

Volume

2



EDUCATION, DEDICATION, MOTIVATION

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The Eastern Collegiate Roller Hockey Association

# Building a Solid Foundation

*A Guide for Growing a College Roller Hockey Program*

THE EASTERN COLLEGIATE ROLLER HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

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A Guide for Growing a College Roller Hockey Program

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# Table of Contents

Letter from the Commissioner	1
About This Manual.....	1
Getting it off the Ground	2
Step 1: Find Your Club/Sports Organization Office	2
Step 2: Secure the Necessary Paperwork	2
Step 3: READ	3
Step 4: Get Some Club Members	3
Step 5: Complete and Turn in the Paperwork	4
Step 6: Use the Wait Time to Your Advantage	5
Step 7: Advertise, Advertise, Advertise	5
Laying the Groundwork	6
The First Official Meeting	6
Getting the Most Out of Your Officers	7
Preparing for Intercollegiate Play	7
Budgeting for Success	9
Funding Essentials	10
Avenue A: Funding From Your School	10
Avenue B: Membership Dues	10
Avenue C: Fundraising Techniques	10
Create a Team Program.....	11
Charge at Tryouts .....	11
Credit Card Applications .....	11
Work a Professional/Collegiate Sports Game.....	11
Car Washes (seriously!) .....	11
T-shirt Sales .....	12
Pizza and Burger Night.....	12
Host a Tournament .....	12
All-night Public Skate.....	12
Campus Raffle.....	12
Services in Exchange for Rink Time .....	12
Run an In-house League.....	12

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## Letter from the Commissioner

**S**ir Francis Bacon once said, “Knowledge is power.” This Renaissance author’s words still ring true after four hundred years.



For exactly this reason, the Eastern Collegiate Roller Hockey Association has created a series of informative manuals designed to educate players, parents, school administrators and team representatives. These manuals are not designed to be an “end all, be all” solution to every situation that will arise – that’s what your league administration is for. These documents, however, *are* intended to help what can often be a daunting process that seems impossibly complicated a little bit easier.

There are sure to be additional questions and clarifications that you may need, even after reading these manuals. Visit our web site at [www.ecrha.net](http://www.ecrha.net) for contact information and the latest information on happenings in the league.

### About This Manual

Volume Three of our four-part series focuses on answering one of the most common questions directed to the league: “How do I start a college roller hockey program at my school and ensure that it survives after I’m gone?” Although it may appear as though starting a club, gaining acceptance (and hopefully some funding!) from a university, and most importantly, assembling a team are huge feats to accomplish, it’s not as hard as one might think. In fact, some clubs in the ECRHA were formed in mere *weeks!*

Unfortunately, not all schools are as receptive to a fledgling roller hockey team as would be desirable. More often than not, roadblocks make the process more difficult than is necessary, but a little bit of dedication and legwork almost always guarantees a successful program that will thrive under sound leadership.

On behalf of the ECRHA, I hope that these guides help you avoid the trial and error experience that the information contained herein is derived from. Should you have any questions, suggestions, or comments about the material you’ve read, feel free to contact me at [commissioner@ecrha.net](mailto:commissioner@ecrha.net).

Michael Burke  
ECRHA Commissioner

## Getting it off the Ground

### *The Seven-Step Process to Forming a Club at Your School*

**A**llright, so you've decided to take the plunge and try to start up a club at your local college or university. Maybe you've found a bunch of students around campus that you've been playing pickup with, or possibly you have a friend at another university that's been raving about his team and you really want to take them down in some intercollegiate play.

### Step 1: Find Your Club/Sports Organization Office

Depending on the size and organizational structure of your school, your potential club might fall under the jurisdiction of anything ranging from the Club Sports Office to Student Government. These organizations can often have VERY different ways of handling requests. Regardless of which department you will fall under, your first step will most likely require a call to either the registrar's office or the main university operator, who should be able to direct your call.

Once you've been transferred, inform the appropriate office that you are interested in starting up a new club at the school. If you've been properly directed, you should ask any questions you may have and end this phone call with some information about basic procedures for starting a club, as well as a specific person that you can contact should you need help.

### Step 2: Secure the Necessary Paperwork

Get in touch with the contact you made from Step 1 and explain your intentions to form a new club, making sure to indicate that it is a sports club, as this can drastically affect the steps necessary to get the club going.

More often than not, your school will require you to complete some paperwork prior to recognizing you as an official club or organization. Speak to your contact and get a copy of all of the paperwork that you need to complete. The packet you receive might be called a charter, bylaw & constitution packet, registration form, etc.

## Step 3: READ

This step can not be overemphasized. Although it may seem tedious, reading the paperwork you've been provided will help avoid possible headaches later on.

Most packets are not that long, and specifically describe the requirements that must be fulfilled to become an official club. These requirements can vary widely between schools. Some key points you may want to check for are:

- Minimum club size – Do you need three, six, or fifty people to be recognized?
- Club funding – This will be described in detail later, but make some notes now of any procedures you might need to go through.
- Documentation requirements – Many schools require a club constitution, a period of probation, or some type of review process. Make sure you know what you have in store for you once you get the ball rolling.

During this entire process, **do not hesitate** to use your contact to answer any questions you have. Getting the paperwork right on the first try is very important, as many schools take some time to process all of the information once you've handed it in.

Finally, you will most likely find a requirement for a club advisor. Almost all schools will require that the advisor be a faculty member. Although it's helpful to find one that loves hockey, it's not absolutely necessary. Simply find a faculty member that you have a good relationship with and that you can contact on short notice should you need help with any issues that may arise. They may need to speak on your behalf in the future if your school requires a review or probationary process.

## Step 4: Get Some Club Members

One of the biggest misconceptions held by people interested in starting a club is that it's necessary to have a massive tryout and an army of interested players in order to convince the school to give recognition.

At this point, you only need to meet the minimum club requirement as mentioned in Step 2. If you already have enough players together to hit the minimum requirement, you're in great shape. If, however, you're still a little bit short, it's time to do some recruiting work.

To do this, simply make a flier similar to the ones you see all over campus for other organizations. Your school may require approval of the flier before it's permitted to be posted, so be sure to check with administration to find out your school's policies to avoid having them ripped down within 24 hours.

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Next, plaster campus with your newly approved fliers. If you only put up a few, it is likely they will go unnoticed. It is recommended that you cover as many high-traffic areas as possible and shell out \$5-\$10 worth of copies. The content of the flier isn't incredibly important, but make sure to include your contact information and use large fonts to help catch attention. A hockey image or clipart helps as well.

Make sure you take down contact information from everyone who responds to your flier. Having a contact list will make your life much easier when it comes time to hold a meeting.

Depending on the response from your fliers, you can now take one of two steps. If you got a relatively small response, select several people you are already acquainted with to be club officers and continue on to the next step. If you now have a full email box and the phone is ringing off the hook with potential club members, you should probably hold an interest meeting.

If you hold an interest meeting, have a vote for officers of the club that is soon to be formed. Most clubs designate a president, vice president, treasurer and secretary. It is a great opportunity for yourself and others to become officers and founders of the club. These positions can be added to your resume and separate you from other students, a valuable asset once you graduate from college. Don't take this lightly!

## Step 5: Complete and Turn in the Paperwork

Complete the form with the officer signatures and the advisor signature and turn it back in to the club or organization office. You might also want to include Volume 2 of our series designed for school administrators. You and your officers must also complete the Bylaws and Constitution of the club and attach these to the club registration form. Most schools will outline these for you and tell you exactly what you need to include. It may also help to obtain a sample constitution from another club at your school or by checking the league web site for a sample school constitution. The Bylaws and Constitution define certain rules of the club, basic operating procedures, and describe the mission statement of the club.

Once the form is received, the appropriate body (Student Government, Student Activities Board, etc.) will review the request. This body is usually made up of elected students who evaluate the form as well as the club's value to the campus community. In simple terms, they ensure that the club does not discriminate and that the new organization will be an asset to the university. Additionally, they will make sure that the form has been properly completed (hopefully you were paying attention back in Step 3, as this process might not be completed for 2-6 weeks after your submission of the paperwork!). Following this review process, your club will either be approved or denied recognition. In some cases, new clubs are put on mandatory probation for one year.

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*Note:* There have been several instances in which a school has been reluctant to grant recognition to a club due to insurance and a perception of hockey being a “rough” sport that condones fighting. Volume 2 of our series, designed for school administrators, can be especially helpful in these circumstances. Additionally, you can have the league and the body responsible for granting your club status contact each other. These steps should get the approval process back on track.

Waiting for the school to pass this proposal usually takes between two and six weeks. This is a good time to contact the league and inform them of your progress as well as read Volume 4 of our series, detailing club and team management.

## Step 6: Use the Wait Time to Your Advantage

This is a good time to nail down a playing spot for the club if you don’t already have a place to play. The reason this step is later in the process is because you can use the inline hockey club which is just now being finalized as a bargaining chip. Having an organized club presents a much more professional and influential argument than a disorganized pickup game.

If you are lucky enough to have a local inline rink, much of this task is already taken care of. Make sure to research how much it will cost to have rink time for designated club recreation days or intercollegiate team practice. This is one of the first steps in the budgeting process for your club.

If no rink is available or the fees associated with having practice at an inline facility seem prohibitive for the time being, look into suitable areas on campus. Many teams use the gym or a multipurpose room on campus. Although it’s not ideal, it’s difficult to beat free practice time. If all else fails, find a freshly-paved parking lot or tennis court and **get approval** to use the area. Find out whom to contact and explain the club’s situation. It reflects badly on the club if facilities on campus are used without permission.

## Step 7: Advertise, Advertise, Advertise

By now you should have received notice that your proposal to form the club has passed. You may need to resubmit some paperwork that was improperly completed, or the review committee might require some more information from you. If for some reason your application has been denied, don’t give up hope! Find out what the reasons for denial were and contact the league to begin working on alternatives.

Now that the school officially has a roller hockey club, you can begin recruitment of club members in earnest. Post a second wave of fliers and set up an interest meeting. Depending on your budget, you might also look into taking out an ad in the school newspaper or the campus radio station.

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## Laying the Groundwork

### *The First Few Meetings of the New Inline Hockey Club*

**N**ow that you've gotten the club off the ground by having it recognized as an official club or organization of your school, your next step is to develop the structure and organization of the club to ensure a solid foundation.

### The First Official Meeting

Grab the contact list you made up back in Chapter 1 and get in touch with everyone that originally expressed interest. Additionally, your second wave of advertising may have generated some fresh contacts. Email or phone each of the contacts informing them that the club is now officially recognized and invite them to the club's first meeting. Their level of interest is not particularly important just yet. Set the meeting at a time that is unlikely to conflict with night classes or popular party times (Thursday-Saturday nights are probably not a good idea). Many schools have designated club hours – this is a perfect time to set your first meeting.

The meeting should outline the club's goals and future. First and foremost is to establish that incredible hockey skills are NOT required to be in the club. Although you may intend to develop an intercollegiate travel team, start slow. Outline how much it will cost players to participate (see Chapter 3). Explain that there are two major levels of involvement in the club, intramural and intercollegiate.

Most clubs set up intramurals as a pickup game once or twice a week. Attendance is not mandatory and the time is essentially set up for fun. Depending on interest, this time might be used for "street hockey" style play with a ball or a full-fledged scrimmage. If you have been lucky enough to get a very large interest base, you might even look into setting up an intramural league! Depending on where intramural games will be held, membership in the club may require dues to pay for rink time.

Intercollegiate teams are a completely different aspect of the club and require extra dedication and commitment. Explain that the intercollegiate team requires travel, additional expenses and a commitment of time to practice. You may even want to bring a copy of Volume 1 of our series designed for incoming players and parents.

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Finally, set a tryout date for the intercollegiate team, a regular club meeting time (once every month is usually sufficient), and a time for intramural games.

## Getting the Most Out of Your Officers

At your initial interest meeting you selected several officers. We make the assumption here that you're the de facto president, having started the club yourself. To this point, you probably have been doing almost all of the work associated with the club due to your initial interest. You are probably noticing an ever-increasing amount of work! It's time to delegate.

Make sure everyone chips in. The club is fairly easy to run and organize as long as everyone does a little instead of one person doing it all. The officers may not get paid for their work, but they do get the title of office which enhances their resume and increases their chance of landing a job after school.

A common delegation scheme is as follows:

- President – Point of contact for administration. Ensures that the intercollegiate program runs smoothly. Schedules meetings.
- Vice President – Handles recruitment of new club members and ensures that the intramural program runs smoothly.
- Treasurer – Drafts budgets, funding proposals, and keeps record of all club expenditures.
- Secretary – Keeps attendance and minutes of all club meetings and sends out official club emails.

## Preparing for Intercollegiate Play

If you have enough interested players to hold a travel team tryout, now is the time to start getting information on joining a league for intercollegiate play. Visit [www.crh1.net](http://www.crh1.net) for information on leagues in your area as well as contact email addresses and phone numbers.

Much like the paperwork you completed to gain club status at your school, all collegiate leagues have registration materials that are required by member clubs each year. Contact your local league to find out exactly what paperwork is required and what the associated due dates are. If you are joining the ECRHA, make sure to read Volume 4 of this series, designed for club representatives.

Most importantly, don't rush into becoming a full member in a league. Although it is tempting, intercollegiate travel play is not for everyone. Make sure you thoroughly

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## BUILDING A FOUNDATION

evaluate the requirements and consequences of becoming involved full-time in a travel roller hockey league *before* you spend the time and effort to get involved.

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## Budgeting for Success

*Devising an Effective Budget is Critical to the Club's Survival*

Unfortunately, most college students are lousy at budgeting (still counting on Ramen to get you through the semester, aren't you?). One of the great benefits of running a club is the opportunity to gain real-life experience in handling a budget that affects people beyond oneself.

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## Funding Essentials

### *Garnering Funding and Effectively Fundraising to Ensure Success*

**A**sk almost any club president to name the single most important limiting factor in how quickly they can grow their club and it's almost a lock the answer will be "money." In an age of tighter school budgets and increasing costs, the financial considerations of running a club often outweigh the logistical concerns. Money is an obstacle that deters many potential players from participating and clubs from forming at a travel team level.

Undoubtedly, there is a financial commitment that needs to be met to remain competitive. Rink fees for practice time, uniforms, travel expenses, and league dues/entry fees can combine into what appears to be an overwhelming amount of money. This chapter deals with three different but equally important avenues of funding your club.

### Avenue A: Funding From Your School

### Avenue B: Membership Dues

### Avenue C: Fundraising Techniques

The trend in roller hockey in general is to get a team sponsorship from a big-name supplier. This, for some unknown reason, is almost exclusively a roller hockey trend. Not many other sports utilize this philosophy. Due to the growth of roller hockey nationwide, however, most big-name sponsors are reluctant to sponsor national champions, much less fledgling teams that have barely gotten off the ground.

Fortunately, there is another way to still get the financial backing necessary to operate a collegiate club. In fact, it's the way most other college club organizations find their programs – through fundraising.

This doesn't mean to ditch the idea of sponsorship entirely. Instead, go after sponsors that can gain the most exposure from a collegiate club team – local sponsors. They

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may not be an endless source of financial support, but local sponsorship deals can usually help the club obtain equipment and rink time at incredibly reduced rates. It is difficult for a single team to generate enough interest nationwide to catch the eye of a national sponsor in an industry that gets no television exposure and can't even support a single trade magazine.

Listed below are a collection of fundraising ideas that have been successful for college teams across the country. Please contact the ECRHA at [development@ecrha.net](mailto:development@ecrha.net) with any new fundraising ideas that aren't listed here!

#### Create a Team Program

The program should include advertisements from local businesses as well as club information such as rosters, schedules, officers, stats, etc. Have each player sell two to three pages of ads. Each page sells for 150-200 dollars. Pages can be sold as a whole, half, quarters, or eight business card size sections. The program is usually handed out for free any time the team is playing somewhere locally. Keep it black and white (cheaper printing costs) and make sure you live up to your end of the bargain by actively handing them out during events. This will increase your chances of getting the advertising back the following season.

#### Charge at Tryouts

If you charge \$10 per person at tryouts and have 75 people show up, that is an easy \$750 and gets your club a little money in its operating budget before other fundraisers kick in, minus tryout expenses.

#### Credit Card Applications

Several marketing companies will offer money to organizations for each credit card application they receive. Often, it's as easy as taking the applications they send you and setting up a table on campus and getting students to fill them out. Those filling out the applications usually get stuff like calling cards or candy for free and the team gets money for every single application. Another idea is to host a hockey party where the "cover" charge is to fill-out an application. More information on these type of fundraisers can be found at [www.campusfundraisers.com](http://www.campusfundraisers.com) and [www.campusconcepts.com](http://www.campusconcepts.com).

#### Work a Professional/Collegiate Sports Game

Several management companies offer groups the chance to work a concession stand or clean up the stands at pro/collegiate sports stadiums and arenas. If you have a professional sports organization in your area, this is a VERY easy way to make money. Often, the organization gets additional money if more people work the event.

#### Car Washes (seriously!)

Get a date and approval from the location ahead of time and make sure it is adjacent to lots of passing traffic, preferably local traffic, not university traffic. You can even go one step further and make it a "topless" car wash by having the girlfriends of the players stand by the road with signs advertising the car wash. After the car pays, they

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pull around to the actual car wash and have their car washed by the GUYS on the team, wearing their roller hockey pants, washing cars. This is a great way to create a little public relations and get some local exposure.

#### T-shirt Sales

Buy shirts at \$5-\$6 and sell them for \$10-\$12. It works really well if you scrimmage high school schools or have a local rink willing to work with you and help sell the shirts. Sell them on campus at a table as well. Make sure to order no less than 100 for better prices and start out with simple designs. Hats also work really well, but require more up-front money.

#### Pizza and Burger Night

Many local restaurants and pizza parlors will allow you to hand out flyers and place ads in school papers for a feed night. Every person who goes in that food establishment and orders food with the flyer earns the team a dollar or a percentage of their bill. This is a good way to make about \$100-\$200 with very little work. Several national chains, such as Friendly's, also support this type of fundraiser.

#### Host a Tournament

Hold a youth or adult tournament. Have the college players officiate and run the management side of the event. Get prizes donated and really hype up the event months ahead of time. This works especially well with youth programs.

#### All-night Public Skate:

Find a local rink and help them run an all-night public skate with a live DJ. In exchange for doing the public relations work and providing players to act as skate guards (maybe even DJ's!), most rinks will split the ticket sales with the club.

#### Campus Raffle

Have local businesses donate various items and gift certificates and have a table on campus for students to purchase tickets.

#### Services in Exchange for Rink Time

A lot of college campuses, high schools, and local city youth clubs will pay your team to hold weekly hockey clinics, coach a local youth team, officiate house leagues, work at the rink, etc. Easy work and free rink time! Making it a non-cash deal seems better for rinks. Volunteer your team to run clinics or camps on a weekly basis in exchange for weekly practice times. Not only is this an easy way to get some extra cash, but also an easy way to generate interest for your team.

#### Run an In-house League

If you have a large number of players and a local rink willing to work with you or somewhere on campus adequate enough to play roller hockey on, set-up a beginner league. This is a way to increase your club membership numbers to more than just the travel team players, as well as create money by charging the members to play in an in-house league. By using the travel team players as the officials and administrators of the league, the league can cost virtually nothing to operate.

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