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## Youth Hockey

Youth hockey is about developing children into strong adults, teaching teamwork, giving participants the basic skill of hockey, and most of all – a chance to play in a fun, healthy, and safe environment. The Barrington Redwings Hockey organization offers youth hockey programs to boys and girls of all ages.

Unique to the game of youth ice hockey are its trained coaches. All coaches are required to have certified coaching training clinics under the direction of the USA Hockey, Inc. Once a coach has received coaching training at a certified clinic they receive a coaching card. Coaching cards allow coaches to train specific ages of hockey players with the proper skills, drills, exercises, and stretches for the age of hockey players they are working with. These clinics also teach coaches communication skills for different aged players. This helps with how to manage, encourage, reinforce, motivate, and communicate with players from 3 to 18 years old.

### Scoring benefits

Ice hockey benefits physical health, motor skills acquisition, and social development. Hockey works every muscle in the body. It works on coordination, timing, and balance. The fast pace of the game facilitates cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flex-

ibility, and healthy bone structure. Drills, scrimmages and games provide aerobic and anaerobic training. Just as important to the physical health benefits of hockey are its social benefits. Hockey players learn teamwork, cooperation, discipline, leadership, work ethic, time management skills, and develop friendships that may last for years.

Hockey is unique in the fact that it is a team sport that requires speed and agility along with exceptional hand-eye coordination. This is a sport that may be played for an entire lifetime. Children as young as 2 start with skating and adults into their nineties continue to skate. Hockey and skating provide great development of the lower body. The muscles that benefit the most from the sport are the quads, hamstrings and calf muscles.

Hockey is considered to be an excellent anaerobic sport that is played in approximately one minute shifts with two minutes of recovery time. During these recovery times, players are burning a lot of calories to recover. During the one minute shift the heart rate can get up to 190 beats per minute. Hockey is an excellent workout. The total time frame for games as is follows.

Mites play period lengths of 10 or 11 minutes per period for three periods in total. The Mite age classification is for any boy or girl under the age of 8 (yes, 2 year olds if they meet the criteria would participate against 8 year olds). The remaining age

groups are as follows: Squirt: 8-10 years; Pee Wee: 10-12 years; Bantam: 12-14 years; Midget: 14-18 years; and high school, which includes 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade players. The junior college and professional ages all vary. By the time you get to professional level and some adult league you may play three 20 minute periods. Most games are played with stop time and teams can play anywhere from 15 games to 70 games as a youth hockey player.

### Getting started

Barrington Youth Hockey is offering a free Learn To Skate program that is eight sessions. Also, season sign-up is still open for registration. Protective gear includes helmet, neck guard, shoulder pads, elbow pads, hockey pants, shin pads, athletic support, skates and gloves. Thermal protection is important to keep the muscles warm and flexible.

For more information, visit [www.redwing-hockey.com](http://www.redwing-hockey.com) or call Rob Hutson at 847-305-6007.

*Rob Hutson is the director of hockey for Barrington Redwings Hockey and the Barrington Broncos High School Hockey Teams. Raised in Edmonton, Canada, Hutson played Division 1 college hockey and professional hockey for six years. Hutson, his wife and their four boys live in Barrington. U*