

GET READY FOR 2005-06!

Pre-season Preparation is underway as players and parents ready themselves for the 2005-06 hockey season. Players are involved in camps, schools, personal training, and of course summer leagues.

In this issue of Hockey Moms, much of the focus is about this preparation. We're checking our gear, checking our conditioning, and tuning up for the season. We also welcome some new columnists to Hockey Moms – hockey mom and professional organizer Karen Asmundson writes about getting your equipment ready and about fitting hockey equipment in Equipment Care on pages 8-9; Dr. Susan Goodale writes about proper hydration during exercise in Nutrition Corner on page 5; Acceleration

West's Greg Sipe offers tips on getting your legs ready for the season in Training & Conditioning on page 7; and Sports Esteem's Jeff Farris provides yet another heavy hitting article on skill and confidence on page 21.

Featured below is the 1st of two articles by Karen Asmundson, this one discussing the pre-season preparation useful in getting your player and her/his gear ready for the season.

See you at the rink!

Hockey? Already?

By Karen Asmundson, *Simply Ordered, LLC*

When August comes, can hockey be far behind? For some families, hockey is a year-round activity. But for the rest of us, hockey seems to catch us unprepared. We get caught up in the last days of summer, the start of school, bedtime schedules and fall sports. Before you know it, it's time to put away the lawn chairs and get out the bleacher seats and hockey blankets.

Just as athletes prepare for hockey by training to improve strength and endurance, parents can help prepare their kids for a successful hockey experience with a little organization.

Here is a pre-season checklist to get back in gear:



Get sign-up dates onto your calendar

Find out when and where your community's hockey association sign-ups are. Look for your association's newsletter with this information. Expect sign-ups to be in August/September for older kids (Squirts, Pee-Wees, and Bantams) and October for little kids (Mini-Mites, Termites, Mites). You may have to contact your local recreation department and ask for the hockey association's phone number.

Fill out sign-up forms

Be prepared to bring your child's information to sign-ups. You'll need your child's date of birth, Social Security number, medical insurance number, names, addresses, and phone numbers of parents/guardians and emergency contacts. If possible, pick up or download the forms ahead of time and fill them out at home so any information you need is readily available. Or, at minimum, bring your cell phone to sign-ups so you'll be able to call home for the information.

Check equipment

It's a fact of life: kids grow during the summer. Even if she/he has been playing hockey year-round, have your child find his/her hockey equipment and try ALL of it on. See if each piece of equipment fits properly (check with a reputable dealer), isn't torn or worn out, isn't missing any hardware or straps, and will adequately protect them. If your child is moving up to a checking level (Squirts to Pee-Wees), make sure the protective equipment will still protect. Buy a new mouth guard and hockey socks.

Trade-in equipment

If your son/daughter has outgrown any equipment, trade it in. Stores like Play It Again Sports usually accept helmets, shoulder pads, elbow pads, gloves, shin pads, and skates during the same time frame as back-to-school sales (late July/early August). Breezers/pants are usually not accepted because they wear out so quickly. For hygiene reasons, socks, garters, protectors, and mouth guards are not accepted either.

To "freshen" up used equipment, toss non-leather, non-metal pieces (elbow pads, shoulder pads, shin pads, breezers) into the dryer on the Air setting

for a few minutes or spray with Atmoskleer™, an industrial deodorizing spray on the market. It was designed to keep cruise ships smelling fresh, so it can probably help with hockey gear. It's available at Ace Hardware.

If the equipment hasn't been washed for a few months, wash it (only non-leather, non-metal equipment). Or take it to a professional hockey gear cleaner. Your child will be too busy using the equipment during the season to wash it then. If you wash gear during warm weather, put the wet equipment out in the sun to dry and kill bacteria.

Bonus Activities:

Add back-up supplies to the hockey bag

Now is the time to put a spare regular screwdriver (get one at the dollar store), a baggie of extra helmet hardware (nuts, bolts), an extra roll of sock tape, stick tape, wax, and a spare pair of athletic socks into the hockey bag. A simple first aid kit (Neosporin, Band-aids or moleskin for blisters) is a good addition too. When your player has a screw loose, you'll be glad you have the tools to fix it.

Create a to-go bag for kids

If you'll be taking little ones to the arena, put together a simple To-Go bag with activities to keep little hands busy for a while. Coloring books, paper and crayons or a small portable white board and dry erase markers can provide hours of entertainment at the arena. Put these items into an enclosed 3-ring binder and you'll have the supplies contained and a firm writing surface all in one. Books or small toys (cars, dolls) are another great addition (make sure they're big enough so they don't fall between the bleachers). Keep these items in the car so they're handy. Most arenas do not allow outside food, but a bottle of water, apple slices or a few Cheerios may keep little tummies happy until practice is over. Bring wipes too.

Create a to-go bag for parents

Whenever you get a new magazine, catalog or book, toss it into a To-Go bag and read it at the arena. It's amazing how much material you can get through during one hour of practice. Assembling/addressing birthday invitations or Christmas cards is also a great portable activity. For you crafters out there, bring a project to work on. More and more moms are knitting or doing other needlework in the stands.

As with the beginning of any new season, preparation is key. Complete these tasks a few weeks before the season begins, and you and your family will be ready to hit the ice. See you at the arena!

About the author:

Karen Asmundson is a hockey mom and professional organizer. One of her sons is a Squirt, another is a varsity goalie, and her husband coaches at the college level. Her objectives during the hockey season are to support her family and have fun, but above all, to maintain her sanity. She has a passion for organizing and for helping families get organized by creating practical solutions for everyday living. She is the owner of Simply Ordered, LLC, a member of the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) and the Minnesota Chapter of NAPO (NAPO-MN).

For more information about *Simply Ordered* or *Get Your Gear™* organizing products, visit www.SimplyOrdered.com.