

## What is Sled Hockey?

**Sled Hockey was first developed in Norway** in 1971 in order to meet the special recreational, emotional and physical needs of youth and adults with disabilities. Sled Hockey is similar to ice hockey. There are six players on the ice including the goal tender and it is played on a full size ice rink. The biggest difference is the equipment used. Players are strapped into small sleds which have a back rest and two skate blades on the bottom. Straps around the ankles, knees and waist securely hold the player on the sled. Players slide to a stop on one or both blades like a skater. The sleds are high enough off the ice surface that they can pass the puck underneath from side to side. Instead of one long hockey stick, Sled Hockey players use two short sticks with metal picks on one end and a wooden paddle blade on the other. They use the pick end to propel themselves across the ice. When it's time to handle the puck, they just turn their wrists and handle the puck side to side with the paddle blade ends. Leaning left or right while digging the stick into the ice turns the sled.

## Who can play?

**The wonderful thing about Sled Hockey** is that anyone can play. This sport is played by both males and females, youth and adults ages 6-70. It is a sport that totally integrates players with mobility limitations, amputees and able-bodied people with knee, leg or hip injuries that limit their participation in traditional hockey.

## Physical Fitness

**Sled Hockey players discover** that piloting a sled is fun and a great form of exercise. It increases strength and coordination and also conditions the lower body. The balance used to propel, play the puck, turn and stop gives legs, back and abdominal muscles a great work out. In fact, paraplegics playing regularly notice an increase in balance when using their wheelchairs.

## Similarities

- Protective gear must be worn at all times. This includes helmet with cage or shield, shin guards, shoulder pads, gloves, elbow and neck guard. Most players also wear hockey pants
- There are 6 players on the ice for each team at a time. The same positions are also used: 1 goalie, 3 forwards and 2 defensemen
- Lines are changed either during stoppages or whenever needed/possible
- The ice surface, goal net, lines, and puck are all the same
- Most of the USA Hockey rules apply with necessary changes

## Differences

- Instead of skates, players sit in specially designed sleds. The sleds sit on top of two hockey skate blades
- There are two sticks for each player instead of one. These sticks are about 1/3 the length of a regulation stick depending on the size of the player. Some players cut their sticks down if they are too large for them to handle. They also have two metal pics on the butt end which enables the players to propel themselves
- Periods are 12 minutes long as opposed to 20
- At rinks where the bench is inaccessible, the players sit on the ice in front of the bench or in front of the penalty boxes depending on which is applicable
- Some added rules apply in reference to T-boning, no-touch players and others