

# FunTeam Hockey Tournament

## *ORGANIZING A FUNTEAM HOCKEY TOURNAMENT:*

### **WHAT IS A FUNTEAM HOCKEY TOURNAMENT?**

Almost every Albertan has experienced a typical hockey tournament, with teams, round robin games, semi-final and final games, trophies for the winners, etc. A FunTeam hockey tournament should be much different, as the reasons for a tournament should be the same as when we play our regular FunTeam games – fun for all, less cost, less competition, ensuring every player feels like a winner!

### **LOCATION**

Select an ice surface to use in your community. It doesn't have to be an indoor ice surface. If your community has outdoor ice available, access to this ice is easier, less expensive and on beautiful winter days, much more enjoyable. Make sure there are no unsafe areas on the ice before starting.

### **EQUIPMENT**

#### **Pucks**

The organizing FunTeam group should ensure that a puck is available for every game, but each team will likely bring their own pucks to warm up with.

#### **Nets**

Two hockey nets are required for each FunTeam rink, whether they be regulation hockey nets, smaller road hockey nets, or simply two boots that can be used as goal posts. The less we try to emulate the professional games we see on television, the less competitive and more fun it will be for all the players. Playing simultaneous 3 on 3 games across a normal size hockey rink is a great way of letting the players experience a new hockey challenge while at the same time ensuring that all players get an ample amount of playing time.

#### **Players' Equipment**

In most cases, FunTeam hockey players should be required to use full equipment when playing in a FunTeam tournament or organized game. For less structured outdoor events, the minimum equipment requirement should be a helmet with cage or visor, elbow pads, gloves and skates. Jerseys can be selected to distinguish the players on each team.

### **NUMBER OF TEAMS**

The most important way of ensuring that all players have an enjoyable time playing in a FunTeam tournament is to make sure that the players are all at a similar skill level. Sometimes this is impossible, but by setting up a tournament schedule that has teams of similar age and ability playing against each other is optimal. It may be possible to identify team strengths if you have had the opportunity to play against them previously in regular FunTeam games.

Setting up groups of 4 teams at every skill level is simple and allows each team to play each of the opposing teams, allowing for 3 games during a tournament. Organizing a FunTeam Hockey Tournament may be as simple as organizing 4 teams to come and play each other on a weekend.

## TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

Just because NHL games are 60 minutes long with 2 intermissions doesn't mean that a FunTeam tournament has to have the same format. A simple schedule that allows for maximal ice time and fun may consist of one hour time slots organized with:

- 10 minute warm-up
- 20 minute first half
- 5 minute rest
- 20 minute second half
- 5 minute cool down

If ice resurfacing is required for indoor ice, the ice slots can be scheduled every 75 minutes, otherwise outdoor games could be scheduled every hour. A shorter game length will allow the players to have more games during a tournament day, but the shortened game time may also encouraged harder skating and quicker shifts.

A 4 team outdoor FunTeam hockey tournament schedule could look like this:

Saturday	10am	Team A vs Team B
	11am	Team C vs Team D
	12pm	Team A vs Team C
	1pm	Team B vs Team D
	2pm	Team A vs Team D
	3pm	Team B vs Team C

This 6 hour event that will give each team an opportunity to play all of the opposing teams with ample rest but maximal fun!

A 4 team indoor FunTeam hockey tournament schedule could look like this (accounting for ice resurfacing):

Saturday	10am-11am	Team A vs Team B
	11:15am-12:15pm	Team C vs Team D
	12:30pm-1:30pm	Team A vs Team C
	1:45pm-2:45pm	Team B vs Team D
	3pm-4pm	Team A vs Team D
	4:15pm-5:15pm	Team B vs Team C

If a FunTeam group wanted to organize an outdoor hockey tournament including 3 divisions of teams with different skill levels, the following schedule could be used:

Saturday	8am	Group 1 Team A vs Team B
	9am	Group 1 Team C vs Team D
	10am	Group 2 Team A vs Team B
	11am	Group 2 Team C vs Team D
	12pm	Group 3 Team A vs Team B
	1pm	Group 3 Team C vs Team D
	2pm	Group 1 Team A vs Team C
	3pm	Group 1 Team B vs Team D
	4pm	Group 2 Team A vs Team C
	5pm	Group 2 Team B vs Team D
	6pm	Group 3 Team A vs Team C
	7pm	Group 3 Team B vs Team D
Sunday	10am	Group 1 Team A vs Team D
	11am	Group 1 Team B vs Team C

12pm Group 2 Team A vs Team D  
1pm Group 2 Team B vs Team C  
2pm Group 3 Team A vs Team D  
3pm Group 3 Team B vs Team C

Keep in mind, if you have a large outdoor ice surface or want to play cross ice games with two games playing at the same time, these schedules can be condensed a great deal, allowing for a more cost effective event and less time commitment for parents and organizers alike!

### **TOURNAMENT ORGANIZERS**

Although a tournament such as this can be organized by one person, it is nice to spread the responsibilities around to a number of parent volunteers so the commitment for all is kept to a minimum.

The following volunteer positions are recommended:

**Tournament Manager** – responsibilities include renting or arranging for a safe ice surface, contacting the other teams, recruiting volunteers for additional positions, dealing with any on or off-ice issues.

**Team Coordinator** – once the schedule has been made, each team should be contacted and informed of their schedule. When the teams come to the rink, the Team Coordinator can welcome them and show them to their dressing area. Any questions about the event schedule can be handled by the Team Coordinator.

**Ice Coordinator** – making sure the ice is well maintained, especially if it is an outdoor event. The Ice Coordinator will have to find sufficient volunteers to help with outdoor ice cleaning between games if required.

**Concession Manager** – If there is no available concession at the indoor or outdoor rink, a volunteer may take on the task of organizing a concession. This can be used as a good fundraiser for the tournament.

**Award Coordinator** – rather than a trophy for the winning team, an Award Coordinator may attempt to find a creative award that can be given to ALL participants at the end of their last game. A valuable experience for all young athletes is when an adult presents an award to them on the ice, recognizing them as a winner in the event, whether they were the best or the weakest player in the tournament. The Award Coordinator can become very creative, as it is not necessary to give out expensive items, as that simply increases the tournament costs. A town pin, colorful pencil or bag of candy will be enough to help recognize each participant in the tournament as a winner!

**Finance Manager** – it is important to have a separate volunteer handling all financial transactions, to ensure proper use of any tournament funds and also to protect from any outside concerns about financial misdealing. The Finance Manager will work alongside the Tournament Manager and will ensure that all tournament fees are paid, deposited and all expenses are paid out promptly. At the end of the tournament, the Finance Manager should distribute a financial spreadsheet outlining all costs and revenue. A joint decision will be made as to how any financial surplus can be used.

Here are some great ideas to consider if you want to make every child's FunTeam Hockey Tournament experience as positive as it can be:

- Don't keep score! If the Tournament Manager or coaches keep score, they are simply showing the children that they care about who wins and who loses. Of course what we really care about is if all the players on both teams enjoy their experience on and off the ice.

- Ensure that the teams are fairly even. Nobody wins in a 10-0 game. If it is obvious that one team is much stronger than the other, exchanges goalies or defensemen! The players will have great fun playing against their former teammates and you will show them an amazing lesson, that indeed how committed you are to all players in the tournament!

-After every scored goal, consider giving a penalty shot to the team that was scored against. This unique addition to your game will give players an opportunity to try their luck with an exciting aspect of hockey and also keep the offensive chances closer in games that may be somewhat lopsided. It is a great way to turn what is often perceived as a negative thing into an exciting opportunity.

- Have the teams shake hands before and after the games. The act of shaking hands is universally a sign of friendship and camaraderie and will help to dispel the every increasing attitude of winning at all costs, trying to injure opposing players or simply being a bad sport!

- After the end of each game, have both coaches or the Tournament Manager bring the players on both teams together and give some positive feedback about the effort given throughout the game. A cheer involving both teams at center ice is a profoundly valuable way of teaching these young athletes the real reason why they are playing hockey! Remember, young players will always remember what is last said at a FunTeam hockey game, so make sure we leave them hearing about the positive aspects of their FunTeam Hockey Tournament experience.

## REMEMBER THE 3 P's:

**BE POSITIVE**  
**BE PLANNED**  
**BE PATIENT**

