



# NEWSLETTER

## NEWSLETTER #1 – 2024-2025

The Game Change Newsletter is a key initiative by Hockey Canada designed to drive transformative growth at the grassroots level. Rooted in the broader **Game Change** program, this newsletter highlights inspiring stories, educational resources and meaningful conversations that drive positive change within the hockey community.

It serves as a platform to amplify underrepresented voices, celebrate progress and provide actionable insights that foster a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all participants—on and off the ice. Whether you're a player, coach, parent or fan, the Game Change Newsletter keeps you informed and engaged to help shape the future of hockey in Canada.



## OMHA / WITHCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE LEARN TO SKATE PROGRAM

This month, we focus on the Learn to Skate program in the Ontario Minor Hockey Association, developed in partnership with the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association. This initiative aims to introduce children aged 8-14 to skating in a structured, fun and inclusive environment.

A Playbook is available at [HockeyCanada.ca/GameChange](https://HockeyCanada.ca/GameChange), providing a step-by-step guide for planning and executing a similar program, covering aspects like equipment procurement, volunteer recruitment, on-ice training progression and outreach strategies.

Additionally, it emphasizes marketing and community engagement, suggesting social media promotions, partnerships with local hockey clubs and funding opportunities.

[WATCH VIDEO](#)

[DOWNLOAD PLAYBOOK](#)



## IIHF / HOCKEY CANADA TRY HOCKEY PILOTS – HEO EVENT

Last month, **Game Change** highlighted the Try Hockey pilot programs through the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) and Hockey Canada, which were launched with funding from the IIHF's Grow the Game Fund. The goal of these initiatives was to create sustainable and inclusive Try Hockey programs across Canada.

The pilot programs were implemented in 10 diverse communities to engage underrepresented groups in hockey, including new Canadians, Indigenous kids and financially disadvantaged families. These initiatives aimed to remove barriers to participation and encourage greater involvement in the sport.

Our video focused on the pilot in Hockey Eastern Ontario, which specifically targeted children without financial means, providing structured sessions and guidance on

registration pathways. These pilot programs demonstrate that hockey can grow through accessible, community-focused initiatives, laying the foundation for national implementation.

[WATCH VIDEO](#)

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A **Hockey Canada Best Practice** refers to a recommended guideline, program or initiative that aligns with Hockey Canada's goals of promoting safe, inclusive and developmentally appropriate experiences in hockey. These best practices are based on research, successful pilot programs and feedback from hockey organizations across the country. They serve as models that can be adopted or adapted by local hockey associations, coaches and communities to improve player development, safety and accessibility.

### **Examples of Hockey Canada Best Practices:**

- **Try Hockey Programs** – Initiatives like IIHF/Hockey Canada Try Hockey pilots help introduce underrepresented groups to hockey by reducing barriers to participation.
- **Long-Term Player Development (LTPD)** – A framework that ensures age-appropriate skill development and progression.
- **Coach & Officiating Development** – Training programs that standardize coaching and officiating practices across the country.
- **Hockey Safety Initiatives** – Concussion awareness programs, equipment guidelines and safety policies to protect players.
- **Diversity & Inclusion Efforts** – Programs aimed at engaging Indigenous communities, new Canadians and other underrepresented groups in the sport.

- **Non-Competitive & Small-Area Games** – Encouraging skill development through fun, modified game play, particularly for younger players.
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Hockey Canada best practices are often tested in pilot programs and, if successful, are scaled up for national adoption to help grow the game in a sustainable and accessible way.

Here are two examples of Best Practices:



### **Hockey Alberta – Player Pledge**

[\*\*LEARN MORE\*\*](#)



### **Hockey Saskatchewan – Where Fun Wins**

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## **SUBMIT A BEST PRACTICE**

Have a program that's making a difference in your hockey community? Use our submission form to share your story! Local hockey associations and members can propose their innovative programs for potential inclusion in Game Change. By sharing your successes, you can inspire other communities, gain national visibility and contribute to the growth and transformation of hockey across Canada.

[\*\*SUBMIT FORM\*\*](#)

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## **NEWSLETTER SIGN UP**

Stay updated on the latest Game Change initiatives and success stories! Sign up for the Game Change Newsletter to receive inspiring content, program highlights, resources and exclusive updates directly in your inbox.

Join our community of hockey enthusiasts and be part of the movement to make hockey more inclusive and impactful at every level.

[SIGN UP NOW](#)



## NHL / NHLPA FIRST SHIFT APPLICATION PERIOD

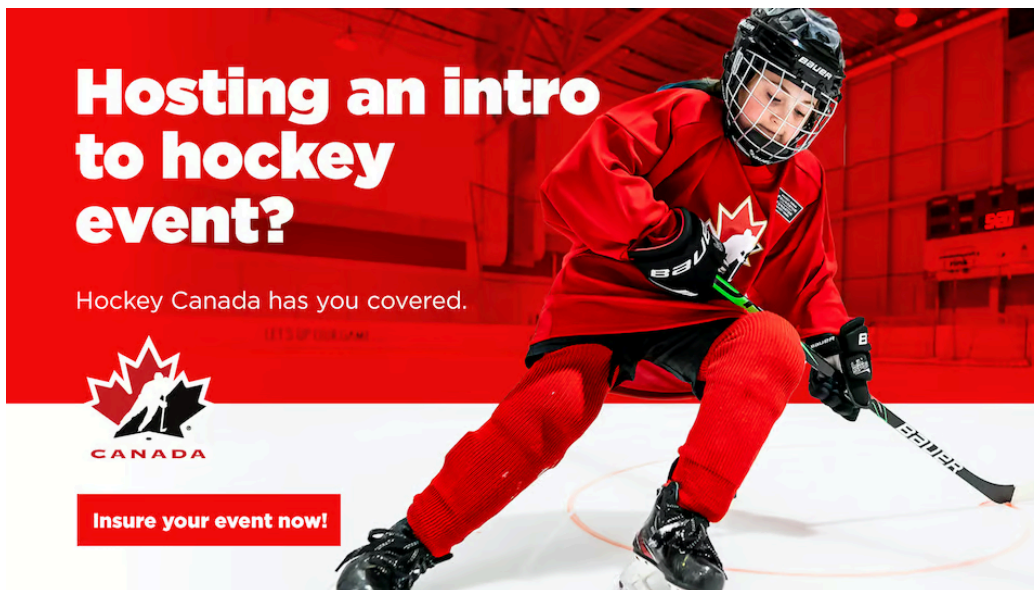
The application period for local hockey associations wishing to host the NHL/NHLPA First Shift during the 2025-26 season is **NOW OPEN!**

A truly unique experience designed to help kids fall in love with hockey, the six-week learn-to-play program continues to focus on having fun while learning basic skills. Full head-to-toe Bauer equipment is included with registration.

We encourage local hockey associations to share their intentions for any equity, diversity and inclusion-focused programming.

[LEARN MORE](#)





Pathway to Hockey programs, also known as Try Hockey programs, offer fun, safe and affordable introductory hockey experiences managed by local hockey associations to grow participation. These programs range from one-day events to comprehensive sessions teaching hockey fundamentals.

The Pathway to Hockey Coverage allows LHAs to include unregistered children, ensuring broader access by adjusting insurance restrictions.

Approval is granted within 15 days by the Hockey Canada Member.

**APPLY NOW**

If you have any questions or require additional support, please don't hesitate to reach out at [gr@hockeycanada.ca](mailto:gr@hockeycanada.ca).



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