

Dear Needham Youth Hockey Family,

Welcome back for the 2010-11 hockey season. We appreciate your participation and look forward to seeing your skaters grow and develop this year. NYH understands that there are many options available for young hockey players in Massachusetts. We are working hard to continuously improve our program with a focus on making it fun, developmentally strong and convenient for our skaters and their families. As an organization, our goal is to give everyone the opportunity to play hockey, enjoy the experience, develop into a better player, find it affordable and learn the values of physical fitness, teamwork, effort, and commitment.

USA Hockey, at the highest levels, has demonstrated great success by winning Gold at Junior World Championship, Silver at the Olympics, and having 13 players drafted in the first round of the NHL draft. However, USA Hockey has also realized that at the younger levels hockey has become more about competition and winning and less about skill development and learning to love the game. Participation in the US is flat to declining, and the dropout rate of young players is the highest it has been in a decade. This is due in part to the cost of hockey, but more importantly results from burnout caused by extreme focus on winning games versus having fun, developing skills and trying other activities

As a result, in 2010 USA Hockey has advocated a move towards The American Development Model (ADM). More information is available on the USAHockey.com website, but essentially ADM focuses more on skills, player development, having fun, and overall athletic development through time off and playing multiple sports – not just hockey year round. NYH agrees with many of the ADM tenets and is fortunate that our in-house and travel programs align well to the model. We continue to monitor adoption of the model by Mass Hockey and the Great Boston Hockey League (GBL) so we can continue to incorporate into our program.

In response to the ADM model and family feedback received in discussions, our spring open meetings and through the year-end survey we have worked over the summer to improve the NYH experience. Most importantly, we contracted for some additional ice, worked to provide a more consistent professional skills program, and continue to work to make scheduling family friendly (posting ice times as far in advance as possible and minimizing changes)--all while driving to maintain a program that is affordable and open to everyone who registers to play. A key component of the ADM model is the number of ice touches per week and focus on skills. In support of that model, there will be times early in the season when teams, particularly at the younger levels, will have 3 teams on the ice and the practices will be run more like a 2<sup>nd</sup> skills session than a standard team practice.

Good value is important. For 2010-2011, we estimate the overall cost per travel player to be approximately \$1400 (\$475 registration plus \$925 additional ice payments). Fees may increase where coaches sign teams up for tournaments, and the actual ice payments will be based on the number of practices and skills for your specific team.

Mite through Bantam players can expect the following this year:

- on average 2 1/2 touches a week for practices and/or skills
  - Practices are primarily half sheet ice for 50 or 60 minutes
    - Mites, Squirt, and PW at times may have three teams on ice in support of ADM model and increasing ice touches per week.
  - 4 to 5 full sheet practices during the year
  - 15 to 20 professionally run skills sessions
- Mite/SQ – 22 to 25 GBL games; PW/Bantam – 25 to 30 GBL games
- SQ/PW/Bantam – Participation in State Playdown Tournament Games
- Entry in Needham Feb or March tournament (team may elect additional tournaments at additional cost)
- Practice Jersey and Game Socks
- Season runs from approximately the start of September to March 20
- Tryout fee for 2010/11 season was included in registration
- All players registered and trying out are placed on a team (no cuts)
- Mite, Squirt, and PW B2/B3 games will not start until late October

Midgets

- 10 to 12 games with GBL or NVL
- 15 practices, including 6 skills sessions
- Participation in State Playdown Tournament Games
- Practice Jersey
- Season runs from September to Thanksgiving (November)
- Tryout fee for 2010 season was included in registration
- All registered players were placed on a team (no cuts)

We have attached a comparison of the NYH program to a few neighboring programs.

Family convenience is a real focus for the program. Hopefully, you saw significant improvements during 2009-2010 in our advance posting of ice times and limitation of last minute changes. We continue to work to drive predictability and improved notice to help hockey fit into busy family lives. Based on family and coach feedback, we have also made an effort to reduce practice ice times that are inconvenient for our families. In 2009/10 we dropped the 6am to 9am Sunday ice at West Roxbury, and the 4pm mini-sheet of ice in Dedham. In 2010/11 we have dropped the 8:40pm Saturday night ice at West Roxbury and the 8:40am ice in Belmont. While the number of times a player touches the ice per week is important, scheduling practices at times that no one attends just creates cost and frustration for our families and coaches. We are listening and have acquired some new ice at Fessenden for skills and Rivers to offset the hours rejected at West Roxbury. With ice in the western suburbs at a premium, we continue to work this issue and always welcome hearing from anyone in the program who can help.

NYH will also be exploring the concept of adding girls teams to our program in the future. The hope is to form a tournament team in 2010/2011 so the girls in our program

and former NYH girl players now on all girls teams can stay connected to the program. We hope to expand that initiative into a full set of girls teams similar to other programs in the area.

Finally, as you know, we are an all volunteer organization. Everyone is busy, but a few of us are able to carve out a little extra time for our youth hockey program. We are always looking to improve our program. However, to do so we need your help. Currently, important volunteer positions are available with Needham Youth Hockey. Many do not require particular skill or experience with ice hockey, and all provide an important way to help strengthen the program and the experience for the kids. If you can help contribute, please contact one of the board members (contact details are available on the website). Open positions include:

- Co-coordinator of in-house program: helping organize our young skaters program
- Greater Boston Hockey League Representative: participates in monthly GBL board meeting and keeps coaches informed about league communications and issues.
- Needham Tournament Chairperson: coordinates and organizes NYH-hosted tournaments towards the end of the season
- Needham Tournament Committee Members: works with Chairperson to help with the various aspects of hosting three successful tournaments and coordinates the Tournament Ad book.
- Equipment Manager: coordinates acquisition, distribution, and storage of game jerseys and game equipment.

Critical to our long term success is the continued success of fundraising to help reduce the burden on our families and keep NYH affordable. We would encourage everyone to participate in the outcoming golf event on 10/1. Furthermore, many of our volunteers are able to receive matching gifts from their companies for their time spent supporting NYH. Companies such as Microsoft and Verizon have been very generous in supporting employees who volunteer their time. Your company may have a similar program.

NYH is planning for a great season. We intend to hold our first open meeting in late September / early October. Please continue to provide your feedback, let us know how you can join in and encourage your players to work hard and have fun. We look forward to seeing you at the rink.

Very truly yours,

NYH BOARD

<b>NYH Youth Hockey</b>
on average 2 touches a week for practices with skills separate
Practices are primarily half sheet practices (50 or 60 minute practices)
advanced schedules, days may rotate base on available ice
4 to 5 full sheet practices during the year
20 skills sessions - 3 to 4 teams on ice
Mite/SQ – 22 to 25 GBL games, PW/Bantam – 25 to 30 GBL games
SQ/PW/Bantam – State Playdown Games
Entry in Needham Feb tournament
game socks, practice jersey
season runs from 8/30 to 3/20
tryout fee for 2010/11 season was included in registration
younger players don't start games until october to allow them to balance fall sports
all players registered and trying out were placed on a team ( no cuts )
<b>\$1,400</b>
<b>Neighboring Town Program</b>
2 touches per week for practices, skills separate
Practices are primarily half sheet practices (50 or 60 minute practices)
1 month advanced schedule, days may rotate base on available ice
12 skills with Lovell - 4 or 5 teams on ice
1 or 2 full sheet practices during the year
Mite/SQ – 22 to 25 GBL games, PW/Bantam – 25 to 30 GBL games
SQ/PW/Bantam – State Playdown Games
Tournament separate fees to teams
games socks provided, players must buy game jersey separate - \$50 per jersey
season runs from 8/30 to 3/20
tryout fee for 2010/11 season was included in registration
younger players don't start games until october to allow them to balance fall sports
all players registered and trying out were placed on a team ( no cuts )
<b>\$1,235</b>
<b>Local Select Team</b>
3 touches a week
1 skills session, 1 50 minute practice on half sheet, 1 50 minute practice on mini-rink
set practice schedule
32 to 40 games
Separate payment for uniforms
Season runs 8/30 to 3/15 - younger player games start in September
Separate tryout fee
Players are cut, only choose 1 or 2 teams per age group
Playing in new league / independent games
<b>\$2,800</b>
<b>Local Select Team</b>
2 - 60 minute practices a week
15 to 20 skills sessions during the year
set practice schedule
36 to 45 games
10 summer practices
3 day camp at end of summer
Separate tryout fee
Players are cut, only choose 1 or 2 teams per age group
Separate fee for game jersey
Play in EHF
<b>\$2,850</b>

Information provided for comparison is based on public information on each programs website.