OPPORTUNITIES IN GIRLS’/WOMEN’S ICE HOCKEY

SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
For more information on introductory level hockey opportunities in your area, including Try Hockey for Free events, please contact your Girls'/Women's Section representative or visit the USA Hockey website at usahockeyprogramservices.com.

RECREATIONAL
The backbone of all USA Hockey programs, recreational leagues offer the opportunity to practice and play games within a local rink, town or association. USA Hockey and its volunteers emphasize the fun, skill development and fellowship aspects of the game in an effort to build a solid foundation that leads to a lifetime of hockey-playing enjoyment. Recreational programs for girls and women are conducted in the following age categories: 8 & Under, 10 & Under, 12 & Under, 14 & Under, 16 & Under, 18 & Under and Senior Women’s A, B and C.

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT
USA Hockey and its twelve districts provide annual player development opportunities at the affiliate, district, regional, and national level. USA Hockey hosts three National Player Development camps.

Get Started
For more information about girls’ and women’s hockey in your area, we encourage you to contact one of the representatives below for further assistance.

GIRLS’/WOMEN’S SECTION DIRECTOR
Don Gould
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USA Hockey’s 12 districts, a total of 34 affiliates provide the formal governance for the sport. USA Hockey’s primary emphasis is on the support and development of grassroots hockey programs. USA Hockey’s primary emphasis is on the support and development of grassroots hockey programs. Its cutting-edge American Development Model, which was launched in January 2009, provides associates nationwide with a blueprint for age-appropriate athlete development.

To Contact USA Hockey

1775 Bob Johnson Drive
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Girls’ & Women’s Hockey
USA Hockey provides the foundation for the sport of ice hockey in America; helps young people become leaders, even Olympic heroes; and connects the game at every level while promoting a lifelong love of the sport.

An organization that was born out of a shoehorn in Tom Lockhart’s New York City apartment back in the fall of 1937 is today represented in all 50 states and includes a record one million-plus players, coaches, officials, parents and volunteers.

USA Hockey’s primary emphasis is on the support and development of grassroots hockey programs. Its cutting-edge American Development Model, which was launched in January 2009, provides associates nationwide with a blueprint for age-appropriate athlete development. Always a leader in safety, USA Hockey furthered the enhancement of those efforts by advancing the USA Hockey SafeSport Program in June 2012.

While youth hockey is a main focus, USA Hockey also has vibrant junior and adult hockey programs that provide opportunities for players of all ability levels. The organization also supports a growing disabled hockey program.

Beyond serving those who play the game at the amateur level, USA Hockey has certification programs for coaches and officials, inclusive of industry-leading online education modules, to ensure standards are met that coincide with the level of play. Furthermore, a large focus is put on parent education with equipment needs, rules of the game and parental roles in youth sports among common topics.

Members of the organization are entitled to many benefits, including a subscription to USA Hockey Magazine, the most widely circulated hockey publication in the world; excess accident, general liability and catastrophic insurance coverage; industry-leading education; access to USAHockey.com; and opportunities to participate in USA Hockey National Championships, as well as player development camps.

As the National Governing Body for the sport of ice hockey in the United States, USA Hockey is the official representative to the United States Olympic Committee and the International Ice Hockey Federation. In this role, USA Hockey is responsible for organizing and training men’s and women’s teams for international tournaments, including the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games and IIHF World Championships. USA Hockey also works closely with the NHL and NCAA on matters of mutual interest.

USA Hockey is divided into 12 geographical districts throughout the United States. Each district has a registrar to register teams; a referee-in-chief to register officials and organize clinics; a coach-in-chief to administer education programs for coaches; a risk manager to oversee liability and safety programs; and a skill development program administrator to facilitate team-to-play programs. Within USA Hockey’s 12 districts, a total of 34 affiliates provide the formal governance for the sport.
HISTORY OF THE WOMEN’S GAME

THE HISTORY OF WOMEN’S ICE HOCKEY

Most people are surprised to learn that women’s ice hockey has a history that dates back more than 120 years, beginning with the earliest known film image of women involved in a game of ice hockey – featuring Isabel Preston, daughter of Lord Stanley Preston (of Stanley Cup lore), playing hockey on a flooded lawn in the winter of 1890.

There is little doubt that women played the sport well before the first newspaper account of a game between two unnamed women’s teams appeared in the Ottawa Citizen on Feb. 11, 1891. After much research, that game, which was played in Ottawa, Ontario, is now regarded as the start of women’s ice hockey.

Over the span of more than a century, girls and women have pursued their interest in the sport, and today that segment continues to be one of the fastest growing in USA Hockey.

A look back at the history of the women’s game reveals an amazing evolution, with the best yet to come for females involved in the sport.

GRASSROOTS ICE HOCKEY

During the 1990-91 season, 5,573 female ice hockey players registered with USA Hockey. Since then, that number has increased more than 10 times with nearly 73,000 registered girls and women playing ice hockey across the United States today. While the number of girls/women’s teams has grown significantly, some females playing ice hockey across the United States today.

The Women’s Ice Hockey National Championships was accomplished when it passed the torch to the NCAA. In 1991, the University of New Hampshire defeating Brown University, 4-1, to.

USA HOCKEY NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The late 1970s ushered in a new era, as USA Hockey hosted the first of its Girls/Women’s National Championships. Today, the National Championships include Girls Tier I and Tier II (14U, 16U, and 19U), Women’s Senior A, B, C, and Women’s Adult Recreational (30 & Over, 40 & Over and 50 & Over). The USA Hockey National Championships are designed to provide competitive playing opportunities in the spirit of good sportsmanship for all levels of the organization’s membership.

AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

In 1993, a survey was conducted by the Minnesota State High School League in an effort to gain an accurate assessment of those games, and today that segment today that continues to be one of the fastest growing in USA Hockey.

The Minnesota State High School League sanctioned girls’ ice hockey as a varsity sport, making Minnesota the first state to do so.

Since then, numerous high schools across the country have sanctioned girls’ ice hockey as a varsity sport, helping to support the expansion of the sport at the college level.

COLLEGE ICE HOCKEY

Women’s collegiate ice hockey continues to grow. Support from organizations such as USA Hockey, the National College Athletic Association and the United States Olympic Committee is helping to advance the game to new levels. The face of women’s college ice hockey is a constantly changing one, as institutions add programs or upgrade existing club teams to varsity status.

In the 1999-2000 season, the Western Collegiate Hockey Association joined the Eastern College Athletic Conference as the second league in the nation to offer women’s Division I hockey. Now with the additions of Hockey East and College Hockey America, there are four Division I leagues. Overall, more than 120 women’s teams (Division I, Division III and ACHA) currently compete at the collegiate level.

A major step was taken in 1997-98 with the debut of the American Women’s College Hockey Alliance, a program that was funded through the USOC/NCAA Conference Grant Program. The purpose of the AWHCA was to organize and develop activities with collegiate women’s varsity ice hockey programs to nationally promote the development and sponsorship of women’s ice hockey at all NCAA levels throughout the United States. The inaugural AWHCA Division I National Women’s Ice Hockey Championship was held in March 1998, with the University of New Hampshire defeating Brown University, 4-1, to become the first recognized national champion in women’s college ice hockey.

Following two more AWHCA National Championships, USA Hockey’s mission was accomplished when it passed the torch to the NCAA, in August 2000, the NCAA announced it would hold its first Division I Women’s Ice Hockey National Championship the following season. The University of Minnesota Duluth captured the inaugural NCAA Division I Women’s Ice Hockey Championship, defeating St. Lawrence University, 4-2, on March 25, 2001.

The 1997-98 season also marked another first with the creation of the Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award, designed to recognize the achievements of the most outstanding player in women’s college ice hockey each season. The award is presented by The USA Hockey Foundation to the player who represents the highest standards of personal and team excellence, and in 1998, the inaugural Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award went to forward Brandi Fisher of the University of New Hampshire.

THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

As far back as 1916, women’s ice hockey teams from Canada and the U.S. have competed against each other. The 1980s, however, provided women’s ice hockey with a future. In April 1987, the Ontario Women’s Hockey Association hosted the first World Invitational Tournament, which proved to be a resounding success. That tournament, representatives from participating nations met to discuss the future of women’s ice hockey and to establish a strategy to lobby the International Ice Hockey Federation for the creation of a Women’s World Championship.

Those discussions led to the first-ever IIHF Women’s World Championship, which was held in March 1990 in Ottawa. In 2005, the U.S. defeated Canada, 4-3, in overtime to win its first-ever world title. Team USA has won seven of the last eight world championships.

April 1995 saw the formation of the first-ever IFH Pacific Women’s Hockey Championship, with teams from the U.S., Canada, China and Japan competing in San Jose, California. Vancouver, British Columbia, served as the site for the 1996 IFH Pacific Women’s Hockey Championship, where Canada, the U.S. and China repeated as gold, silver and bronze medalists from the previous year.

When the U.S. defeated Canada, 3-0, in the championship game of the 1997 Three Nations Cup in Lake Placid, New York, it marked the first time Canada had been shut out. It was also Team USA’s first title in international competition, foreshadowing the future.

Women’s ice hockey received its most prestigious acknowledgment in 1992 when the International Olympic Committee voted to include it as a full medal Olympic sport beginning in 2002. The IOC gave the organization the 1994 Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway, and the 1998 Winter Games in Nagano, Japan, the option of including women’s ice hockey on their programs. Norway declined, but Japan accepted and set the wheels in motion for a historic event.

On Feb. 17, 1998, Team USA defeated Team Canada, 3-1, to earn the first Olympic gold medal ever awarded in women’s ice hockey, forever securing its place in the record books and earning the admiration of an entire nation. The U.S. followed that up with a silver medal on home ice at the 2002 Olympic Winter Games held in Salt Lake City, a bronze medal at the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Torino, Italy, and silver medals at the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver and the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia.

In 2008, the IIHF added a world championship at the Under-18 level and again, the U.S. made history. On January 12, 2008, the U.S. Women’s National Under-18 Team captured the first-ever gold medal at the IIHF U18 Women’s World Championship in Calgary, Alberta. Team USA has played in the gold-medal game in all nine U18 Women’s World Championships, winning gold in five, including the last two.

WOMEN’S PROFESSIONAL HOCKEY

The CWHL and NWHL are professional leagues that are dedicated to raising the profile of women’s hockey and show the growth and desire for an extended future for athletes to play at the highest levels. The CWHL season culminates with the Clarkson Cup championship, which is the first league to pay its players, concludes with teams competing for the Clarkson Cup.

ANNUAL EVENTS

Each season, there are many opportunities to showcase girls’/women’s ice hockey at various levels and these are some of the annual highlights. For more information on these events and girls’/women’s hockey, visit USAWomensHockey.com

In early October, the IIHF conducts World Girls’ Ice Hockey Weekend, a global opportunity for girls to try the sport. USA Hockey supports the initiative by hosting girls’ hockey events nationwide.

At the U16 level, the U.S. Women’s Under-16 National Team competes in the IHF Under-16 Women’s World Championship each year since 2008.

The Four Nations Cup, held in November each year, is an annual showdown with the U.S. Women’s National Team facing their counterparts from Canada, Finland and Sweden. It has taken place in varying forms since 1996.

The U.S. Women’s National Team also participates each March in the IIHF Women’s World Championship. Other than the Olympic Winter Games, it is the highest level of competition.

USA Hockey also fields U.S. Women’s Select Teams at the Under-18 and Under-22 level that face Canada each August in the Under-18 Series and Under-22 Series.