



WORLD CUP OF
HOCKEY 2016
TORONTO



HOCKEY
SENSE™



WORLD CUP OF HOCKEY 2016
TORONTO



Hockey SENSE HD Summit: Summary

Event Date: **Wednesday, September 21, 2016**

Location: **Hockey Hall of Fame | Toronto, ON Canada**

The World Cup of Hockey 2016 – a best-on-best tournament that featured more than 160 NHL players from 14 different countries – was a reminder of hockey’s global reach. Together, the National Hockey League (NHL) and National Hockey League Players’ Association (NHLPA) assembled hockey leaders and held *Hockey SENSE HD*, a summit devoted to the state of the youth game and our collective interest in developing, promoting and supporting positive changes in the sport.



The NHL and the NHLPA are committed to growing the game of hockey. Together, we recognize not only the value participants provide to the game, but the values the game can provide to its participants. Our goal is not just to create better hockey players, but better people.

Within the Hockey Hall of Fame’s Great Hall, the discussions focused on shifting culture through age-appropriate programming and principles of long-term athlete development. The Summit presented an opportunity to examine the principles of hockey organizations internationally, to learn from federations and former players, and to share best practices.

We are proud to share with you a synopsis and takeaways from *Hockey SENSE HD* at the World Cup of Hockey 2016. For a video recap of the event, visit wch2016.com.

"ANY SPORT DEPENDS ON FUTURE GENERATIONS FOR SUCCESS. WE SEND KIDS OUT TO PLAY HOCKEY – TO LEARN SKILLS AND STRATEGY WITH THEIR TEAMMATES. THEY THINK THEY ARE LEARNING JUST A GAME, BUT THESE ARE IMPORTANT LESSONS FOR LIFE." – **DON FEHR, NHLPA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

"THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLAYERS, AND ENCOURAGING YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE INTERESTED IN OUR GAME, IS IMPORTANT -- NOT BECAUSE THEY MIGHT GROW UP TO BE HOCKEY STARS BUT BECAUSE HOCKEY PLAYERS VIEW THE WORLD WITH A GREATER SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY, FOCUSING ON TEAMWORK, HARD WORK, PHYSICAL FITNESS AND BEING A GOOD STUDENT. OUR GAME CAN HAVE A GREATER IMPACT ON SOCIETY AS A WHOLE IF IT DELIVERS THE RIGHT MESSAGES AND PROMOTES IMPORTANT CORE VALUES." – **GARY BETTMAN, NHL COMMISSIONER**



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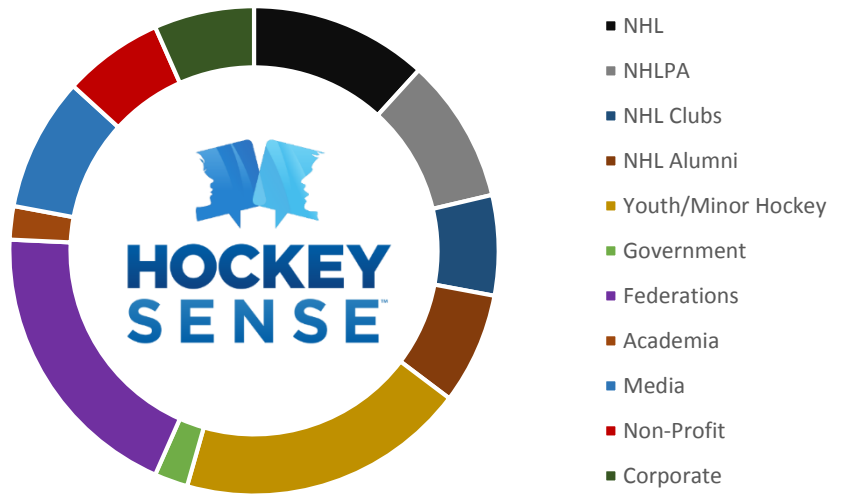
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Attendees



Hockey SENSE HD was attended by representatives from thirteen (13) countries across North America, Europe and Asia. The attending delegates primarily consisted of IIHF Federation members, minor and youth hockey organizations, former players and executives from the NHL, its Member Clubs and the National Hockey League Players' Association.



The State of Our Game

Keynote by **Chris Price**, the CEO and President of Life Sports. Data plays a valuable role for the greater hockey community as it strives to set new benchmarks in participation and retention. Chris Price's opening keynote identified and assessed key metrics in the youth sports industry and trends in hockey participation globally. The keynote urged international hockey leaders to use data to recognize challenges facing the game at the youth level and identify opportunities to improve participation and retention.

State of Youth Sports

Source: IIHF and SFIA

Youth sports participation is being challenged globally -- its decline has been referred to as a "pandemic" by certain governments.

In the USA alone, youth sports lost over five million participants in the last five years. Hockey is one of only three sports in the USA that has seen a marginal increase in participation in the past five years.

Youth sports are struggling with retention. Baseball and basketball lose 15% of their existing participants every year; football and soccer lose 26%; hockey loses 33%.

Global Hockey Data

Source: IIHF

There are over 1.8 million registered participants across 72 countries. USA and Canada represent 70% of total registered participants.

The top 5 countries (+Czech Republic, Russia and Finland) represent 85% of total registered participants. The top 10 countries (+Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, France and Japan) represent 90% of the total.

Eight of the top 10 markets have increased participation over the last four years (exceptions: Sweden and Japan)

There are 196,000 female hockey participants globally (11.2% of total registered participants). Female players in USA and Canada represent 82% of the current global female hockey market.



COUNTRY	PLAYERS	% GLOBAL	INDOOR RINKS	POPULATION	% POP
Canada	639,500	36%	3,250	35 million	1.82%
United States	543,239	31%	1,800	321 million	0.17%
Czech Republic	109,103	6%	21	10 million	1.02%
Russia	102,179	6%	550	142 million	0.07%
Finland	74,150	4%	263	5 million	1.35%
Sweden	60,408	3.5%	358	9 million	0.62%
Switzerland	26,898	1.5%	159	8 million	0.33%
Germany	25,430	1.5%	209	80 million	0.03%
France	21,451	1.2%	135	66 million	0.03%
Japan	18,988	1%	34	126 million	0.01%

Source: IIHF

Growing without Winning

The vast majority of the 72 IIHF countries are without a realistic opportunity to medal in an international tournament.

Emerging markets (including throughout Asia) are critical to fueling hockey's overall growth within the next decade. Challenge: Create compelling product that sustains participation without winning.

Key Questions

Retention data reflects what customers think about their experience. What do hockey's retention numbers tell us about how participants view their experience?

Hockey needs a strategy to support growth in all 72 markets, including emerging markets where growth cannot be fueled by winning. How can the established markets assist?

Female participation in youth hockey is driving recent growth in various markets. How does the game expand demographically, to better include players of both genders, and all races, colors, ethnicities, sexual orientation and disability?



The panel – comprised of representatives from the NHL, NHLPA and IIHF – engaged in a conversation about the factors contributing most to the state of the game around the world.

Christine Simpson (NHL on Sportsnet) moderated a conversation between **Petr Briza** (IIHF), **Mathieu Schneider** (NHLPA) and **Pat LaFontaine** (NHL).



"OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS, WE HAVE BEEN FOCUSING MORE RESOURCES ON GROWING MARKETS GLOBALLY. HOCKEY IS A GAME THAT BUILDS CHARACTER...WE NEED TO USE THAT TO OUR ADVANTAGE." – **PETR BRIZA** | COUNCIL MEMBER, IIHF

"WHEN YOU LOOK AT WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH OUR KIDS PLAYING HOCKEY, THEY ARE GETTING PUSHED OUT BY THE SYSTEM THAT IS CURRENTLY IN PLACE. WHEN COACHES ARE TELLING NINE YEAR OLDS THAT THEY CAN'T PLAY OTHER SPORTS BECAUSE THEY NEED TO BE PLAYING OR TRAINING FOR HOCKEY ALL YEAR, THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH THAT. SPORT SPECIALIZATION IS HURTING OUR KIDS PHYSICALLY AS WELL AS MENTALLY. THE NHLPA AND NHL, ALONG WITH OTHER HOCKEY ORGANIZATIONS, NEED TO BE LEADERS IN PUTTING THE VALUES BACK IN SPORTS." – **MATHIEU SCHNEIDER** | SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NHLPA

"HOCKEY PROVIDES SUSTAINABLE VALUES THAT WE, AS THE LEADERS, NEED TO COMMUNICATE: LEADERSHIP, TEAMWORK, LIFE SKILLS; NOT EVERYONE WILL BECOME A PRO HOCKEY PLAYER, NOT EVERYONE IS GOING TO GET A COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP, BUT IN TIME, HOCKEY CAN MAKE YOU A BETTER FATHER, MOTHER, WORKER -- A BETTER PERSON." – **PAT LAFONTAINE** | VICE PRESIDENT OF HOCKEY DEVELOPMENT, NHL

Challenges Facing the Game

The rate of return on participation growth does not reflect the millions of dollars spent on youth hockey all over the world.

2% of youth players in North America make college hockey rosters; .01% make it to the NHL. Despite the statistics, there is still an arms race for scholarships and professional contracts.

Specialization in youth sports is having an adverse effect.

Developing markets internationally are working to grow on their own, without sufficient support and sharing of resources, best practices, etc. from other federations.

Youth sports have become overly structured, more focused on what an adult values as opposed to what a child values, and what is in the best interest of that child's development.

Coaches and entrepreneurs are pressuring youth athletes to train with them in the spring and summer in order to make the in-season roster.

Emerging international markets struggle with inadequate infrastructure; established markets struggle with aging and inefficient facilities.

Opportunities

Traditional thinking involves developing players for an outside chance at making the elite levels, focusing coaches on the elite players and creating world class facilities to play hockey. Organizations need to think non-traditionally: shift time, resources and energy to better engage parents and families with the values and life-lessons that hockey teaches children.

There is a paradox when it comes to the growth of women's hockey: Parents of female youth hockey players often speak of the fun and camaraderie they witness. Whereas other girls' sports, such as soccer, have become about elite competition and scholarships, women's hockey is still pure -- fun is fueling the growth of women's hockey.

Access to ice is an issue; we can creatively bring alternative forms of the game to kids off the ice, in gymnasiums and spaces for general recreation.

Recruitment and retention in developing markets can be supported through investments in human capital, information sharing and digital media.

First Period: Long-Term Athlete Development

Keynote by **Dr. Stephen Norris**, Performance Consultant and CEO of IMobius Ingenuity. Dr. Stephen Norris' keynote focused on long-term athlete development (LTAD), providing a reminder that youths are experiencing significant changes in brain function, skill levels, social interaction capabilities and communication styles. Hockey is not an early-specialization sport. A long-term developmental pathway provides opportunities for 'late-bloomers' in a system that recognizes the reality that players do not reach their potential until their mid-20s. Dr. Norris' keynote suggests that a commitment to long-term athlete development will help hockey retain more youth players who, in some cases, may evolve into the game's best.

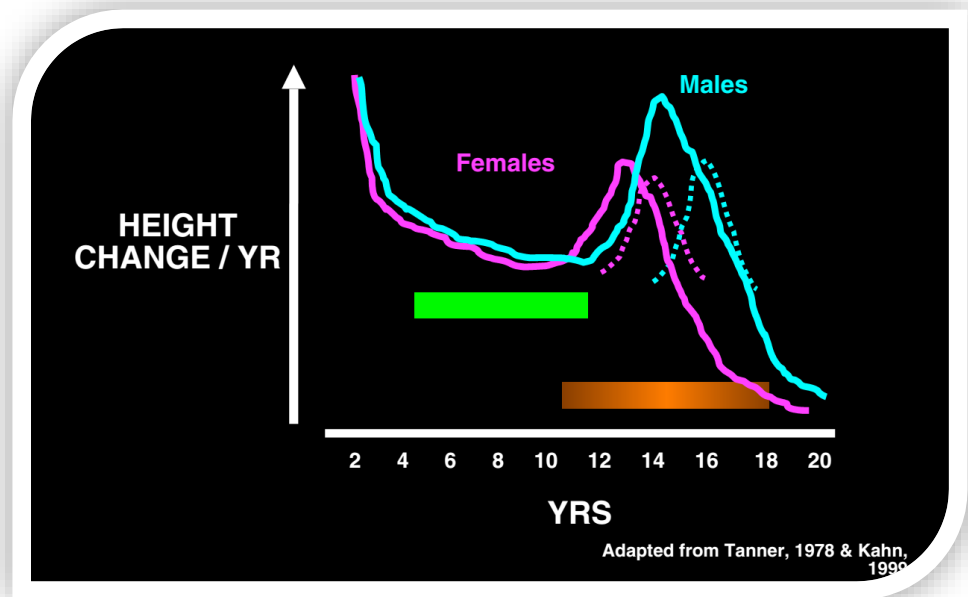
Value Proposition

By age 18, every hockey player should believe two things: (1) Hockey taught me a lot; and (2) I had a great time.

Hockey's greatest value proposition is its potential to make people great citizens of the world.

Youth players may or may not become future professionals, but they have the potential to become the future parents and coaches of our sport.

On the ice, youth players are often grouped by age in an attempt to match their muscular strength, anaerobic power, aerobic capacity and skill level. Stratification works well in early years prior to puberty. However, once the growth spurt occurs, there is a rapid increase in body size as well as an acceleration in strength and power. Because of variance in the age at which these changes occur – and the extent of disparity in development between individuals – grouping players by age alone causes issues when athletes of varying levels of coordination and size, as well as abilities, meet on the ice. True potential in each youth athlete cannot be truly known until stabilization in adulthood.



About LTAD

Long-term athlete development is not a narrow fixation; it is broad. LTAD puts physical maturity together in context with the development of the brain and human psyche.

Peak human potential is from 25 to 30 years old. Though the media might focus on phenoms, they are rare and their trajectory is unrealistic.

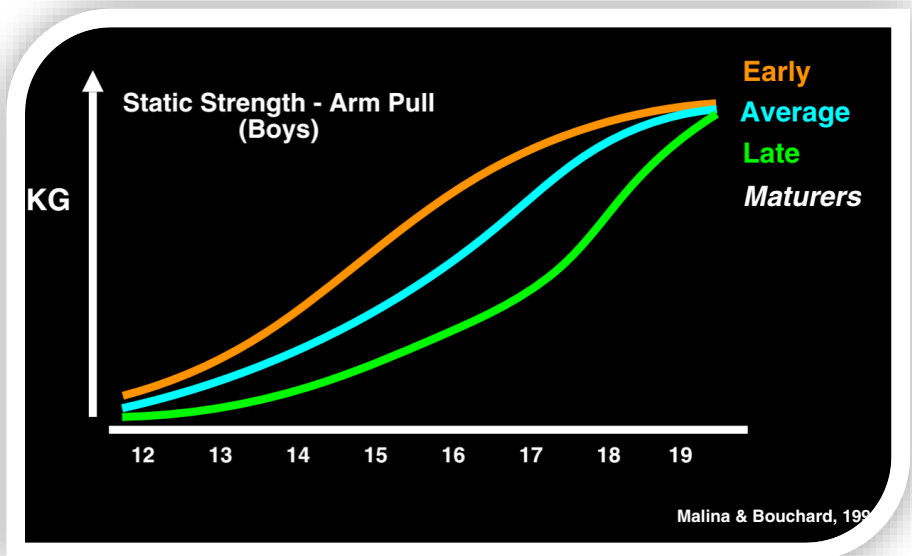
LTAD stresses teaching fundamental skills, not tactics, to improve physical literacy -- introducing movements and skills to establish confidence, poise and efficiency.

Physical and mental development realities will mean some must deal with failure along their learning curve; this short-term loss is a long-term gain.

Very few early developers, celebrated as top talent in adolescent years, remain the game's best players by adulthood. Early maturation leads to early cessation of growth and development. Meanwhile, more than 80% of age-group champions 'disappear' from the sport horizon before the optimal age of top achievement. The time frame for being chosen on competitive teams (ages 15-17) neglects 2/3 of the population that develops on a late or average trajectory.

"THE GREATEST PLAYER ON EARTH WAS PROBABLY NEVER DISCOVERED BECAUSE HE LEFT THE GAME EARLY."

- DR. STEPHEN NORRIS |
PERFORMANCE CONSULTANT
AND CEO OF IMOBILIUS
INGENUITY



Key Takeaways

Children are our most precious resource; they should be built into good citizens/people first, athletes second, hockey players last.

Children are not miniature adults. Parents need to be educated on physical and mental development realities, so that they can make the best possible decisions for their children.

Children should be exposed to as many experiences and as many stimuli as possible from ages 0-16.

There is a high probability players will begin and end their hockey career in the same community. Today's youth players are the parents and coaches of tomorrow.

Performance markers that celebrate and reward early developers only are detrimental to hockey's growth; normal and late developers, who many times exit the sport for these reasons, could reach the greatest potential.

The subsequent expert panel explored the theory and implementation of these concepts, discussed models of age-appropriate programming designed to enhance enjoyment, skill and creativity, and debated hot-button topics such as specialization in sports. **Dr. Stephen Norris** moderated a conversation between **Dr. Dean Kriellaars** (University of Manitoba), **Paul Carson** (Hockey Canada) and **Roman Rotenberg** (Ice Hockey Federation of Russia). *The following includes excerpts from the panel.*

"WINNING MEDALS IS A BYPRODUCT OF A HEALTHY SPORTS SYSTEM. WE CAN'T COMPROMISE EVERY YOUNGSTER IN THE GAME (FOR MEDALS). WITH A COMMITMENT TO THESE LTAD PRINCIPLES, CHAMPIONS WILL STILL PERCOLATE UP THROUGH THE SYSTEM."
- **PAUL CARSON** | VICE PRESIDENT OF HOCKEY DEVELOPMENT, HOCKEY CANADA

"RUSSIA IS CHANGING THE CULTURE OF ITS HOCKEY PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE ACCESS FOR KIDS OF LOWER-SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE FOR KIDS BY FOCUSING ON FUN OVER COMPETITION." -
ROMAN ROTENBERG | VICE PRESIDENT, ICE HOCKEY FEDERATION OF RUSSIA

Sport Specialization

Over-specialized creatures don't have durability; specialization in sports leads to higher injury rates and burnouts.

How does hockey begin to work with other sports to promote diversity of sport? Competition structure, schedule and communication are critical.

Players should only leave a sport for the right reasons. At an early age, before maturity, leaving one sport to focus entirely on another is an example of a bad reason.

Quality sport indicators would help measure how sport-specialization is affecting player experience and hockey's overall retention rates.

LTAD in Practice

Parents and players alike need to understand physical literacy and fundamental movement skills before focusing solely on hockey skills.

Child development is a marathon, not a sprint. Parents must help their children remain patient and be a supportive part of their youth sports experience.

For the LTAD model to permeate throughout hockey development systems, it must be consistently communicated at the community level.

Key Takeaways

Educate community leaders, coaches and parents on why their children need diversification in sports.

Incorporate other sports and activities (kick-ball, frisbee, lacrosse) into hockey camps. Kids love to play off the ice just as much as playing hockey on the ice.

Second Period: Development Pathways and Coaching

Keynote by **Dr. Wade Gilbert**, Professor at California State University (Fresno), Coaching Scientist and Coach Education Advisor. From education to skill development, safety and ethics coaches play an important role in the positive development of athletes. Dr. Gilbert's keynote identified pathways for appropriate athlete development and remarked on the impact coaches have to influence and educate them. The research presented discussed the setting of developmental standards that create positive hockey experiences while providing opportunities for teaching values that transcend the game.

Coaching in Context

What targets are we trying to hit and how do we know if we score? We have to measure success based on a player's competence, confidence and character.

Quality coaching is the direct pathway to hit these targets, but what is the method to get there? Coaches must have professional knowledge (understanding of the game), interpersonal knowledge (people skills) and intrapersonal knowledge (understanding of oneself).

Creating the appropriate environment is essential; all stakeholders - players, coaches, officials, parents, boosters - need to pull in the same direction with an aligned system of thinking.

Coaching Development

Youth coaches must be able to connect with and relate to players; people won't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

Coaching expertise is context and age specific. In early development, you need a coach to be passionate, and bring out a child's passion for the game. Coaches achieve this not through teaching of tactics, but by making the experience fun.

Coaches at different levels of an organization or program benefit by communicating with coaches at other age and skill levels; players should be presented with a united curriculum and receive consistent messaging.

Coaching materials should provide practice strategies that are flexible, educating the coach on how to adapt in a real practice setting.

Coaching through Cooperation

Any athlete in the community should be viewed as "our" athlete, regardless of the team on which he or she plays.

Coaches should be encouraged to share the responsibility of teaching; rotating coaches and sharing best practices benefits all.

Coaches should not be the only leaders; referees and parents, along with coaches, should form an advisory board to talk about each game and the coming schedule.

Key Takeaways

Coaches are the gatekeepers; they provide direct messaging. At the youth level, the success of coaches should not be based on wins or losses but on more important metrics: participation, retention, engagement and enjoyment.

Coaching effectiveness is in the small moments; coaches need to be taught how to navigate and manage those moments -- from an on-ice mistake to an off-ice personal issue. In those moments, much will depend on their interpersonal and intrapersonal skills to reinforce positive behaviors.

Parent coaches, who have years of experience, wisdom and expertise, leave when their child moves on from a team. These parents can still serve an important role in their communities as mentors, even if not coaching a team.

"COACHING EXPERTISE NEEDS TO ALIGN WITH THE AGE AND SKILL OF PLAYERS AT THEIR STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT. WE DON'T NEED MIKE BABCOCK TEACHING EIGHT YEAR OLDS. AT THAT AGE, YOU WANT A COACH WHO IS GOING TO MAKE THE GAME FUN. HOCKEY SKILLS WILL COME. AT EIGHT, IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PASSION." – DR. WADE GILBERT | PROFESSOR AT CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

An expert panel discussed the role and efforts of federations in developing coaches and the framework and organizational structure that help create an environment to cultivate a pipeline of players.

Andre Lachance (Sport for Life) moderated a conversation between **Dr. Wade Gilbert** (California State University at Fresno), **Jorgen Lindgren** (Swedish Hockey League), **Slavomir Lener** (Czech Republic National Team), and **Jim Johannson** (USA Hockey).



"YOU DON'T COACH HOCKEY, YOU COACH JEREMY OR JULIA WHO WANT TO PLAY HOCKEY – SO IT IS VITAL TO KNOW JEREMY OR JULIA AT THAT SPECIFIC TIME IN THEIR LIFE." – **ANDRE LACHANCE** | SPORT FOR LIFE LEADERSHIP TEAM

"WE ALL RUN CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS AND AGE APPROPRIATE PROGRAMS – BUT IN MANY CASES IT COMES DOWN TO A COACH WHO IS JUST TRYING TO HELP A CHILD. FOR THAT YOUNG AGE GROUP, A COACH SHOULD BE MEASURED ON WHETHER THAT CHILD COMES BACK TO THE GAME." – **JIM JOHANNSON** | ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HOCKEY OPERATIONS, USA HOCKEY

Coaching Challenges

The reality of grassroots hockey is that teams and organizations are comprised almost entirely of volunteer coaches, many of whom are parents who follow their son or daughter, resulting in a lack of continuity and expertise with certain age groups.

For years, federations delivered materials to coaches in hard copy; today, mobile applications provide all the necessary tools, but we need to make coaches aware of their existence.

Retention is not only an issue with players, but also with coaches. The coach needs to enjoy his or her time; when they do, they become more engaged. For young age groups particularly, coaches should be judged on retention and player experience, not on wins and losses.

Federation Crossovers

USA and Finland developed a coaching exchange, working together at the youth level to engage and educate coaches through new experiences and networks. Parents and players have communicated their appreciation for the different perspective provided by foreign coaches.

The Czech Republic moved resources from their U18 teams to focus on coaches in the developmental stages. In the first two years, the federation has 65 paid professional coaches - and expects that to climb to 100 coaches within the next few years - to provide consistent messaging and training to club coaches. Czech Republic credits Sweden with creating the model.

Third Period: Growing Hockey Markets

With the growing global popularity of the sport, the ethnic diversity of players at the NHL level continues to expand. In 2014-15, players from 19 different countries competed in the National Hockey League and at the 2015 NHL Draft, the first ever Dutch and Chinese players were selected. At the international level, ice hockey associations exist in 72 countries, including nontraditional hockey markets such as Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, South Africa and Australia (IIHF). Given the ever-expanding base of member associations, along with the additional exposure the sport will receive through future international contests, the sport is positioned to globalize further.

The expert panel, consisting of leaders from growing federations at different stages of their development, discussed their efforts to grow the game in their respective geographic markets. The federations provided an overview of their challenges, successes and goals for expansion through the lens of the local cultural and political realities that exist. **Elliotte Friedman** (NHL on Sportsnet) moderated a conversation between **Franz Reindl** (German Ice Hockey Federation), **Zoltan Kovacs** (Hungarian Ice Hockey Federation), and **Adam Sherlip** (The Hockey Foundation).



"HUNGARY HAS A GREAT, PROUD HISTORY WITH WOMEN'S HOCKEY. OUR WOMEN'S TEAM LOST 4-1 TO CANADA, BUT WE HAVE THE PHOTO OF THAT ONE GOAL HANGING IN OUR OFFICE. SO WE SAY - IF YOUR SON PLAYS HOCKEY, WOULDN'T YOUR DAUGHTER LIKE TO COME AS WELL?" - **ZOLTAN KOVACS** | GENERAL SECRETARY, HUNGARIAN ICE HOCKEY FEDERATION

"TO GROW, YOU HAVE TO CHANGE. THE PAST IS GONE, THE FUTURE IS IN FRONT OF US. WE HAVE A LOT OF PEOPLE AND A LOT OF RINKS, WE HAVE TO USE THE RESOURCES WE HAVE. EMOTION AND EXPERIENCE CAN MOVE US FORWARD." - **FRANZ REINDL** | PRESIDENT, GERMAN ICE HOCKEY FEDERATION

A Girls Game, Too

In many countries across the world small and large, the growth of female hockey participation is outpacing that of male participation. A new generation in management and coaching is embracing this interest as an opportunity.

Germany and Turkey have a U18 women's hockey exchange. To Germany's surprise, the Turkish community filled the arena for a women's game between the two countries. Though the final score was 24-0, the players and audience alike reveled in the experience.

In India, empowered girls are helping to empower the boys. Female brains typically develop earlier; this fact exists across all persons regardless of culture or geography. Mothers, who have been traditionally resistant to their daughters playing, now see the value in hockey participation and are supporting their involvement.

IIHF #	COUNTRY	PLAYERS	% GLOBAL	FEMALE	INDOOR RINKS	POPULATION	% POP
8	Germany	25,430	1.5%	2,416	209	80 million	0.03%
21	Hungary	4,776	0.27%	538	41	9.9 million	0.05%
32	India	1,276	.07%	305	5	1.2 billion	0.0001%

Source: IIHF

Keys for Growth

It is important to maintain your country's hockey identity. Germany and Hungary agree: when players finish their national playing career, it is vital to their growth that players return to the country as an ambassador for the game and role model for children.

Within the IIHF family, many countries are now exchanging information and resources like never before. Relationship building between federations is fueling growth.

Participation growth is only possible with a vision and a plan. In Germany, through their long-term development plan dubbed *Powerplay26*, the federation gained consensus to restructure youth hockey to better position themselves for participation growth.

The game has potential to expand into South America (Chile, Argentina, Brazil) and Africa (Morocco, Kenya, Philippines and Nepal) with help from the IIHF and established federations.

Overtime: Sustainable Values

Keynote by **Chris Price**, the CEO and President of Life Sports. Hockey has the power to teach more than skating, stick-handling and shooting; the game is a platform to deliver important life-lessons which help players succeed in their lives off the ice. The game can bring us together – to meet one another across borders, to learn to compete as friends, to respect and trust one another even in opposition, regardless of faith, race, culture, beliefs, gender and ability.

Mr. Price's closing keynote discussed hockey's opportunity to establish a unique position in the world of youth sports. Using the game, hockey organizations can teach positive values and life lessons that establish a deeper emotional connection for its participants.

Traditional Approach

Most federations focus time, effort and resources on three primary issues: (a) lowering or eliminating costs; (b) advancing development of coaches and players; and (c) building new facilities.

Many federations believe the key to participation and retention is through medals and championships, focusing on (a) national teams; (b) Olympics or World Championships; (c) elite athletes; and (d) sponsorships.

Many leaders of hockey organizations believe that parents are the game's biggest problem and that they diminish the experience for participants and other stakeholders.

Shifting Stakeholder Behavior

Grassroots hockey follows the behavior of federations. The current system -- focused on winning games, medals, scholarships and professional contracts -- pushes people out of the game too early.

Organization leaders, coaches and referees can help shift parent behavior through deeper engagement, with greater value and a better experience for children and their families.

Children build character in various environments including at home, in school and through extra-curricular activity. Hockey has an opportunity -- and a responsibility -- to teach lessons that supplement and bolster those in the classroom.

What Matters Most

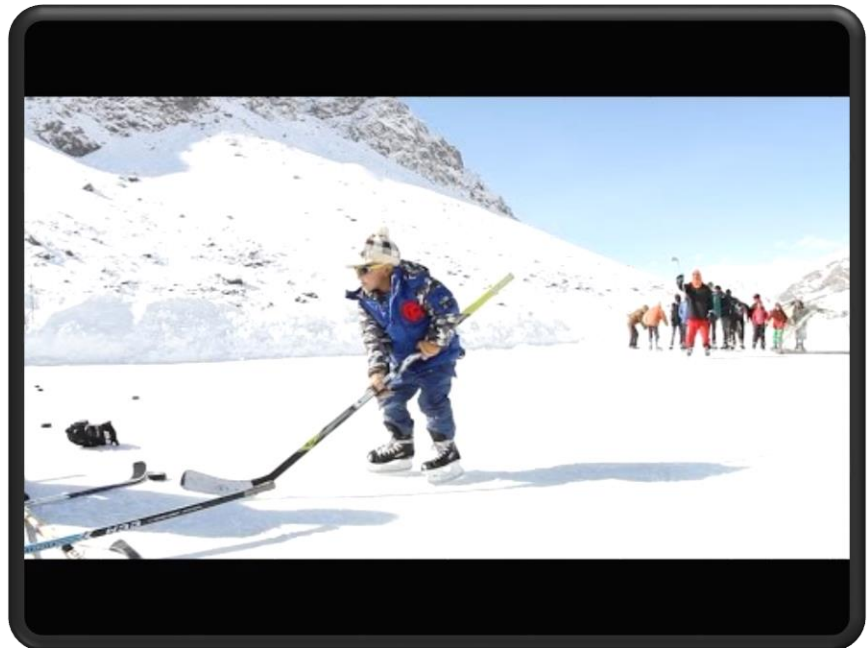
Parents are hockey's greatest asset; the majority of coaches and leaders of youth hockey are also parents. When parents believe in the sustainable values delivered to their children through the game, they become the game's ambassadors, using their networks to expand participation.

If a coach knew that the organization would view a winless season as a success if the kids came back the following year, then he or she would teach sustainable values. This approach, appreciated by the vast majority of parents, provides players with a deeper, more positive emotional connection to the game.

If you had two teams of equal athletic ability, the team whose coach teaches communication, leadership, respect and how to deal with adversity will win more games and its athletes will win in life.

If organizations shift focus away from investing primarily in early-developed "elite" players -- instead allocating resources and effort to improving the experience for all participants-- this will result in a larger quantity of quality hockey players.

The Hockey Foundation's mission is to use ice hockey to reinforce character strengths, improve the quality of life and empower children in less fortunate regions of the world. Founded by Adam Sherlip, the Foundation journeys to India each season with a growing group of volunteers, sponsors and partners to execute a professionally organized youth hockey program in a number of locations. Through equipment donations, certified coaching, and ice rink maintenance advisement, The Hockey Foundation is bringing the game to India and introducing hockey to other non-traditional markets across the globe. [Video.](#)



The panel of former players discussed the values and attributes gained through the sport that improved their lives off the ice. The conversation addressed the most fundamental values provided through the game that must be communicated to the public in order to consistently and sustainably fuel participation. **David Amber** (NHL on Sportsnet) moderated a conversation between former professional players **Adam Graves**, **Luc Robitaille**, **Cassie Campbell-Pascall** and **Miroslav Satan**.

"WE WORK A LOT ON SKILL DEVELOPMENT. THAT SAME LEVEL OF EFFORT CAN BE PUT INTO TEACHING VALUES. RESPECT YOUR TEAMMATES, SHOW UP ON TIME, SAY HELLO TO THEM IN THE LOCKER ROOM... A KID HAS TO LEAVE THE ROOM LOVING THE GAME." – **ADAM GRAVES**

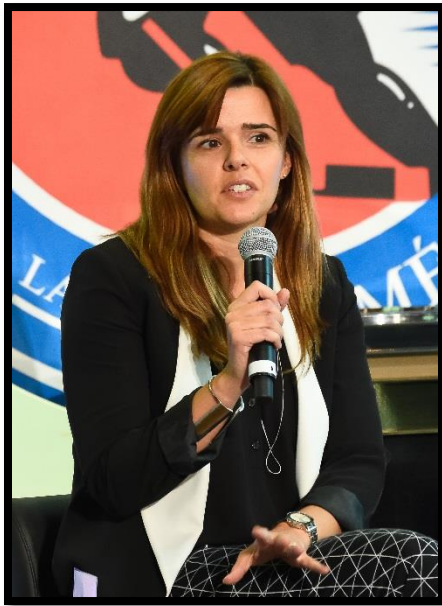
"WHEN YOU COME TO THE DRESSING ROOM AFTER LOSING, IT IS HARD TO EXPLAIN TO KIDS THAT THEY SHOULD JUST BE HAVING FUN. RIGHT NOW, WINNING CONFIRMS THAT YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK... BUT THESE ARE JUST GOOD KIDS, TRYING TO HAVE FUN. WE NEED TO TELL THEM WINNING IS NOT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING." – **MIROSLAV SATAN**



"HOCKEY GAVE ME THE CONFIDENCE TO TRY SOMETHING NEW IN BROADCASTING, AFTER MY ON-ICE CAREER. THE GAME KEPT ME HUMBLE BUT IT GAVE ME THE CONFIDENCE TO COME OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE." – **CASSIE CAMPBELL-PASCALL**

"THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS YOU DON'T WANT TO HEAR FROM YOUR PARENTS – BUT IF YOUR COACH TELLS YOU, YOU ACCEPT IT. WHEN DONE RIGHT, A COACH'S INFLUENCE ON KIDS IS POWERFUL. IT STAYS WITH YOU FOREVER. I TALK TO MY MIDGET COACH TO THIS DAY BECAUSE HE CHANGED MY LIFE." – **LUC ROBITAILLE**

Closing Remarks



"OUR PLAYERS CARE ABOUT THE GROWTH OF THE GAME, OUR YOUTH AND WHAT MAKES THEM GOOD CITIZENS. THIS BEST-ON-BEST TOURNAMENT COMES WITH RESPONSIBILITIES AND A MICROPHONE. IF WE WANT TO CHANGE, WE HAVE THE CAPACITY. THIS EVENT WAS A HISTORIC MOMENT." – **SANDRA MONTEIRO** | CHIEF OF GLOBAL BUSINESS STRATEGIES, NHLPA

"THE LEAGUE AND ITS PLAYERS ARE WORKING CLOSELY TO ENSURE THE RIGHT THINGS ARE DONE AT THE YOUTH LEVEL. THROUGH OUR 'LEARN TO PLAY' PROGRAM, WE ARE BREAKING DOWN SOME OF THOSE TRADITIONAL BARRIERS, AND WILL THEN FOCUS ON RETENTION, WHICH IS KEY TO SUSTAINING GROWTH." – **BILL DALY** | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, NHL



Attendee Feedback

At *Hockey SENSE HD*, attendees named the top three core values, skills, or life lessons they believe the game of hockey should teach all players.

They Said It: Inspiration to Improve Culture in Youth Hockey

Youth hockey belongs to the players | Inspiring to see so many influencers within the sport come together to discuss the growth of game and shifting the focus of the sport to developing better people, not just hockey players | Hockey needs to be inclusive to support all the needs of the families involved. We need to include parents in the



discussion | We have a responsibility to help grow the game globally | Encourage our youth athletes to play many other sports outside of hockey | I was inspired of how the NHL and the PA can work together in trying to put a plan together to improve the culture in youth hockey | Very impressed with the NHL and the NHLPA speaking about fun, people and cooperation across boundaries | Developing good people first!! | The notion that parents have the potential to become our #1 asset, not our biggest problem | Collaboration of players and administrators, pooling resources and expertise to build a better and more sustainable future for the game | Change in the culture of hockey is desired by both the NHL and NHLPA | Retention rate in youth hockey is striking | Recruiting young players is not as big of a challenge as retaining players | There is a need for "late entry" opportunities | Great to see that the physical literacy and LTAD movement is being presented to the highest level of hockey in the world | Citizens first. Athletes second. Hockey players third | Hearing many of the speakers remark that teaching children to be good human beings with strong core values should be the key goal of sport, including hockey.

They Said It: Challenges

What We Face

Providing opportunities for young female players after the age of 13.

Providing affordable and fun introductory skill development programs to kids who are not playing the game currently (immigrants, under-resourced, etc.).

Shifting stakeholder behavior. Parents are the biggest challenge but yet they represent the biggest opportunity.

Too much pressure on kids to win at every level of the game.

Established governing bodies are sometimes more focused on elite player development and international competition than forging a strategy to support growth in participation.

Facilities and cost. The fact that the game requires ice to play will always present challenges in most parts of the world. Also the cost of equipment is prohibitive to many families.

Rebuilding the hockey program for kids, so they have time to play other sports and become better athletes, not just hockey players.

"THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IS THAT IN MOST (ALMOST ALL) AREAS THE PEOPLE THAT SET THE RULES ARE THE PEOPLE THAT MAKE THEIR LIVING AT YOUTH HOCKEY (RINK OWNERS, TEAM OWNERS, CLUB EMPLOYEES) AND TYPICALLY THEIR BIGGEST MOTIVATION IS FINANCIAL. MAKING MONEY DOESN'T ALWAYS SYNC WITH LTAD (I.E. 9 YR OLDS SHOULDN'T BE ON THE ICE IN THE SUMMER BUT I STILL NEED TO PAY MY ARENA DEBT SERVICE SO I'M GOING TO OFFER ALL SORTS OF PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG PLAYERS KNOWING THAT IF SOME SIGN-UP THEY ALL WILL, BECAUSE PARENTS DON'T WANT THEIR CHILD LEFT BEHIND). AT THE SAME TIME, THE GREATEST OPPORTUNITY IS SOMEHOW TEACHING THOSE THAT MAKE MONEY ON THE SPORT THAT YOU CAN STILL DO SO WHILE PROVIDING OFFERINGS THAT ARE MORE IN LINE WITH LTAD AND HEALTHY CHILDHOODS." – *HOCKEY SENSE HD* ATTENDEE

They Said It: Opportunities

How We Should Respond

Building stronger working relationships with different, experienced hockey people.

Growing women's hockey.

Growing the game in Asia, South America, Africa and other untapped markets.

Finding quality volunteers who have the sustained values approach.

Teaching sustainable values to players; engaging parents and families to offer them value beyond hockey skills.

"THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IS RETURNING THE GAME TO THE KIDS AND AWAY FROM A PARENT CENTERED ENDEAVOR. THE FOCUS ON DEVELOPMENT HAS CREATED A RACE TO NOWHERE FOR FAMILIES AND THE CHASE OF A DREAM THAT IS STRIPPING THE ENJOYMENT FROM THE GAME FOR KIDS. FOR EXAMPLE: NINE YEAR OLDS DON'T NEED 95 GAMES AND 8 ROUNDS OF PLAYOFFS TO DETERMINE CHAMPIONSHIPS. THEY NEED TO LOVE THE GAME AND WANT TO PLAY IT MORE. TOP HOCKEY PLAYERS BARELY MAKE IT THROUGH 4 ROUNDS OF PLAYOFFS OVER TWO MONTHS AND WE EXPECT LITTLE KIDS WHO AREN'T FULLY DEVELOPED TO DO SOMETHING SIMILAR. WE NEED TO CHANGE THE GAME TO REFLECT THE BEST IN ALL OF US." – *HOCKEY SENSE HD* ATTENDEE

