



OPPORTUNITIES IN HOCKEY

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2005

OPPORTUNITIES IN HOCKEY 2005

The purpose of this presentation is to provide information regarding various options available to the hockey player that has completed or is about to complete his/her high school education. For eligibility purposes, the NCAA expects the student-athlete to graduate from high school when they are 18 years of age. The **expected** graduation date is the NCAA eligibility bench mark.

I have been involved in hockey as a player, coach or administrator for over 50 years. For the last 20 years I have been directly involved with players between the ages of 15 and 20 years old. When it comes to choosing options for their hockey future, I am continually troubled by how poorly prepared and uninformed many players and their parents are. Answers can be found if you know where to look. The challenge is to be **realistic** about your hockey abilities and **pro-active** when planning your hockey future. As your skills develop to the higher levels, you can begin to think about your options. I believe parents and players should begin investigating hockey opportunities when the player is 12 to 14 years old. This is not the forum to debate when a player's hockey potential can be evaluated or predicted. Although there may be optimism concerning potential when players are 12 and under, their potential cannot be realistically evaluated until they reach the age of maturity. All have dreams and expectations - but players and their parents need to make informed and realistic decisions.

SOME TYPICAL QUESTIONS:

- What are my hockey opportunities after high school?
- How important are academics?
- How do I determine what is best for me?
- What are some determining factors?
- What are my chances?
- How can I find out where I fit?
- How and where do I get noticed?
- What role does my coach play?
- Should I actively pursue opportunities or should I wait until opportunity knocks?

PLAYER REGISTRATION NUMBERS (2004-2005):

Total USA Players:	Female	39,742 (19 and under)
	Male	363,508 (20 and under)
	<u>Adult M/F</u>	<u>73,211 (20 years and older)</u>
	Total	476,461

Age Classification:	Midget/High School	
	Male	67,471 (18 and under)
	Female	7,683 (19 and under)

Juniors (20 and under)	
Male	5,050
Female	None registered in this classification

Adults (over 20)	
Male	62,464
Female	10,747

2004-05 Hockey Canada player registration:

Female	65,951
Male	<u>477,989</u>
Total	543,940

Note: There are currently about **224** US citizens playing in IIHF Countries (exclude Canada)
242 U-18 IIHF citizens playing in USA
400 U-18 Canadians in USA Youth programs

2004 International Ice Hockey Federation IIHF - other than USA & Canada

Female	18,628 (19 and under)
Male	279,288 (20 and under)
Adult	<u>168,766 (over 20)</u>
Total	466,682

IT IS A NUMBERS GAME:

Academic preparation:

The better the student, the more the options
Teams/schools equate academic performance to discipline, commitment and effort
Teams/schools will not recruit players that cannot compete academically.
It is not over until it is over.

Evaluate options and make informed choices:

Advancing your hockey career is a numbers game.
Put yourself in the game and keep yourself there.
Make choices that will better prepare you for the future.
Realistic self-evaluation vs. the "parent factor". Objectivity
Separate the player from the person - you can be a great person and an average player
Consider the source

Can youth tier 1, private prep school, post graduate school and/or junior hockey be options?

Academic rehabilitation - reinforcement - improvement

Enroll in prep school for junior and senior years (repeat if necessary)
Take college level courses
Post graduate - transcript improvement
Tutors
Academic maturity - some develop later than others

Develop and improve hockey skills - play at a higher level

Game driven programs vs. skill development driven programs
Select programs with track record of player advancement
Select programs that train the complete athlete

Prepare the complete athlete:

Academic strength
Hockey skill development
Strength and conditioning

Nutrition
Mental toughness
Discipline

TIER 1 BANTAM AND MIDGET HOCKEY:

Pay to play
Investigate
Variety - check track record
Make sure you are not playing for the label - credibility

PREP SCHOOL HOCKEY:

Choosing the right prep school for you

Location - most are in the East (New England +/- 58) - 85%

Boys' schools ± 75

Girls' schools ± 56

Post graduate programs ± 48

Criteria for selecting a school:

Academic admission criteria - curriculum

Costs - annual tuition alone can run \$25,000-35,000

Level of hockey - number of teams - schedule

Player alumni - track record of success

Geography - culture

School visit is essential

"Broken leg" rule - plan for life outside of athletics

Prep schools are a high priority for college recruiters (ECAC/Hockey East/MAAC/AHL)

90 % of Prep School players are college bound

Approximately 8,750 players in US Prep Schools

Sources of information:

High School guidance counselors/teachers

"Prep School Hockey Guide" by Thomas Keegan

www.prephockey.org

www.boardingschoolguide.com

Canadian boarding schools www.dundum.com

THE DOMESTIC JUNIOR HOCKEY OPTION:

The USA Junior hockey program is available to citizen athletes who are 20 years old and under as of December 31st of the current season of competition. The principal purpose of the domestic junior development program is to prepare the athlete for career advancement into collegiate hockey. US junior hockey is administered by USA Hockey - Dave Tyler, USA Hockey Vice President, Junior Council Chair

Goals of USA Hockey's Domestic Junior Programs:

Skill development

Provide quality coaching

Educational advancement of athlete

Recruiting exposure - college

Advanced levels of domestic and international competition

Protect amateur status - NCAA

It is a numbers game:

Generally the player between the ages of 16 and 20 is considered eligible for junior hockey. There is approximately USA 71,500 male players in that age group. There are approximately 75,000 Canadian Players in this age group. 5,050 players are currently playing in domestic junior hockey programs.

800 +/- in Tier 1 or Tier 2 Junior A
1775 +/- in Tier 2 Junior B
2,475 +/- in Tier 2 Junior C

123 Canadians in USA Junior Hockey
444 USA Citizens into Canadian Junior Hockey
82 IIHF Federation players in USA Junior Hockey
184 USA Citizens into IIHF Junior Hockey

5,050 +/- domestic junior Players are US citizens
1 out of 14 eligible players (16 to 20 yrs) are playing domestic junior hockey (7.1%)
1 out of 90 eligible players are playing Tier 1 or Tier 2 Junior A (1.1%)
1 out of 40 eligible players are playing Tier 2 Junior B (2.5%)
1 out of 29 eligible players are playing Tier 2 Junior C (3.5%)

Differences in Junior Classifications:

All domestic junior programs protect the amateur status of the players. However, there are specific differences between tier 1 and tier 2 programs as well as differences between A, B, and C programs. USA Hockey has established specific criteria for each level of domestic junior classification. These criteria are monitored and enforced by the USA Hockey Junior Council. Refer to the USA Hockey Annual Guide. To verify the classification of a league or team you can contact John Cowley, USA Hockey Junior Registrar at jrhockeyreg@cablone.net

Junior Programs differ:

Operating budgets
Organization criteria
Equipment provisions
Rink size
Off ice and on ice official minimums
Number of games
Number of practices
Player fees

Certified USA Domestic Junior Hockey Leagues:

Tier 1 Junior A - 253 players in USHL (11 teams in IL, IA, WI, NE, SD, MO)

Gino Gasparini President www.ushl.com

Tier 2 Junior A - 525 players in NAHL (21 teams in AK, IL, MT, ND, NM, TX, OH, MN, MO, MI)

Michael Santos, Commissioner www.nahl.com

Tier 2 Junior B - 1775 players

CSHL - 13 teams in IL, OH, MI, MO

Frank Ferrara, President www.cshlhockey.net

EJBHL - 20 teams in NY, CT, PA

Don Kirnan, President www.empirehockey.com
METJHL - 14 teams in PA, NJ, NY
Glenn Hefferan, President www.metleague.org
MJHL - 7 teams MN, IA and WI
Ken Gaber, President www.mnjhl.com
NORPAC - 11 teams in MT, ID, WA, OR
Jack Tragis, Commissioner www.norpachockey.com
WSHL - 12 teams in CA, NV, AZ, UT
Ron White, Commissioner www.wshl.org
Tier 2 Junior C - 1675 players currently registered with USA Hockey
AJHL - 10 teams in CT, NJ, NY, MD
Glenn Hefferan, President www.AJHLHockey.org
EJHL - 14 teams in MA, VT, NH, NY, RI
Dan Esdale, President www.easternjunior.com
CHL - 23 teams in PA, NJ, NY, MA, MI
Andrew "Sarge" Richards President www.jrhockey.net
NEJDL - 7 teams MA, CT, NH
Graham Gal, League Contact
SEJHL - 4 teams FL
Rick Ninko, President
Independent Junior C - 8 teams see Junior Hockey Directory

How can a 16 to 20 year old get a junior hockey opportunity?

Talk to your midget or high school coach
Participate in showcase events specific to the 16 to 19 year old player
District player Development/Evaluation Camps
National Camps and Festivals
Minnesota Elite High School Tournament
Chicago Showcase
District high school tournaments
Global Prospect Camps
Prospects Camps
Attend junior tryout camps - investigate
Hockey Night in Boston

Before attending commercial camps, get an actual staff list and information on attending scouts.

CANADIAN MAJOR JUNIOR HOCKEY:

There are Tier 1 and Tier 2 Junior programs in Canada. Whereas the US programs are predominately for the athlete seeking to move into NCAA college hockey, the Canadian Major (Tier 1) Junior program is typically for the non-college bound player, perhaps seeking a professional opportunity. The players that participate in Major Junior Programs will lose their amateur status impacting NCAA eligibility. NCAA classifies Canadian Major Junior programs as professional.

NCAA Amateurism Rules impacting the Ice Hockey Student Athlete - summarized:

1. If a player signs a playing contract or signs with an agent he will lose NCAA eligibility forever.
2. If a player participates on a Major Junior A Team after expected high school

graduation date he will lose NCAA eligibility forever.

3. If a player participates on a Major Junior A Team prior to expected high school graduation date he will lose one year of NCAA eligibility plus one game for every Major Junior A game (including exhibitions) played.

4. If a player attends a Major Junior A try out camp and plays in games at the camp he will lose one year of NCAA eligibility plus one game for every game played in camp.

Note: if a player pays his own expenses to a Major Junior A camp he can only practice for 48 hours before NCAA eligibility is impacted.

The issues of eligibility for the student athlete are very important. The NCAA website (www.ncaa.org) has good information under the rules and eligibility section. You can also link to the NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student-Athlete which has general information regarding recruiting and amateurism.

Canadian Major Junior Hockey Leagues:

Ontario Hockey League 20 teams www.ontariohockeyleague.com

Dave Branch, Commissioner

Quebec Major Junior Hockey League 18 teams www.lhjmj.qc.ca

Gilles Courteau, Commissioner

Western Hockey League 19 teams www.whl.ca

Ron Robinson, Commissioner

Canadian Tier 2 Junior A Hockey Leagues has approximately 15,000 players - **these programs are recognized as amateur by the NCAA.**

Marty Knack, President www.cjahl.com

Alberta Junior Hockey

British Columbia Junior A

Central Junior A Hockey

Manitoba Junior A Hockey

Maritime Junior A Hockey

Northern Ontario Junior A Hockey

Ontario Provincial Junior A Hockey

Quebec Junior AAA Hockey

Saskatchewan Junior A Hockey

Superior International Junior Hockey

PRIMARY FACTORS WHEN SELECTING A JUNIOR PROGRAM:

Academic Impact

Reputation - Skill Level - History

Location

Cost

SELECTING THE RIGHT JUNIOR PROGRAM:

Talk with former junior players

Meet with junior coach - where will you fit in?

Visit the location - if possible, practice with the team

How many players has the organization moved on to college?
Evaluate the local schools
Age of players on junior roster
Geographic considerations
Discuss with your parents - be realistic

You are in control - do not get oversold!

Sources of information:

www.usahockey.com

www.tjhn.com

www.whl.ca

www.usajuniorhockey.com

USA Hockey Annual Guide

www.ncaa.org

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY HOCKEY OPTIONS:

This is a terrific option and the goal of most players. It is perhaps the single most important decision a player and his family will make - yet we spend very little time exploring and researching what may be the best fit. There is a school with a hockey program out there for you - you just need to find it. As we have stated many times, the guiding principle to all your decisions should be academics. You also need to be realistic about your skills. NCAA college players are between the ages of 18 and 26 years old.

Three major considerations when choosing a college:

Academics - **SAT** scores prior to 2005 ranged from 900 to 1300. These ranges will change as a third component (essay) has been added to the 2006 SAT. You will need to check with local guidance counselors for revised acceptance ranges. The new average SAT is expected to be 1500. (www.collegeboard.com) **ACT** ranges are currently 18 to 30+.

NCAA Clearinghouse reviews all applicants:

www.ncaa.org/eligibility/cbsa/clearinghouse.html

You must register and be certified by NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse

Stronger you are academically the more options you have as a player

When applying to schools - you should narrow your choices to six:

Two (2) that are long shot

Two (2) where you have a good chance

Two (2) where you are certain to be admitted

Hockey - play or rostered spectator?

Social life - average age of college freshman is 20 years old; small school vs. large school

Information to help you decide where you can play in US:

Division 1 - 87 programs (29 women, 58 men) www.ncaa.org

Division 2 - 9 programs (2 women, 7 men) www.ncaa.org

Division 3 - 111 programs (43 women, 68 men) www.ncaa.org

NJCAA - 10 programs www.njcaa.org

Making an informed decision - a touch of realism:

There are approximately 3,700 male players (19 to 27 years old) in NCAA Varsity Hockey programs (1.1%)

There are approximately 1,680 males in Division 1 Hockey programs (0.5%)

There are approximately 604 females in Division 1 Hockey programs

Approximately 483 females are US citizens (5.0%)

There are approximately 777 Division 1 full scholarships (0.24%) - estimate 190 +/- new scholarships each year

Not all Division 1 schools offer scholarships - Ivy League

NCAA allows maximum of 18 scholarships per team. Not all teams are funded to maximum.

Many schools have less than the 18 full scholarships allowed. There can be 7-9 "walk on" players per team.

± 190 male scholarships available each year. US born players receive approximately 45% (85).

~ 1/500 (0.20%) eligible US players get scholarships.

To play Division 1 in a given year; are you one of the top 300 male players in the country?

Opportunities in Women's college hockey are expanding rapidly:

1995-1996: 11 Women Division 1 Programs

2004-2005: 29 Women Division 1 Programs

NCAA players -where do they come from?

75% of US players on current Division 1 rosters have played in junior programs; 68% of Division 3 participants played in junior programs.

States represented on Division 1 rosters: **MA** (25% of total players), **MN** (22%), **MI** (12.4%), **NY** (12.1%), **IL** (5.8%), **RI** (4.9%), **CT** (4.8%), **AK** (4%), **WI** (3.1%), **ND** (2%), **CO** (1.6%), **MT**, **AZ** and all others (2.3%)

Statistics by Division 1 league:

WCHA rosters - US players ~ 70%; Canadian players ~ 28.1%

CCHA rosters - US players ~ 67%; Canadian players ~ 28%

Hockey East rosters - US players ~ 67%; Canadian players ~ 27%

ECAC rosters - expect it is similar to Hockey East - perhaps more Canadians

MAAC rosters - no information

AHL rosters - no information

NON-VARSITY NCAA COLLEGE HOCKEY:

It is not the end of your hockey career if you do not play Division 1 college hockey. There are numerous opportunities to play competitive college hockey in Division 3, Junior College and Non-Varsity programs.

American Collegiate Hockey Association

32 Women's Programs

40 Men's Division 1

124 Men's Division 2

132 Men's Division 3

World University Games - USA Hockey

Sources of information: www.ncaa.org

"College Hockey Guide Book" by Thomas Keegan

www.hockeycenter.com

www.achahockey.org

www.uscollegehockey.com

www.njcaa.org

NCAA - Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete

ADULT AND SENIOR PROGRAMS:

There are adult and senior programs all over the country. One can continue playing well into their 60s or 70s. There are men's programs as well as women's and coed programs. Contact the USA Hockey representative in your area. Some adult programs are administered by the rinks - contact rink management for information.

Levels of play: Senior A - National Championship
Checking
Non-checking
Co-ed
Adult Elite - National Championship

Sources of information: USA Hockey Annual Guide
www.usahockey.com
John Beadle USA Hockey Vice President Adult Council Chairman
719-339-6263

PROFESSIONAL HOCKEY:

We cannot talk about options without mentioning professional hockey. The National Hockey League is for the truly elite players (0.1%) but there are other professional options outside the NHL.

National Hockey League - NHL - 30 teams www.nhl.com Prior to 2004-2005 "Lock Out"

American Hockey League - AHL - 28 teams (primary feeder system to NHL) www.theahl.com

East Coast League - ECHL - 32 - teams (secondary affiliate) www.echl.com

Minor leagues independent of the NHL:

United Hockey League - 11 teams in Great Lakes area www.theuhl.com

Central Hockey League - 17 teams Texas www.centralhockeyleague.com

Atlantic Coast Hockey League - 6 teams in Southeast www.achl2.net

NHL general information: 124 US citizens out of 690 total players in the NHL -
Approximately 4.1% (1/24) of the NHL draft comes directly from NCAA colleges

NHL in 1970-71 = 14 teams / 325 players: 95.3% Canadian, 2.3% European and 2.1% US

NHL in 2003-04 = 30 teams / 690 players: 49.9% Canadian, 32.3% European
and 17.8 % US

22 MN ~ 17.7%

22 MA ~ 17.7%

18 MI ~ 14.5%

16 NY ~ 12.9 %

62.8% from four states

PROGRESSION PATH FOR THE USA MALE PLAYER:

<u>Private Lessons</u>	<u>Learn to Skate Programs</u>	<u>Cross Ice Program</u>
Recreation	8 and under 10 and under	Recreation
Recreation	12 and over 14 and under	Competitive Tier 1 - Tier 2
High School/ Recreation	17 and under	National Camps/Festivals/ USA NTDP
High School / Recreation Non Check	18 and under	Scholastic High School /Prep
	20 and under	USA Tier 1 & Tier 2 Junior A, B, & C Canadian Junior Tier 2 Canadian Major Junior USA National U-20 Team
Recreation	20 and over	ACHA College Non-Varsity NCAA - Division 1, 2, & 3 Minor Professional NHL USA Olympic Team
Recreation	Adult Hockey	Competitive

A SUMMARY OF THE NUMBERS:

- Tier 2 Competitive Youth Team: **1 in 10** (10.0%)
- Tier 1 Competitive Youth Team: **1 in 20** (5.0%)
- Tier 2 Junior C: **1 in 29** (3.5%)
- Tier 2 Junior B: **1 in 40** (2.5%)
- Tier 2 Junior A: **1 in 70** (1.5%)

Tier 1 Junior A: **1 in 90** (1.1%)
NCAA Division 3: **1 in 100** (1.0%)
National Teams: **1 in 250** (0.40%)
NCAA Division 1: **1 in 300** (0.33%)
NCAA Division 1 with scholarship: **1 in 450** (0.22%)
NHL: **1 in 800** (0.13%)

Note: USA Males have ~ 68% of available spots in NCAA
USA Males have ~ 17% of available spots in NHL

HOW DO I GET NOTICED?

This is one of the most frequently asked questions in hockey. There is no simple answer. You must come to the realization that there are several alternatives and routes a hockey player can take in achieving his/her goal. The informed student-athlete has a better chance of reaching the optimum hockey opportunity. Consider that there are well over 6,500 Midget, Junior and High school teams in North America. Coaches, scouts and recruiters cannot possibly cover all the teams and leagues. The NCAA restricts the number of annual contacts a college coach can have with a player. Prior to your senior year a college coach cannot initiate contact with you but he can observe or evaluate you seven (7) times. During your senior year you can have 3 personal contacts with a coach plus four (4) additional evaluations. There are certain parts of the country where college and junior teams find most of their players. If you are not in a geographic "hockey hot bed" your chances of exposure diminish. Your current coach can have significant impact on your future opportunities. To improve your chances:

- Make yourself academically attractive. Programs are looking for the student athlete.
- Select and play for a coach that has a history of moving players to the next level.
- Contact programs you are interested in - your coach should be your strongest advocate
- Contact alumni of programs; ask them to speak on your behalf.
- Look for teams/leagues that have a history of moving players to the next level.
- Participate in district and national camps.
- Participate in district and national tournaments.
- Investigate Chicago Showcase, Hockey Night in Boston, Top Prospect camps
- Try out for affiliate or district teams that play at elite tournaments.
- Attend summer camps that offer the best exposure and training.

RULE OF THUMB FOR THE ELITE ATHLETE:

- The "Elite Athlete" has been in his/her sport for 7 years;
- Trains 3 hours per day - five days per week - 11 months per year

BE ACADEMICALLY COMPETITIVE - GOOD STUDENT ATHLETES HAVE BETTER OPPORTUNITIES

PLAY YOUR BEST AT ALL TIMES - YOU NEVER KNOW WHO IS WATCHING.

CAN YOU PLAY UNDER PRESSURE? TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR OPPORTUNITIES

DO NOT MAKE EXCUSES

NARROW THE GAP BETWEEN YOUR POTENTIAL AND YOUR PERFORMANCE.

GOOD LUCK!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Val Belmonte, Former Director of Athletics, Union College, NCAA Representative, USA Hockey
Tom Anastos, Commissioner CCHA, NCAA Director USA Hockey
Jim Johannson, USA Hockey, Sr Director Hockey Operations
Kim Folsom, USA Hockey, Coordinator International Administration
Mark Tabrum, USA Hockey, Coaching Program Director
Rae Briggie, USA Hockey, Sr. Director, Member Services
John Cowley USA Hockey Junior Registrar
Dr. Alan Murdoch, USA Hockey Section Director Non Varsity Programs
Joe Bertagna, Executive Director, AHCA
Thomas Keegan, The College Hockey Guide