NHL/NHLPA IGF Innovation Competition: Rules and Regulations

The NHL/NHLPA IGF Innovation Competition (the "Competition") is organized by the National Hockey League of One Manhattan West, 395 Ninth Avenue, New York, NY 10001 ("NHL") and the National Hockey League Players' Association of 10 Bay Street, Suite 1200, Toronto, ON, M5J 2R8 ("NHLPA") (NHL and NHLPA together, the "Sponsors").

1. Eligibility

- **Who Can Enter**: The Competition is open to full-time and part-time students currently enrolled in a participating university or college in California, USA. A participating university or college is one which has been invited to take part in the Competition by or on behalf of the Sponsors.
- **Team Composition**: Each team must consist of a maximum of four (4) students. All students on a team must be enrolled at the same participating university or college. A student may not be on more than one (1) team.
- **Age Requirement**: All participants must be at least eighteen (18) years of age at the time of entry.
- **Residency**: All participants must be legal residents of California, USA.
- **Exclusions**: Employees, officers, directors, members, representatives, and agents of the NHL, its member clubs, NHL Enterprises, L.P., NHL Enterprises Canada, L.P., NHL Enterprises B.V., NHL Interactive CyberEnterprises, LLC, the NHLPA, SAP SE, the San Jose Sharks Foundation, SponsorPulse and Relate Social Capital, each of their affiliates, subsidiaries, advertising and promotional agencies, as well as their immediate family members, namely spouses, children, siblings and parents and/or those living in the same household of such persons (at least three (3) months a year, whether or not related), are not eligible to participate. Void where prohibited or restricted by law.

2. How to Enter. No purchase necessary.

- **Registration & Submission**: Teams may register beginning on October 19th 2026, and must complete their registration and submit their innovative ideas through the online portal located at www.nhl.com/innovationcomp by the designated submission deadline of November 30th, 2026.
- Submissions (defined as "Submission" herein) must include:
    - A written proposal (maximum five (5) pages) **or** presentation (maximum ten (10) slides)
    - Optional:
        - A video pitch (maximum five (5) minutes) in .mov format uploaded as part of the submission (YouTube or similar video-sharing websites are not permitted)
        - Any additional supporting materials
- The submission must address the following thesis question:

- 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?
- **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?

- **Multiple Submissions**: Each team may submit only one (1) Submission. Entry of multiple Submissions from the same team or individual participants will result in disqualification. No person may register/enter more than once by using different email addresses and no email addresses can be used to submit more than one (1) Submission. Proof of Submission will not be deemed by the Sponsors as proof of receipt or entry into the Competition. Any attempted form of entry into the Competition not in accordance with these rules is void and will be disqualified. Any attempt by a participant to use multiple email accounts will result in disqualification. Any use of robotic, repetitive, automatic, programmed or similar entry methods or agents will void all Submissions by that participant. Submissions that are incomplete, late, garbled or corrupted are void and will not be accepted. All Submissions become the property of Sponsors upon receipt and will not be returned.

3. Competition Timeline

- Registration Opens: October 19th, 2026
- Submission Deadline: November 30th, 2026
- Judging Period to Select Top Twenty (20) Semi Finalists: December 2026
- Online Top Twenty (20) Pitch Interviews: January 2027
- Top Six (6) Finalists Notified: January/ February 2027
- In-Person Final Pitch Day at SAP Center: February or March 2027

4. Judging Criteria

For the purposes of the rounds prior to the In-Person Final Pitch Day, all Submissions will be evaluated by a panel of judges appointed by Sponsors based on the following criteria:

- **Innovation and Creativity**: Originality and inventiveness of the idea.
- **Feasibility and Implementation**: Practicality and potential for real-world application within the hockey ecosystem
- **Overall impact on the game of hockey**: Displays potential positive, measurable impact on the game and its participation levels
- **Business Acumen**: Evaluation of the business approach to the problem, clarity in strategy and overall clarity on business plan with associated results
- **Presentation and Communication Skills**: Clarity and effectiveness of the proposal or presentation.
- **Time-limits**: Each top twenty (20) pitch presentation may not exceed five (5) minutes in duration, and each Final Pitch Day presentation may not exceed ten (10) minutes.

- For the purposes of the In-Person Final Pitch Day, the Submissions will be evaluated by a panel of judges appointed by Sponsors based on the criteria applicable to the relevant awards (as set out in Section 5 below).

5. Prizing

- **The Play Maker Award**. Awarded to the team whose submission demonstrates exceptional creativity and ingenuity in building a new solution for hockey. Each team member of the team awarded The Play Maker Award will receive:
    - Scholarship of US $10,000
    - An engraved trophy
    - One (1) VIP ticket experience in an SAP suite to a San Jose Sharks 2027-2028 NHL regular seasons game (determined by the Sponsors)
    - Exclusive networking opportunity with senior leadership from the NHL, San Jose Sharks and SAP (including select executives, as determined by the Sponsors) Approximate retail value ("ARV") of each prize per person: US $12,000
- **The Game Changer Award**. Awarded to the team whose submission demonstrates the greatest potential to create meaningful and lasting impact within hockey. Each team member of the team awarded The Game Changer Award will receive:
    - Scholarship of US $10,000
    - An engraved trophy
    - One (1) VIP ticket experience in an SAP suite to a San Jose Sharks 2027-2028 NHL regular seasons game (determined by the Sponsors)
    - Exclusive networking opportunity with senior leadership from the NHL, San Jose Sharks and SAP (including select executives, as determined by the Sponsors)
    - Approximate retail value ("ARV") of each prize per person: US $12,000
- **Finalist Prizes**: All six (6) teams invited to the Final Pitch Day will receive:
    - NHL/NHLPA/San Jose Sharks swag packages (including the recipients of The Play Maker Award and The Game Changer Award).
    - ARV of each Finalist Prize per person: US $200

Any portion of a prize not accepted or unclaimed and/or unused by any winning team member will be forfeited and may only be substituted in the Sponsors' discretion. The Sponsors reserve

the right, in their sole discretion, to substitute a prize (or any component thereof) for one (1) of equal or greater value whether due to the unavailability of the prize or any prize component, or for any other reason. Each winning team member must be able to accept the prize as awarded or the prize may be forfeited in its entirety, as determined in Sponsors' sole discretion. The odds of winning a prize will depend on the number of Submissions received and how the team's Submission is evaluated as compared to other Submissions based on the judging criteria. All winners must abide by all venue policies and event ticket terms and conditions, where relevant. All prizes may not be resold or otherwise used for promotional purposes.

Where a participant is awarded a scholarship, this will be payable directly to that participant's college or university (where permissible) to offset tuition costs. Where the outstanding tuition amount is less than the amount of the scholarship, the Sponsors may reduce the amount of the scholarship to an amount equal to the remaining tuition.

Travel and accommodation costs associated with attending the Final Pitch Day, VIP suite experience, or participating in any prize are not included as part of the Competition or any prize. Each participant is solely responsible for arranging and covering any and all travel and accommodation costs and expenses, as applicable.

All other costs and expenses not expressly stated as part of a prize, including without limitation applicable federal, provincial, state, and municipal taxes and fees, are the sole responsibility of each participant.

6. Final Pitch Day

- The top six (6) finalist teams, as determined by the judging panel, will be invited to present their ideas at the SAP Center, in February or March 2027.
- All members of each of the top six (6) finalist teams will be required to sign and return a Declaration of Compliance and Release to Sponsors' representative prior to participation in the Final Pitch Day event.
- Teams will present their proposals (max ten (10) minutes per presentation) to a panel of judges, which may include Sponsors' executives, industry experts, and academic leaders.
- The winning team will be announced at the Final Pitch Day.

7. Conditions of Participation

- **Originality**: All Submissions must be the original work of the team members. Plagiarism or Submissions not generated by the team, including Submissions created using artificial intelligence platforms or models, will result in immediate disqualification.
- **Rights and Usage**: As consideration for the opportunity to enter the Competition, participants agree that all Submissions made as part of the Competition become the property of the Sponsors upon entry. Accordingly, the Sponsors may use, publish, or promote the Submissions (and the ideas contained therein) in any way and in any media, including online, on a worldwide basis and without any additional consideration or credit for such use.

- **Publicity**: Except where legally prohibited, participation in the Competition and acceptance of any prize constitutes all participants' agreement and consent to Sponsors, SAP SE and San Jose Sharks, LLC and their affiliates', agents', affiliated third parties' and designees' use of their name, likeness, photograph, voice, opinions and/or hometown and state, for promotional purposes in any media now known or hereafter devised, worldwide, without payment or consideration, notice, review or approval.
- **Confidentiality**: Participants should avoid including any proprietary or confidential information in their Submissions. No Submission shall be considered confidential. The Sponsors are not responsible for protecting such information.
- **Voluntary**. Participants are entering this Competition and providing Submissions on a voluntary and unsolicited basis.
- **Other Conditions**: All Submissions must:
    - be in English;
    - not have been submitted into any previous competition or contest and must not have been previously published;
    - be suitable for publication at the sole discretion of the Sponsors;
    - not contain materials embodying the first or last names or likeness identifying any person, living or dead, without written permission (which evidence of such permission shall be produced upon request by Sponsors);
    - not be indecent, obscene, hateful, offensive, tortious, defamatory, or libelous;
    - not contain material that is owned or controlled by third parties, including third-party brands, or any material that violates, infringes or otherwise misappropriates the rights of any third party (including trademarks rights, copyrights, and rights of publicity);
    - not improperly or incorrectly suggest that the Sponsors endorse, sponsor or are affiliated with any participant or any third party;
    - not disparage, demean, or harm the business reputation of the Sponsors or any of their employees, officers, directors, members, or owners, any other person or entity affiliated with the Competition (including any employee, officer, director, member or owner of such affiliated entity);
    - not promote alcohol, drugs, tobacco, violence, or firearms/weapons (or the use of any of the foregoing);
    - not contain any personally-identifiable identification (other than team members' names and associated information as requested by this Competition); and
    - not contain material that is unlawful in any way.

8. General Conditions

- **Disqualification**: The Sponsors reserve the right to disqualify any team or participant who violates these rules or acts in a disruptive or unethical manner.
- **Cancellation or Modification**: The Sponsors reserve the right to cancel, modify, or suspend the Competition in the event of unforeseen circumstances, including but not limited to technical failures, unauthorized human intervention, or fraud.
- **Decisions of the Judges**: All decisions made by the judging panel and the Sponsors are final and binding. No correspondence regarding the decisions will be entered into.

9. Release; Indemnification; Disclaimer of Warranty

- Participants acknowledge and agree that content in any Submission may be the same or similar to concepts the Sponsors have previously developed on their own, have received from or via third parties or have considered developing independently. Participant is aware that third party(ies) may submit materials to the Sponsors that are comparable to the Submission or any other materials in connection with entry. Sponsors may elect to acquire or produce said third-party materials, without any obligation to participants of any kind.
- By participating in the Competition, all participants agree to forever and irrevocably release and hold harmless the Sponsors and each of their respective officers, directors, governors, members, partners, partnerships, principals, owners, employees, volunteers, representatives, agents, affiliates (past, present and future), related entities, successors and assigns, Relate Social Capital, SponsorPulse, SAP SE and San Jose Sharks, LLC (collectively, the "Released Parties"), from any and all liability, claim, cause of action, suit, or other demand (collectively, “Claims”) for any loss, harm, damage, fine, penalty, injury, cost or expense of any nature whatsoever (including attorneys’ fees) (collectively, “Losses”) that are asserted by any party (on a first and third-party basis) or that arise from or are related to (a) the Competition or any element thereof, including entry, Submission, or participation therein, (b) delivery, possession, acceptance and/or use or misuse of any prize or any component thereof, or (c) participation in any Competition-related activity or prize-related activity including without limitation in each case any Losses that may be caused or contributed to by (1) any wrongful, negligent or unauthorized act or omission on the part of any of the Released Parties, or any of their independent contractors or any other person or entity not an employee of any of the Released Parties, or (2) any other cause, condition or event whatsoever beyond the control of any of the Released Parties.
- Participant agrees that any use by Sponsors of any materials that are similar or identical to the Submission in any way will not give rise to any Claims by participant or on participant’s behalf against the Released Parties of any kind, including, without limitation, claims of infringement, unfair competition, or implied contract, and participant hereby releases and waives any and all such Claims. Participant further acknowledges and agrees that Sponsors have no obligation to disclose to participant the existence of similar or identical ideas, concepts, proposals, materials, or other submissions that are developed or received by Sponsors.
- In addition, by participating in this Competition, each participant agrees, to the extent permitted by law, to indemnify and hold harmless the Released Parties from and against any and all damages, Losses, costs and expenses (including amounts paid in settlement and reasonable attorneys’ fees) incurred by any of the Released Parties in connection with any third-party Claim arising out of or resulting from: (a) breach or alleged breach of any representations, warranties or agreements of participant hereunder; or (b) participant’s possession, use or misuse of the prize or any component thereof. Each participant hereby acknowledges that the Released Parties have neither made nor are in any manner responsible or liable for any warranty, representation or guarantee, express or implied, in fact or in law, relative to the prize (or any components thereof) and that, except to the extent prohibited by applicable law, the prize is provided "as is" without

warranty of any kind, either express or implied. Released Parties hereby disclaim all such warranties, including but not limited to, the implied warranties of merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose and/or non-infringement.

10. Limitations of Liability

- Without limiting anything set forth in Section 9, Released Parties shall not have any obligation, responsibility or liability, including any obligation or responsibility with regard to: (a) Submissions in excess of the stated limit; (b) Submissions that are illegible, late, forged, destroyed, lost, misplaced, stolen, misdirected, tampered with, incomplete, deleted, damaged, garbled, altered or otherwise not in compliance with or in violation of these rules; (c) any technical or human error which may occur in the creation, submission, assignment or processing of Submissions; (d) Submissions or notifications that are not received by the intended recipient due to transmission, technical, computer or human failures or error of any kind; (e) changes in any contact information which affects the ability to contact such participant; (f) typographical errors in promotional material; (g) cancellations and/or delays or any change by any company or any other persons providing any components of any prize due to reasons beyond the control of any of the Released Parties; (h) any interruptions/postponement/cancellation of the Competition; (i) human error; incorrect or inaccurate transcription of submission information; (j) any technical malfunctions of the computer on-line system, computer dating mechanism, computer equipment, software, wireless or internet service provider utilized by any of the Released Parties or by a participant; (k) interruption or inability to access the Competition, any Competition-related web pages, or any on-line service via the Internet or wireless service due to hardware or software compatibility problems; (l) any damage to a participant's (or any third person's) computer, mobile device and/or their contents related to or resulting from any part of the Competition; (m) any lost/delayed data transmissions, omissions, interruptions, defects; and/or (n) any other errors or malfunctions, even if caused by the negligence of any one or more of the Released Parties.

11. Disputes

- PLEASE READ THIS SECTION CAREFULLY. IT MAY SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS INCLUDING YOUR RIGHT TO FILE A LAWSUIT IN COURT. EXCEPT WHERE PROHIBITED BY APPLICABLE LAW, EACH PARTICIPANT AGREES THAT ALL DISPUTES ARISING FROM THESE RULES SHALL BE LITIGATED IN COURT OR ARBITRATED ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS AND WAIVE ANY RIGHT TO A JURY TRIAL OR TO LITIGATE IN COURT OR ARBITRATE ANY CLAIM AS A CLASS ACTION, REPRESENTATIVE ACTION, OR CLASS ARBITRATION; AND, IF A PARTICIPANT DOES NOT CONSENT TO THIS CLAUSE, SUCH PARTICIPANT SHOULD NOT ENTER THE COMPETITION.
- For purposes of these rules, "Dispute" shall be defined as any dispute, claim or controversy arising out of or relating to the Competition. The following is a summary of the Dispute Resolution and Binding Arbitration, Class Action and Jury Trial Waiver, and Choice of Law terms. For full terms please visit the NHL Terms of Service at

https://www.nhl.com/info/terms-of-service. Any current or future Dispute shall be resolved in binding individual arbitration. Before initiating an arbitration proceeding, a written "notice of Dispute" must be sent containing the following information: (a) name, contact information (address, telephone number, and email address), and account information, if applicable; (b) a detailed description of the nature and basis of the Dispute; and (c) a detailed description of the nature and basis of the relief sought, including a calculation for it. If participant has a Dispute, such participant shall send the notice of Dispute by email to adr@nhl.com. Parties agree to make a good faith effort to resolve the Dispute for at least sixty (60) days following receipt of the notice of Dispute. If such parties cannot resolve the Dispute within that time period, it shall be resolved by binding individual arbitration administered by the American Arbitration Association ("AAA") and heard by a single arbitrator. The AAA rules will govern except as specifically modified. All issues are for the arbitrator to decide except the following, which are for a court of competent jurisdiction to decide: (a) issues that are specifically reserved for a court, and (b) issues related to the scope and enforceability of the arbitration provisions. To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, each party may bring claims (whether in court or in arbitration) against the other only in an individual capacity, and not participate as a plaintiff, claimant, or class member in any class, collective, consolidated, private attorney general, or representative proceeding. To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, parties waive any right to a jury trial. There are additional procedures for "multiple case filings." These rules and any Dispute will be governed by the laws of the State of New York without regard to its principles of conflicts of laws. To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, the state and federal courts of New York County, New York shall have exclusive jurisdiction over any Dispute (except for Disputes brought in small claims court) that are not subject to arbitration or over any action involving the applicability or enforceability of any provisions of these rules (including the arbitration provisions and class action waiver). Except where prohibited by law, and subject to the foregoing, participants agree that: (a) any and all Disputes shall be resolved individually, without resort to any form of class action, (b) any and all Disputes, judgments and awards shall be limited to actual out-of-pocket costs incurred, including costs associated with entering this Competition, but in no event attorneys' fees, (c) under no circumstances will participants be permitted to obtain awards for, and participants hereby waive all rights to claim, indirect, punitive, incidental, consequential and/or any other damages other than actual out-of-pocket expenses, (d) they waive any and all rights to have damages multiplied or otherwise increased, and (e) they irrevocably consent to the personal jurisdiction of the aforesaid courts, as applicable to each such participants, and waive any claim of forum non conveniens or lack of personal jurisdiction that they may have.

12. Privacy

- Personal information collected during the Competition will be used for Competition-related communication and otherwise in accordance with the Sponsors' privacy policies at http://www.nhl.com/info/privacy-policy and https://www.nhlpa.com/privacy-policy, including without limitation in accordance with any consents or permissions you provide in connection with your Submission.

13. Contact Information

- For any questions or concerns regarding the Competition, please contact innovationComp@nhl.com or visit nhl.com/innovationcomp. Relate Social Capital and SponsorPulse is working with the Sponsors to oversee and manage the Competition.