

Huntsville Amateur Hockey Association



In the Hockey Capital of the South, league scores a hat trick with paperless registration, improved fee collection and an integration with USA Hockey

Background

The Huntsville Amateur Hockey Association (HAHA) is a non-profit, volunteer corporation formed to promote the sport of hockey in the community of Huntsville, Alabama. HAHA began in 1962 and has been hugely successful, currently encompassing over 700 players on approximately 50 teams. In a city dubbed the "Hockey Capital of the South," HAHA serves an avid community of athletes and offers time on the ice to all levels of players—whether prepping for the collegiate level or simply trying to learn the game.

Challenge

Up until 2008, HAHA used paper-based processes for all registrations. Players and parents mailed in registration forms and checks to Patti Fulks, Association Registrar, and her husband Terry Fulks, Association Treasurer. Patti and Terry would manually enter and record the information for hundreds of players, and then make periodic trips to the bank to deposit the payments. This was inefficient, causing Patti and Terry to spend countless hours trying to organize paperwork and payments.

Another issue related to installment payments. Hockey registration opens annually in August and continues for four months. Players can pay fees in installments over those months, but full payment is due by December 1st. Terry would collect all funds and reconcile which checks had bounced or were late. "We would typically have up to \$20,000 outstanding in accounts receivable in December," Patti mentioned. "From there, I would have to make collection calls and track down missing payments. It was a complete ordeal."

In an effort to eliminate these manual processes, Patti decided to try an online hockey registration system that was offered through HAHA's website hosting company. The system immediately created problems. Payment processing was not set up correctly and fees were deposited months late. This was a serious issue, considering HAHA generates nearly \$700,000 per year. The system also did not offer any template reports—Patti had to learn how to build each report from scratch herself. "Our problems all originated with the system," Patti explained. "Our players are tech-savvy and have a high online conversion rate, so switching to paperless registration was not an issue. The system we were using just couldn't process the information and payments correctly and quickly." Patti was back where she started, spending valuable time trying to manage fees and manual processes instead of being able to focus on more important registrar duties.





Solution

Patti did some research and this time around chose Active Network, Sports, to provide hockey registration software for HAHA. As an established online technology company whose experience is rooted in the sports industry, Active was an ideal fit. Active successfully processes millions of transactions each year and also offers a crucial integration with USA Hockey. Active's system syncs with USA Hockey's membership database to instantly verify a player's eligibility, eliminating the need for athletes to write down membership numbers and bring them to registration.

Patti found Active's registration system to be straightforward and easy to learn. "It was so intuitive that I taught myself to use it. If I ever got hung up, I would just call technical support and have the answer right away." In addition to the friendly interface and dedicated customer service, Active's software features pre-built template reports, allowing Patti and Terry to download real-time information on player data and financials. Reports can also be customized to access and pull specific information that is needed by the league.

Results

Once Active's hockey management software was up and running, HAHA saw noticeable results immediately. Player information and payments were collected and processed smoothly, including instant verification of membership numbers with the **USA Hockey membership database integration**. Active's software also offered a recurring payment function, which **billed installment payments automatically**, without any manual leg work from Patti or Terry. This provided parents and players with an affordable way to manage their fees, while simultaneously ensuring the association's revenue would be collected on time and in full. No manual data entry, no trips to the bank, and less paperwork. Players and parents had convenient, 24/7 access to registration and Patti saved endless hours of time by automating the registration process online. "The biggest benefit has been the amount of time saved," noted Patti. "Both my time, Terry's time and the volunteer time we no longer need. It added up to a lot of hours."

Another huge benefit was the **remarkable decrease in outstanding fees**. By eliminating checks and using Active's email marketing tool to send fee deadline reminders, league updates and notifications of outstanding fees, HAHA was able to increase collections by 75%. As of last December after HAHA began using Active, only \$2,000 was unpaid, compared to the previous years when the balance would average \$20,000. This not only made the Association managers happy, but Patti had dramatically fewer collection calls to make.

The reporting functionality has also been a positive asset to HAHA. Patti and Terry can **pull real-time information on any combination of data**, allowing them to assess and forecast for upcoming seasons with greater accuracy. They have gained more insight into the players, leagues and the finances—saving more time and making their jobs easier.

"Take a look at Active's hockey registration software and go through a demo," advised Patti. "It really is simple to use, from both the player and the administrative perspective. Go online and it will be much easier, more organized and a whole lot less stressful for you."

Rink Recommendations from Patti Fulks, HAHA Registrar

- ▶ Paperless online registration saves you hours of time and stress
- ▶ Automated fee collection and installment payments greatly improve revenue collection and give you an accurate picture of your financials
- ▶ Integration with USA Hockey's membership database makes registration quicker and more convenient for both you and your players