



## Parents Guide to Travel Hockey and Development Levels

(Everything you need to know about Travel Hockey but never thought to ask)

Needham Youth Hockey has prepared this document as an overview of our Travel program. For parents of children who have not played travel hockey in the past, (or even some experienced veterans) it will be a resource to answer questions and help you learn what to expect during the course of a season. It includes everything from a broad overview of the Needham program such as age groups, practices, leagues, season schedules, and tryouts, all the way down to the nitty gritty details of registration, game shirts and fees.

Players too young for the age groups listed below should look to play in our inhouse program. Registration for that program is in the fall.

### Teams and Age Groups

NYH offers a travel hockey program for Needham and Dover children. The season typically runs from late August / early September until mid- to late March. Teams are aligned by the USA Hockey age groups. For the 2012/2013 season, the age groups will be as follows:

- Mite 1/1/05 to 12/31/06
- Squirt 1/1/03 to 12/31/04
- Peewee 1/1/01 to 12/31/02
- Bantam 1/1/99 to 12/31/00
- Midget 1/1/95 to 12/31/98
- Girls u10 1/1/03 to 12/31/04
- Girls u12 1/1/01 to 12/31/03

Players are required to tryout at each level. Tryouts are designed to place players on teams with players of similar ability. There are multiple levels of teams for each age group: "A", "B", and "C" with "A" teams consisting of higher skilled players and "C" teams consisting of less experienced players.

Mite and lower squirt teams games will start in mid-October and run until late March. The Squirt A, PW, and Bantam games run from early September until late March/early April.

### Mite and Squirt Development

NYH offers a Development program for Needham and Dover children. The season typically runs from early October to mid-March. Teams are aligned by the USA Hockey age groups. For the 2012/2013 season, the age groups will be as follows:

- Mite 1/1/05 to 12/31/06
- Squirt 1/1/03 to 12/31/04



The primary focus for this group is player development. The teams will practice twice a week in a skills based approach and have a cross-ice game each weekend. The squirt team may also play some full ice games. The Mite teams may play some full-ice games at the end of the season.

In 2013, we are planning to have 1 mite travel team and 4 squirt travel teams. Players who register to tryout for travel, but do not make one of those teams will be placed in the mite or squirt development based on the year.

Families interested in not trying out for travel will need to register this spring for mite and squirt development. The registration process will give you the option to indicate you wish to have your child placed directly in mite or squirt development.

We have had to move registration to the spring in order to understand the number of players at each level and properly plan for teams and league commitments.

### **Commitment**

Playing travel hockey is a significant financial and time commitment for player and family. Needham Youth Hockey encourages kids to play multiple sports, and we respect that families and players must balance commitments to family, school, and conflicting sports schedules. While we understand there will be scheduling conflicts during the season, we ask that all players and families make an effort to honor the commitment to NYH and regularly attend practices and games. Coaches at the beginning of each season should set out guidelines for the team on communication and expectations on practice and game attendance.

### **Practices**

Teams from the Mite to Bantam level and Girls U10 and U12 average two to three practices and/or skills sessions per week. Practices are primarily half sheet of ice (two teams share the rink) for 50 or 60 minutes. Teams usually have 4 to 5 full sheet practices during the year

Practices are generally held on weekday evenings or weekend days or evenings at St. Sebastian's and other rinks where we have secured practice ice. These rinks include Dexter School (Brookline), The Fessenden School (Newton), Noble and Greenough School (Dedham), Roche Rink (West Roxbury), Boch Rink (Dedham) or Rivers School (Weston). Practice times range from 4pm to 9pm during the week and from 7am to 9pm on the weekends. Younger teams will generally receive earlier practices times, and older teams have the later practice times.

### **Skills**



NYH supplements practices by also providing skills sessions for players and goalies throughout the season. NYH contracts with two skills providers, *Teams Training* and *Pro Ambitions*. We offer 12 to 16 skills sessions over the course of the season for each team from Mite to Bantam and girls U10 and U12. We will also provide 12 separate goalie clinics for our full-time goalies.

## Leagues and Season Schedules

The Needham teams will be split across the Valley League and Greater Boston Hockey League. It league provides value to NYH program. We have tried to balance the competitiveness/parity value of the Valley League with the flexibility and convenience of the GBL as we placed teams.

Final league placement may change after registration as final commitments and acceptance by the leagues happen in April.

Projected leagues:

- Squirt A, All PW teams, and the Bantam B1 and B2 will play in the Valley League
- Mite A, SQ B1, B2, B3, Bantam A will play in the GBL
- Midget A will play in Valley League. Midget B and B2 will play in GBL.
- Girls Teams – Middlesex Girls League
- Mite and SQ development – Middlesex Cross-ice league at Fessenden

Primary drivers for placement

- Mite and lower squirt teams – GBL offers a shorter game season allowing us to better align with the ADM principles of allowing young players more flexibility to play other sports in the fall with fewer game conflicts
- Midget A, SQ A, PW teams, and lower Bantams – Valley offers better parity for these teams
- Bantam A –competition has been strong in the North division of GBL over the past few years and the convenience of the GBL schedule of typically have many Saturday night games at St Sebs and Sunday morning at BU provides the many potential 9<sup>th</sup> graders on the team more predictable scheduling and convenience then the Valley League
- Midget B and B2 - competition has been the right level in the GBL over the past few years and the convenience of the GBL schedule of typically have many Saturday night games at St Sebs

Game Information

- SQ A, Peewee and Bantam teams play 35 game schedules beginning in early September and ending in late March.
- Squirt and Mite teams will play 25 game schedules starting in mid-October and running until mid-March. The Mite games will be a mix of cross-ice and full-ice games.



- Girls U10 and U12 season runs from September 1 to April 1, and play games in the Mass Girls Hockey League
- Midgets play a 10 to 12 game half-season schedule that wraps up prior to the start of the High School season.

Girls, Squirts, PeeWees and Bantams also participate in State “Playdown” Tournament Games, which are preliminary State tournament games. Playdown games are held regionally, with winners in that round advancing to the State tournament. Playdown and State tournament games are single elimination, so teams continue to advance as long as they win.

In addition to the league game schedule, coaches and teams are encouraged to play in two or three tournaments. One of those tournaments is normally the NYH-sponsored Frank Bell Invitational in February and March. The February portion of the tournament is held over school vacation. “A” level teams play the first weekend and the “B” level teams play 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the week (Thursday thru Sunday). “C” level teams play the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend in March.

*The PeeWee A team historically plays in the Saint John, New Brunswick Holiday Tournament from December 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>. Players making the PW A team should plan to participate in this event.*

### **Mite A and Mite Development Program**

USA Hockey (the governing body of American youth hockey and the US National teams) has conducted significant research on how best to develop players beginning at the Mite level. As a result of this research, in 2010 USA Hockey began instituting the “American Development Model” (ADM), which includes recommendations and mandated changes to Mite level programs that wish to remain sanctioned by USA Hockey. NYH has reviewed the research, believes that USA Hockey’s approach is the best way to develop younger players, and like many other local programs, is making changes to conform to USA Hockey’s requirements for Mites.

To continue our three year transition to conform with ADM principles, NYH launched our Mite and SQ Development program in 2012/13. Players born in 2005 and 2006 will be eligible to register in the spring and tryout in the fall for the Mite A team. In 2013/14, Mite A players will participate in coach-led practices, skills sessions and will play approximately 15 cross ice games against other towns in the GBL, with the balance of their game schedule after 1/1/14 being full ice games.

Kids who are not selected for the Mite A team, will be placed in the Mite Development Programs with players who registered directly for Mite Development. Mite Development Program will skate 2 times each week, participate in supplemental skills sessions and play cross



ice games against teams from other towns that are currently developing similar programs. The intent is to have the number of on-ice hours per child be equivalent to what it has been in prior years at the Mite level; only the structure of the practices and format of the games will be different than pre-ADM.

### **SQ Development Program**

Similar to the Mite Development Program, Players who register for squirt, but do not make a travel team will be placed in squirt development. Players may also register directly for squirt development. The program will follow the same format as mite development, but teams will play squirt age games (mostly cross-ice) will option for some full-ice games or tournaments.

### **Registration**

Any player wishing to participate in Travel or Development NYH program must register online and pay appropriate registration fees. NYH online registration will be held from 2/25/13 to 3/24/13 – exact dates and Instructions are posted on the website at time of registration launch.

Midget Registration will close on 3/21 as the first tryout will be on 3/24.

***Spring registration is for travel and development level only. Inhouse level registration is in the fall.***

USA Hockey requires all players and coaches to register directly with USA Hockey. Instructions will be provided on the NYH website to make it easy for players and coaches to register. All players must register with USA Hockey and update their account information on the NYH website or they will not be allowed on the ice at the start of the season in September.

NYH provides online coaches registration for those interested in coaching in NYH. Instructions will be included as part of the online registration.

### **Tryouts and Team Placements**

Tryouts and team placements for Midget, Bantam, Peewee Squirt, Girls U10 and U12 teams will be conducted in late March and early April. To take advantage of the additional six months of maturation and development that later tryouts will provide for younger players, Mite tryouts and team placements for next year will take place in the September, before the start of their season.

Information on the tryout process and dates will be posted on the Needham Website as soon as tryout dates are finalized.



## Numbers of Teams by level:

Based on the current projections of registration numbers, NYH expects to have the following numbers of teams by level:

- NYH plans to have 3 Midget teams with a max of 20 players per team including goalies. If more than 60 players register we may have a 4<sup>th</sup> team, or may not have a spot for everyone on a team. Players not chosen for a team during tryouts will be refunded their registration fee less \$75 tryout fee.
- NYH plans to have 3 Bantam teams with a target of 18 to 19 players per team including goalies. If more players register than projected we may have a 4<sup>th</sup> team or may not have a spot for everyone on a team. Players not chosen for a team during tryouts will be refunded their registration fee less \$75 tryout fee.
- NYH plans to have 5 Pee wee teams with a target of 15 to 18 players per team including goalies. If more players register than projected, we may not have a spot for everyone on a team. Players not chosen for a team during tryouts will be refunded their registration fee less \$75 tryout fee.
- NYH plans to have 4 travel and 1 or 2 Squirt development teams with a target of 15 to 17 players per team including goalies. If more players register than projected we may not have a spot for everyone on a travel team. Players not chosen for a travel team during tryouts will be placed on in squirt development program
- NYH plans to have one Mite team with a target of 14 to 16 players. We expect more players will tryout than will make the team. Players not chosen for the team will be placed in the Mite Development program.
- NYH plans to have one Girls U10 team and one Girls U12 team with a target of 17 to 20 players per team including goalies. Any player not chosen for a girls' team will have the option to tryout for the age appropriate Mite, Squirt or Pee wee team or participate in a squirt development. Girls may only play on one team in the Needham program, unless there is extra space on the coed team.

## Game Shirts

In 2011, NYH ordered new games shirts for players. In 2013/14, we expect that some players may not need new shirts, but many will need to replace their shirts because they have grown, shirts have worn out, ripped, stained. Also, as a player moves to a new team there may be duplicate numbers.

The plan is to assume that all players need new shirts and build the cost into the registration fee. During registration, you will be asked to provide the number of the shirt your child has and



what number preferences your child has in the event of a duplication on his/her new team. We will then provide an option to “opt out” of replacing your shirts (assuming they still fit and are in good condition). For those parents who “opt out”, NYH will provide credit of \$75 in the fall once the season begins.

It is very important to understand that all of the shirts ordering activities happen in June when rosters are set and numbers assigned. If you “opt out” and then change your mind, it may take several weeks to get replacement shirts for your child and there may be additional charges from the shirt company.

### How we assign numbers

Once teams are chosen from tryouts, the selection process for choosing who gets what number is based on the following:

1. Player returning to same team
2. Oldest player to youngest player
3. Rare case of two players with same # and same birthday alphabetical order (A to Z)

### Shirts



### Midget Shirts

We provided midget shirts in 2011 and prior year bantams should have them. We are assuming – players have a shirt. We will ask for current number and number preference. If there is a conflict – NYH will provide midget with a white shirt. If a Midget needs a new shirt there is an option to order the shirt at time of registration.

### Travel Team Costs

Registration fees were flat in 2011/12, but due to increases in ice costs and league fees and misc. operating costs, fees will increase by approximately 5%. Tryout costs are included in registration fee.

\$630 – girls, mite to bantam

\$450 – Midget



Registration fees primarily cover operating costs, tryout fees, league registration fees, and game fees. This fee is paid at time of registration on the NYH website. The Fee is a financial commitment to Needham Youth Hockey and not a deposit. NYH makes financial commitments to leagues, etc based on registration data. Review the refund policy on the website in the documents section before registering.

#### **Mite to Bantam and Girls –% of registration fee aligned to major costs**

- 65% - League fees, tryout costs, and playdown fees
- 10% - NYH operating costs
- 10% - Participation in NYH feb/march tournament
- 15% - New game shirts, socks, and practice jersey

#### **Midgets**

- 90% - league fees, tryout costs, practices
- 10% - NYH overhead and combined practice/game shirt

USA/Mass Hockey registration fee will be paid directly to USA hockey through their website. The fee is projected to increase from \$35 to \$45 in 2012/13.

Teams also pay for the cost of their practice ice and skills sessions (except midget) throughout the season. Average cost of ice for NYH in 2012 was approximately \$320 per hour. Coaches will typically appoint a team treasurer to track team expenses and pay the bills. Treasurers will collect periodic payments from parents to cover expenses. Estimated cost of ice and non-Needham tournaments throughout the season is approximately \$1000 per player.

**Mite and Squirt Development charge will be \$1050 for the 2013/14 season. We will collect the \$630 at time of registration and collect the remaining balance in the fall.**

***Note: The registration fee is non-refundable except in the case of injury that prevents a player from missing the great majority of the season, moving out of town, attending boarding school, or NYH is not able to place a player on a team. Choosing to play on a different team after registering is not a valid reason for a refund.***