

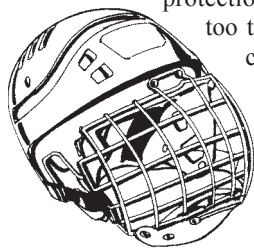
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As a coach, you are responsible to be knowledgeable about all aspects of hockey – including the equipment that your players are required to wear. If a player does not have all the right equipment during a practice or a game, he/she is not allowed to participate. In addition, if the equipment does not fit properly, injuries could occur and developmental problems could surface. Make it a point to know everything you can about what equipment is required, and how it should be properly utilized.

The basic equipment necessary is skates, shin pads, breezers (pants), garter belt, hockey socks, athletic supporter with cup or pelvic protector, shoulder pads (with or without chest protector), elbow pads, hockey gloves, hockey helmet with protective mask and chin protector, mouth guard, hockey stick. Other clothing players should have: athletic socks, sweat shorts, t-shirt, skate guards or soakers and hockey jersey.

## When is it necessary to purchase a new helmet?

Check to make sure the player's helmet still feels comfortable. The helmet should fit snug to prevent any shifting and maximize protection. It is important that the helmet is not too tight, so it remains comfortable. Does the chinstrap adjust so it gently makes contact under the chin when fastened? It should not be too tight or create any other discomfort. Also, players must have a HECC sticker on both the helmet and facial protection.



If the helmet is dented or cracked it MUST be replaced.

Also, check the face mask or shield for dents or cracks. These can cause the mask or shield to lose its strength and must be changed immediately.

## How can I tell if a player's shoulder and elbow pads fit properly?

It is very important that the center of the player's shoulders lines up directly with the shoulder cups. These cups are designed to protect the shoulder joints from receiving direct impacts. The remainder of the shoulder pads can be adjusted to fit with the adjustable strap as long as the shoulders and shoulder cups line up correctly.

Also check that the shoulder pads are not pushed uncomfortably high around the player's neck when lifting the arms above the head.

Check that the elbow pad fits comfortably into the center of the elbow pad cup. Also, a good elbow pad will provide forearm protection which extends down to bear the cuff of the player's hockey glove.

## What is the proper fit for hockey gloves?

The main concern with the fit of a glove is making sure the gap between the glove and the elbow pad is minimal. The tightness or looseness of a glove is an individual preference. However, if the glove is too loose it may turn on the player's hand and reduce the gloves

protective ability. Also, it is important that the fingers of the gloves are not too short. The tip of the fingers should not go completely to the end of the glove. If they do, they may be exposed to injury by a slash from an opponent's stick.

## Do the pants fit properly?

While the fit should be loose and comfortable the pants should have the ability to be secured firmly by a belt around the waist. Make sure you also check the length of the pant legs. The bottom of the pants needs to overlap the top of the shin pad kneecaps by 1 or 2 inches. This will insure proper protection even when in a kneeling position. The leg length is very important. Sometimes a taller player will have to purchase a pair of pants which is one size too big in the waist in order to achieve the proper leg length. There are pants made specifically for tall people, but they are not easily attained except by custom order.

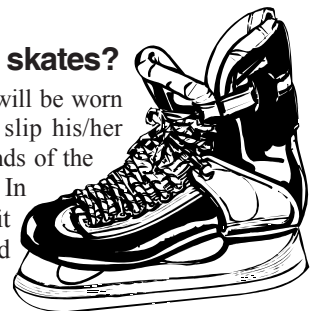
## Do the shin pads fit properly?

A player's kneecap should fit directly into the center of the kneecap cup of the shin pad. The shin pad should then extend down the full length of the lower leg. It's important to make sure the shin pad isn't too long. If so, the skate would push it up and the kneecap would be out of position. It's always a good idea to have a skate available when fitting a shin pad.

If the shin pad is cracked or dented it has lost its protection and should be replaced at once!

## What is the proper fit for skates?

While wearing the sock that will be worn when skating, the player should slip his/her foot into the skate, pressing the ends of the toes against the front of the skate. In this position, one finger should fit between the inside of the boot and the heel of the foot. Check the skates when snugly laced. Eyelets should be roughly 1 1/2" to 2" apart.



If further apart, a wider boot would work better. And if the eyelets are closer the player should look for a narrower boot.

The player should walk 10 to 15 minutes in the skates checking for comfort. Red areas or pressure points on the feet are signs of an improperly fitted skate.

## Is the length of the hockey stick correct?

When standing on skates, the stick should come up to the player's chin or just below it.

Also, a defenseman may want to use a longer stick and a forward may want to use a shorter stick. This is an individual preference for each player.

Remember it's important to take time prior to the upcoming season to check your players' hockey equipment for proper fit and excessive wear and tear. If you fail to do so, you have not done your job as a coach.

