additional protection to your neck and throat.
- l. Hockey Socks: Cover your shin guards and keep your legs warm.

m. Jersey: Represents your team and provides an outer layer of protection.

n. Visor or Cage: Face protection for players who prefer more visibility than a full face mask offers.

2. Monthly Ice Bills:

Participating in hockey often involves ice time rental fees, especially if you're joining a league or a team. However, the cost of ice time can vary significantly depending on the location, facility, and time of year. Here are some factors to consider when estimating your monthly ice bills:

Additional Information on Monthly Payments:

1. Membership or Registration Fees: When participating in organized hockey, there are often membership or registration fees associated with joining a team or league. These fees contribute to the operational costs of the organization and may cover expenses such as administrative overhead, equipment maintenance, and referee fees. The amount of these fees can vary depending on the level of play and the specific organization you are involved with.

2. Tournament Fees: If your team participates in tournaments, there may be additional fees involved. Tournaments offer opportunities to compete against teams from different regions and provide valuable game experience. Tournament fees typically cover ice time, referees, and other tournament-related expenses. The cost of tournament fees can vary depending on the level of the tournament and the location.

3. Travel Expenses: In some cases, hockey teams may need to travel for away games or tournaments. Travel expenses can include transportation costs (such as flights or gas for car trips), accommodation, meals, and other incidentals. Travel expenses can significantly contribute to the overall cost of participating in hockey, especially for teams that frequently travel long distances.

4. Equipment and Gear Maintenance: While not a monthly payment, it's important to consider ongoing expenses related to equipment and gear maintenance. Hockey

equipment may require regular maintenance or replacement to ensure player safety and optimal performance. This can include sharpening or replacing skate blades, purchasing new sticks, repairing damaged equipment, and purchasing additional gear as needed.

5. Fundraising and Sponsorship Opportunities: To help offset the costs associated with playing hockey, teams often engage in fundraising activities or seek sponsorship from local businesses or individuals. Fundraising initiatives can include events like bake sales, car washes, or selling team merchandise. Sponsorship can involve businesses providing financial support or in-kind contributions in exchange for advertising or brand exposure. Engaging in fundraising and sponsorship efforts can help reduce individual player costs and contribute to the overall financial health of the team or organization.

It's important to note that the specific costs may vary significantly depending on your location and the level of hockey you're involved in. It's best to check with your local rink or hockey association for accurate and up-to-date information.

3. “No Pay, No Play” Policy

This policy typically states that players must fulfill their financial obligations, such as membership fees or registration fees, before being eligible to participate in games or practices. Here are some key points to consider regarding the "No Pay, No Play" policy:

1. Financial Responsibility: The policy emphasizes the importance of financial responsibility and ensures that the organization or league can cover its operational costs. By requiring payment before participation, it helps maintain the financial stability of the program.

2. Equality and Fairness: The "No Pay, No Play" policy aims to treat all participants equally. It ensures that each player contributes their fair share and prevents any undue burden from falling on others who have fulfilled their financial obligations.

3. Administrative Efficiency: Enforcing the policy streamlines the administrative processes involved in managing a hockey organization. It allows administrators to accurately track and verify payments, reducing the administrative burden of chasing overdue fees.

4. Exceptions and Flexibility: It's important to note that "No Pay, No Play" policies may have exceptions or flexibility based on individual circumstances. Organizations may offer payment plans or financial assistance programs for players who may be experiencing financial hardship. Communication with the organization's management is crucial to address any concerns or discuss available options.

5. Impact on Player Participation: Players who do not fulfill their financial obligations may face restrictions on their participation, such as being unable to participate in games, practices, or other team activities. This policy serves as an incentive for players and families to prioritize timely payments and contribute to the financial health of the organization.

It's essential to familiarize yourself with the specific policies and guidelines of your hockey organization to understand the expectations regarding financial responsibilities and participation eligibility.

4. Training and Development:

1) Off-Ice Training:

- While on-ice practice is crucial for hockey development, off-ice training plays a vital role in improving overall performance. Here are some key aspects of off-ice training:
- **Strength and Conditioning**: Building strength, power, and endurance through weightlifting, plyometrics, and cardiovascular exercises can enhance on-ice performance.
- **Agility and Speed Training**: Incorporating exercises such as ladder drills, cone drills, and sprints can improve agility, quickness, and acceleration.
- **Flexibility and Mobility**: Stretching routines and mobility exercises help prevent injuries and improve range of motion on the ice.

- **Core Stability:** Developing a strong core through exercises like planks, Russian twists, and medicine ball work improves balance and stability during gameplay.
- **Mental Conditioning:** Mental training techniques, such as visualization, focus exercises, and goal setting, can enhance concentration, resilience, and overall mental toughness.

2) Sports Nutrition:

- Proper nutrition plays a crucial role in the performance, endurance, and overall well-being of hockey players. Here are some key points to consider when it comes to sports nutrition:

1. Balanced Diet: A well-balanced diet is essential to provide the necessary nutrients for energy, muscle repair, and overall health. Encourage players to consume a variety of foods from different food groups, including carbohydrates, proteins, healthy fats, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

2. Pre-Game and Pre-Practice Meals: Before games or practices, players should consume a meal that provides sustained energy. Emphasize the importance of consuming carbohydrates for fuel, along with a moderate amount of protein and healthy fats. Optimal pre-game meals may include whole grain pasta, lean proteins (e.g., chicken, fish), vegetables, and a small amount of healthy fats (e.g., olive oil).

3. Hydration: Proper hydration is critical for optimal performance and to prevent dehydration. Encourage players to drink water regularly throughout the day, before, during, and after practices and games. Emphasize the importance of hydrating well in advance to ensure players start activity properly hydrated.

4. Post-Game or Post-Practice Recovery: After intense physical activity, proper recovery is essential. Encourage players to consume a post-game or post-practice meal or snack that includes a combination of carbohydrates and proteins to replenish energy stores and aid in muscle repair. Examples include a fruit smoothie with added protein, a turkey or chicken wrap, or Greek yogurt with fruits and nuts.

5. Snacking: Snacks can play a role in maintaining energy levels throughout the day. Encourage players to choose nutrient-dense snacks such as fruits, vegetables, yogurt, nuts, and granola bars. Discourage excessive consumption of sugary snacks, sodas, or processed foods, as they may provide short-term energy but lack the necessary nutrients for sustained performance.

6. Meal Timing: Timing meals and snacks appropriately is important. Encourage players to eat a balanced meal or snack 2-3 hours before practices or games to allow for digestion. If a player needs to eat closer to activity, encourage lighter snacks that are easier to digest, such as a piece of fruit or a granola bar.

7. Travel and Away Games: When traveling for games or tournaments, players should plan ahead for their nutrition needs. Encourage players to pack nutritious snacks and meals for the journey to avoid relying solely on convenience foods. Additionally, emphasize the importance of staying hydrated during travel.

8. Individualized Needs: Every player's nutritional needs may vary based on factors such as age, body size, position, and overall activity level. Encourage players and parents to consult with a registered dietitian or sports nutritionist who can provide personalized guidance on optimizing nutrition for performance.

9. Supplements: While it's always best to obtain nutrients from whole foods, some players may consider using supplements. Players and parents should be cautious and consult with healthcare professionals or sports nutrition experts before using any supplements, as they can have potential risks and may not always provide the desired benefits.

Remember, developing healthy eating habits and maintaining proper nutrition is a long-term commitment. Encourage players to focus on overall dietary patterns rather than quick fixes. By providing the right fuel for their bodies, players can optimize their performance and recovery, supporting their journey in the sport of hockey.

5. Skill Development:

- Hockey players should focus on developing various fundamental skills to excel on the ice. Here are some essential skills to work on:

- a. Skating: Mastering proper skating technique, including strides, crossovers, and turns, is crucial for speed, agility, and maneuverability.

- b. Stickhandling: Practicing stickhandling drills and techniques helps improve puck control, agility, and hand-eye coordination.

- c. Shooting: Developing accurate and powerful shots through practice drills and proper shooting mechanics enhances goal-scoring ability.

- d. Passing: Improving passing skills, such as accuracy, speed, and saucer passes, is vital for effective teamwork and offensive play.

e. Defensive Skills: Learning defensive techniques, including body positioning, angling, and stick checking, is essential for effective defensive play.

6. Coaching and Development Programs:

- Seeking guidance from experienced coaches and participating in structured development programs can significantly accelerate your progress as a hockey player. Consider the following options:

a) Local Hockey Associations: Many cities and towns have hockey associations that offer programs for players of all ages and skill levels. These associations often provide coaching, practice sessions, and game opportunities.

b) Skills Clinics and Camps: Attend specialized skills clinics and hockey camps where you can receive focused coaching and instruction on specific aspects of the game.

c) Private Coaching: Working one-on-one with a qualified hockey coach can provide personalized guidance and targeted skill development.

d) Junior or College Hockey: As players progress in skill and age, they may aspire to play at the junior or college level. These higher-level programs often have intensive training regimens and coaching staff dedicated to player development.

Remember, consistent practice, discipline, and a passion for improvement are key to reaching your full potential as a hockey player. Embrace opportunities for training and development and enjoy the journey of honing your skills in this exciting sport.

7. Additional Information on Safety:

- Ensuring safety is paramount in the sport of hockey. Here are some additional aspects to consider when it comes to safety:

1. Concussion Awareness and Prevention: Concussions are a significant concern in hockey. Players, coaches, and parents should be educated about the signs and symptoms of concussions and follow proper protocols for diagnosis, treatment, and return-to-play. Emphasize the importance of reporting any head injuries or suspected concussions promptly.

2. Protective Equipment Maintenance: Regularly inspecting and maintaining your protective equipment is crucial for safety. Check helmets for cracks or other

damage, ensure straps are secure, and replace any worn-out or damaged equipment promptly. Additionally, make sure all equipment fits properly to provide adequate protection during play.

3. Proper Checking Techniques: For players involved in contact leagues, learning proper checking techniques is vital. Coaches and instructors should emphasize safe body-checking techniques and discourage dangerous or illegal hits that can lead to injuries. Respect for opponents' safety and fair play should always be emphasized.

4. Hydration and Nutrition: Staying hydrated and maintaining proper nutrition is essential for player safety and performance. Encourage players to drink plenty of fluids before, during, and after practices and games. Promote a balanced diet that includes sufficient carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats to fuel their bodies.

5. Warm-up and Cool-down: Proper warm-up and cool-down routines are essential for injury prevention. Encourage players to warm up with dynamic stretching and light exercises before taking the ice. Similarly, cool-down exercises and static stretching after activity can help prevent muscle soreness and promote recovery.

6. Respect for Officials and Opponents: Promoting sportsmanship and respect for officials and opponents contributes to a safe and positive playing environment. Encourage players to play within the rules, avoid reckless behavior, and treat opponents with respect both on and off the ice.

7. Emergency Action Plan: Every team or organization should have an emergency action plan in place. Coaches, staff, and volunteers should be trained in basic first aid, CPR, and the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs). Ensure there are clear protocols for responding to injuries, contacting emergency services, and communicating with parents or guardians.

8. Safe Playing Environment: Rinks and facilities should provide a safe playing environment. Regular maintenance of the ice surface, boards, glass, and netting is essential. Adequate lighting, clear markings, and properly maintained locker rooms and benches contribute to the overall safety of the facility.

9. Education and Training: Continued education and training for players, coaches, and parents can promote safety in hockey. Encourage participation in safety clinics, workshops, and seminars that focus on injury prevention, concussion management, and general player safety.

Remember, safety is everyone's responsibility. By prioritizing safety measures and fostering a culture of respect and awareness, we can create a safer and more enjoyable hockey experience for all participants.

Conclusion:

Hockey is an exhilarating sport that offers challenges, excitement, and a sense of camaraderie. Equipped with the knowledge of essential gear, an understanding of potential costs, and a grasp of basic hockey terminology, you're well on your way to experiencing the thrill of the game. Lace up your skates, grab your stick, and get ready to embrace the world of hockey!