



OPPORTUNITIES IN HOCKEY AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

PRESENTED BY:

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Presented by Al Bloomer, Managing Partner and Associate Head Coach Billings Bulls Junior A Hockey Club NAHL, Rocky Mountain District Coach-in-Chief, Member of USA Hockey Junior Council, Member of USA Hockey National Player Development Committee.

The purpose of this presentation is to provide information regarding various options available to a hockey player that has completed or is about to complete his/her high school education. 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.

I have been involved in hockey as a player, coach or administrator for over 50 years. For the last 20 years I have been directly involved with players between the ages of 15 and 20 years old. When it comes to choosing options for their hockey future, I am continually troubled by how poorly prepared and uninformed many players and their parents are. 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 begin to think about your options. I believe parents and players should begin to think seriously about 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 parents need to make informed and realistic decisions.

Some typical questions:

What are my hockey opportunities after high school?

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?

How important are academics?

What role does my coach play?

Should I actively pursue opportunities or should I wait until opportunity knocks?

The player registration numbers (2002-2003):

Total USA Players:	Female	36,258	
	Male	334,200	
	<u>Adult M/F</u>	<u>75,870</u>	
	Total	446,328	Rocky Mountain 33,902 (7.6%)

Age Classification:	Midget/High School (Under 18)		
	Male	62,223	Rocky Mountain ± 3,684 (6.0%)
	Female	6,751	± 457 (6.8%)

Juniors (18-20)

Male	6,407	Rocky Mountain ± 500 (7.8%)
Female	764	± 50

Adults (over 20)

Male	66,157	Rocky Mountain ± 6,700 (10.0%)
Female	9,713	± 670 (7.0%)

2002-03 Hockey Canada player registration:

Female 61,177

Male 476,975

Total 538,152

Note: There are currently about 403 US citizens playing in Canada
360 Canadians playing in USA

2002-2003 International Ice Hockey Federation IIHF - not including USA & Canada

Female 15,000

Juvenile 243,000

Total 258,000

IT IS A NUMBERS GAME

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.

Realistic self-evaluation vs. the "parent factor". Objectivity

Separate the player from the person - you can be a great person and an average player

Consider the evaluation source

Parents typically exaggerate their child's level of play; actual level plus 1= Parent Factor

Academic preparation:

The better the student, the more the options

Teams/schools 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.

Can youth tier 1, private prep school, post graduate 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 track record of player advancement

Select programs that train the complete athlete

Prepare the **complete** athlete

Hockey skill development

Strength and conditioning
Nutrition
Mental toughness
Discipline

PRIVATE PREP SCHOOL - BOARDING AND DAY SCHOOL OPTIONS

Choosing the right prep school for you

Location - most are in the East (New England +/- 60)

Boys' schools	± 75
Girls' schools	± 56
Post graduate programs	± 48

Western and mid-western schools - proximity to the Rocky Mountain District

Banff Hockey Academy - Alberta
Breck School - Minneapolis, MN
Blake School - Minneapolis, MN
Athol Murray College - Wilcox, Sask.
College Mathieu - Gravelbourg, Sask.
Culver Academies - Culver, IN
Shattuck St. Mary's - Faribault, MN
Gilmore Academy - Gates Mills, OH
Univ. School of Milwaukee - WI

Prep schools are a high priority for college recruiters (ECAC/Hockey East/MAAC/AHL)
90 % of the players are college bound
Approximately 8,500 players in US Prep Schools

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

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 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. 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 coaching
- Educational advancement of athlete
- Recruiting exposure - college
- Advanced levels of domestic and international competition
- Protect amateur status - NCAA**

There are approximately 3,706 players currently playing in US domestic junior hockey programs

- 788 +/- in Tier 1 or Tier 2 Junior A
- 1370 +/- in Tier 2 Junior B
- 760 +/- in certified Tier 2 Junior C

IT IS A NUMBERS GAME

- 3,300 +/- domestic junior players are US citizens (4.8% of the available player pool)
- 1 out of 21 eligible players are playing domestic junior hockey (4.8%)
- 1 out of 80 eligible players are playing Tier 1 or Tier 2 Junior A (1.3%)
- 1 out of 45 eligible players are playing Tier 2 Junior B (2.2%)

Certified USA Domestic Junior Hockey Leagues:

Tier 1 Junior A - 288 players in USHL (12 teams in IL, IA, WI, NE, SD, MO)

Gino Gasparini President www.ushl.com)

Tier 2 Junior A - 500 players in NAHL (20 teams in AK, IL, MT, ND, TX, OH, MN, MO, MI)

Michael Santos, Commissioner www.nahl.com

Tier 2 Junior B - 1370 players

CSHL - 12 teams in IL, OH, MI, MO

Frank Ferrara, President www.cshlhockey.net

EJBHL - 12 teams in NY, CT, PA

Don Kirnan, President www.empirehockey.com

IJHL - 7 teams in MA, NH, CT

Bob Rotondo, President www.ijhl.org

METJHL - 8 teams in PA, NJ, NY

Glenn Hefferan, President www.metleague.org

MJHL - 6 teams MN, IA and WI

Ken Gaber, President www.mnjhl.com

NORPAC - 6 teams in MT, ID, WA, OR

Jack Tragis, Commissioner www.norpachockey.com

WSHL - 6 teams in CA, NV, AZ, UT

Ron White, Commissioner www.wshl.org

Tier 2 Junior C - 760 players currently **registered** with USA Hockey

AJHL - 6 teams in CT, NJ, NY, MD
Glenn Hefferan, President
EJHL - 12 teams in MA, VT, NH, NY, RI
Dan Esdale, President www.easternjunior.com
CHL - 15 teams in PA, NJ, NY, MA, MI
Andrew "Sarge" Richards President www.jrhockey.net

All USA domestic junior programs protect the amateur status of the players. However, there are specific differences between USA tier 1 and tier 2 programs as well as differences between A, B, and C programs. USA Hockey has established specific criteria for each level of domestic junior classification. These criteria are monitored and enforced by the USA Hockey Junior Council. Refer to the USA Hockey Annual Guide. To verify the classification of a league or team you can 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

How can a 16 to 20 year old get exposure to 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
 - USA Hockey District Player Development Camps
 - USA Hockey National Camps and Festivals
 - Chicago Showcase
 - District high school tournaments
 - Attend junior tryout camps - investigate
 - Various private commercial global and prospect camps

Before attending commercial camps, get an actual staff list and information on attending scouts. Get placement information on players that have attended previous camps. This information should be readily available.

Canadian Major Junior Hockey:

There are Major 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 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 Major Junior programs as professional.

NCAA Amateurism Rules impacting the Ice Hockey Student Athlete - summarized:

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 21 teams www.ontariohockeyleague.com

Dave Branch, Commissioner

Quebec Major Junior Hockey League 16 teams www.lhjmq.qc.ca

Gilles Courteau, Commissioner

Western Hockey league 19 teams www.whl.ca

Ron Robinson, Commissioner

Note: alumni of Canadian Major Junior Hockey can get some financial aid from their team based on the number of years played prior loss of eligibility. This aid applies to Canadian Universities only.

Canadian Tier 2 Junior A Hockey Leagues has approximately 17,000 players - **these programs are recognized as amateur by the NCAA.**

Marty Knack, Commissioner 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

Which junior program is right for you?

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 high schools and colleges

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.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.

Three major considerations when choosing a college:

Academics - **SAT** scores range from 1300 to 900, **ACT** ranges are 30+ to 18

NCAA Clearinghouse reviews all applicants:

www.ncaa.org/eligibility/cbsa/clearinghouse.html

You must register and be certified by NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse

Stronger you are academically the more options you have as a player

When picking schools - you should narrow your choices to six:

Two (2) that are long shots

Two (2) where you have a good chance

Two (2) where you are certain to be admitted

Hockey - play or roster 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 - 90 programs (32 women, 58 men) www.ncaa.org

Division 2 - 9 programs (2 women, 7 men) www.ncaa.org

Division 3 - 109 programs (40 women, 69 men) www.ncaa.org

NJCAA - 12 programs www.njcaa.org

ACHA - 292 Non-Varsity - Non-Scholarship programs www.achahockey.org

42 Women's programs

40 Men's division 1

124 Men's division 2

86 Men's division 3

Making an informed decision - a touch of realism:

There are approximately 3,545 male players in NCAA Varsity Hockey programs (1.1%)

There are approximately 1,680 males in Division 1 Hockey programs (0.5%)

There are approximately 604 females in Division 1 Hockey programs

Approximately 483 females are US citizens (5.0%)

There are approximately 777 Division 1 full scholarships (0.24%)

Not all Division 1 schools offer scholarships - Ivy League

NCAA allows maximum of 18 scholarships per team. Not all teams are funded to maximum. There can be 7-9 "walk on" players per team.

± 190 male scholarships available each year. US born players receive approximately 45% (85).

1/500 eligible US players get scholarships.

To play Division 1 in a given year; are you one of the top 275 male players in the country?

Opportunities in Women's college hockey are expanding rapidly:

1995-1996: 11 Women Division 1 Programs

2003-2004: 32 Women Division 1 Programs

75% of US players on current Division 1 rosters have played in junior programs; 60% of Division 3 participants played in junior programs.

States represented on Division 1 rosters: MA (25% of total players), MN (22%), MI (12.4%), NY (12.1%), IL (5.8%), RI (4.9%), CT (4.8%), AK (4%), WI (3.1%), ND (2%), CO (1.6%), MT, AZ and all others (2.3%)

Statistics by Division 1 league: WCHA rosters - US players ~ 70%; Canadian players ~ 28.1%
CCHA rosters - US players ~ 67%; Canadian players ~ 28%
Hockey East rosters - US players ~ 67%; Canadian players ~ 27%
ECAC rosters - expect it is similar to Hockey East
CHA rosters - no information
MAAC rosters - no information
AHL rosters - no information

It is not the end of your hockey career if you do play division 1 college hockey. There are numerous opportunities to play competitive college hockey in Division 3, Junior College and Non-Varsity programs.

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
 Checking
 Non-checking
 Co-ed
 Adult Elite - 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
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: 127 US citizens out of 690 total players in the NHL (18.4%)
 Approximately 4.1% (1/24) of the NHL draft comes directly from colleges
 NHL in 1970-71 = 14 teams / 325 players: 95.3% Canadian, 2.3% European and
 2.1% US
 NHL in 2002-03 = 30 teams / 690 players: 51.3% Canadian, 30.3% European and
 18.4 % US

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 6,100 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 USA Hockey district and national camps.
Participate in USA Hockey district and national tournaments.
Investigate Chicago Showcase, Hockey Night in Boston, Top Prospect camps
Try out for affiliate or district teams that play in elite tournaments.
Attend summer camps that offer the best exposure and training.

PLAY YOUR BEST AT ALL TIMES - YOU NEVER KNOW WHO IS WATCHING.

CAN YOU PLAY UNDER PRESSURE? TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR OPPORTUNITY(S)

DO NOT MAKE EXCUSES

NARROW THE GAP BETWEEN YOUR POTENTIAL AND YOUR PERFORMANCE.

GOOD LUCK!

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