

Fairbanks Men's Hockey Association



Hockey association freezes paper for online registration software that integrates with USA Hockey's database and improves their bottom line

Background

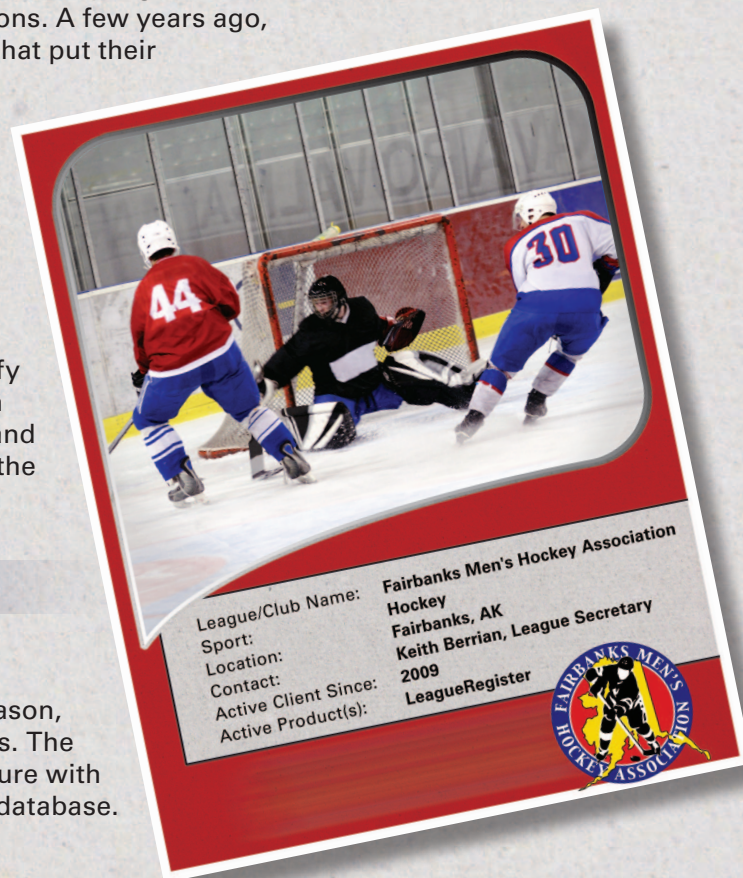
The Fairbanks Men's Hockey Association (FMHA) is a non-profit dedicated to promoting adult competitive and recreational hockey in the Interior of Alaska. The goal of FMHA is to provide the best possible experience for all participants. Players range in age from 18 to mid-60's and the skill levels vary from Tripod to ex-Division I. While defined as a "men's" league, in actuality FMHA is co-ed with nearly 30% of the 250 players being women. The association fluctuates between 18-24 teams annually, which is big enough to overrun four of the five local rinks.

Challenge

When asked what system FMHA originally used to process registrations, Keith Berrian, FMHA League Secretary, had three words to describe it: "paper, pencils and checks." The manual registration process ended up costing the association in lost registrations and payments, not to mention the lost time that could have been better spent on the ice. It quickly became apparent that incorporating hockey registration software with an electronic payment system was needed to improve operations. A few years ago, FMHA selected an affordable, self-setup registration solution that put their operations online. The system accomplished the immediate goal of automating registration and payments, but there were still some gaps to be filled. FMHA was looking for more flexible payment options, including the ability to split payments. The association also needed more transparency into financials and player information. Not only did the busy staff lack a central database to record internal notes and collect registration data, but they needed more detailed reporting on leagues, teams, players and revenue. Most importantly, FMHA wanted to find a more efficient way to verify players' membership status with USA Hockey. The verification process required a manual look up that was time-consuming and tedious. Keith and the board members realized an upgrade to the entire hockey registration software was in order.

Solution

FMHA selected Active Network, Sports, to provide the hockey management software it needed for league registration and payment processing. At the beginning of the fall 2009-2010 season, FMHA debuted Active's LeagueRegister system to their players. The cornerstone of Active's technology (and the most popular feature with the players) is an integration with USA Hockey's membership database.





The integration automatically verifies USA Hockey membership status and creates an export file for the league's Cyber Sport registration software—all online.

Another benefit of the technology was that FMHA could designate different levels of administrative access, ensuring that all staff members could view important information while still limiting who had high-level editing rights.

The hockey league management software also included hundreds of detailed reports that Keith and his staff could pull, at any time, to view accurate data. "Registration is extremely quick to set up each season," Keith mentions. "I just copy one of the templates and change the dates and amounts. It's easy, everything is integrated and I have all of the reports I need."

Results

Within a few weeks of launching the new system, online registration was so successful that Keith and his staff decided to eliminate paper registrations completely. Automatic data collection and payment processing was at least 3-4 times faster than the manual system. Plus, with all information stored centrally, everything was tracked and viewable. No missing paperwork, no wasted time on data entry and no disorganized information.

Here are some of the best features of the hockey management software that FMHA has seen positive results with:

- ▶ USA Hockey membership verification is quick and the staff is armed with real-time knowledge of exactly who is eligible.
- ▶ Changes to leagues and teams can be made with the click of a mouse, saving time and paperwork hassles.
- ▶ Reports can be run on any combination of data, which is especially useful when FMHA searches for outstanding revenue.
- ▶ Communication with players has improved using built-in email tools to send notices regarding registration dates, payment due dates, special events, and league reports.
- ▶ Collection rates have increased and time spent chasing payments has decreased with automatic payment processing, including split payments.
- ▶ Transparency among the staff has improved with detailed records stored in the communication center that can be viewed by anyone with a login.

"The cost has been more than offset by the drastic reduction in outstanding revenue, not to mention all of the other benefits that have piled up" Keith states. FMHA is extremely happy that it has transitioned to the new hockey registration software and can now focus on the ice, instead of on the administration.

Rink Recommendations from Keith Berrian

1. **Reduce your liability by using an online system**—you don't have to handle cash and data verification is instant.
2. There are huge benefits to be gained from **tracking all of your revenue and finances**.
3. **Eliminate paper registrations completely**—it will make your life easier. For those who don't have a computer, partner with a local sports store to offer computer access to those who need it. It will drive traffic to the store and allow you to avoid the data entry and paperwork associated with offline entries.