

Guide to Fitting Hockey Equipment

When purchasing hockey equipment, the most important aspect to consider is that the equipment is properly fitted. When equipment is not suitably fitted, the player is exposed to injury.

This guide is intended to be used by parents, coaches, trainers, and players when selecting appropriate protective equipment before stepping on the ice. The information contained herein should only be used as a guideline when purchasing hockey equipment.

Three important factors should be stressed when evaluating hockey equipment: A. that the equipment is in proper condition, B. that the equipment is properly maintained throughout its life span and C. that the equipment fits properly.

A./ If any piece of equipment is cracked or is structurally unsound, it should be replaced immediately or properly repaired by a professional. Equipment should be inspected often so that all breaks can be recognized immediately and properly attended to.

B./ All equipment should be hung to dry after every game or practice. This reduces deterioration in the equipment's structure and quality. Skate blades and holders should be completely dried immediately after every game or practice. This will prevent deterioration of the blade. Proper maintenance involves examining all equipment frequently throughout its life span.

C./ Equipment should cover the entire area of the body that it is meant to cover. Equipment should never be bought to grow into. This leaves the player at risk of serious injury, as equipment that is too big will slide away from the area that it is protecting.

The following are guidelines that will assist the consumer when fitting and purchasing hockey equipment for themselves or their child.

Underwear

- Wear light fitting, cool, comfortable undergarments during all games and practices.
- When fitting all other equipment, the same undergarments should be worn in order to get the proper sizing.
- Wash after every use.

Jock (Jill) Strap

- This piece of equipment should be fitted according to waist size and should feel comfortable for the player.
- Tears, especially where the two leg straps attach to the protective cup, should be properly repaired or replaced immediately.
- Protective cups come in sizes to suit all players.

Shin Pads

- When sizing, wear loosely fitting skates in order to get the proper length of the shin pad.
- The cap of the shin pad should be centered on the kneecap.
- The bottom of the pad should fit where the foot and the leg meet at a 90-degree angle.
- If the pad is too short, it leaves an unprotected area above the skate will be exposed.
- If the pad is too long, it will restrict movement and create discomfort for the player.
- Shin pads are sized in inches and come in both junior and senior sizes.
- Cracked pads should be replaced or properly repaired immediately.

Pants

- Fitting should be done with shin pads properly in place.
- Pant should slightly overlap the top of the shin pad.
- Pants are sized according to waist size.
- Pants must completely protect the front and side of the thigh, tail bone, hip and kidney areas throughout the entire range of motion.
- When fitting pants for females, fit hips first, and then check the length of the pant.
- Regularly check for tears and irregularities in the pants.

Skates

- Before sizing skates, check the person's feet for any irregularities, which would affect the size of skate.

- Player should wear the same foot hosiery that they would in a game or practice (i.e. socks, barefoot, etc.).
- With the foot in an untied skate, have the player push foot forward so that the toes touch the front of the skate.
- There should be one finger width space between the player's heel and the back of the boot.
- Before lacing up the skate, have the player kick the heel back in order to ensure a snug fit.
- When completely laced, eyelets should be 1.5 – 2 inches apart.
- Never buy skates to grow into as this puts the player at risk of injury and will inhibit their skating ability.
- Laces should never be wrapped around the ankle as this inhibits blood flow.
- Blades should be completely dried after every use.
- Skate guards should be used during transport or when walking on non-ice surfaces.
- Never dry skates over direct heat, as this may crack and damage the composition of the skates

Shoulder Pads

- Should protect the entire shoulder joint throughout a full range of motion.
- Arm pads should extend to just above the elbow to ensure full protection.
- Back pad should meet the top of the pants.
- For female players, a combination of shoulder and chest protector gives added protection to the chest area.
- When lifting arms, pads should not dig into the neck of the player as this may cause injury.
- Check pads and straps regularly for damage.

Sports Bra

- Every female player should wear a properly fitted sports bra to ensure appropriate support.

Elbow Pads

- When fitting, place the point of the elbow in the circular area on the inside of the elbow pad and fasten all straps properly.
- The top of the elbow pad should meet the bottom of the shoulder pad.
- The bottom of the pad should extend down the forearm and fit inside the cuff of the glove.
- Check straps regularly and have any defective pad or strap properly repaired or replaced immediately.

Gloves

- Should fit the players' hands snugly but not too tight.
- Glove should overlap the elbow pad through the entire range of motion.
- Padding on the back of the glove should absorb all shock.
- Check this by pressing on the back of the glove. The player should not feel any pressure on the backside of the hand.
- Be sure that the palms of the gloves are always soft and without rips or tears.
- Always leave laces (if present) in the cuff.
- Check gloves for damage frequently and repair or replace immediately.

Throat Protector (although not mandatory in the TNHC league, we highly recommend their use)

- All players must wear a throat protector featuring a BNQ* certification label on it.
- Should fit snugly and should completely cover throat area.
- Hang to dry after every use.

Helmet

- Should be snug and remain in place when chinstrap is properly fastened.
- Helmet should fit just above the eyebrows.
- Helmet MUST be CSA* approved.
- Never paint or add stickers as this weakens the structure and removes CSA* certification.
- Replace loose or missing screws immediately.
- Check inside and outside of helmet for cracks or deterioration and replace if necessary.

Facemask (although not mandatory in the TNHC league, we highly recommend their use)

- When fitting, a proper measurement should be taken from the front of the helmet to the bottom of the player's chin.

- Chin should fit comfortably into cup of facemask.
- Facemasks come in both cage and polycarbonate visor styles and also in different types.
 - Type I – for players 10 years or older (excluding goaltenders), denoted by a white CSA sticker.
 - Type II – for players 10 years and under (excluding goaltenders), denoted by an orange CSA sticker.
 - Type III – for goaltenders of any age, denoted by a blue CSA sticker.
 - Type IV – for players at the Major Junior level and up, denoted by a yellow CSA sticker.
- An internal mouth guard may be attached to the facemask to protect the player's teeth and to help reduce the risk of concussion. It is recommended that a dental practitioner fit the mouth guard.
- All breaks or cracks should be replaced.
- Check that mask is compatible with helmet.
- Be sure to clean visor after every use.
- Never cut or alter facemask.

Stick

- In street shoes, the stick should reach between the chin and the mouth of the player and just below the chin when on skates.
- Junior sticks should be used for younger players as these sticks have features, which are more suitable for this age group.
- When purchasing a goalie stick, the blade of the stick should be flat on the ice when the goalie is in a crouch position.
- Be aware of players' personal preference when purchasing a hockey stick.

Goaltender Equipment

- Goal pads should always be fitted with goaltender skates on.
- Kneecap should be in the middle of the knee roll.
- When completely fastened, the pads should extend from the toe of the skate to four inches above the knee.
- Extra kneepads may be worn under the goal pads for added protection.
- Always dry and store pads in an upright position.
- Check straps regularly.
- Pants should fit the same as regular pants but should be loose enough to fit belly pad inside.
- Pants should be expected to be heavier than usual because of their extra padding.
- Belly pad should tuck in about two inches below the belly button.
- Upper body protection should cover collarbone, chest, abdomen, and should extend down arms to the wrist.
- Goaltenders should wear special athletic support.
- Blocker and trapper should fit to the hand size of the player and should overlap arm pads.
- Never warp the blocker as this reduces its structural integrity.

*CSA – Canadian Standards Association

*BNQ – Bureau de normalisation du Québec.