



## **Scores for Schools Newark Ice Hockey Association (Ohio)**

The Newark Ice Hockey Association teamed up with local schools in the Licking County and surrounding areas to create our Score for Schools programs. NIHA has obtained grant funds from Mid-Am District (a part of USA Hockey) to pay for the transportation costs for these schools to bring the children into the rink and introduce them to the sport of hockey. Our local area rink, Lou Gibb Ice Arena, and the Newark Sports and Events commission also supported NIHA in providing the ice and facility at no cost for the program.

We have already introduced hockey and ice skating to over 600 children in our area. The grades range from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>. We have increased our numbers by 11%, which does not count the 2009-10 season. We hope our numbers will increase even more as some of our sessions were late in the hockey season.

The format we use is two hours long. We bring in classes averaging 60-75 kids per session. For our larger school systems, we bring the entire grade in spreading it out throughout the week. We have our USA Hockey Certified Coaches (usually 3-6) as well as one figure skating teacher. For the girls, I do recommend having at least one female coach with pink hockey attire. I can share with you that this grabbed a number of girls' attention. We added three girls to our development league with the first two schools!

When the kids come in, we split them into 3 or 4 groups and use two, one-hour sessions. In the first hour, two groups are fitted with skates, helmets and are taken on the ice. Elementary skating moves are taught, such as basic skating, stopping, learning to fall down and getting up – which is usually the favorite.

The other groups are taken to our conference room for a science lesson on how the ice area makes ice. The ice resurfacer, compressors, temperature and a tour of the facilities are included. The schools have been able to incorporate this into their teaching syllabus's for science.

In the next hour, all the children are brought back on the ice. At this point, we split the rink into the hockey area and the open skate area. The children who want to play hockey come over and we allow them to learn the basics of the game and play. The other children are able to open skate. We end up having waiting lines on our hockey side as the children who were tentative in trying hockey at first, come over and want to play.

The finale is bringing the ice resurfacer out and showing them how it works and cleans the ice.

When the children are done, packets of information are sent home to each child. This includes a free skating voucher for an open skate, as well as information on all of our



hockey leagues and classes. This year, the Columbus Blue Jackets will provide information and goodies for the kids. We hope to have Stinger (mascot) on the ice with us for some of the sessions.

The win/win occurs in many different areas. The ice arena has grown their open skate numbers. The parents are coming in with the children and are also trying skating. Both parents and children watch our hockey learn to play classes and/or games and become very interested in playing. In late October, November and December, we also host Free Learn to Play Hockey clinics for the adults and children.

As the program advances, we do have at least one school in particular that is looking into the concept of incorporating ice hockey/skating into the physical education courses. We are in early discussions but may be able to pilot this program this year.