

## Play It Again Sports solves equipment conundrums

Business | 1 week 2 days ago | Comments 0

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By Site Contributor

(Article by Stacey Pastorella).

Before Sandy and Jim Pezzillo were co-owners of Play It Again Sports, they were exasperated parents looking for hockey equipment.

When their son expressed an interest in hockey about five years ago, they began searching for equipment in large sporting goods stores. Sandy said the equipment offered at those stores was very expensive, and the lack of customer service was often frustrating.

"Sometimes you'll get somebody that knows a lot about camping supplies, but they know nothing about hockey," she said.

The family began searching for places to buy used equipment. Purchasing it online would have been impractical, Sandy said, because it doesn't allow the player to test the fit of the equipment.

One of Jim's online searches brought him to the Web site for Play It Again Sports, a company based in Minnesota. The Web site announced opportunities to purchase individual franchises, and the Pezillos soon became owners of a franchise with their business partner, Sean McClellan.

Although Jim works as a chemical engineer and McClellan is a civil engineer by trade, both men have a passion for sports, Sandy said. Jim played high school football, and enjoys playing hockey, lifting weights and working out. He said Sean played soccer and participated in track.

Sandy, an environmental consultant by trade, said she enjoys the marketing and merchandising aspects of running a business.

Sandy said that the store, which they have owned for about two and a half years, is one of three Play It Again locations in the state.

She said there used to be a Play It Again store in Hamilton that operated under different ownership, and closed in 2001.

The store offers a large selection of new products as well. As much as 80 percent of the inventory is new, Sandy said.

She said that when the store does offer used equipment, it is always in very good condition.

"We buy used equipment, but only quality used stuff," she said.

Sandy said the store's main sports are hockey, baseball and lacrosse. It also carries a variety of fitness equipment, treadmills and equipment for sports such as field hockey, golf and soccer, among others. Jim said the store carries major brand names including Adidas, Easton, Reebok and Rawlings. Play It Again will also match any prices advertised by other sporting goods stores.

Sandy said the store also offers customers the opportunity to sell and trade equipment. Customers can bring in used equipment and receive either cash or store credit. Consignments are also offered for larger items, she said. Under that arrangement, the customer and store split the money after the product is resold.

Sandy said that trading in equipment is a good option for families with young athletes, because children frequently outgrow their gear and can trade it in and purchase replacements using store credit.

Play It Again prides itself on the customer service its staff provides. Sandy said that Jim and Sean provide helping hands to customers.

"They'll sit down and they'll work with you," she said.

The store also offers certain services as a courtesy to its customers. For example, if someone purchases a pair of skates, the store will bake and sharpen them free of charge.

Play It Again also partners with a number of local sports teams and leagues including Robbinsville Lacrosse, Nassau Hockey and Nottingham Little League. The store has a variety of partnership arrangements with these teams and leagues, offering them various discounts, rebates and sponsorship opportunities.

Play It Again Sports is located at 625 Highway 33 in Hamilton. Store hours are Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.; and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information, call 609-584-0700 or visit its Web site at <http://www.playitagainsportshamilton.com>.