



# OPPORTUNITIES IN HOCKEY

PRESENTED BY:

AL BLOOMER

USA Hockey National Coach in Chief  
Director, USA Hockey Coaches Section

2007

## OPPORTUNITIES IN HOCKEY 2007

The purpose of this presentation is to provide information regarding the many options available to a hockey player that wants to compete at the highest level.

I have been involved in hockey as a player, coach or administrator for over 50 years. For the last 30 years I have been directly involved with players between the ages of 12 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** when evaluating your hockey abilities and **pro-active** in the planning of your hockey future. As your skills develop to the higher levels, you should begin to think about your options. I believe parents and players should begin to seriously investigate hockey opportunities when the player is 12 to 14 years old. This is not the forum to debate when a player's skill potential can accurately be evaluated or predicted. Although there may be optimism concerning potential when players are 12 and under, their potential cannot be realistically evaluated until after they reach the age of maturity. All have dreams and expectations; however players and their parents need to make informed and realistic decisions. We all realize that players mature and develop at different rates. Your coach should be your initial source of information.

### ***SOME TYPICAL QUESTIONS:***

- What are my hockey opportunities after I turn 12?
- How important is my academic standing?
- How can 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 can I get noticed?
- What role does my coach play?
- Should I actively pursue opportunities or should I wait until opportunity knocks?

### ***PLAYER REGISTRATION NUMBERS (2005-2006):***

Total USA Players:	Female	41,909 (19 and under)
	Male	313,317 (20 and under)
	<u>Adult M/F</u>	<u>86,921 (20 years and older)</u>
	Total	<b>442,147</b>

Note: there are  $\pm$  225 Canadians in USAH Youth Programs  
 $\pm$  345 IIHF citizens in USAH Youth Programs  
 $\pm$  220 USA citizens Canadian Youth Programs - this is an estimate because Canadians do not officially report this number

Note: USA has approximately 2,000 indoor rinks and about 400 outdoor rinks

Age Classification:	Midget/High School - ages 15 - 18
	Male 66,929 (15-18)
	Female 7,928 (15-19)

Juniors (20 and under)

Male ± 5,100 (155 Canadians and 14 IIHF citizens)  
Note there are ~ 397 USA Citizens in Canadian Juniors  
Female N/A - No females registered in this classification

Adults (20 years and older)

Male 74,598  
Female 12,323

2005-06 Hockey Canada player registration:

Female 69,577  
Male 481,588  
Total **551,165**

Note: There are ± 220 US citizens playing youth hockey in Canada

Note: Canada has approximately 3,000 indoor rinks and 11,000 outdoor rinks

2005 International Ice Hockey Federation IIHF - other than USA & Canada

Female 16,682 (19 and under)  
Male 295,078 (20 and under)  
Adult 159,644 (over 20)  
Total **471,404**

Note: There are ± 282 US citizens playing in IIHF Countries (exclude Canada)

Note: IIHF Countries have approximately 1,730 indoor rinks and 600 outdoor rinks

***IT IS A NUMBERS GAME:***

Academic preparation:

The better your grades and SAT /ACT scores the more options available to you.  
Teams/schools often 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.

Evaluate options and make informed choices:

Advancing your hockey career is a **numbers game** - be realistic  
Put yourself in the "game" and **keep yourself there**.  
Make choices that will prepare you for the future - help you reach your ultimate goal(s)  
Realistic self-evaluation vs. the "parent factor"  
Consider the source & motivation of those advising you  
Separate the player from the person - you can be a great person and an average player  
Be willing to accept advice and even criticism - recognize that all players need to get better  
Can youth tier 1, private prep school, post graduate high school and/or junior hockey be an option?

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 other

Develop and improve hockey skills - **compete** at the highest level

Game driven programs vs. skill development driven programs - number of wins not important

Select programs with a history of advancing players to the next level

Select programs that train the **complete athlete**

Prepare the complete athlete:

Academic strength

Hockey skill development

Strength and conditioning - total athlete

Nutrition

Mental toughness

Discipline - emotional focus & control

### ***TIER 1 BANTAM AND MIDGET HOCKEY: (± 122,739 U.S. PLAYERS AGES 13 - 18)***

Pay to play - Nation Wide Recruiting - no boundaries

Costs vary - comparison shop

Investigate - play for programs that have a history of moving players to next level

Variety - check track record and coach's credentials

Make sure you are not just playing for the Tier 1 label - credibility

Quality programs receive national exposure

### ***PREP SCHOOL HOCKEY:***

Choosing the right prep school for you

Boarding Schools - ± 90

Day Schools - ± 38

**Location** - most are in the East - 108 (New England has ± 58); 13 in Canada

Boys' schools ± 72

Girls' schools ± 56

Post graduate programs ± 48

Criteria for selecting a school:

Academic admission criteria - curriculum

Costs - annual tuition alone can run \$30,000-40,000

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

Prep schools are a high priority for college recruiters (ECAC/Hockey East/Ivy/CHL)

90+ % of Prep School players are college bound

Approximately 8,500 players in US Prep Schools

Sources of information:

High School guidance counselors/teachers

"Prep School Hockey Guide" by Thomas Keegan

[www.prephockey.org](http://www.prephockey.org)

[www.boardingschoolreview.com](http://www.boardingschoolreview.com)

[www.schools.com](http://www.schools.com)

## ***THE DOMESTIC JUNIOR HOCKEY OPTION:***

The USA Junior hockey program is available to citizen athletes who are 20 years old and under as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current season of competition. Currently domestic junior hockey is divided into tier 1 tier 2 and tier 3. Tier 3 programs will charge participating players a tuition fee to play. The principal purpose of the domestic junior development program is to prepare the athlete for career advancement into collegiate hockey. U.S. junior hockey is administered by USA Hockey Junior Council - Dan Esdale, USA Hockey Vice President and Council Chair

Goals of USA Hockey's Domestic Junior Programs:

Skill development

Provide quality professional coaching

Educational advancement of athlete

Recruiting exposure - college

Advanced levels of domestic and international competition

**Protect amateur status - NCAA**

It is a numbers game:

Generally the player between the ages of 15 and 20 is considered eligible for junior hockey.

There are approximately **76,811** U.S. male players in this age group. There are approximately **182,378** Canadian Players in this age group. A total of **5,100 ±** players are currently registered in U.S. domestic junior hockey programs.

± 276 in Tier 1 - USHL

± 425 in Tier 2 - NAHL

± 1,622 in Tier 3 Junior A - (EJHL, AJHL, CSHL, WSHL, MinnJHL and NAHL)

± 1,302 in Tier 3 Junior B - (Empire, Met, Continental-premier and Southeast)

± 571 in Tier 3 Junior C & D - (Continental, MAD, Southeast & Junior Dev)

± 904 Independent Junior - other

155 Canadians in USA Junior Hockey

397 USA Citizens into Canadian Junior Hockey

14 IIHF Federation players in USA Junior Hockey

**± 4931 domestic junior Players are US citizens**

1 out of 15 USA players (15 to 20 yrs) are playing USA junior hockey (6.6%)

1 out of 280 USA players are playing tier 1 (0.36 %)

1 out of 181 eligible USA players are playing tier 2 (0.55 %)

1 out of 47 eligible USA players are playing tier 3 Junior A (2.11 %)

1 out of 58 eligible USA players are playing tier 3 Junior B (1.70%)

1 out of 135 eligible USA players are playing tier 3 Junior C & D (0.74%)

Differences in Junior Classifications:

**All** U.S. domestic junior programs protect the amateur status of the players. However, there are specific criteria differences between tier 1, tier 2 and tier 3 programs as well as differences between A, B, C and D programs. USA Hockey has established specific criteria for Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 domestic programs. Tier 3 criteria have been established been

put into place following the 2007 USA Hockey Annual Congress. These criteria are monitored and enforced by the USA Hockey Junior Council. Refer to the USA Hockey Annual Guide. The specifics will be posted on the USA Hockey web page - [www.usahockey.com/juniors](http://www.usahockey.com/juniors) . To verify the classification of a league or team, contact John Cowley, USA Hockey Junior Registrar at [jrhockeyreg@cableone.net](mailto:jrhockeyreg@cableone.net)

Junior Programs differ between and within classifications:

- Operating budgets
- Organization criteria
- Equipment provisions
- Rink size
- Off ice and on ice official minimums
- Number of games
- Number of practices
- Player fees - only tier 3 programs can charge a player fee

Certified USA Domestic Junior Hockey Leagues:

Tier 1 Juniors- 276 players in USHL (12 teams in IL, IA, WI, NE, SD, MO)

Gino Gasparini, President [www.ushl.com](http://www.ushl.com)

Tier 2 Juniors - 425 players in NAHL (19 teams in AK, IL, MI, ND, NM, TX, MN, MO, IA)

Mark Frankenfeld, Commissioner [www.nahl.com](http://www.nahl.com)

Tier 3 Junior A - 1,622 players

AJHL - 10 teams in CT, NJ, NY, MA, DC, PA

Glenn Hefferan, President [www.AJHLHockey.org](http://www.AJHLHockey.org)

EJHL - 14 teams in MA, VT, NH, NY, RI

Dan Esdale, President [www.easternjunior.com](http://www.easternjunior.com)

CSHL - 13 teams in IL, OH, MI, MO

Jim Ruffo, President [www.cshlhockey.net](http://www.cshlhockey.net)

MJHL - 9 teams MN, IA and WI

Ken Gaber, President [www.mjhl.com](http://www.mjhl.com)

NPHL - 13 teams in MT, ID, WA, OR

Mike Butters, Commissioner [www.norpachockey.com](http://www.norpachockey.com)

WSHL - 11 teams in CA, NV, AZ, UT

Ron White, Commissioner [www.wshl.org](http://www.wshl.org)

Tier 3 Junior B - 1,271 players

CHL Premier- 12 teams in NJ, PA, VA, NY and MA

"Sarge" Richards, President [www.jrhockey.net](http://www.jrhockey.net)

EJBHL - 19 teams in NY, CT, PA

Don Kirnan, President [www.empirehockey.com](http://www.empirehockey.com)

METJHL - 15 teams in PA, NJ, NY

Glenn Hefferan, President [www.metleague.org](http://www.metleague.org)

SEJHL - 6 teams in FL

Rick Ninko, President

Tier 3 Junior C & D - 571 players currently registered with USA Hockey

CHL MAD & Selects - 8 teams in PA, NJ, NY, MA, MI

Andrew "Sarge" Richards, President [www.jrhockey.net](http://www.jrhockey.net)

SEJHL - 6 teams FL

Rick Ninko, President

CHL - 10 teams

Andrew "Sarge" Richards, President [www.jrhockey.net](http://www.jrhockey.net)

Junior D - 4 teams  
Tier 3 Junior - Independent 7 teams - 904 players - not on protected lists

How can a 15 to 20 year old get a junior hockey opportunity?

Talk to your bantam, midget, high school or prep school coach

Participate in showcase events specific to the 15 to 19 year old player

District player Development/Evaluation Camps

District & National Tier 1 & Tier 2 Championships

USA National Select Camps

District High School tournaments

Sanctioned High School championships

Attend junior tryout camps - investigate - commercial camp vs. opportunity camp

**Before attending commercial camps, get an actual staff list and information on attending**

**Scouts - inquire about the number of players from previous camps that moved on to Juniors.**

## **CANADIAN MAJOR JUNIOR HOCKEY:**

There are Tier 1 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 Canadian Major Junior programs as professional. Players in Major Junior may earn scholarship money for a Canadian University. There are approximately **1,269** players registered in Major Junior programs.

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

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](http://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 20 teams [www.ontariohockeyleague.com](http://www.ontariohockeyleague.com)

Dave Branch, Commissioner  
Quebec Major Junior Hockey League 18 teams [www.lhjmq.qc.ca](http://www.lhjmq.qc.ca)  
Gilles Courteau, Commissioner  
Western Hockey league 21 teams [www.whl.ca](http://www.whl.ca)  
Ron Robinson, Commissioner

Canadian Tier 2 Junior A Hockey Leagues: approximately 7,647 players - **these programs are recognized as amateur by the NCAA.**

Marty Knack, President [www.cjahl.com](http://www.cjahl.com) 10 leagues - 142 teams  
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

Canadian Tier 2 B and other Junior leagues have approximately 7,726 players

### ***FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN SELECTING A JUNIOR PROGRAM:***

Academic Impact - NCAA eligibility  
Reputation - Skill Level - History  
Location - exposure  
Cost  
Expectations after juniors

### ***SELECTING THE RIGHT JUNIOR PROGRAM:***

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 or the next level?  
Evaluate the local schools  
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](http://www.usahockey.com)  
[www.tjhn.com](http://www.tjhn.com)  
[www.whl.ca](http://www.whl.ca)  
[www.usajuniorhockey.com](http://www.usajuniorhockey.com)  
USA Hockey Annual Guide - [www.usahockey.com](http://www.usahockey.com)  
[www.ncaa.org](http://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. NCAA college players are between the ages of 18 and 26 years old. 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.

Three major considerations when choosing a college:

Academics - acceptable **SAT** scores prior to 2006 ranged from 900 to 1400 +. These ranges

will change as a third component (essay) has been added to the 2007 SAT. You will need to check with local guidance counselors for revised acceptance ranges. The new average SAT is expected to be 1500. ([www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)) **ACT** ranges are currently 18 to 30+.

**Note:** If you are a 3.75 GPA student with an SAT in excess of 1400 and are in the top 10% of your class you will qualify for 161 schools. If you are a 2.5 GPA student with an SAT of 900 to 999, you qualify for only 23 schools

NCAA Clearinghouse reviews all applicants:

[www.ncaa.org/eligibility/cbsa/clearinghouse.html](http://www.ncaa.org/eligibility/cbsa/clearinghouse.html)

You must register and be certified by NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse. The stronger you are academically the more options you have as a player.

When applying to schools, you should narrow your choices to six:

Two (2) that are long shot

Two (2) where you have a good chance

Two (2) where you are certain to be admitted

Hockey - play or "rostered" 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 - 91 programs (32 women, 59 men) [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)

Division 2 - 9 programs (2 women, 7 men) [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)

Division 3 - 117 programs (44 women, 73 men) [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)

NJCAA - 10 programs [www.njcaa.org](http://www.njcaa.org)

Making an informed decision - a touch of realism:

There are approximately 400,000 male college prospects in North America

There are approximately 3,595 male players (19 to 27 years old) in NCAA Varsity Hockey programs (0.9%)

There are approximately 1,584 males in **Division 1** Hockey programs

Approximately 1,022 are U.S. citizens (64.50 %)

There are approximately 775 females in **Division 1** Hockey programs

Approximately 475 females are US citizens (61.3%)

There are approximately 777 **Division 1** full scholarships (0.20%) - estimate 190 +/- new scholarships each year

Not all **Division 1** schools offer scholarships - Ivy League

NCAA allows maximum of 18 scholarships per team. Not all teams are funded to maximum.

**Many schools have less than the 18 full scholarships allowed. There can be 7-9 "walk on" players per team.**

± 190 male scholarships available each year. U.S. born players receive +/- 45% (85).

± 1/500 (0.20%) eligible US players get scholarships.

To play **Division 1** in a given year; are you one of the top 250 male players (ages 18-21) in

the

country?

Opportunities in Women's college hockey are expanding rapidly:

1995-1996: 11 Women Division 1 Programs

2006-2007: 32 Women Division 1 Programs

Note: we need to complete an Opportunities in Hockey specifically for females

NCAA players -where do they come from?

**75%** of US players on current Division 1 rosters have played in junior programs; **68%** of Division 3 participants played in junior programs.

States represented on Division 1 rosters: **USA Citizens** 1,022 (64.5%) **MN** (13.6%), **MA** (8.1%), **MI** (9.3%), **NY** (6.44%), **IL** (3.72%), **Canadian** 465 (29.36%); **Europeans** 15 (0.95%)

Statistics by Division 1 league:

WCHA rosters - US players ± 68.6 %; Canadian players ± 30.6%

CCHA rosters - US players ± 68.6%; Canadian players ± 30.5%

HEA rosters - US players ± 79.6%; Canadian players ± 19.3%

ECACHL rosters - US players ± 50.3%; Canadian players ± 48.3%

CHA rosters - US players ± 49.3%; Canadian players ± 48.7%

Ivy rosters - no information

AHA rosters - US players ± 65.8%; Canadian players ± 30.1%

### ***NON-VARSITY NCAA COLLEGE HOCKEY:***

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

American Collegiate Hockey Association (ACHA)

32 Women's Programs

50 Men's Division 1

148 Men's Division 2

132 Men's Division 3

World University Games - USA Hockey

Sources of information: [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)

"College Hockey Guide Book" by Thomas Keegan

[www.hockeycenter.com](http://www.hockeycenter.com)

[www.achahockey.org](http://www.achahockey.org)

[www.uscollegehockey.com](http://www.uscollegehockey.com)

[www.njcaa.org](http://www.njcaa.org)

## ***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  
                                  Senior A Elite  
                                  Checking  
                                  Non-checking  
                                  Co-ed  
                                  Adult National Championship

Sources of information:    USA Hockey Annual Guide  
                                  [www.usahockey.com](http://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](http://www.nhl.com)  
American Hockey League - AHL - 28 teams (primary feeder system to NHL) [www.theahl.com](http://www.theahl.com)  
East Coast League - ECHL - 32 - teams (secondary affiliate) [www.echl.com](http://www.echl.com)

Minor leagues independent of the NHL:

United Hockey League - 10 teams in Great Lakes area [www.theuhl.com](http://www.theuhl.com)  
Central Hockey League - 17 teams Texas [www.centralhockeyleague.com](http://www.centralhockeyleague.com)  
Atlantic Coast Hockey League - 6 teams in Southeast [www.achl2.net](http://www.achl2.net)

NHL general information: ± 172 US citizens (25%) out of 690 total players in the NHL -  
60 Americans were drafted in 2006 = 28.0 % of the 213 drafted  
10 Americans were drafted in the first round; 8 Americans went in the second  
round.

18 (30.0%) came out of NCAA College Hockey

NHL in 1970-71 = 14 teams / 325 players: 95.3% Canadian, 2.3% European and 2.1%  
U.S.

NHL in 2005-06 = 30 teams / 690 players: 47.5% Canadian, 27.3% European  
and 25.0 % US

22 MN ± 17.7%

22 MA ± 17.7%

18 MI ± 14.5%

16 NY ± 12.9 %

62.8% from four states

***PROGRESSION PATH FOR THE USA MALE PLAYER:***

<u>Private Lessons</u>	<u>Learn to Skate Programs</u>	<u>Cross Ice Program</u>
Recreation	8 and under 10 and under	Recreation
Recreation	12 and over 14 and under	Competitive Tier 1 - Tier 2
High School/ Recreation	17 and under	National Camps/Festivals/ USA NTDP
High School / Recreation Non Check	18 and under	Scholastic High School /Prep School
	20 and under	USA Tier 1, Tier 2 & Tier 3 Junior A, B, & C Canadian Junior Tier 2 Canadian Major Junior USA National U-20 Team
Recreation	20 and over	ACHA College Non-Varsity

NCAA - Junior College  
NCAA - Division 1, 2, & 3  
Minor Professional  
NHL  
USA Olympic Team

Recreation

Adult Hockey

Competitive - Senior A

### ***A SUMMARY OF THE NUMBERS:***

Tier 2 Competitive Youth Team: 1 in 10 (10.0%)  
Domestic USA Junior Hockey: 1 in 15 (6.67%)  
Tier 1 Competitive Youth Team: 1 in 20 (5.0%)  
Tier 3 Junior A: 1 in 47 (2.11 %)  
Tier 3 Junior B: 1 in 58 (1.7.0%)  
NCAA Division 3: 1 in 100 (1.0%)  
Tier 2 Junior: 1 in 181 (0.55%)  
Tier 1 Junior: 1 in 280 (0.36%)  
NCAA Division 1: 1 in 300 (0.33%) ~ top 250 players US & Canada in ages (18-21)  
NCAA Division 1 with scholarship: 1 in 450 (0.22%)  
NHL: 1 in 800 (0.13%)  
National Teams: 1 in 1000 (0.10%)

Note: USA Males have  $\pm$  74.4% of available spots in NCAA Varsity Programs - inclusive.  
USA Males have  $\pm$  25% of available spots in NHL

### ***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 6,500 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 district and national camps.  
Participate in district and national tournaments.  
Investigate Chicago Showcase, Hockey Night in Boston, Top Prospect camps  
Try out for affiliate or district teams that play at elite tournaments.  
Attend summer camps that offer the best exposure and training.

### ***RULE OF THUMB FOR THE ELITE ATHLETE:***

The "Elite Athlete" has been in his/her sport for a minimum of **7** years;

Trains **4** hours per day - **5+** days per week - **11** months per year

The Elite Athlete has the "Hungry Spirit"

There is nothing wrong in believing in your dream. To make the dream come true you must dedicate yourself to a work ethic that separates you from the rest. You must become the complete athlete; physically as well as mentally. This commitment should not begin before the age a maturity.

### ***IN SUMMARY:***

Be academically competitive - the better your grades and class standing - the more your opportunities

Play your best at all times; you never know who is watching.

Can you play under pressure? Are you a "go-to" player? Are you on the ice in critical situations?

Never make excuses.

Narrow the gap between your potential and your actual performance.

Good players make those around them better.

Good players can play with anyone.

### ***SOURCES OF INFORMATION & REFERENCES:***

Tom Anastos, Commissioner CCHA, NCAA Director USA Hockey

Jim Johannson, USA Hockey, Assistant Executive Director Hockey Operations

Kim Folsom, USA Hockey, Coordinator International Administration

Mark Tabrum, USA Hockey, Director Coaching Program  
Rae Briggie, USA Hockey, Assistant Executive Director, Member Services  
John Cowley, USA Hockey Junior Registrar  
Dr. Alan Murdoch, USA Hockey Section Director Non Varsity Programs  
Joe Bertagna, Executive Director, AHCA - Stops & Starts  
Thomas Keegan, the College Hockey Guide  
Thomas Keegan, Prep School Hockey Guide

Good luck in your hockey future - it is truly a great game

To win the game is *Great*;  
To play the game is *Greater*;  
To LOVE the game is the *Greatest* of all.  
Tom Eccleston