2027 Case Challenge

CALIFORNIA BAY AREA

Hockey's future will not be shaped by tradition alone.

It will be shaped by new voices, bold ideas, and people who see the game differently. The NHL, NHLPA, SAP and Sharks Foundation invite students to show us hockey through their eyes, using their discipline, lived experience, or passion to identify a problem, barrier, or opportunity in the game and develop an idea that delivers measurable impact and helps shape the future of hockey.

> **Bring technology into your thinking**
> To support your thinking, explore SAP's tools and resources and consider how technology could strengthen your solution. How could data, analytics, AI, or enterprise technology help you better understand the opportunity, deliver your idea at scale, improve the participant experience, or measure its impact? **No prior SAP experience or working technical prototype is required. Students should explain at a conceptual level.**

The Challenge

Drawing on your discipline, professional expertise, lived experience, or personal passion, what do you believe hockey needs next? What problem, barrier, or opportunity in hockey are you uniquely positioned to solve?

Students are invited to use what they know best to identify a specific problem, barrier, or opportunity in hockey, then propose a business, organization, program, product, service, or plan that responds to it. The strongest submissions will clearly define the issue they are addressing, explain why it matters now, demonstrate how technology could enable the solution, and show how their idea will change the game for the better.

START WITH:

Your field of study, lived experience, passions, interests, career goals, or a challenge you feel uniquely positioned to help solve. Then ask:

What problem are you trying to solve, why does it matter, and how could your idea create meaningful impact?

Submission Prompt

1. **What problem, barrier, or opportunity is your team trying to solve?** What does hockey need next, and why does this matter for the future of the game?
2. **What is your idea?** Is it a business, organization, program, product, service, or plan, and how does it address the problem, barrier, or opportunity you identified?
3. **Why is your team the best to bring it forward?** How does your discipline, lived experience, or passion shape your understanding of the problem and the solution?
4. **What is the impact?** How will your idea make hockey more accessible, inclusive, affordable, sustainable, safe, engaging, or relevant for the future?
5. **How could technology strengthen your idea?** Using the tools and resources, how could data, analytics, AI or enterprise technology help enable your solution and measure its impact?

Put Your Team into the Game

ART HISTORY & DESIGN
Art history or design students could rethink how jerseys, storytelling, or visual identity help people see themselves in sport

NURSING
Nursing students could redesign emergency response or player safety protocols for youth hockey

BUSINESS
Business students could rethink how hockey teams use digital platforms to create revenue opportunities

TECHNOLOGY & COMPUTER SCIENCE
Technology or computer science students could explore how AI or data can help fans better connect with the game

PHOTOGRAPHY
Students who love photography could showcase overlooked people, places, or moments that make hockey meaningful

FAR FROM THE RINK
Students who grew up far from an ice rink could help bring hockey closer to communities without easy access to ice

THOUGHTSTARTER:

Hockey does not need one kind of thinker. It needs your expertise, lived experience, passion, and reason for caring. Show us what you know, why it matters, and how it can change the game for the better.

What We Are Looking For

- **Innovation:** Is the idea original and compelling? Look into what already exists in today's world and how evolving technology could help shape what comes next for hockey.
- **Relevance:** Does the submission clearly define the problem, barrier, or opportunity and explain why it matters now?
- **Impact:** Will the idea create meaningful value for players, families, fans, communities, or the hockey ecosystem?
- **Feasibility:** Can the concept realistically be implemented or scaled?
- **Presentation:** Is the idea clearly communicated and supported?

Why Participate?

- Compete to win **$10,000** in scholarships, incredible NHL prizes and career-building opportunities
- Access to mentorship, tools, and guidance from NHL, SAP, and industry leaders to help shape and strengthen your pitch.
- Build connections across sport, business, technology, community impact, and innovation.
- Develop real-world pitch, problem-solving, leadership, and professional skills.

How It Works

Eligibility: Students enrolled at a college or university in California

Submission Deadline: November 30th, 2026

Team Composition: Each team must consist of a minimum of one (1) and a maximum of four (4) students. All students on a team must be enrolled at the same university or college. A student may not be on more than one (1) team.

Format: Max 5-page written report **or** 10-slide presentation

- Optional 5-min video presentation or supporting materials

Submissions must:

- Clearly identify a real-world problem.
- Propose a feasible, scalable solution that aligns with the challenge.
- Include how the impact will be measured and how it could be implemented by the NHL or its Clubs.

SELECTION PROCESS

JANUARY 2027
20 teams advance to semi-finals.

MARCH 2027
Top 6 finalists pitch live at SAP Center, San Jose, CA