

Laughing Skulls Hockey Club



Request For Sponsorship

Justin Panzer, Captain
Joshua Reece, Assistant Captain
Scott Sarama, Assistant Captain
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Summary

The Laughing Skulls Hockey Club is comprised of four teams of adult ice hockey players (ages 22 to 55) who skate at The Gardens Ice House in Laurel, Maryland. Our teams each play in separate divisions determined by skill level. Our organization has grown from one team of 15 players in 2003 to the current 66 players for the 2008/09 season.

To date, the Laughing Skulls Hockey Club is 100% funded by its members meaning that ice time (in the form of league dues), jerseys and individual equipment are paid for with the personal funds of our players. Primarily due to the rising costs of energy, league fees have increased dramatically and the Laughing Skulls are seeking financial assistance from local businesses for the upcoming season and beyond.

We are requesting donations to our club of \$500 or more to help us subsidize our annual costs. Our primary objective is to reduce the individual dues of players to approximately \$400 per season by raising \$10,000 in sponsorship funding. In return for sponsorship, the Laughing Skulls Hockey Club will work with our benefactors to provide a return on investment to include any or all of the following:

- Regular patronage of the sponsor's establishment by our players, their families and their acquaintances. This could take the form of beer purchases for game days and team events (beverage retailers), frequent dining with teammates or family members (restaurants and bars), booking of events for our individual company activities (lodging and meeting facilities or restaurants), contracting of services (medical or therapeutic practices, home services, etc.) or a variety of other business arrangements as required by our members.
- Recognition of the sponsor's business on our team website
- Team naming rights and uniform advertising for amounts exceeding one-quarter of our total season budget.

The fall/winter season begins in early September 2008 and will run through March 2009. The total anticipated budget for that period is \$33,000 (league dues, jersey costs and other miscellaneous expenses). We will be making payment to the majority of our creditors prior to the start of the season with the final cash disbursements expected to be made no later than November 1, 2008. With this timeframe in mind, we are seeking commitment from sponsors as early as possible – preferably before September 1, 2008.

The Laughing Skulls Hockey Club appreciates your interest in supporting us and we look forward to working with you to find a mutually beneficial solution to our request. For more information on the Club and our needs, please see the body of this proposal. If you have questions or wish to make a contribution to the organization, please contact Justin Panzer at 443-538-6465 or the individual team member from whom you received this proposal.



Introduction

The Laughing Skulls Hockey Club is a group of men who play ice hockey at The Gardens Ice House (TGIH) in Laurel, Maryland. The group is comprised of former youth, high school, and college players, as well as many players who learned to play the game as adults. The mission of the Laughing Skulls is to provide an organization in which such players can come together in a competitive league and join with quality people who want to have fun, stay fit, and make friends in a team-oriented atmosphere.

Justin and Doug Panzer and their former New Orleans Hockey League teammate Josh Reece formed the Maryland incarnation of the Laughing Skulls in 2003. Through aggressive recruiting of adult hockey players from around the Baltimore-Washington area the Skulls flourished quickly – advancing to the B-League finals of TGIH Adult Hockey League in each of their first two seasons. Despite the constant movement of players in and out of the area – for work and personal reasons – our success and our great atmosphere have allowed us to continually attract quality people to our organization. In the five-plus years since our inaugural season, the Laughing Skulls have grown from one team of 15 players to four teams of over 60 players.



The Laughing Skulls originally became a hockey team in the mid-1990s in Atlanta. It was there that Justin Panzer met Greg Kelly who was the founder and president of the Atlanta Brewing Company. The Atlanta Brewing Company, one of the most recognized brands of micro-brewed beer in the Atlanta area, launched Laughing Skull Bohemian Pilsner with help from the Vortex Bar and Grill in the eclectic neighborhood of "Little Five Points". It wasn't long before Mr. Kelly formed a hockey team to take advantage of the popularity of his new brew and the Laughing Skulls were born.

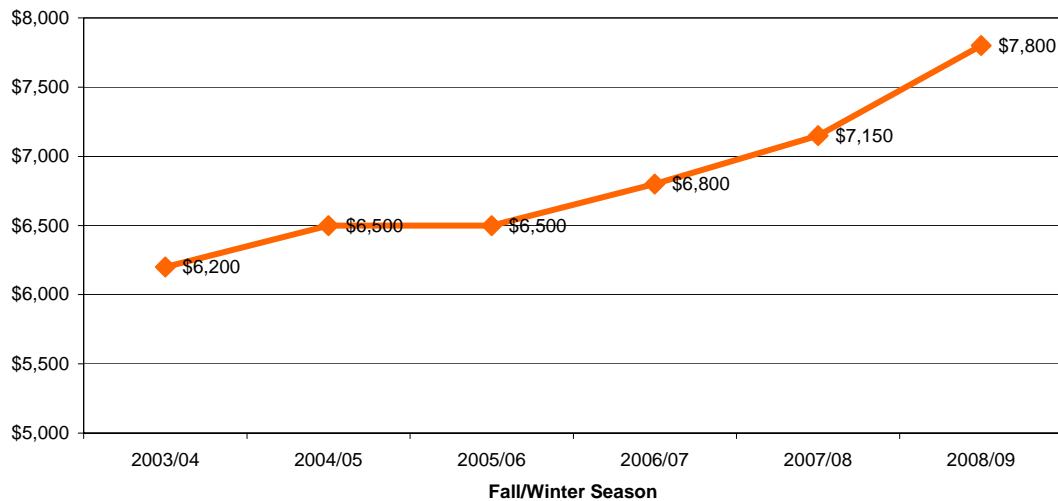
The original Laughing Skulls still play in the Atlanta Amateur Hockey League in Alpharetta, GA. Though Greg Kelly sold the Atlanta Brewing Company in 2006, and Laughing Skull Pilsner is no longer brewed, the brewery is still thriving in the Southern

United States. To learn about the Atlanta Brewing Company, please visit their website at www.atlantabrewing.com. To learn more about the Vortex Bar and Grill, please visit www.thevortexbarandgrill.com.

Objectives

Ice hockey at any level is an expensive sport to play and our growth has not come without a price. Team dues in amateur hockey leagues are typically driven by the hosting rink's energy costs more than any other factor. It is estimated that over two-thirds of the dues for a team at The Gardens Ice House go to cover the rink's utility bill. With the rising costs of energy, the 2008-2009 season will cost \$7800 per team (approximately \$32,000 total) which will break down to between \$520 and \$600 per player without assistance from outside of our organization. This represents the single

Team Dues Per Season



largest year-on-year increase in league fees since the Laughing Skulls began playing in Maryland. Factor in additional costs of equipment, jerseys for new players, skate sharpening and other incremental expenses and the overall price becomes potentially prohibitive to many of our players.

It is the objective of our organization to partner with local businesses to make Laughing Skulls hockey affordable for all those who have an interest to play for us and share in our vision of building a competitive and enjoyable hockey and social club. Polling of our players indicates that an affordable price point for most individuals is approximately \$400 per player. For us to achieve the necessary dues reduction to reach the desired per-player cost target the Laughing Skulls Hockey Club would like to raise a minimum of \$10,000 for the 2008/09 season.

It is our belief that to achieve this rather auspicious goal our organization and individual players must form a strong partnership with our benefactors through a commitment to provide a measurable return on investment. In return for donations of \$500 to \$10,000, the Laughing Skulls Hockey Club will offer:

- Regular patronage of a sponsor's establishment by our players, their families and their acquaintances. This could take the form of beer purchases for game days and team events (beverage retailers), frequent dining with teammates or family members (restaurants and bars), booking of events for our individual company activities (lodging and meeting facilities or restaurants), contracting of services (medical or therapeutic practices, home services, etc.) or a variety of other business arrangements as required by our members.
- Recognition of the sponsor's business on our team website and other activities designed to increase brand-awareness and customer base
- Team naming rights and uniform advertising for amounts exceeding one-quarter of our total season budget.

Though we believe we can support a number of varied businesses by re-directing current personal and team expenditures toward those assisting our program, there are particular services which we are guaranteed to use. The top five known needs of our team are:

1. A beer supplier
2. A bar/restaurant for us to regularly patronize as a group and with family
3. Sporting goods suppliers
4. Sports medicine and physical therapy as required by our players
5. Home-related services

We would like to begin receiving donations as early as September 1, 2008 (or as late as November 1, 2008) for this coming season and look to form long-lasting relationships with sponsors to provide mutual benefit in subsequent seasons as well.

Procedures, Budget and ROI

As previously stated, the minimum budget for the fall/winter season starting in September 2008 is \$32,000. This includes league fees and jersey costs. We anticipate first payments to The Gardens Ice House due during the first week of September with installment payments due during October and as late as November 1, 2008. Our goal is to reduce this burden by approximately \$10,000 through sponsorship funding. We would like to have all outside funding in place no later than November 1, 2008 – though we can manage more flexible terms in certain cases.

Upon receiving commitment from a sponsor to support the Laughing Skulls, the team representative managing the relationship and the team captains will work with the business manager to determine the appropriate procedures for providing return on investment and measuring the success of the partnership. Due to the varied nature of businesses with whom we are working, it is assumed that there will be different agreements with each sponsor. Once an agreement is in place for amount of donation, communication to our members, return to the sponsor and measurement of the results the sponsor will be asked to provide a check made out to Laughing Skulls Hockey Club.

On the part of the Laughing Skulls, we will reciprocate on the receipt of funds by instructing our members to uphold the agreements that are in place with our sponsors. In many cases this is as simple as informing them to prioritize our sponsors' establishments above others when considering personal choices for dining out, services, etc. In other cases we will move team activities from the rink's locker rooms and parking lots to a local business for our post-game events. Other arrangements will be made as necessary with sponsor businesses that fall in other categories.

Timetable

The following dates are applicable to this proposal

Date	Activity
8/31/2008	Final jersey payments due to vendor
9/1/2008	First 2008/09 season payments due to The Gardens Ice House Initial sponsor funding required
9/10/2008	Fall/Winter season starts
10/1/2008	Second installment payments due to The Gardens Ice House
11/1/2008	Final installment payments due to The Gardens Ice House
3/1/2009	Registration begins for Spring/Summer 2009 season 2009 Season budget determined New/renewed sponsorship agreements required
4/15/2009	First 2009 summer season payments due to The Gardens Ice House
5/15/2009	Summer 2009 season starts
6/1/2009	Final installment payments due to The Gardens Ice House
8/1/2009	Registration begins for Fall/Winter 2009/10 season 2009/10 Season budget determined

Key Club Personnel

There are a number of people that contribute to the success of the Laughing Skulls. As we have grown we have established a small group of eight people to help with day-to-day management of the organization and the administrative duties of the various teams. The group is led by three individuals who also serve as on-ice captains for the teams.



Justin Panzer is the original founding member of the Skulls and continues to lead the organization. Justin manages the North American product management and marketing organization for Rohde & Schwarz, Inc. based in Columbia, Maryland. Justin has been with the wireless test equipment manufacturer for over five years and has spent almost fifteen years in the wireless communications industry. He has played and coached hockey for many years dating back to his childhood in the Philadelphia area. He has a wife and two children and lives in Sykesville, MD.

As it relates to the Laughing Skulls, Justin's role is to oversee management of all four teams, provide representation at league meetings and handle the general business aspects of the organization. Justin can be reached on 443-538-6465 or justin.panzer@gmail.com.

Joshua Reece is the co-founder of the Laughing Skulls and has known Justin Panzer for approximately fifteen years. Josh has a PhD from Johns Hopkins in Allergy and Infectious Diseases and is currently working on a number of medical research projects.

Josh lives in Elkridge with his wife and two children and also provides web development and hosting services to a number of local businesses. Josh continues to coach youth hockey at the middle school level and has been playing since his childhood in Alaska.



Josh handles a number of administrative duties for the Skulls and in our teams' webmaster. Josh can be reached at josh.reece@gmail.com.

Scott Sarama joined the Laughing Skulls in 2006 after challenging himself to learn to skate and play ice hockey. He has quickly become an integral part of our organization by taking over the majority of the management duties of the Laughing Skulls Bronze 2 and Bronze 3 teams.

Scott works in Columbia, Maryland as an engineer with Northrop Grumman. He works on a number of government and military projects, often requiring special security clearance.

Scott is originally from the Buffalo, New York area and is an avid fan of the Buffalo Bills and Sabres. He is the founder of Two Bills



Drive – one of the pre-eminent Bills fan sites on the World Wide Web. Scott lives in Elkridge with his wife and two children.

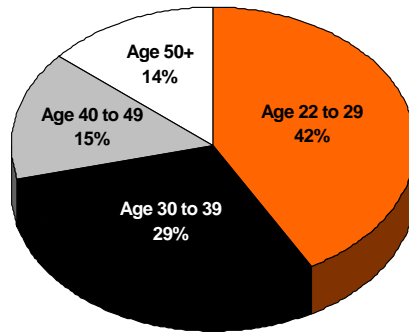
As mentioned above, Scott is responsible for most of the day-to-day management of two of the Skulls teams. Scott can be reached at ssarama@gmail.com.

Demographics and Tendencies

The Laughing Skulls will have 66 rostered players for the 2008/09 season. In addition to those players there are eight to 12 more that will return in subsequent seasons but are still affiliated with us and live in the area. Looking at just the players scheduled to skate with us for the Fall, there are a number of demographic attributes that may be useful to a potential sponsor in determining the potential spending behaviors of our members.

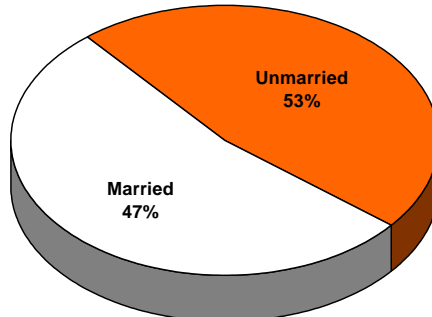
Players are male and range in age from 22 to 55 with a breakdown shown below:

Laughing Skulls Age Breakdown



Approximately half (47%) of the Laughing Skulls players are married with the majority of unmarried players in the 20 to 29 age bracket. Of the married players, nearly 75% have children ranging in age from 2 years old to 22 years old (plus three scheduled to arrive during the early part of our upcoming hockey season).

Marital Status of Laughing Skulls Players



Geographically, our players reside and work throughout the I-95 corridor between Baltimore and Washington. We have individuals as far north as Baltimore, as far south as Silver Spring, east to Annapolis and west into Sykesville and Mt. Airy. The primary concentration of individuals are in Howard and Baltimore Counties with the most concentrated group being in the Elkridge, Ellicott City and Columbia areas.

The occupations and income levels of our membership are very diverse but all are gainfully employed and tend to spend any "disposable" income on varied recreational activities. Just a few examples of the occupations of Skulls players are: Emergency Room Doctor, Patent Attorney, Elementary School Teacher, Optical Engineer, Physical Therapist, Financial Analyst, Child Psychologist, Tile & Granite Salesperson and Network Administrator.

For obvious reasons, detailed financial records of individual club members are not available. However, anecdotal information indicates that many of our players eat out with friends and family at least once per week, attend movies, concerts, sporting events and partake in cultural activities on a regular basis in the Baltimore-Washington area.

Over 50% of our members are homeowners and spend a significant amount of their annual income on do-it-yourself projects, home improvement services and home-based activities such as barbecues and entertaining of family and friends.

As a group, our teams frequently get together to have dinner, play golf, attend professional sporting events, etc. Most notably, we have at least one annual barbecue at a player's home and we go out together to a bar or restaurant after almost every game that ends prior to 10PM.

A final notable purchasing behavior of our team is a minimum of 30 beers per game to be enjoyed after play in either the locker room or the parking lot of The Gardens Ice House. Given the average of one game per team per week this comes to a minimum of four 30-packs of beer – plus ice and other accompaniments – each week.

Evaluation

Review of the success of sponsorship activities will begin as early as December 1, 2008. Since arrangements with our various sponsors will be unique to each, the metrics by which success is determined will be set at the time of initial sponsorship discussions and prior to disbursement of funds by the business manager. Regular meetings will be held between the sponsor and the Laughing Skulls representatives to evaluate the mutual benefit to each. The frequency of review meetings will be at the discretion of the sponsor.

Next Steps

In order to move forward with action on this proposal, a Laughing Skulls Hockey Club member will follow up personally with the prospective sponsor to determine interest and commitment level. After establishing clear interest a meeting will be held between the sponsor and a member of the Laughing Skulls Hockey Club management team to set ROI metrics, payment amount and dates and follow-up meetings. This entire process is expected to take only a matter of days but may extend longer as required by the arrangement being set in place.