



HOCKEY EDUCATION PROGRAM

*A program developed collaboratively by Minnesota Hockey and  
the Mayo Clinic Sports Medicine Center*

## Hockey Education Program (HEP)

### Mission Statement

HEP will ensure a positive athletic experience for youth hockey players by integrating a progressive approach to skill development with coaching excellence and accountability through Fair Play.

### What is HEP

HEP is an educational program that will serve as the foundation for Minnesota youth hockey. Started in the 2004-05 season, HEP is entering its third season.

HEP addresses four main areas for improvement in the youth hockey culture: skill development; athletic participation; moral behavior and sportsmanship; and enjoyment by players. Three integrated components address these four challenges:

**Skill Development.** Skills are learned, evolve over time and integrate knowledge, dexterity, coordination and competence. The goal of the HEP skill development component is to teach skills, have players master skills and evaluate players on a set of age appropriate skills that build on each other at each level of play. Youth hockey players, on average, touch the puck only a few seconds in a game. HEP sets minimum guidelines of three practices to one game to give young players an opportunity to build skills.

**Education.** HEP's education component will center on a unique educational program for coaches and parents that has been researched for over 25 years. It will teach coaches skills to develop well-rounded athletes and – as importantly – to promote good sportsmanship. It will teach parents to create realistic expectations for their children's youth hockey experience.

**Accountability.** Using the Fair Play program will address major concerns in youth hockey such as lack of respect for opponents, abuse of officials, inappropriate spectator behavior, on-ice violence, a win-at-all-costs attitude and undue pressure on players to win reducing the fun children have playing hockey today. Fair Play rewards sportsmanship and withholds that reward for inappropriate behavior by players, coaches and spectators. Fair Play will not decide the outcome of individual games but consistently good (or bad) behavior will have a cumulative effect through league standings and playoff seedings.

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