

Dear NYH Families,

Thanks to all those who attended the open meeting. Hopefully you found it informative and we very much appreciate your feedback on how we can improve the program. The board will be meeting in early February to set the plan for the 2013_14 season. We will send out information by mid-February and look to launch registration in late February. Highlights from the meeting:

State of Needham Hockey – Significant work has gone into improving NYH over the past few years. We have a very strong program financially and operationally that offers a fun and challenging hockey experience for our players. The overall satisfaction level is extremely high and we continue to retain significant number of young players in the program.

The next phase of our improvement needs to come in the form of sustainability. Today, we rely on a few people to do a large bulk of the work and are overly dependent on those volunteers. You will see over the next several months a strong push for the next generation of volunteers to step forward and support and help define the future of this organization. I will be sending out a separate email on volunteerism and the many roles that we will need help filling. For any youth sports organization to thrive and best meet the needs of its families, it requires fresh faces and people to get engaged and help evolve the organization.

We have blessed with many quality coaches and a core group of volunteers willing to go the extra mile to help make the hockey experience for the 550 kids in our program fun and challenging. We appreciate those who already volunteer their time, but we need new blood in many roles within the organization to help maintain the quality experience and define what Needham Hockey needs to be in the future.

This is our #1 priority over the next 6 to 12 months, without greater involvement the quality of the program will suffer and likely the costs will increase as we will have to pay for outside help.

Leagues we play in – The board is in discussion with the Valley League and the GBL around our plans for next season and what will be the right mix of teams in each league. The Valley League pilot has been extremely successful. We will be weighing the pro/cons of each league for each age level as we finalize our plans. The Mite Development will continue to play in the Middlesex cross-ice league, and the girls teams will continue to play in the Middlesex Girls League. Research is being done on what is the right cross-ice league for our mite A team to play-in.

Registration - The board believes a key tenet to the success of our organization has been our commitment to player development and delivering on our mission and goals. We continue to support the American Development Model and the recommended mix of ice touches (practices, skills, and games) for all levels. With that stated, we have a growing number of players in our organization, but only a limited number of sheets of ice. The availability of ice creates constraints on the number of travel teams, development teams, and inhouse levels we can maintain while honoring our commitments on ice touches. The board is considering altering the registration process in the spring to ensure that players currently in the program have the first opportunity to register and secure a spot on a travel or development team. Inhouse registration is not affected and will continue to be in the fall.

New process being considered: All current NYH players will have a 3 week window to register when registration opens. No new players will be allowed to register at that time. If the number of slots at an age level is full by returning NYH players, we will not open registration to new players. If slots are available at the end of the 3 weeks, we will have a general registration – first come first serve to register. Once an age level is full, registration will close and we will create a waitlist. If you are a returning player and do not register during the 3 week window, you fall into the first come first serve registration.

Our objective is to give those already committed to Needham the opportunity to register and secure a spot. Based on our projections we have enough room at each level for current players. We hope to have some room for returning players, but that will be based on actual registrations.

Mite Registration: We will ask that all mites interested in mite A travel or mite development to register in the spring. Tryouts for the Mite A team will be in the fall and the mite development teams will be divided into parity teams like this year. Registration needs to be moved to the spring as the leagues require us to commit teams in the spring.

Tryouts – Will follow a similar process as prior years:

- Evaluators will choose the teams based on tryout performance and input from the coach's evals that we receive. Evaluators set the teams not the coach's evals.
- Placements are final once announced. Board, President, Tryout Coordinator do not move players.
- Mix of NYH experienced coaches and evaluators and an outside evaluator
- Outside goalie evaluator
- All tryouts will be in the spring (except mite) – likely late March into the first two weeks of April
- 3 tryout sessions for midget, bantam, pw, sq (likely 2 for girls and mites)

Recommendations the board is considering and will make final decisions on at the February meeting

- Increase the amount of scrimmaging at tryouts – add cross-ice scrimmages to the 2nd tryout
- Establish a formal documented policy for injured or absent players: draft (not final) – Absent player or injured player who is not able to tryout will be placed on the same team for the next season or 1 level lower if they are moving up in age (examples: same age: squirt b1 stay a squirt b1, new age level: squirt b1 move to pw b2). The injured player maybe re-evaluated the following season if there is overwhelming evidence based on his/her performance on the team that he/she belongs on a higher team. If a player becomes sick or injured during the tryout process and only misses part of the tryout will be placed based on the data already gathered by evaluators (both their observations during the players time trying out and coaches feedback)
- Limiting parents access to watch tryouts

General age level data - (note: final number of teams will be decided prior to registration)

- Midgets – 3 teams – slightly larger rosters than this year
- Bantam – 3 teams – similar roster size as this year

- PW – up to 5 teams – similar roster size as this year
- SQ – up to 5 teams – 4 full travel and 1 squirt development – similar roster sizes to this year
- Mite – mite A team and mite development teams (up to 45 mite development players and 15 mite a players – 60 total)
- Girls – 1 u10 girls team and 1 u12 girls team. No u14 team in 2013 (not enough players). U10 girls team will be limited to 9 and 10 year olds. Girls born in 2005 will need to play in the mite development or mite A program due to ADM cross-ice rules.
- Inhouse – continue to have 3 levels – Beginner, Rookie, inhouse mite. Registration will be in the fall. Look to add a fall skating program to help young players work on staking prior to start of the inhouse season. Large # of beginners this year used the program as more of a learn to skate program instead of a learn to play hockey program which is the intention. This program would also give returning players a chance to do some skating in the fall prior to the start of the full inhouse season.

Our goal with any change will be to continue to improve our organization and the overall experience for a family and their player. We feel that NYH is competitive with any program in the area as far as the quality of the hockey experience for the price paid.

Once the board has voted on proposed changes, we will provide updated information to families prior to registration.

Thanks,

Mike Canavan

Sample Comparison Data – PW

Data is from start of season through 12/31			
Team	NYH team	Local Select Team	Neighboring Town
Practices	38	34	30
Skills	12	11	6
Games	30	28	26
Total Touches	80	73	62
Cost	\$1,600	\$3200+	\$1,600

Needham team has averaged 1 more touch per week than the neighboring town for the same price. The Needham team has averaged almost 30 more minutes of practice time a week then the Select team (reason: 4 more total practices and 75% of Needham’s practice ice is 60 minute sheets vs. select teams practices are all 50 minutes), had roughly the same number of skills sessions, and played the same # of games at half the cost.