



Coaches Most Common Questions Answered by the FYHP Equipment Manager

Q: What “equipment” are you talking about when you say “equipment manager”?

A: My job is to order, maintain, distribute and inventory all of the program’s travel team jerseys (about 350 shirts total), goalie gear, beginner / house league jerseys, pucks, socks, first aid kits, water bottles, gear bags, you name it. You can order name badges and FYHP pins through me – other logo gear you can pick up at Ray’s skate shop, 4 Seasons in Saxonville or the Natick Outdoor Store. I also manage the used equipment bins.

Q: I’m a new coach. What am I getting when I get an email saying “it’s time to pick up your gear”?

A: You’ll be getting a complete set of home and away jerseys in garment bags, goalie equipment if your goalie doesn’t have his/her own set, 50 pucks and a puck bag, water bottles and a carrying cage, first aid kit and socks (home and away) for your team.

Q: When does the pick-up time happen?

A: I place the order for new gear in June and usually distribute everything on the Saturday before the rink opens. You can send your team manager or an assistant coach if you can’t make it yourself. I do my best to have your stuff ready to go so you can get in and out as quickly as possible.

Q: Seems like there’s a lot of stuff to order. How much money and time does that all take?

A: Each jersey has a replacement cost of around \$75. The order total varies, and no one item is that expensive, but it does add up. Each team gets about \$100 worth of pucks, and we usually have to order more as teams lose them over the course of the season! As for time, that depends directly on how good a job the prior season’s coaches did when they returned their jerseys. If they did it right, with jerseys hung, in order, washed, facing the right way, it takes me about two full days to have it all ready for pickup. That’s why I’m always looking for helpers, and why I implore coaches to do their part.

Q: What's the deal with Locker Room X?

A: First of all, FYHP does not own Loring Arena – we are a customer. Locker Room X was cleaned up and built out before my time – it was intended to be an alternate area for dressing and equipment storage. It's dark. It's dirty. It's cold. The rink staff does not maintain this area so it's important to keep it clean and, if you need to take something out of there, to return it where you found it.

Q: One of the goalie pads for my team has a loose strap. Can you fix it?

A: I'm not really good with that stuff, but if you bring it to Ray he can fix it and he'll send us the bill. Just check with me first because I might have a better set of pads you can use.

Q: Parents are asking me what to do with their old used equipment. Is there a swap / trade bin?

A: Absolutely. I schedule an equipment donation drop-off at the end of the summer AFTER the jerseys have been distributed to teams. The reason is that there are several bins for old gear that are behind where we store our jerseys. The bins tend to get disorganized so I ask for everyone's help to keep things as neat as possible. I also ask that people resist the temptation to use the drop-off even as a way to throw out their trash. Used equipment is fine. Old, broken, unsafe equipment should go out in your trash.

Q: What's the deal with name badges for the backs of travel jerseys?

A: Ah, the most hotly discussed topic outside of tryouts. As a coach, I HATE them. But most parents LOVE them. New players in the program get their name badges at no charge. I ask team managers to collect names and submit them to me a few weeks into the season once I have a minute to breathe. Because so many kids lose them, parents can order replacements, usually they're around \$15. I have a strict deadline when I place the order because it's labor intensive and we get volume pricing. It's also a fairly major pain in the butt .

Q: Why don't the white jerseys have Velcro for the name badges?

A: The white jerseys, for the most part, are new. We have not attached Velcro to all 200+ jerseys yet. I am not sure we will. See above.

Q: What do I do with my team jerseys once I get them? Do I hand them out to the kids or what?

A: You are responsible for your jerseys – they are property of FYHP. I recommend that you keep the home and away sets together and assign a parent to keep one and bring them to the games. Most teams rotate so that one parent has the jerseys for only one month at a time. That way the sets stay clean and it's much easier at the end of the year when you turn them back in. Some coaches think it's easier to let the kids keep their jerseys for the whole season. If you choose to do that, I can guarantee that you will end up having to chase kids down at the end of the season to get their jerseys. Some will go missing for good; if they do, you will be charged \$75 per jersey and you will get angry emails and phone calls from your otherwise friendly equipment manager.

Q: I can't track down a jersey. That's not a big deal is it?

A: Um, no, it is a very big deal. You're on the hook for \$75. Why? Imagine if every coach came to me with the same question. Do the math real quick and you'll realize that the program would be out 16 jerseys. That's an entire roster, an entire team, without jerseys. Plus, when we place our new jersey orders, we get volume discounts. We can replace 100 at a time, but not 16, if we want it to be cost-effective. We can't lose a jersey. Not a one. No exceptions.

Q: What about returning the equipment at the end of the season?

A: You'll receive an email with a time to turn in your jerseys at Loring usually the weekend after tryouts end. I also ask for any pucks, puck bags, goalie equipment to be returned also. The more you can return, the better – it helps keep our costs down. As far as jerseys, I ask that they all be returned as a complete set, cleaned, on hangers, in numerical order all facing the same way. With 300 jerseys to keep track of, your equipment manager needs all the help he can get. He's just one guy, after all. And he's probably missing a beautiful spring Saturday, unpaid, to collect and organize everything.

Q: What if a kid's jersey doesn't fit / I'm missing #13 / I lost my puck bag / a parent wants their own water bottle, etc.?

A: Special requests are part of the job, so if something comes up, I'll work with you to find a solution. Just keep in mind that we don't always have every number jersey in every size. Sometimes I can re-order stuff as needed, other times I might have an extra whatever-you-are-looking-for in the closet. Just remember that I have 16 teams that are probably looking for something too – I'll do my best.

Q: How much do you get paid to do this job?

A: Very funny. But on a serious note, just because we are all volunteers doesn't mean we are allowed to be bad at it. We do the best we can. I'm always looking for feedback and, of course, help. If there's a better way to do it, or if you can pitch in to make it better, I'm all ears.

Q: What can I do to help?

A: Glad you asked. The best thing any coach can do is to stay organized and follow, as closely as possible, the directions I lay out in my emails. The second best thing you can do is to enlist the help of your parents. Whether it's helping to keep Locker Room X clean, moving the black bumpers in and out of the benches, stacking tires after practices – it literally takes a village of volunteers, official or not, to make youth hockey happen. Thank you for doing what you do to help. And remember, although your equipment manager doesn't get any special benefits, I hear that he does enjoy the occasional adult beverage when he's off the clock.

