



The Vipers Pit...

AUGUST, 2009

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

Another Viper First - A new League!

*You know you
have been
bitten when...*

*Your friend
lets you know
that*

*"all the best
Hockey players
come from
Canada..."*

*and you start
teaching
your child
French!*

Well here we are one month until the 2009 - 2010 season begins! I hope everyone is enjoying the summer and some valuable time off.

Summer practices are in full swing and attendance is better than we expected. Please check the schedule to see what nights your teams have been assigned to. Schedules are available on our website at www.westchestervipers.org if you need another copy. Come on down to the rink if you are available.

Vipers Conditioning Camp begins on August 24th for most of our teams. Camp continues the following week as well as the first practices for our Midget teams. Before you know it we will be playing in Silver Sticks and beginning the season at WSA! It has been a very busy off-season thus far.

*I am very pleased to announce
that the Vipers
will be an original team member
of the newly formed
Tri-State Youth Hockey League*

This is a Tier II AA league for some of the top teams in the Tri-state area. For its inaugural season, the League will be comprised of two divisions, Pee-wee's & Bantam's. Our Pee-wee AA team and Bantam 96 team will be representing the Vipers for this season. The league is made up of the following organizations: Vipers, Icetime, Montclair, Red Bank, Wonderland, Darien, Central Connecticut, and the LI Edge.

Playoffs will be held in February to crown a division champion on each level. While in past years our independent teams solely played for a chance to play in the State Tournament, this will give them a chance to play for a league title in a highly competitive league.

If all goes well this season, the League is hoping to add a Squirt bracket for the 2010 - 2011 season.

*We are proud to be an original team
in what should be a great league.*

As in the past the Vipers will also be participating in the Hudson Valley Hockey league (HVHL). Our Mite B, Sq A, Sq B, PW A, Ban A, and Midget A teams will be league members for the upcoming season. Championship Weekend for these teams will be held at WSA on February 27 or 28, 2010.

The practice schedule for September will be released somewhere around August 20th. Your Team Manager will be forwarding the schedule to you accordingly. Regular practices, power skating sessions, and defensive clinics will all be coordinated on the schedule.

Our team of schedulers has begun working on the game schedules for both the boys and girls teams. The team schedules should be ready for publication after the Labor Day Holiday. I know you are all anxious to see them but please have some patience, we need to make sure they are accurate before they are released.

As in the past there will be no **games** played between December 21 - January 1. There will be games played on Saturday & Sunday January 2 and 3. Please plan your Holiday Vacations accordingly. We will still have practice ice during this time for those who are not able to escape.

I hope you all enjoy the rest of the Summer.

See you at the rink
Dave Mensi
President
Vipers Hockey



Subscribe to USAHockey's "Play Like a Girl" Enewsletter at their website USAHOCKEY.COM



Photo courtesy Bob Wilson

The
Ref's
Corner

Can you answer this correctly?

(Answer is on page 4)

The goaltender heads for the bench during play either because a penalty has been called against the other team or to be replaced by an extra skater late in the game. The extra skater leaves the bench prematurely, i.e., before the goalie arrives at the bench.

True or false, this results in a two minute bench penalty.



Important changes to playdown procedures for Boys Tier II Tournament bound teams

The Eastern Region of the New York State Hockey Association has made important changes to the procedures for qualifying for the State Tournament. These changes apply to our Squirt AA, Pee wee AA, Bantam 95 AA, Midget Minor, and Midget major teams:

In the past in order for a Viper team to qualify for the State Tournament, we needed to prevail in a two game playdown with the Hudson Valley Polar Bears (Icetime). The playdown was often one goal nail biters, with the winner moving on to a second round game against the second seed in the Long Island Hockey League (LIAHL). The first place team from the LIAHL always received an automatic bid as League champion.

Many times both the Vipers and Icetime teams competing were far superior to any of the LIAHL teams competing on their level, yet at best only one of these two deserving teams could compete for a State Tournament slot.

The #1 team from the LIAHL always received an automatic bid as League champion. On rare occasions, the looser was offered a "play in" game if one of the other sections within NY State had a team default their invitation for a variety of reasons.

Our Viper teams always played a large percentage of LIAHL teams during the season, and if we fared well, this would strengthen their position

should a "play in" game be offered. More times than not, this way of thinking never panned out in our favor.

After much effort, this chaotic system has been modified and made more balanced. After over 20 years of holding an automatic bid, the LIAHL has agreed to forego its automatic bid for the State Tournament. In exchange, a better "playoff" or "playdown" system has been developed. This change will also eliminate the hassle of playing up to five grueling games in a very short period at the end of February.

For the upcoming 2009-2010 season, all East Section Tier II teams in each specific division (Squirt, Pee wee, Bantam, and Midget) will play each other in a home and home match up during the regular season. The top two teams, regardless of geographical location within the Section, will move on to the State Tournament representing the East Section as the first and second seeds accordingly. This will allow the opportunity for both the Vipers and Icetime to participate in the same State Tournament should both finish in the top two slots.

This will allow the opportunity for both the Vipers & Icetime the right to participate in the same State Tournament should they finish in the top two slots.

As previously mentioned, our teams have played most of the LIAHL teams twice during the regular season. This year the

same will take place, only this time the games have an unprecedented meaning.

There are still some details being worked out and this information will be passed on to the coaches and managers once the procedures are finalized.

I wish all of our State Tournament Bound teams the best of luck for the upcoming season.

*Dave Mensi
President
Vipers Hockey*



Photo courtesy Bob Wilson

Confused by A, AA, AAA, Tier 1, Tier 2 - Who isn't!



One of my wife's favorite moments



Photo courtesy Bob Wilson

With my son just starting his Hockey adventure, I was more than a little confused by the terms used to describe the various divisions. I got the age grouping fine, but got lost in the more complicated rankings of teams. I asked Dave for some help and here it is—Thanks Dave.

Lets start with who make the rules! **USA Hockey** is the governing body of all amateur hockey in the USA.



Photo courtesy Bob Wilson

They set the educational and training standards for all Coaches & Officials as well as the age and performance standards for all Teams, League and Tournament play through out the US.

USA Hockey writes and controls the rule book. They even set the Parental Conduct Codes and Zero Tolerance Policy codes for Spectators.

Each state has it's own division of **USA Hockey** that mandates and administers to the hockey programs both within that state and also the geographical regions in which tournaments are played (i.e. Northeast Region or New England Region).

Because they are all are governed by the **USA Hockey**

Guidelines, there are few differences between state programs. This makes Interstate tournaments much easier to administer.

USA Hockey also sponsors both the Men's and Women's USA National Hockey Team, as well as several Physically Challenged Teams.

By virtue of your participation in The Viper Program your Skater is already enrolled in the **USA Hockey Association** (you still need to fill out the enrollment form).

Tier I hockey is the highest level of travel hockey **USA Hockey** offers. Tier III is the lowest (grassroots).



Photo Courtesy Bob Wilson

The Vipers are a Tier II organization. However, we have been granted Tier I status for one of our girls teams (U12).

Our Viper teams are tagged AA, A, or B

AA teams are Independent

(no league affiliation) and are NY State Tournament Bound. The objective for these teams are to qualify for the State Tournament in March and win that. The Peewees, Bantams and midgets as well as the girls teams have the opportunity to move on to the Nationals.

You are only allowed to declare 1 team as Tournament Bound on each level. And there is no National Tournament for Squirts.

Due to the record turnout and talent that tryouts brought, the Vipers we were able to put together 3 Squirt Teams (AA, A and B) as well as 3 Bantam Teams (Bantam 95 AA, Bantam 96 AA and Bantam A).

Viper A teams play in the Hudson Valley Hockey league in the A bracket of their particular division. The goal for these teams is to win the League title.

Viper B teams also play in the HVHL in the B bracket of their particular division. They have the same goal as our A team.

The Vipers do not offer AAA teams as NY State does not recognize a AAA level.



Photo Courtesy Bob Wilson

Jump Rope and Hopscotch

What was old, is new again!

Training Tips - Plyometrics, *for speed and agility*

A growing science, Plyometrics focus on a series of short-burst exercises that are designed to help any athlete develop

*quickness, jumping ability,
lateral - forward & backward movement.*

The Plyometrics exercises are meant to be repetitive but won't tire the athlete out. Most kids find them enjoyable and a typical session doesn't last more than 15 mins.

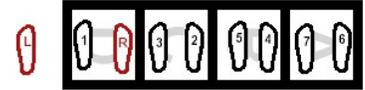
The most common plyometric exercises include hops, jumps and bounding movements.

One popular plyometric exercise is jumping off a box and rebounding off the floor and onto another, higher box (using the balls of the feet). These exercises typically increase speed and strength and build power.



Jumping rope is also an example of a plyometric exercise. If your youngster jumps rope 5-7 mins (landing and jumping only from the balls of their feet) over the course of a few weeks they will begin to develop a much stronger feeling of foot quickness (as well as better developed calf muscles).

Ladder drills
(Just like hopscotch) are also excellent drills to develop the muscle memory of direction changes and foot speed, and foot coordination.



Want more info,
visit these sites or
Goggle or Youtube
"Plyometrics"

(Parent's Permission Please!!!)

- <http://sportsmedicine.about.com/od/sampleworkouts/a/Plyometrics.htm>
- <http://www.sport-fitness-advisor.com/ladder-agility-drills.html>
- <http://www.verticaljumpresource.com/box-jump-and-plyometric-boxes-intermediate-plyometrics/2009>
- http://www.pssathletics.com/Agility_Ladders_Part_I.html

**Talk with your parents
before starting any exercise program.**

Make sure that it's right for you!

Volunteers needed!

We are looking for volunteers (6-8) to form a Fundraising and Marketing committee.

This committee will meet in early September (and thereafter as necessary), to determine appropriate ways to help defray costs and reduce tuition fees, by raising money from other sources.

If you have any experience in Fundraising or Marketing or *just want to help*, let us know with ...

an email to joekelly318@aol.com
Please put **Volunteer** in the "Subject" line



Jumble Answers

- 1 Stars
- 2 Bruins
- 3 Canucks
- 4 Panthers
- 5 Canadiens
- 6 Thrashers

How did you do?

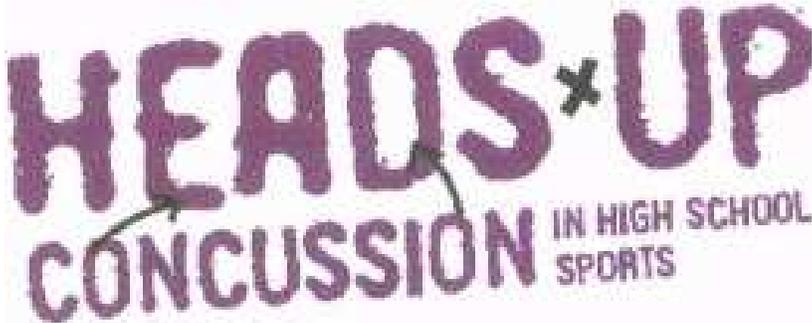
Refs Corner...
The answer is; *False.*

The linesman will blow the play dead as soon as the offending team touches the puck. No penalty will be assessed, but the faceoff will be in the offending team's zone if that is where play stopped or at center ice



The Vipers coaches and leadership have always made the safety of our players their highest priority. The *Vipers Pit* is a wonderful vehicle for us to reinforce these concerns, and to address safety issues on an ongoing basis. One of the more serious threats ice hockey players face is that presented by **concussions**. USA Hockey has made the prevention of concussions a major priority. What follows below is a very useful Fact Sheet relating to concussions issued by the federal government and distributed widely by USA Hockey.

We ask Vipers players and their parents to take the time to read and consider the important information provided below. Remember to wear (and securely fasten your helmet) and always use your mouthpiece.



What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head.
- Can change the way your brain normally works.
- Can range from mild to severe.
- Can occur during practice or games in any sport.
- Can happen even if you haven't been knocked out.
- Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged" or "had your bell rung".

How can I prevent a concussion?

It's different in every sport, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself from concussion.

- Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Use the proper sports equipment, including personal protective equipment (such as helmets).
- In order for equipment to protect you, it must be;
 - Appropriate for the game, the position, and activity.
 - Well maintained.
 - Properly fitted.
 - Used every time you play.

How do I know if I have a concussion?

You can't see a concussion, but you might notice some of the symptoms right away. Other symptoms can show up days or weeks after the injury. It's best to see a health care professional if you think you might have a concussion. An undiagnosed concussion can affect your ability to do schoolwork and other everyday activities. It also raises your risk for additional serious injury.

What are the symptoms of a concussion?

- Nausea (feeling that you might vomit)
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise.
- Headache
- Feeling sluggish
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays).
- Confusion

What should I do if I think I have a concussion?

Tell your coach as and your parents. Never ignore a bump, blow or jolt to the head. Also tell your coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion.

Get a medical check up. A health care professional can tell you if you have had a concussion and when you are Ok to return to play.

Give you self time to recover. If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a second concussion. Second or later concussion can cause permanent brain damage and even cause death in rare cases. Severe brain injury can change your whole life.

It's better to miss one game than the whole season.