



**Addressing the 3 key concerns
of hockey organizers**



Every season comes with new and exciting challenges, but these may sometimes leave you feeling anxious and uneasy.

Will we get enough players and coaches to sign up?

How many returning players will we have?

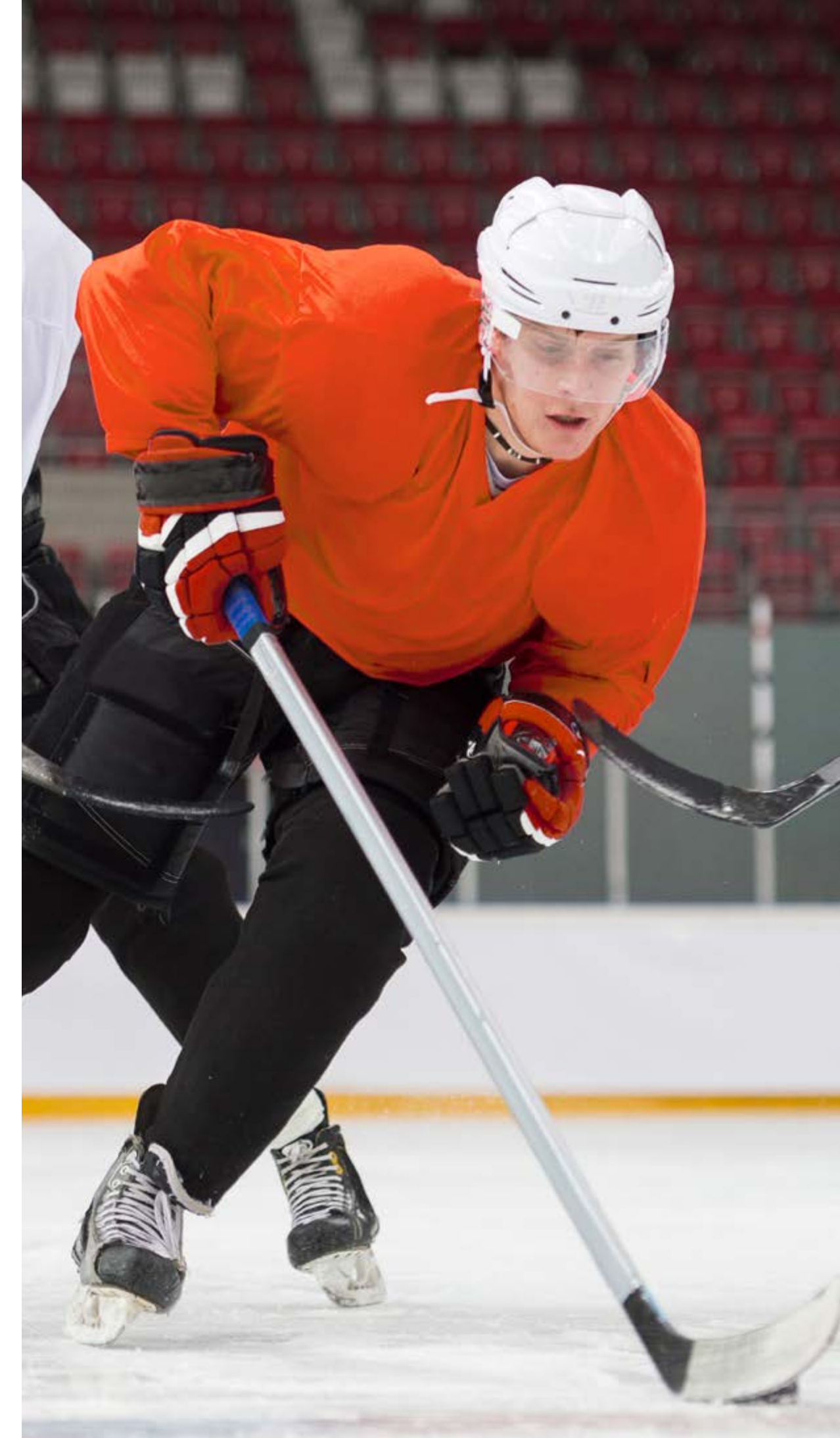
Are our registration forms set up correctly?

Have we scheduled enough ice time?

We're here to tell you that you are not alone. Many other ice hockey organizers have the same questions and concerns and have been in your shoes.

We spoke with 62 ice hockey organizers to understand what their biggest concerns were going into a season, and their number one piece of advice for others in a similar situation.

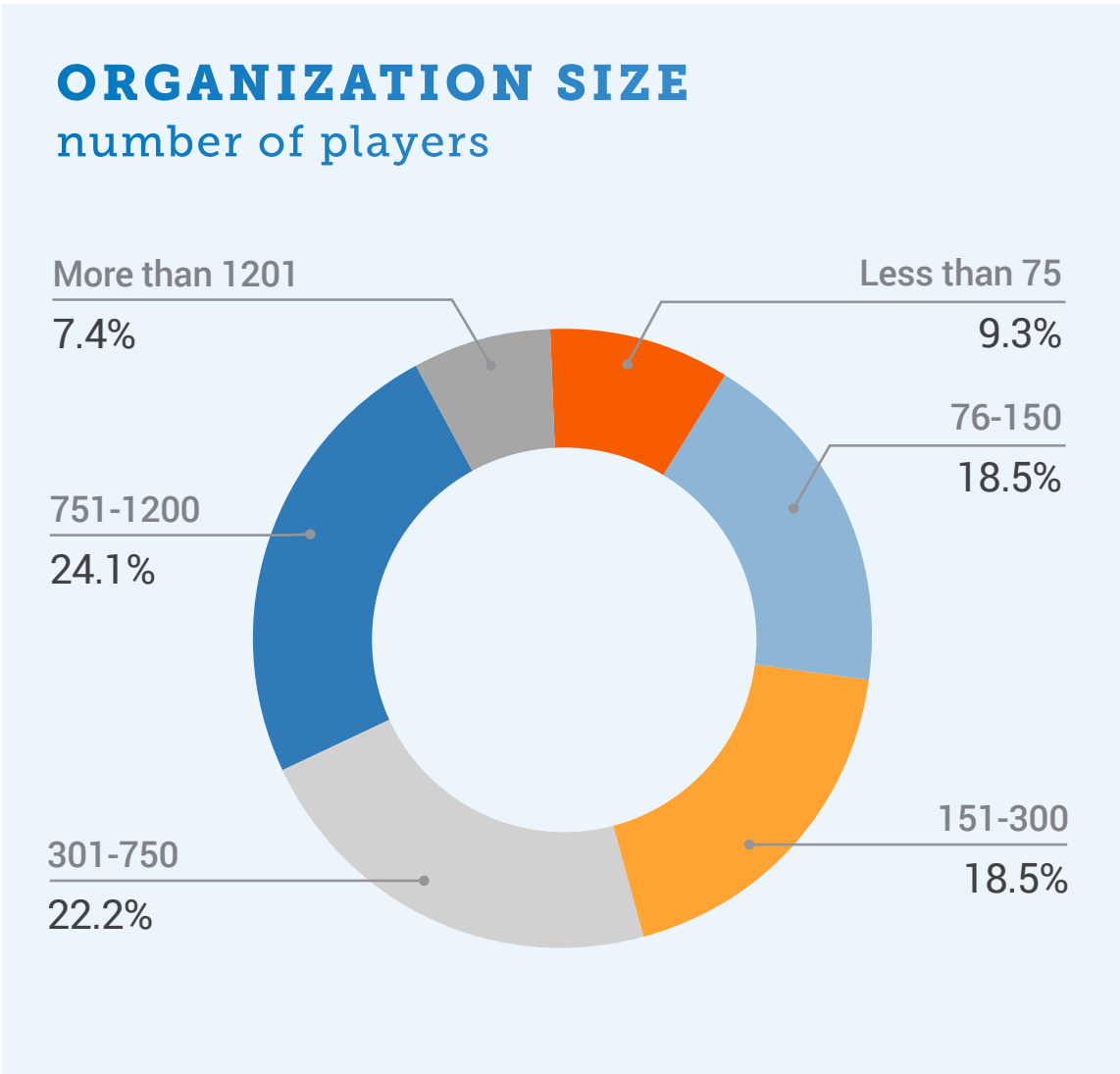
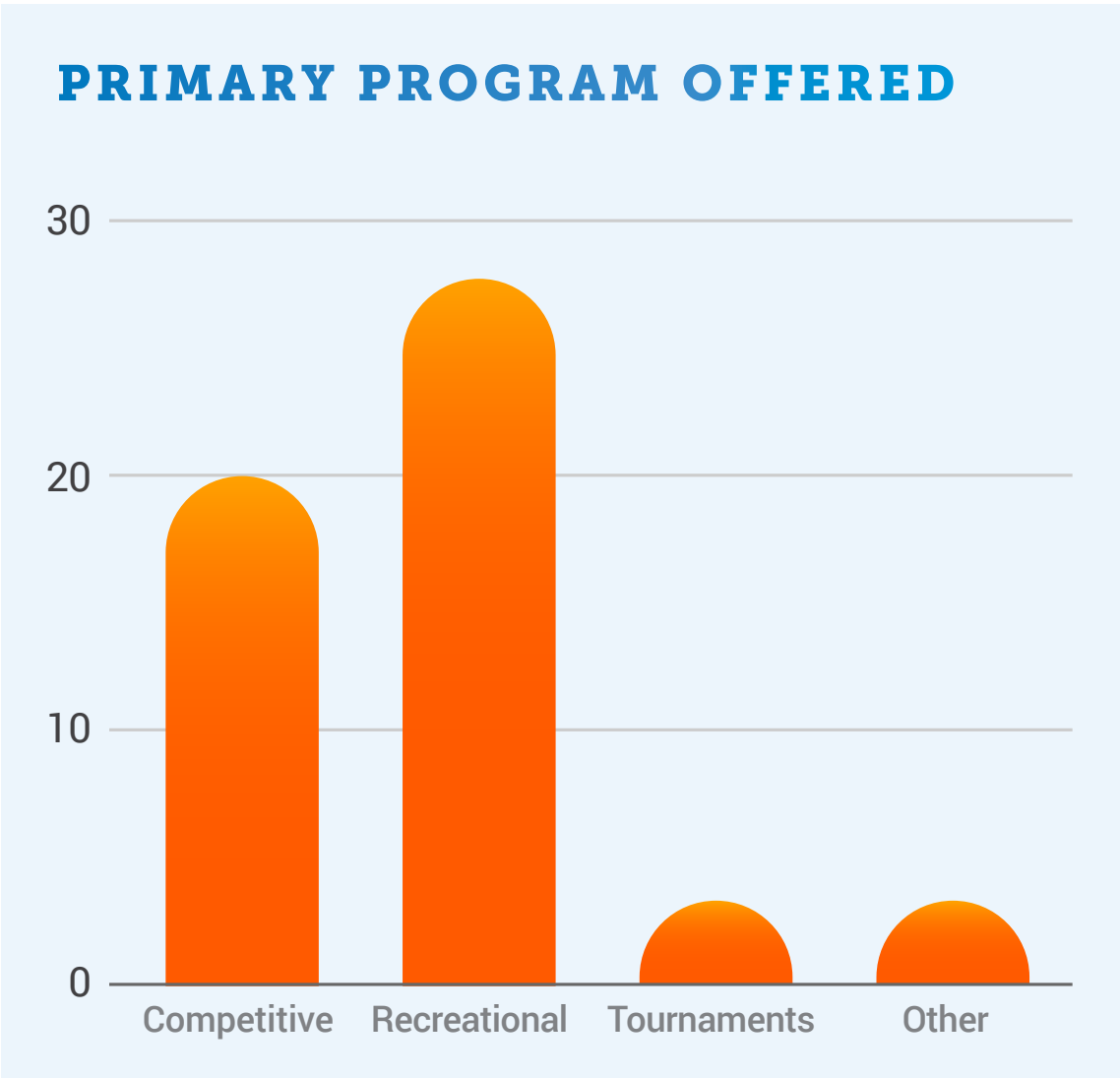
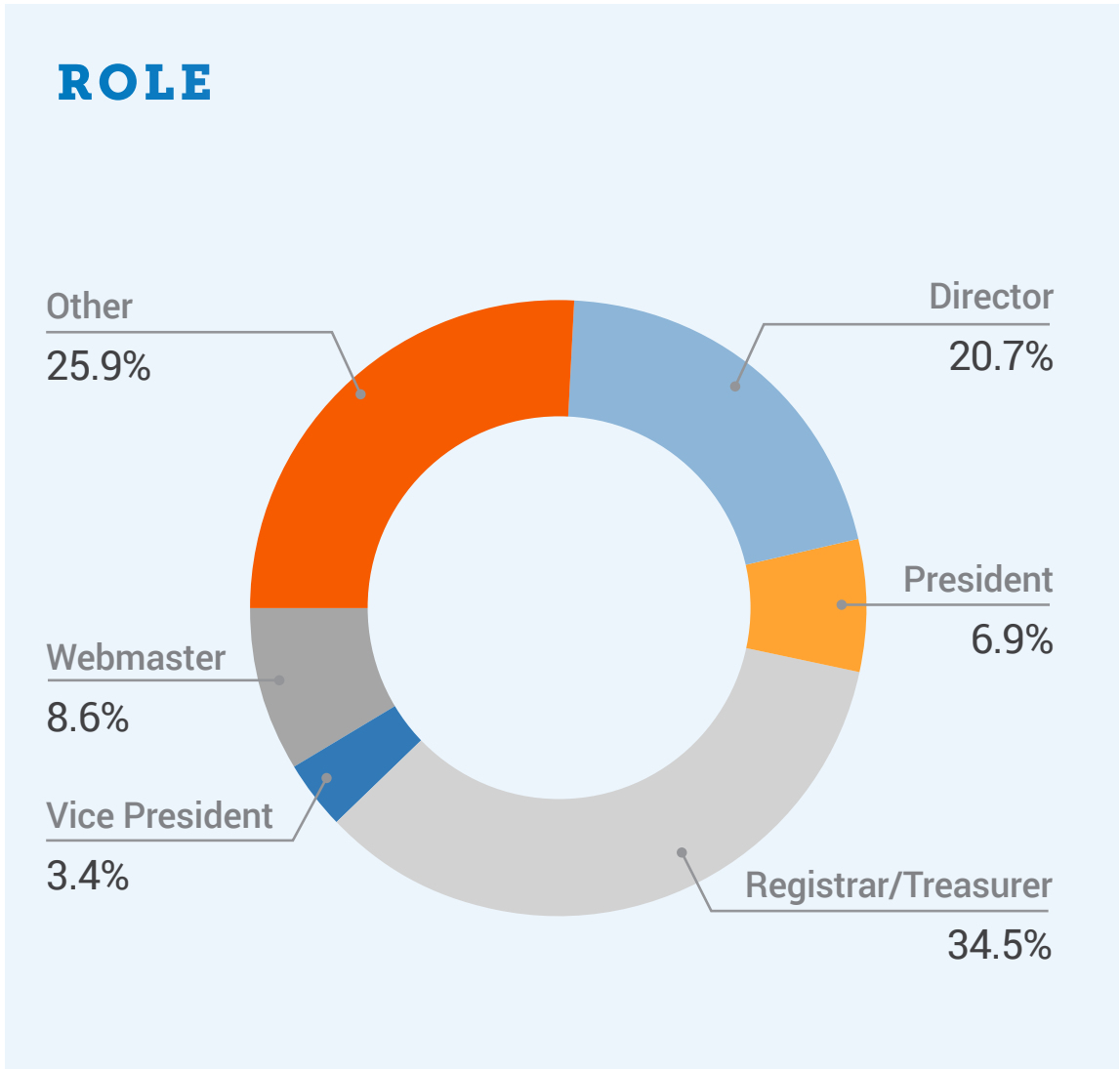
Let's dig into our findings.



Organizers Like You

When you have questions, it's natural to seek out the advice of your peers and colleagues—the people who understand our situations best. They've been in your shoes, which is why they can give you the best guidance.

We knew that in order to create a valuable guide for ice hockey admins, the best people to get insight from were other hockey admins. Here are some of the most important tidbits we gathered from dozens of your peers.



Shared Concerns

No matter the size or makeup of the ice hockey organization, there were three core concerns that resonated across the board: member recruitment, payment and financial management, and organizing around registration.

MEMBER RECRUITMENT

Teams, clubs, and sports organizations are nothing without the players that help drive their success—which is why the recruitment and development of players can make or break a season.

One of the main goals of almost every sports organization is to continue growing its member base, and on the flip side, one of the biggest fears is not having enough players to fill each team.

Ice hockey faces a few challenges, especially in areas outside of popular hockey hubs such as Minnesota, Michigan, and Massachusetts, as well as Canada. The stigma of the high cost of equipment and ice time was a major barrier that many organizers noted, especially in youth leagues. Youth leagues also lose players to other sports with lower barriers of entry. In more senior leagues, organizers had issues with players “club hopping” and not being able to commit to a regular schedule. Several organizers of girls’ hockey leagues brought up the ongoing issue that girls’ hockey simply isn’t an option a lot of parents know about.

These are big challenges, but ice hockey admins are coming up with some creative ways to attract new players. These admins all agree that making community connections is key to a successful program. Hosting meet and greets for prospective families and inviting prospective players to practices are two important ways to showcase the program you’re building and convince fence-sitters to sign up. Participating in local community events and working with institutions, such as schools, community centers, and libraries are easily accessible channels that can end up being your best referral sources, especially in tightly-knit communities.

Advertising and social media promotion are other great ways to get the word out. Several ice hockey admins told us that they place ads in community newspapers at the start of each season. As an alternative to traditional advertisements, local newspapers often offer “sponsored content” stories that you can buy; it’s an ad in the form of an article that touts all the great things about your program. Other admins emphasized the importance of a friendly, well-maintained social media presence, which can answer questions related to schedules and other

issues prospective players may have. Social media is a great way to mobilize your existing base of players, parents, and volunteers to spread the word about your program.

Organizers of beginner and youth leagues also spend time working on ways to lower the financial impact on first-time players. Offering free gear to borrow and finding sponsors to keep fees low both make a positive impact on enrollment.

Lastly, ice hockey admins are great at getting creative and using events and clinics to drum up interest. Offering multi-day camps or free half-day clinics (with gear that can be borrowed or rented) provides parents with a way to keep their kids occupied—something that all parents are looking for during school vacations. Think of these shorter-term offerings as a gateway for parents to learn more about your organization and the ongoing programs that you can offer.

PAYMENT AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Ice hockey is an expensive sport, which is why admins emphasized to us that getting fees paid upfront and accurately is essential to a successful season.

To do this, admins use software to deliver an online registration and payment experience. This provides them the flexibility to set up things the way they need, offer installment payments for parents, and add more automation to financial management and reporting. The addition of technology allows organizations to greatly decrease the amount of manual work that goes into collecting payments from each member and documenting the most up-to-date information.

If your organization has a dedicated treasurer, it's a good idea to set up ongoing reviews with them before and during the season. This helps you gauge costs and gives you a continuous view of your finances; these frequent check-ins will make it easier to stay on budget and keep a track of your cash flow.





ORGANIZING AROUND REGISTRATION

A successful season is downright impossible without being prepared and organized. To make sure they are prepared, many ice hockey organizers strongly suggest starting the groundwork as early as possible. Planning a season takes time; giving yourself enough of a window allows you to make sure you cover each question and concern.

The logistics of registration and rostering is a major priority for ice hockey organizers. They told us that registration needs to be accurate, rostering needs to be easy, and they strongly preferred using tools they can share rather than emailing around spreadsheets. For organizers who are dealing with a high volume of registrations, their systems need to be glitch-free from the get-go. Canadian organizers mentioned the importance of being able to submit clean rosters to national organizations such as Hockey Canada for approval. Being able to rely on easy-to-use tools makes the whole process easier.

It's a good rule of thumb to start preparing your

registration and rostering process a month or two in advance and test it out to make sure everything's running smoothly when the season starts. Make sure you review the registration forms to confirm that you are collecting the right information and everything is working as expected. Take the time to run through every potential scenario for team formations, travel arrangements, and tournament schedules—and think through different mistakes and errors registrants may encounter (or have encountered in the past). Some organizations even ask parents and coaches to give their procedures a test run as well—they may catch inconsistencies you missed and have valuable suggestions. Confirm that you've correctly resourced ice time for the season. And make sure coaches and other admins are aligned with the plans, so that everyone is on the same page.

Being well prepared and organized will allow you to provide a much better experience for all involved—including yourself.

Sage Advice

There will definitely be challenges that come with running your sports organization, but always remember that you are not alone—there are others experiencing the same set of concerns and hurdles.

“Ensure registration forms are short, and have answers to questions before they are asked.”

“Start prepping for the new season as soon as the old season is done.”

“Keep up regular communications!”

“Communicate clearly, concisely, and directly.”

“Be organized, be proactive, and be welcoming to new families who are interested in joining.”

“Think and plan out the season and goals before any email or website is launched”

“Ensure that your data is current, up to date, and accurate”

“Be open and honest with parents when dealing with them.”

“Get out there and promote your organization—don’t be shy”

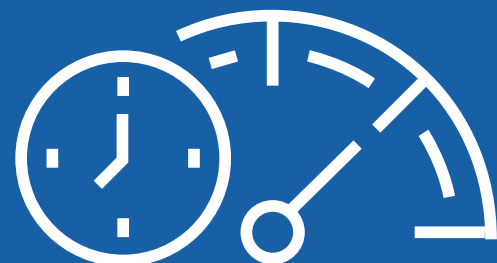
“Use one piece of software. Having data across multiple platforms makes it very hard to manage!”

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**Single
Solution**



**Increased
Efficiency**



**Streamlined
Operations**



**Seamless
Communication**



**Happy
Members**

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You can also reach out to our Sales team directly at sales@teamsnap.com or call us at 1-855-733-6676.