



Equipment Purchasing Guidelines

The following is a list of required hockey equipment for Mercer Bulldogs Hockey participants. All Mercer Bulldogs must purchase/obtain proper fitting hockey equipment and wear the equipment during all Mercer Bulldogs practices and games. First year players may borrow equipment for a few weeks, if available, from the Mercer Bulldogs while making a determination to join the Mercer Bulldogs for the entire hockey season. The guidelines listed below are meant to assist in selecting and fitting equipment for Mercer Bulldogs players.

1. Skates:

Try both skates on; lace them up as if your player was going out on the ice. Toes should be free to wiggle in the skates. Heels should not slip out of skates once laced. Full length socks should be worn that go above the top of the skates. Typically skates are worn that are ½ size smaller than the player's shoe size.

2. Shin pads:

Place these over whatever your player is wearing - with the leg straight, the knee section of the shin pad covering the knee cap, and the bottom of the shin pad overlapping the top of the skate tongue by about an inch. If there is a gap between the skate and the shin guard, you must replace the shin pads with a larger version. Most of the puck/stick activity takes place 6 inches above the ice and lower - right where that exposed shin can take a shot. All shin guards are labeled by their length.

3. Hockey Pants:

Have your player try their pants on over whatever they may be wearing. The top few inches of the waist are meant to protect your player's kidneys/lower ribs/abdomen - make sure the strap/draw string area is snug against your player's waist. The bottom of the pants should extend to about mid-knee cap. Any higher, and their thigh is exposed when they skate. In this case the pants must be replaced with larger versions. If the pants are well below the knee, ask a coach at the next practice to give them a look - this may not be an issue as long as the hockey pants fit properly elsewhere.

4. Suspenders:

Purchase suspenders that fit with the hockey pants purchased. The suspenders should keep the hockey pants from slipping down so that the hockey pants maintain protection around the kidneys/lower ribs/abdomen.

5. **Athletic supporter:**

Every player should wear some kind of athletic supporter. Kids hate old fashioned jocks, but love those shorts or compression shorts with the velcro sock-holding strips that have an athletic supporter/cup built into the shorts.

6. **Shoulder pads:**

A little thought has to go into this. In general the shoulder pads should fit comfortably without being too tight when connected using the Velcro straps. If you're player is a good skater, and is becoming competitive at hockey, they need significant upper body protection - gear that covers the rib cage, upper back, shoulders and upper arms. Thin protection may be light and comfortable, but doesn't soften the blow of a stray puck. On the other hand, if your player is focusing more on skating techniques than actual game play this season, light pads are fine. Just be sure your equipment has some rib cage protection - can't tell you how many times players fall on the butt end of their own sticks.

7. **Neck guards (optional):**

Your player should wear one on the ice to protect against sticks and skates.

8. **Elbow pads:**

Make sure the velcro is not worn out, and the pads fit well. Elbow pads should not slide up and down the arm, but they should also not be too tight to cut off circulation. Elbow pads are designed to mostly cover the outside of the elbow and arm sections adjoining the elbows.

9. **Hockey gloves:**

Similar to shin pads, all gloves have size labels - in inches. Gloves should be comfortable, and neither too small nor too big. They should cover your player's wrist and a section of their lower forearm - think about those sticks chopping downward, and how often they hit arms.

10. **Helmets:**

The Mercer Bulldogs organization pays strict attention to quality headgear, and new helmets are advised in most cases for players. Try your helmet on and check on a few things:

a. Snug fit - not tight, but snug. Virtually all helmets adjust for growth, so if your player tells you their helmet is a little tight, we can help you with adjustments. If they are really unhappy, consider going to the next size - up or down.. The HEC label at the back of the helmet will tell you what size you have.

b. Chin strap/cage should comfortably fit BELOW the chin - not in front of it.

Most falls on the ice are forward, and the chin/jaw has to be covered from below.

c. All three helmet straps must be in working order - chin strap attaches on both the right and left while the throat strap goes under the jaw. Adjustments to these straps are often needed to keep a snug fit that is also comfortable to the player.

11. **Hockey sticks:**

If you are new to the game of hockey, you must determine whether your player shoots right (holds top of stick in left hand) or left (holds top of stick in right hand). This is important in selecting a stick as almost all stick blades are curved based on whether the players shoots right or left. Most players shoot left, but it is important to make the correct selection for the player.

a. With your player standing with skates on, the top of the stick should come to your player's chin. With your player standing in shoes, the top of the stick should come to at least to your player's nose.

b. Do not purchase a hockey stick that is not at least as long as noted above in #11a. You may purchase longer sticks and cut the stick to the proper length.

c. Once the proper length stick is selected, black/white/colored tapes should be applied to most of the stick blade and the top of the stick (in the form of a knob) to assist in holding onto the stick. One layer of tape on the blade is sufficient.

Any of the coaches can assist you in making hockey stick selection and preparation for use. Please note that hockey sticks can cost as little as \$20 or so to \$200. Please opt for the less expensive wooden hockey sticks initially. The expensive sticks break as well.

12. **Other recommended equipment (optional):**

a. **Skate blade covers:** Terry cloth or rubber skate blade covers protect the skate blades from being damaged or ruining the "edge" needed for skating. Be sure to wipe the ice/moisture off the skate blades after each use to avoid skate blade rust.

b. **Skate key:** A skate key provides assistance in tying your player's skates. It is a little hook with a handle that provides help in tightening the laces of your player's skates. And, the skate key is easier on adult fingers.

c. **Tape:** Purchase some black and white (or colored) tape. Use white tape over black tape knobs at the top of the stick. Any color tape can be used on the hockey stick blade.