



GETTING STARTED IN HOCKEY

Why Play Hockey?

Hockey develops skills on the ice that build a foundation for a lifetime. In addition to athletic prowess, hockey promotes confidence, pride, focus and responsibility. With an emphasis on fun, hockey is a game to be played and enjoyed for life.

The thrill of carrying the puck up the ice on a breakaway, the exhilaration of scoring your first goal or making that amazing save is possible due to the encouraging environment hockey provides to try new things and grow as a hockey player and person.

Hockey is a vehicle to:

- Experience the benefits participation in sport offers
- Exercise
- Positive attitude
- Confidence
- Team Work
- Focus
- Teach core values and life lessons
- Focus on developing good citizens first, hockey players second
- Model team work and leadership
- Inspire hard work, dedication and discipline
- Offer a lifelong membership to a tight-knit hockey family

About Hockey Canada, BC Hockey, District, and Minor Hockey Associations

Hockey Canada is the governing body for amateur hockey in Canada. They are responsible for the major decisions such as player divisions (or age groupings), and general rules & procedures. Hockey Canada is divided into 13 branches.

BC Hockey is the governing body of amateur hockey in the province of British Columbia and the Yukon Territory. They are responsible for carrying out the Hockey Canada programs as well as other programs such as officiating, coaching, and development programs. BC Hockey is divided into eight (8) districts:

- East Kootenay – [East Kootenay Minor Hockey Association](#)
- Lower Mainland – [Pacific Coast Amateur Hockey Association](#)
- North Central – [Cariboo Amateur Hockey Association](#)
- North East/Yukon – [Peace River District Minor Hockey Association](#) / [Yukon Amateur Hockey Association](#)
- North West – [North West District Minor Hockey Association](#)
- Okanagan – [Okanagan-Mainline Amateur Hockey Association](#)
- Vancouver Island – [Vancouver Island Amateur Hockey Association](#)
- West Kootenay – [West Kootenay Minor Hockey Association](#)





There are more than 120 Minor Hockey Associations (MHAs) within British Columbia and the Yukon. MHAs are responsible for all minor hockey activities within the boundaries established. MHAs register players, select coaches, and create teams.

To find out your local MHA, [click here](#).

What are the age divisions?

For the 2019 – 2020 season, the age divisions are as follows:

Division		Birth Year
Initiation (Ages 5 & 6)	Hockey 1	2014
	Hockey 2	2013
Novice (Ages 7 & 8)	Hockey 3	2012
	Hockey 4	2011
Atom (Ages 9 & 10)		2010
		2009
Pee Wee (Ages 11 & 12)		2008
		2007
Bantam (Ages 13 & 14)		2006
		2005
Midget (Ages 15 – 17)		2004
		2003
		2002
Juvenile (Ages 18 – 20)		2001
		2000
		1999

The player's age is determined for the current playing season by the player's age at December 31 of the current season.

What are the different levels of hockey available?

For Atom & older divisions, teams are available at a “C” Recreational or “A” Representative (Rep Team) level. Rep Hockey is generally for the more skilled players, where the teams play at a higher caliber and require more of a time and financial commitment. To make a Rep team, a child must attend “try-outs” which usually occur in mid-August, and follow the try-out process where the top players for Rep teams are selected.

How much does it cost for my child to play?

Registration fees paid to the MHA depend on the division that your child will play in. In addition to the registration fees, each team will develop its own team budget based on factors such as the number of tournaments that they will participate in, how much fundraising the team will do, etc.





How much time is involved?

Generally, each team has one (1) to two (2) practices, one (1) “home” game, and one (1) “away” game each week, depending on the division.

When does the season start and when does it end?

Players tend to hit the ice August or September for evaluations, and the season wraps up in March.

What if my child doesn't skate very well or can't keep up with the other kids their age?

Evaluations are done at the start of the season to assess each child's skating/ hockey abilities. If a child is having difficulties matching the skills of his age group, an evaluator will discuss options with the parents.

What equipment is required?

Hockey is a fast-paced sport. In order to keep every player safe, you must wear proper equipment while on the ice.

Your most important decision before starting hockey should be to purchase properly fitted and comfortable equipment. When equipment is not suitably fitted, the player may be injured.

Three important factors should be stressed when evaluating hockey equipment:

- a) that the equipment is in good condition,
- b) that the equipment is well maintained throughout its life span,
- c) that the equipment fits properly.

'Hand-me-downs' are a great way to save money but be sure to carefully inspect the items to ensure they are safe to wear.

Plan a budget for purchasing equipment. The most expensive equipment is not always necessarily the best for your child. We recommend you consult a professional sporting goods retailer for advice before you purchase any product.

- Helmet with face mask
- Mouth guard (optional)
- Neck guard
- Shoulder pads
- Elbow Pads
- Gloves
- Jill/Jock strap
- Pants
- Shin Pads
- Skates
- Stick
- Socks & Jersey





Is hockey safe?

BC Hockey is dedicated to player safety and providing young athletes with the opportunity to best develop and acquire skills, and keeping as many players playing the game as possible. This includes not only on-ice safety but also off-ice safety in any part of our hockey programming.

BC Hockey works together with leading organizations, including Hockey Canada and Respect Group, to develop policies and programs that are intended to protect our participants and create a safe and enjoyable environment.

BC Hockey and Hockey Canada Officiating Programs have strict standard of rules enforcement, allowing for improved skill development and a more positive environment for all participants. This standard results in greater emphasis on skating and puck possession. Body checking is not permitted in female hockey at any age-groups or level.

Off the ice, BC Hockey has a zero-tolerance for misconduct and abuse and is committed to providing an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect. Members and participants shall conduct themselves at all times in a manner consistent with the values of BC Hockey, which include fairness, integrity and mutual respect.

Is there any financial assistance offered?

The following organizations offer financial assistance for youth hockey:

[Athletics 4 Kids](#)

[Canadian Tire Jumpstart](#)

[Grindstone Award Foundation](#)

[KidSport BC](#)

[NHLPA Goals & Dreams](#)

Many municipalities and MHAs also offer grants and financial assistance for families with limited income.

More Questions?

Please contact the BC Hockey office with any further questions:

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