



ATLANTIC AMATEUR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

"OPPORTUNITIES IN HOCKEY"

2006-2007

**Information Compiled by USA Hockey
In Conjunction with**

USA Hockey Coaches Section



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Al Bloomer, Coaching Section Director
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2006

Atlantic District

"OPPORTUNITIES IN HOCKEY"

Seminar

The purpose of this presentation is to provide information regarding various options available to the hockey player that wants to compete at the highest level. 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.

When it comes to choosing options for their hockey future, there are many players (and parents) who are seeking answers to very important questions. 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 should begin to think about your options. USA Hockey believes 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. We all realize that players mature and develop at different rates.

SOME TYPICAL QUESTIONS:

- What are my hockey opportunities after I turn 14?
- 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	40,301 (19 and under)
	Male	328,970 (20 and under)
	<u>Adult M/F</u>	<u>75,974 (20 years and older)</u>
	Total	445,245

Note: there are ± 300 Canadians in USA Youth Programs

± 238 other IIHF citizens in US Youth Programs

Note: USA has approximately 2,000 indoor rinks and about 400 outdoor rinks

Age Classification: Midget/High School
Male 64,832 (18 and under)
Female 6,940 (19 and under)

Juniors (20 and under)
Male 7,592 (7,199 are USA citizens and 393 Non-citizens)
Female 886

Adults (20 years and older)
Male 65,000
Female 10,974

2004-05 Hockey Canada player registration:

Female 65,951
Male 477,989
Total **543,940**

Note: There are ± 240 US citizens playing youth hockey in Canada

Note: Canada has approximately 3,000 indoor rinks and 11,000 outdoor rinks

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

Female 16,682 (19 and under)
Male 295,078 (20 and under)
Adult 159,644 (over 20)
Total **471,404**

Note: There are ± 224 US citizens playing in IIHF Countries (exclude Canada)

Note: IIHF Countries have approximately 1,730 indoor rinks and 600 outdoor rinks

IT IS A NUMBERS GAME:

Academic preparation:

The better the student athlete, the more options are available.
Teams/schools often 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 - help reach your ultimate goal(s)
Realistic self-evaluation vs. the "parent factor".
Separate the player from the person - you can be a great person and an average player
Consider the source & motivation of those advising you
Can youth tier 1, private prep school, post graduate high 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 a history of advancing players
- 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: (\pm 135,000 U.S. PLAYERS)

- Pay to play - National Recruiting
- Investigate - play for programs that have a history of moving players to next level
- Variety - check track record and coach's credentials
- Make sure you are not just playing for the Tier 1 label - credibility

PREP SCHOOL HOCKEY:

Choosing the right prep school for you

Location - most are in the East (New England \pm 56) - 85%

Boys' schools	\pm 75
Girls' schools	\pm 56
Post graduate programs	\pm 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/Ivy/CHL)

- 90 % of Prep School players are college bound
- Approximately 8,500 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. Currently domestic junior hockey is divided into tier 1 and 2. In June 2006 it is expected that the junior program will reorganize into tier 1, tier 2 and tier 3 programs. The following information anticipates this reorganization. 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 professional 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 are approximately 65,000 U.S. male players in that age group. There are approximately 75,000 Canadian Players in this age group. A total of **7,592** players are currently registered in U.S. domestic junior hockey programs.

- ± 255 in Tier 1 - USHL
- ± 525 in Tier 2 - NAHL
- ± 600 in Tier 3 Junior A - (EJHL & AJHL)
- ± 1,875 in Tier 3 Junior B - estimated
- ± 1,100 in Tier 3 Junior C - estimated
- ± 3,237 Independent Junior - other
- 115 Canadians in USA Junior Hockey
- 383 USA Citizens into Canadian Junior Hockey
- 65 IIHF Federation players in USA Junior Hockey
- 134 USA Citizens into IIHF Junior Hockey

± 7,412 domestic junior Players are US citizens

- 1 out of 8.75 eligible players (16 to 20 yrs) are playing domestic junior hockey (11.4%)
- 1 out of 250 eligible players are playing tier 1 (0.4 %)
- 1 out of 125 eligible players are playing tier 2 (0.8 %)
- 1 out of 100 eligible players are playing tier 3 Junior A (1.0 %)
- 1 out of 35 eligible players are playing tier 3 Junior B (3.0 %)
- 1 out of 20 eligible players are playing tier 3 Junior C (5.0 %)

Differences in Junior Classifications:

All U.S. domestic junior programs protect the amateur status of the players. However, there are specific criteria differences between tier 1, tier 2 and tier 3 programs as well as differences between A, B, and C programs. USA Hockey has established specific criteria for Tier 1 and Tier 2 domestic programs. Tier 3 criteria have been established and will be put into place following the 2006 USA Hockey Annual Congress. These criteria are monitored and enforced by the USA Hockey Junior Council. Refer to the USA Hockey Annual Guide. As mentioned earlier, there will be revisions to the classifications following the 2006 USA Hockey Annual Congress. The specifics will be posted on the USA Hockey web page - www.usahockey.com/juniors . To verify the classification of a

league or team, contact John Cowley, USA Hockey Junior Registrar at jrhockeyreg@cableone.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 - only tier 3 programs can charge a player fee

Certified USA Domestic Junior Hockey Leagues:

Tier 1 Juniors- 255 players in USHL (11 teams in IL, IA, WI, NE, SD, MO)
Gino Gasparini, President www.ushl.com

Tier 2 Juniors - 525 players in NAHL (21 teams in AK, IL, MT, ND, NM, TX, OH, MN, MO, MI) Michael Santos, Commissioner www.nahl.com

Tier 3 Junior A - 600 players

- AJHL - 11 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

Tier 3 Junior B - 1875 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 3 Junior C - 1,100 players currently registered with USA Hockey

- CHL - 23 teams in PA, NJ, NY, MA, MI
Andrew "Sarge" Richards, President www.jrhockey.net
- NEJDL - 7 teams MA, CT and NH
Graham Gal, League Contact
- SEJHL - 4 teams FL
Rick Ninko, President

3,237 Independent Junior C - 8 registered teams (see 2006 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 - commercial camp vs. opportunity camp
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 below:

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.lhjmq.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 - NCAA eligibility
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.usahockey.com

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 - acceptable **SAT** scores prior to 2005 ranged from 900 to 1400 +. 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

The 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 - 88 programs (30 women, 58 men) www.ncaa.org

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

Division 3 - 112 programs (44 women, 68 men) www.ncaa.org

NJCAA - 10 programs www.njcaa.org

Making an informed decision - a touch of realism:

There are approximately 3,579 male players (19 to 27 years old) in NCAA Varsity Hockey programs (1.1%)

There are approximately 1,586 males in **Division 1** Hockey programs

Approximately 1006 are U.S. citizens (63.4 %)

There are approximately 686 females in **Division 1** Hockey programs

Approximately 409 females are US citizens (59.6%)

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. U.S. 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

2005-2006: 30 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: **MN** (13%), **MA** (9.4%), **MI** (9.0%),

NY (6.4.1%), **IL** (2.9%), **Rocky Mountain States** - **CO**, **TX**, **AZ**, **ID**, **UT** & **NM** (2.8%)

Statistics by Division 1 league:

WCHA rosters - US players ± 65.0 %; Canadian players ± 33.0%

CCHA rosters - US players ± 63.4%; Canadian players ± 32%

Hockey East rosters - US players ± 66%; Canadian players ± 30%

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

CSCHL rosters - no information

Ivy rosters - no information

CHL 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
- Senior A Elite
- Checking
- Non-checking
- Co-ed
- Adult 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: ± 125 US citizens out of 690 total players in the NHL -
 Approximately 4.1% (1/24) of the NHL draft comes directly from NCAA colleges

61 Americans were drafted in 2005 = 26.5 % of the draft.

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

NHL in 2005-06 = 30 teams / 690 players: 47.5% Canadian, 32.3% European
 and 20.0 % 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:

Private Lessons	Learn to Skate Programs	Cross Ice Program
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 School
	20 and under	USA Tier 1, Tier 2 & Tier 3 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

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 3 Junior C: **1 in 20** (5.0%)
 Tier 3 Junior B: **1 in 35** (3.0%)
 Tier 3 Junior A: **1 in 100** (1.0 %)
 NCAA Division 3: **1 in 100** (1.0%)
 Tier 2 Junior: **1 in 125** (0.80%)
 Tier 1 Junior: **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%)
 National Teams: **1 in 1000** (0.10%)

Note: USA Males have \pm 68% of available spots in NCAA
 USA Males have \pm 20% 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 a minimum of 7 years;
 Trains 3 hours per day - 5 days per week - 11 months per year

There is nothing wrong in believing in your dream. To make the dream come true you must dedicate yourself to a work ethic that separates you from the rest.

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!

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

Val Belmonte, V P Athletic Marketing & Development Quinnipiac University
Al Bloomer, USA Hockey Coach in Chief
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