

# THE 2 & 2 NATIONAL CHALLENGE

The idea of growing hockey on the local level can be daunting; youth association growth by big numbers happens with small steps.

Recently the number of children between the ages of 4 to 8 playing hockey has been shrinking. Shockingly, over the last 10 years, acquisition of new players has dropped from 47,752 to 39,212 in 2008-09. To add to the shrinking numbers, 43.1% stop playing hockey by age 9, showing us that retention is as important as recruitment.



The 2 & 2 National Challenge is a call to action for local associations. We are asking you to recruit two more players than last year. For example, if your association brought in 22 new 4 to 8 year olds last year, then next year you want to get 24.

The second half of the challenge is to improve the retention of your 4 to 8 year olds by two more players. If your club kept 30 players from the previous season, next year you need 32 hockey players back on the ice.

From the example above, the 2 & 2 National Challenge has helped this youth association experience a 7.7% increase at their 8 & under level. With the increase at the association's youngest level, these new hockey players will long serve the future of the club.

| <b><u>Challenge Summary</u></b> |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b><u>Acquisition:</u></b>      | Add 2 more players than last year's total  |
| <b><u>Retention:</u></b>        | Keep 2 more players than last year's total |

Youth associations come in many different sizes, but this attainable goal will have significant results. As another example, the table below shows what would happen if the Holland (Michigan) Hockey Association is able to successfully complete the 2 & 2 National Challenge.

| <i>Holland Hockey Association</i> | <b>2008-09</b> | <b>2009-10</b> | <b>+/-</b>   |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| <b>NEW</b>                        | 18             | 20             | +2<br>+11.1% |
| <b>RETAINED</b>                   | 29             | 31             | +2<br>+6.9%  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | 47             | 51             | +4<br>+8.5%  |

For more information on the 2 & 2 National Challenge, please contact Program Services at (719) 576-USAH or email [growthegame@usahockey.org](mailto:growthegame@usahockey.org).