

Taking Care of Your Hockey Equipment

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Former Chicago Wolves Coach, Don Granato and his five siblings, played many sports while growing up. However, it was their love of hockey that survived. As Mom of these die-hard hockey fans, I want to share my insight on how hockey translates to family fun.

TIP #2 – Taking Care of Your Hockey Equipment

This week we continue with a suggestion on how you can help Mom and Dad during your hockey season. Did you get some new equipment to cover your growth spurt during the summer? Plan on how you will take care of this priceless protection. Where will you air out your pads and skates? How will you remember to pack everything back into your bag? Here are a few hints to keep your equipment in good shape:

1. **Label** all of your equipment. Ask Mom or Dad to put a luggage tag on your bag including their cell phone number if possible. That way if you ever forget your bag or take someone else's by mistake, the finder of your bag will have a convenient way to reach you.....maybe even before you get back home!
2. Get to know your equipment and the correct way to put it on. Make sure the padding is facing the right way to protect the correct part of your body. New equipment may need a break-in period of time to feel really comfortable.
3. Decide what kind of underclothing you will wear with your equipment. Treat this as you do your equipment. **Label** it and be sure to keep it clean. Put it back into the bag so you're ready to go for the next ice time.
4. Remember that a drying towel for your skate blades is a **very** important piece of equipment that should go into your hockey bag. You may also want to attach skate guards to the blades after you wipe them dry. **Take good care** of your skates. **Place them** into your bag, **don't throw or drop them** back into the bag.
5. Your mouth guard is also **very important**. It should be attached to your helmet face cage. If you have a clear visor on your helmet, wipe it off after each use with a protective cloth. Slip your helmet into an old pillow case and then into your bag....this will help to keep your shield from getting scratched and your mouthguard clean. Be sure to air out once you get home.
6. Find a place to air out your equipment when you get home after ice time. Any space or room that has good airflow will work.

7. Pull the skate tongue back to expose as much of the inside of your skate as possible. This helps the air to reach down inside your skate.
8. **Avoid** putting your skates directly over an air vent.
9. Try to hang or prop up your pads so air flows completely around them.
10. When it comes time to wash your socks and jersey, ask Mom for some help.
11. **Finally:** Repack your bag when the equipment is dry. Do it as soon as you can, not when it's time to leave for the game! If you are still new to the sport, you may want to make a list of your equipment on paper and tape it up to look at, or at least count the items as you pack your bag. Take your time doing this. Hurrying this step could result in a missing piece of gear and perhaps missing your ice time.

If you take good care of your equipment off the ice, it will take good care of you on the ice! Good luck in your upcoming game. And don't forget, GO WOLVES !!!

NOTE TO MOM AND DAD: If you have a new little skater this year and would like additional info on equipment and how to dress your hockey player, try the following website. <http://www.belahockey.com/servlet/the-template/Ask-Bela/Page#howtodress>



Natalie Granato is the mother of former Wolves Coach Don Granato. A true Hockey Mom in every sense of the word, Natalie has attended thousands of games while parenting her six children, four of whom play hockey. From the small outdoor rinks that her kids skated on to the International and Professional games she's attended, nothing thrills Natalie more than to share her family's love of hockey with others. Write Natalie@usamom21.com with your comments.

