



To: All ECHO and NEYHA Members

Subject: Organization Merger

Over the past couple weeks the organizations have met with each other to discuss merging. From the onset of the talks the merits of the combined organization were obvious. On Wednesday November 7, 2018 the Board of Directors for both organizations met separately to discuss the merger as well as vote to move forward with the merger proposal. Both Boards voted unanimously to move forward with the merger proposal. We understand that there will be questions. Attached you will find FAQ's developed to answer many of the questions you may have. Both boards are excited about the proposal. However, there is still plenty of work to do before this becomes ratified.

What are next steps?

- Financial Due Diligence
An independent review of the finances of both organizations will be completed.
Timeline: immediately
- Branding
The new organizational name, logo and colors will be defined.

Timeline: Work has already begun. The new branding will be released prior to the membership vote.
- Leadership
The framework for a transitional Board of Directors will be developed and finalized. A date for the election of the new Board of Directors will be set.
Timeline: Immediately
- Q&A Session/Office Hours
Despite the FAQ we know that some members will want to have further discussions. Both BODs will be planning "office hours" at the rink for members to drop in and discuss the merger proposal.

Timeline: Schedules will be posted over the next couple days.
- A Membership vote
Both organizations bylaws require a membership vote in order to dissolve the organization. The Board of Directors for both organizations will schedule a membership vote on an agreed upon date and location. Both organizations will be voting at the same place and at the same time. In order for ratification two-thirds of the members who vote will be required.

Timeline: The vote will take place prior to the holiday break

We encourage you to read through the provided FAQs and feel free to reach out to a member of the Board of Directors with any questions.



ECHO-NEYHA Merger FAQ

I have heard that there is a proposal to merge ECHO and Northeast Huskies youth hockey. What is the rationale behind this merger? What are the benefits?

- The resulting merger would create a larger pool of players from which our teams would be selected from. This will allow for increased player development and allow our players to be better aligned at the correct age and skill level for greater success during the season.
- The merger would address competitive threats currently experienced from larger organizations and for profit organizations. Larger organizations that we currently play can field more diverse teams and teams with more equal skill throughout their rosters. These organizations accomplish this, in large part, because of the sheer number of skaters their organizations have. Some of these organizations have upwards of 400-500 skaters. As a combined organization ECHO/Northeast would have over 200 skaters to create travel teams with.
- The resulting merger would create an organization that will strengthen alignment with USA hockey regarding coaching development and the ADM development model.
- The resulting merger would create an organization that would allow for greater rink flexibility and deployment of on ice skill sessions and small area game sessions in alignment with the USA hockey ADM model.
- The resulting merger would create an organization that would allow for the creation of girls' teams.
- The resulting merger would create a more competitive organization which should increase player retention.

I heard that one of the organizations is in financial trouble. Is that why the merger taking place?

- Both organizations are reporting strong finances. However one of the key elements of the merger proposal is the completion of an independent review of both organizations finances.

I heard that Bolton Ice Palace is being sold. Is that why the merger is taking place?

- No, the rumor that BIP is being sold originated two years ago. The rumor seems to be based on the fact that Munson's Chocolates were considering the purchase of the lot next door to BIP in order to expand their operations. While it will never be known who started the rumor or the motives behind it the rumor perpetuates.

What rink will my player's team skate at?

- Each team will have equal time at each facility. The practice ice and the game ice will be split evenly when the schedules for the seasons are released.



What uniforms will be used?

- The creation of the merged organization creates the opportunity to create a new brand in the CT hockey market. A new name, logo and colors will be developed. However given both organizations histories those legacies will be maintained. Initial concepts are being worked on to have a blend from both organizations in the future name, logo and colors.

I like to know who my players coach will be before I commit to the team. How will the coach be selected?

- We recognize the importance the coach. Coaching is a backbone of the organization. The organization requests applications from coaching candidates prior to the tryout process. However the coach is not named until after the tryout results are finalized. It is important that the tryout process remains separated from the coaching selection process. Once the tryout process is finalized the most qualified candidate is named as coach. This decision is made jointly by the organization president and VP of Operations. This will be the process for the combined organization.

My player has tried out at both organizations. The tryout processes are different. I know families that have left one organization for the other because they like the way teams are selected. What tryout process will be used?

- Both organizations have reviewed and discussed each other's tryout procedures. Based upon that review it was mutually agreed upon that ECHO's tryout process will be the process used by the combined organization.

What organizations bylaws will be used?

- Both organizations have reviewed and discussed each other's bylaws. Based upon that review it was mutually agreed upon that ECHO's bylaws will be the governing document used by the combined organization.

I have heard that the ice time rates are different between Bolton and Northeast. How will my skater fees be affected?

- Yes, each facility has different rates that they charge for ice time. However, a review of the ice rates show that the overall difference is small between the two organizations and that the impact on skater fees should be minimal. The creation of the larger organization should yield significant buying power allowing the merged organizations to offer more to the membership.

The two organizations are perceived as rivals. We have played each other for years and there is a perception that we dislike each other. Culturally we are just different. I can't see how this will work.

- Yes, the organizations have histories battling each other on the ice. Despite the sentiments that have developed in the past, each side should have competitive respect for the other organization. The passion that each side brings will be joined. Regardless of what organization the parents originated from they are looking for a fun and competitive environment for their



kids to develop within. Our memberships draw from the same communities. Despite the rooting interests we are more alike than different.

I have a daughter who plays. How will the merger affect female players?

- Each organization has female players. Female players will have the option to play on a coed team or all female teams. Individually each organization has not had enough girls to field all female teams. By combining the females from both organizations a greater potential exists for female teams to be created. Furthermore there are enough female players in the lower age groups to supplement the female rosters with each passing year. By fielding and maintaining female teams the merged organization should become a target destination for female players in the area. This is one of the primary goals and benefits of the merger.

The merged organization will increase in size. I'm afraid my kid will get lost in the shuffle.

- Both organizations agree that the merged organization will remain a place for every player at every skill level. The strength of any organization is based the ability to field teams for the A player as well as the C player. Having a large pool of players to choose from will allow for the creation of teams with a more competitive balance across a given roster and allow a better focus on player development. This strategy aligns the new organization with other organizations in the state that we currently are and will continue to compete against.

How does the merger protect each organization from raids by for profit organizations?

- The merged organization will have strength in numbers, strength in talent, strength in offerings and a far more competitive price point. We will be able to field multiple teams at every level. We will be able to provide on and off ice skill and athletic training and we can do so without a 5 hour car trip and hotel stay each weekend.

My player is bantam and traditionally bantam teams are torn apart by the local high school programs. How will the merger help?

- The projected numbers that the merged organization will have at the bantam level will allow for the creation of traditional full year teams with rosters that will be minimally affected, if at all, by high school departures.

How will the merger affect the Learn to Play and in-house programs?

- The Learn to Play programs are the bedrock of each program. The merged organization will be no different. Having access to two facilities will give the merged program the continued access to a broader market and provide more flexibility to families in those markets. The In-house program is an offering that ECHO has provided for those players from squirt to bantam ages that are not ready or are not interested in playing at the travel level. This program allows players to have fun and develop even if hockey is not their primary activity. The program offers two practices a week with games added to one of the practice slots as the season moves forward. The merged organization will continue the in-house program with the excitement of the potential for more skaters to utilize its offerings.



How will the merger protect the values and identity of each organization?

- The initial make-up of the Board of Directors will include the existing members of each board of directors. This will ensure a smooth transition and will allow families of both organizations equal access to their Board representation.

I am struggling with how to evaluate this proposal, any suggestions?

- It is a reality that the hockey season is long and that our member families spend countless hours with each other at the rink during practices and games. This time together does create a certain culture. However, it is also important to try and think about this merger in two different ways. First, the culture. Yes, family environment is important. Second, however, are the hockey aspects of this merger. Larger organizations have the ability to create a greater number of teams with more consistent skill level on their rosters. While player development in both organizations has never been only about wins and losses, at some point, players do become aware of the competitive imbalance between organizations. The experiences we are trying to enhance are those of the players to ensure their future hockey development. If players are no longer having fun playing the game, future hockey development will suffer in the end.

What happens if the merger is approved and one or both organizations want to back out at the end of the first season?

- As part of the due diligence being completed by both organizations, an agreement will be developed and put into place to ensure that both organizations are protected. This agreement will ensure that both organizations are able to walk away from the merger with the same percentage of assets that were brought into the merger. This includes players, equipment and finances. This agreement will dissolve after an agreed upon period of time.

Both organizations attended holiday tournaments this past season that involved every team in the organization. With the amount of teams the merger is proposing that does not seem possible. What are the plans for tournament play with the merged organization?

- Yes, with the potential to have upwards of 15 teams across the organization it is not likely that we will be able to find a tournament that will be able to accommodate our large hockey family. Both organizations recognize the importance of traveling to an away tournament and how that helps bring the team and the families together. With the combined organization it will be more important than ever. There are many tournament options in the New England, New York and Canadian markets that are within driving distance and offer competitive play and a fun experience. While we may not be able to enter all of our teams in the same tournament, we will work to ensure that each of our travel teams enjoys a tournament experience during the 2019-20 season.

This season Northeast was unable to field team PW or Bantam level teams. How does a combined organization help if my skater is at these levels?

- Northeast has had difficult times the past two seasons at the PW and Bantam levels. In a smaller organization when players leave at these levels they are hard to replace and it affects the entire



organization. The combined organization will provide stability to the numbers. Those players either moving up or staying within these age groups to have faith that a fully rostered team can be formed and that the skill level will be more balanced among all the teams at these age groups.