



Declaration of Principles

Hockey's role in building character, fostering positive values and developing important life skills



PURPOSE

Since 2015, hockey leaders across professional and amateur organizations have been meeting to discuss the state of the game and their collective interest in developing, promoting and supporting positive changes in the sport.

Together, we recognized the values the game can provide to its participants. **Our goal is not just to create better hockey players, but better people.**

To keep the momentum, the NHL and NHLPA assembled hockey leaders and held **Hockey SENSE**, two summits at the World Cup of Hockey: the first devoted to the state of the youth game and our collective interest in developing, promoting and supporting positive changes in the sport; and the second on hockey's role in social equality and sustainable environments.

The Declaration of Principles is a joint commitment developed by and for hockey stakeholders globally to advance policies, programs and initiatives of their organizations – and inspire their respective fans, participants and communities – to create the best possible experience for the entire hockey community.

2% of players in North America make college hockey rosters; .01% make it to the NHL. Despite the statistics, there is still an arms race for scholarships and professional contracts.

While youth players may or may not become future professionals, they all have the potential to become the future parents and coaches of the sport. For 100% of participants and their families, hockey provides benefits that transcend the game.

THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

We believe every leader of the sport has the responsibility to inspire stakeholders in an effort to deliver a positive family hockey experience. Hockey participation offers families value beyond making an individual a better player or even a better athlete. The game of hockey is a powerful platform for participants to build **character**, foster **positive values** and develop important **life skills**. These benefits are available to all players, desirable to every family and transcend the game.

Today, guided by our common values, we jointly pledge to the following Principles.

- Hockey should be an enjoyable family experience; all stakeholders – organizations, players, parents, siblings, coaches, referees, volunteers and rink operators – play a role in this effort.
- Hockey's greatest value is the role it plays in the development of character and life skills.
- All hockey organizations – regardless of size or level of competition – bring value to players and families in their ability to deliver a positive family experience.
- Physical activity is important for a healthy body, mind and spirit.
- There are significant benefits of youth participation in multiple sports.
- Hockey programs should be age-appropriate for all players, accounting for each individual's physical, emotional and cognitive development.
- There is great value in all forms of hockey, both on and off the ice.
- All hockey programs should provide a safe, positive and inclusive environment for players and families regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation and socio-economic status. Simply put, hockey is for everyone.

We believe in our ability to improve lives and strengthen communities globally through hockey. We believe that living by these Principles will provide a healthy, balanced and enjoyable experience for all and inspire impactful service beyond the rink.

**WE
BELIEVE**

HOCKEY'S VALUE (AND VALUES)

"ANY SPORT DEPENDS ON FUTURE GENERATIONS FOR SUCCESS. WE SEND KIDS OUT TO PLAY HOCKEY – TO LEARN SKILLS AND STRATEGY WITH THEIR TEAMMATES. THEY THINK THEY ARE LEARNING JUST A GAME, BUT THESE ARE IMPORTANT LESSONS FOR LIFE." – **DON FEHR, NHLPA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

"THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLAYERS, AND ENCOURAGING YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE INTERESTED IN OUR GAME, IS IMPORTANT -- NOT BECAUSE THEY MIGHT GROW UP TO BE HOCKEY STARS BUT BECAUSE HOCKEY PLAYERS VIEW THE WORLD WITH A GREATER SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY, FOCUSING ON TEAMWORK, HARD WORK, PHYSICAL FITNESS AND BEING A GOOD STUDENT. OUR GAME CAN HAVE A GREATER IMPACT ON SOCIETY AS A WHOLE IF IT DELIVERS THE RIGHT MESSAGES AND PROMOTES IMPORTANT CORE VALUES." – **GARY BETTMAN, NHL COMMISSIONER**

"WE ALL RUN CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS AND AGE APPROPRIATE PROGRAMS – BUT IN MANY CASES IT COMES DOWN TO A COACH WHO IS JUST TRYING TO HELP A CHILD. FOR THAT YOUNG AGE GROUP, A COACH SHOULD BE MEASURED ON WHETHER THAT CHILD COMES BACK TO THE GAME." – **JIM JOHANNSON | ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HOCKEY OPERATIONS, USA HOCKEY**

Quotes from the *Hockey Sense* summit at World Cup of Hockey | September 2016

"OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS, WE HAVE BEEN FOCUSING MORE RESOURCES ON GROWING MARKETS GLOBALLY. HOCKEY IS A GAME THAT BUILDS CHARACTER...WE NEED TO USE THAT TO OUR ADVANTAGE."
– **PETR BRIZA | COUNCIL MEMBER, IIHF**

"WINNING MEDALS IS A BYPRODUCT OF A HEALTHY SPORTS SYSTEM. WE CAN'T COMPROMISE EVERY YOUNGSTER IN THE GAME (FOR MEDALS). WITH A COMMITMENT TO THESE PRINCIPLES, CHAMPIONS WILL PERCOLATE UP THROUGH THE SYSTEM." – **PAUL CARSON | VICE PRESIDENT OF HOCKEY DEVELOPMENT, HOCKEY CANADA**

HOCKEY'S VALUE (AND VALUES)

"HOCKEY PROVIDES SUSTAINABLE VALUES THAT WE, AS THE LEADERS, NEED TO COMMUNICATE: LEADERSHIP, TEAMWORK, LIFE SKILLS; NOT EVERYONE WILL BECOME A PRO HOCKEY PLAYER, NOT EVERYONE IS GOING TO GET A COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP, BUT IN TIME, HOCKEY CAN MAKE YOU A BETTER FATHER, MOTHER, WORKER -- A BETTER PERSON." - **PAT LAFONTAINE**

"WE WORK A LOT ON SKILL DEVELOPMENT. THAT SAME LEVEL OF EFFORT CAN BE PUT INTO TEACHING VALUES. RESPECT YOUR TEAMMATES, SHOW UP ON TIME, SAY HELLO TO THEM IN THE LOCKER ROOM... A KID HAS TO LEAVE THE ROOM LOVING THE GAME." - **ADAM GRAVES**

"HOCKEY GAVE ME THE CONFIDENCE TO TRY SOMETHING NEW IN BROADCASTING, AFTER MY ON-ICE CAREER. THE GAME KEPT ME HUMBLE BUT IT GAVE ME THE CONFIDENCE TO COME OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE." - **CASSIE CAMPBELL-PASCALL**

"THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS YOU DON'T WANT TO HEAR FROM YOUR PARENTS - BUT IF YOUR COACH TELLS YOU, YOU ACCEPT IT. WHEN DONE RIGHT, A COACH'S INFLUENCE ON KIDS IS POWERFUL. IT STAYS WITH YOU FOREVER. I TALK TO MY MIDGET COACH TO THIS DAY BECAUSE HE CHANGED MY LIFE." - **LUC ROBITAILLE**

THE LAUNCH

WHO'S IN:

17 Hockey organization from around the world: American Collegiate Hockey Association (ACHA); American Hockey League (AHL); Canadian Hockey League (CHL); Canadian Junior Hockey League (CJHL); Canadian Women's Hockey League (CWHL); College Hockey Inc.; ECHL; Hockey Canada; International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF); National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA); National Hockey League (NHL); National Hockey League Players' Association (NHLPA); National Women's Hockey League (NWHL); North American Hockey League (NAHL); U SPORTS; United States Hockey League (USHL); USA Hockey.

WHEN:

The Declaration of Principles will be announced on **September 6th** on NBC's TODAY (during the 8-9am hour), followed by a press conference in New York City with hockey leaders representing the above organizations.

WHAT:

The NHL has created **assets for organizations to amplify the message** of the Principles, including:

- Graphics/identity package: fonts, color palette, etc.
- Posters/Digital banners
- A TV spot, titled: 'Thank You, Hockey'
- Website with relevant content and stories
- Social campaign to create a conversation

BRINGING THE PRINCIPLES TO LIFE

Hockey inherently offers families value beyond the game – it provides lessons in teamwork, respect, integrity, humility and much more. Organizations are already engaged in activities which promote these positive values which we will celebrate. That being said, the Declaration of Principles is also aspirational. It is **a challenge to all of hockey's stakeholders** – all organizations, players, parents, siblings, coaches, referees, volunteers and rink operators – **to shift attitudes, behaviors, policies, programs and initiatives for the betterment of the game.**

What does it mean to “live by the principles”? From stakeholder to stakeholder, opportunities small and large exist to become part of a more positive family hockey experience for all. Below are just a few **examples** of how stakeholders **LIVE THE PRINCIPLES**:

- Coaches consciously and intentionally using situations presented by the sport to emphasize the associative life skill
- Development camps encouraging players to participate in sports other than ice hockey and communicating the benefits of doing so
- Coaches speaking, listening and surveying parents about their child's experience and welcoming their feedback
- Youth players and their parents fundraising and/or raising awareness with their hockey team for a charitable cause
- Rink operators reserving hours each week to accommodate orgs serving underrepresented, marginalized or disadvantaged people
- Players bringing the game back home, engaging their parents, siblings and family members in roller, ball and knee hockey
- Rink owners engaging in energy efficient practices to lower operating costs and cost of ice time
- Organizations adapting cross-ice and half-ice programming for new and young players

BRINGING THE PRINCIPLES TO LIFE

Commit to the Principles. Take action. Promote the Message.

- Set new institutional policies or programs to help your organization make a better family hockey experience
- Share with us, for inclusion on the website, stories relevant to the Principles
- Use the content and graphics developed to promote the Declaration of Principles message consistently across your channels
- Share the “Thank You Hockey” video on digital, in-arena and with broadcast partners