



ESSEX YOUTH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION HOCKEY HANDBOOK

www.essexyouthhockey.org

Below are some of the guidelines that provide the basis for running our association. We continue to maintain our focus on providing kids with a positive athletic experience and lifelong skills.

EYHA Board of Directors

VISION AND MISSION

The Essex Youth Hockey Association's mission is to introduce the youth of our area communities to the great game of ice hockey, such that every child, through their participation in the program, can enjoy a positive, character building sports experience while creating a passion for the game. EYHA believes that through the development of every individual, the collective team benefits from the resulting depth, diversity, and cohesion. This produces a level of confidence that brings success in the competitive hockey environment. Emphasis will always be placed upon education, personal development, teamwork, and sportsmanship. The individual conduct of board members, coaches, players, and parents will be maintained to ensure a positive culture in which all can honor the sport, and exemplify an organization in which to be proud of. And above all else...

"It's always about the kids"

TYPES OF PROGRAMS

The Essex Youth Hockey Association may have several hockey programs to serve the needs of all ability levels dependent on registration numbers at each level of play.

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION: both Girls and CoEd at all levels

- NewBees (minimum age 4 years old by October 1)
- House Mites
- Travel (both Girls / CoEd): (Tiers 2, 3, 4)
 - 14U: Ages 13-14
 - 12U: Ages 11-12
 - 10U: Ages 9-10
 - 8U Cross Ice: Ages 6-8

NEWBEE PROGRAM

The NewBees Program is our entry-level program primarily for children between 4-7 years of age. The program focuses on the fundamentals of skating in a supportive and fun environment. The NewBee program runs for one-hour on Saturday mornings at the Essex Rink from October through February. Each participant will receive a team jersey at no additional charge that is theirs to keep. Parents / guardians are allowed to join on the ice to assist as coaches. Any adult wishing to coach will be required to complete a coaching application, SafeSport certification and USA Hockey background check. Everyone on the ice **MUST** have a buckled helmet on, **NO EXCEPTIONS**.

HOUSE PROGRAM

The Essex House Program is a SKILL based and FUN oriented recreational ice hockey program with the emphasis on PARTICIPATION, having FUN, and learning HOCKEY SKILLS and SPORTSMANSHIP in a team atmosphere.

Objectives: The main emphasis of the House Program is to develop a love for the game by providing the player the opportunity to:

- Learn basic hockey skills necessary to play the game
- Play games to practice their skills, teamwork and sportsmanship
- Have FUN

Schedule: In general the House program meets at least once on weekends at varied times from 6:30am to 10:00 am. As ice is available, House teams may meet twice a week including Saturday and Sunday mornings. The number of sessions and times are determined by the number of players and ice availability. Later in the season games may be scheduled with other local organizations and assigned times may be different than or in addition to our normally assigned times.

Arrival Time: All players should be dressed and ready to go on the ice at least 5 minutes before their scheduled ice time. Ice time is precious, so we need to make the most of it when it is available. Locker rooms will be assigned and we encourage their use. This enhances the “team” atmosphere and also greatly simplifies the off-ice to on-ice transition.

Housekeeping: Everyone is expected to practice good housekeeping in the warm up room, the dressing rooms, the arena, and the surrounding grounds. If you see litter, please pick it up so we can maintain a skating facility that we can be proud of.

Coaches and Instructors: All those interested in becoming instructors must complete a coaching application, USA Hockey background check, and USA Hockey safesport certification. All coaches are required to wear a helmet on the ice that is securely buckled.

Volunteers: You do not need to coach to be a part of EYHA family. We are always looking for help in many areas to ensure that your child's experience with hockey is positive. We will need help throughout the season to coordinate team activities, picture day and other matters. If you have any questions on how you can help, please contact a board member

Suggestions: We are always open to suggestions. Improving the house program and answering major concerns that you have are very important to us. It is the PLAYERS program and it is incumbent upon us to make sure it is FUN, and that we develop a love for the game. We hope to build confidence in the players' skills and ability, but mostly in themselves.

Uniforms: Each House player will be given one jersey. This jersey is theirs to keep. All jerseys will be replaced every year.

TRAVEL HOCKEY

VSAHA (Vermont State Amateur Hockey Association) uses a Tier system for designating teams. EYHA may form teams at the T2,T3,T4 levels for each age group depending on the number of registrants, available ice time and the ability to field competitive teams. Association coaches shall strive to provide a positive experience for all players involved. The development of an individual player is expected to be an enjoyable experience originating from quality instruction, training in the fundamentals of hockey and team play. Due to the highly competitive schedule, equal ice time is not mandated by the Association rules. Every effort will be made to manage shifts in an equal fashion however the dynamics of the game may dictate shift changes that may appear unfair.

The following teams will be formed if registered players support it:

14U / G14U: T2, T4

12U / G12U: T2, T3, T4

10U / G10U: T2, T3, T4

- (T2) There are fewer T2 level organizations in the state and as a result more out of state travel will be required to play at a competitive level. There is typically at least one away tournament (possibly more), plus the state tournament. The state champion T2 association will represent the State of Vermont at the New England Regional Tier 2 and possibly the USA National Tournament.
- (T3) There are generally more T3 teams so there may be more in-state game opportunities relative to T3 teams. There is typically one away tournament plus the state tournament. Potentially, a T3 team could be invited to the Tier 3 New England Regional tournament and possible USA Hockey National Tournament.
- (T4) This level generally has the most teams than the higher divisions. Because of this, in-state games are more prevalent than T2 and T3 thus requiring less overnight travel. There is typically one away tournament plus the state tournament.

8U /6U Cross Ice Mites:

- There are no tryouts for Cross Ice Mites. **The board has approved that Cross Ice teams will be balanced with like players.** This means players of all skill levels will be spread amongst the 4 teams. EYHA 8U director will build teams based on age and skill level and will balance each team.
- During games however, the 8U director may coordinate with the coaches and with opposing teams coaches to try to match skill level on ice at various times.

TEAM PLACEMENT EVALUATIONS

The Essex Youth Hockey Association (EYHA) annually selects teams for all levels of play as long as the number of players are adequate to support complete teams. The target number of players selected for each team will be 15 skaters and two goalies. Depending on the actual number of players at a level, team size can vary and may exceed the aforementioned roster limit and will be determined by the Head Coach and EYHA Board of Directors. Every effort will be made to ensure the variance between team size is not more than two players at each team at each level. This may not always be achieved depending on various circumstances. The schedule for evaluations for all levels will be published at registration and on our website. The EYHA Head Coach will select appropriate representatives to participate as Evaluators. The EYHA Head Coach will select skilled on-ice coordinators to run the evaluation sessions to

ensure an efficient and effective workout session. Only the evaluators will be involved in the rating and selection of all the players being evaluated for that age group. An independent board member will be assigned to each grouping to monitor record keeping and to manage confidentiality of the process. Placements for teams at each level will be completed on the final day of the evaluation sessions and notification will be made as soon as possible subsequent to the last day of evaluations and will be posted on the website. As part of the evaluation process, all players will be assessed relative to their peer group in the level of their team placement. Any player that is evaluated as significantly below the skill development level of their placed peer group will be required to meet with the EYHA Head Coach, 2nd VP of Travel along with their parents to discuss the skill development gap and align on the best option to provide a safe and positive experience for the player. An individual development plan will be outlined to maximize the player development which may include alternate placement, specialized practice participation, modified game participation and other options appropriate for the circumstances. In the event, the individual development plan includes reduced participation, fees may be adjusted accordingly.

UNIFORMS

- Each Travel player will be required to purchase one reversible home / away jersey that will be theirs to keep. A number will be assigned to each player by the association and that number will remain with that child until graduation from the program. Effort will be made by the association to assign family members the same number to allow for hand downs.
- Each Travel player will need one pair of reversible game socks. The away socks are worn with away jersey (blue) and the home socks are worn with the home jersey (white). Any player not wearing the correct socks will be warned by his/her coach for the first offense and after that may lose playing time.

GOALIE EQUIPMENT REQUIRED/PROVIDED:

EYHA will supply goalie equipment to those children that are interested in playing goalie, excluding 14U age children.

- 14U goalies must have their own equipment and because of this they will receive a fixed discount. 12U age goalies that play in goal full-time and have their own full set of equipment will also be entitled to the discount. Note: Any 14U goalie that makes a high school team and discontinues to play with EYHA will receive a portion of the payment back.
- Goalie equipment is available from the equipment manager and must be signed out by a parent.
- Goalie equipment is available for use all year long (for camps, summer league) and may be subject to a rental fee of \$50.00 per year.
- Goalie equipment that is not being signed out for the summer must be returned on one of the equipment return days at the end of the season. Equipment that is not returned or signed out will be replaced at the cost of the parent who signed it out. This cost will be added to your next year's registration fee.

TOURNAMENTS:

EYHA pays for ONE away tournament per travel team. Additional tournaments may be scheduled and costs associated with registration fees and travel costs will be the obligation of the families. Acceptance of your child's placement on a travel team implies acceptance of

these additional costs and an obligation to attend these events. Many of these tournaments are pre-scheduled and have been part of the EYHA tournament plan for years. Advanced commitments to participate in these tournaments are required by the EYHA in order to ensure participation. Understanding this obligation is critical for all travel parents.

SCHEDULE

The goal of the Essex travel schedule is to provide competition for each team at the appropriate level. The organization strives to maintain a schedule with teams of similar ability both in-state and out-of-state. Scheduling is accomplished by the following volunteers:

Ice Coordinator: Responsible for obtaining ice for EYHA. The growth of our Association has required the use of “Home” ice in other rinks, including those in Waterbury, Highgate, Burlington’s Leddy Park, and UVM’s Gutterson Fieldhouse. They are responsible for scheduling ice times for both practices and games for all.

Scheduler: Responsible for obtaining games with other organizations to provide a full season worth of games, both home and away. The scheduler and the team head coach work together to accept games that are equally competitive, reasonable in time and distance, and conform to EYHA guidelines for game profiles and tournaments. The Association has several schedulers who volunteer their time to set up games for each level. The schedulers work closely with the Ice Coordinator to ensure that all available ice time is utilized fairly.

The majority of weekends during the season will have two games with an occasional three games. Each weekend usually has games on both Saturday and Sunday. For tournament play, three games will count against the profile regardless of the number played. Official state and regional tournaments do not count against the profiles. Officially the season ends after the last game of sanctioned state, regional or national play, whichever comes first. The only exception may be midgets. A team that is knocked out of the state tournament early can extend the season but cannot go past the State tournament weekend. Team schedules will be available on the EYHA website under **Contact - Game Schedulers**. Generally, schedules are only shown one month in advance to allow for changes that may occur with ice scheduling. Master copies for the House team/level are posted on the bulletin board in the warm-up room at the Essex Rink and on the EYHA Web page. The schedules are updated frequently with last minute changes so please check the Master schedule often. Game cancellation decisions due to weather are made by the Second Vice President (Travel Coordinator), who is responsible for the Travel Program. Team Coaches submit input to the travel coordinator at least four hours before departure. Please be aware that weather related cancellations are rare. Any disputes between a team scheduler and a team head coach must be communicated to the VP of Travel who will remediate and decide the best course of action. The VP of Travel may consult with the EYHA Head Coach, President and/or Ice Scheduler on appropriate remediation actions. Under no circumstances should parents directly contact their respective team scheduler to complain about game and practice schedules. All feedback should be constructive and courteous and directed to the team head coach.

COMMITMENT

Hockey players and their families should be aware of the commitment required to play hockey on a travel team. Games begin in mid to late-October after tryouts, and continue to approximately mid-February to possibly mid-March depending on USA Hockey Tournament advancement. Teams who finish first in the Vermont State Tournament are required to continue play at the New England Regional Tournament at the Tier 2 and 3 levels respectively and possibly the National Tournament. For some teams, a second place finish in States will mean a New England Sectional Regional position typically requiring overnight out of state travel. Regional tournaments extend the season until the end of March. **Please be aware that the Vermont State Tournament usually is held during the February school vacation.**

EYHA strives to have at least two practices a week for all competitive teams. Due to limited practice ice time available at the Essex Rink, some practices are scheduled at other rinks, including Waterbury, Leddy Rink in Burlington, and Gutterson at UVM. Games scheduled at these rinks are considered "Home" games along with those played at the Essex Rink.

Due to limited "Home" ice availability, it is not unusual for Essex travel teams to play more "Away" games than "Home" games during the season.

When traveling, day trips are not scheduled at rinks more than 170 miles away. Typical overnight trips in the past have been to Glens Falls and Albany, New York, Springfield and Marlboro MA, Plattsburgh and upstate NY, and various other points in Massachusetts, Portland, Maine and Providence, Rhode Island.

Schedulers attempt to find tournaments during the season that offer a challenging level of competition. Many of the tournaments entered are done in advance of the season and EYHA has been participating in them for many years. The Association will appropriate specific funds for each team for the State Tournament. Tournament Fees in excess of this appropriation will be the responsibility of the team. Where there is a dispute between the Head Coach and Scheduler - the VP of Travel will confer with both parties regarding participating in a tournament. The VP of Travel has final authority on determining whether a team participates in a tournament.

Excluding State and Regional tournaments, the maximum number of overnight trips allowed in a given hockey season will be 3 for all teams.

The number of overnight stays in a hotel per trip can vary from one to a maximum of three. In the past, the Association has taken part in a limited number of tournaments that require teams to travel during a school day in order to participate. Typically, this has resulted in missing one or two days during the year (excluding the Regional tournaments)

EYHA recognizes the extraordinary commitment it takes for a family to be a part of the travel organization. If hockey games are scheduled outside the guidelines stated above, or if a family has a conflict with other family activities, this conflict should be discussed with the child's Team Coach and the child may be excused from participation without repercussion. Please let the Team Coach know as early as possible to allow adequate planning for any player absences.

As noted previously, your acceptance of your player into the travel program also implies agreement with the terms of the program.

Due to the complexity of the scheduling process, the organization cannot guarantee strict adherence to the guidelines. In addition, parents must understand that the schedule for each team is somewhat dictated by the availability of ice at home and away rinks. While schedulers strive to make each schedule logical and convenient, the availability of opposing team's ice sometimes causes a different result. Once a game is scheduled, the opposing team, as well as our own, has made a commitment for valuable ice time. It is important that each team follow their schedule as any cancellations may harm the reputation of EYHA.

PARENT VOLUNTEER FUNCTIONS

All parents are expected to participate during the regular youth hockey season to support EYHA activities such as running the clock /scoreboard, score sheet or penalty box at regular season games. In addition, it is the policy of USA Hockey that all Affiliates, Districts, leagues, and local hockey programs have at least one responsible adult present directly monitoring the locker room during all team events to assure that only participants, (coaches and players), approved team personnel and family members are permitted in the locker room and to supervise the conduct in the locker room. **Locker Room Monitors MUST complete SafeSport training and have a completed background check.** Any individual meetings with a minor participant and a coach in a locker room shall require a responsible adult be with the coach. Further, responsible adults must personally monitor the locker room environment at all times while participants are present and also make sure the locker room is appropriately secured during times when minor participants are on the ice.

Additionally, EYHA hosts several state and regional tournaments at the end of the year. These tournaments are major fundraising events for EYHA and benefit all skaters in the organization. For each tournament, EYHA teams will be assigned tournament games to cover responsibilities for the clock, scoreboard, score sheet, penalty boxes, ticket sales etc. Parents of all skaters are expected to work assigned tournament games, even if their child is not participating in the tournament.

Fundraising is one of the most important responsibilities within the organization. EYHA will hold fundraising activities during the course of the season to help offset the cost of ice and referees. It is expected that all families will support fundraising activities. Team parents will be responsible for soliciting and organizing volunteers for tournaments and fundraising activities.

STATE ALL-STAR SELECTIONS

Vermont State Amateur Hockey Association (VSAHA) coordinates the selection of a boys and girls state all-star team. VSAHA established a policy where all age eligible players may apply to openly tryout for the respective team based on their respective birth year. Tryouts are typically held by VSAHA at various times during the year. Tryout schedules are posted on the VSAHA website. EYHA will make the best effort to inform our members of the tryout dates; however parents are solely responsible for monitoring and registering their players for festival tryouts. Parents are encouraged to monitor the VSAHA website for details.

ANNUAL AWARDS

Sportsmanship Awards - Each team Head Coach selects an individual player to be awarded a trophy at the end of the year.

- **Greg Lehoullier Award** - The EYHA Head Coach, 2nd Vice President Travel and President select the recipient from the Sportsmanship Award winners. Son * Teammate * Friend 10 In the summer of 1978, Greg Lehoullier was tragically killed when hit by an automobile near his home in Underhill. Greg was nine years old and an avid hockey enthusiast in the Essex Youth Hockey association. Not only did he display good hockey skills at a young age but, more importantly, he epitomized the philosophy of EYHA. He respected his coaches and teammates; he always worked hard to improve his skills; he demonstrated good sportsmanship toward his teammates and his opponents; and most of all, he was fun to be with. With the concurrence of Greg's parents, Joan and Marcel, the EYHA Directors established the Greg Lehoullier Award in 1979 to be awarded to a deserving participant who exemplifies Greg's qualities. Each team coach is asked to submit a candidate to receive that team's sportsmanship award. From that list of names, a committee of EYHA Directors selects the recipient of this memorial. His or her name is placed on a plaque that is proudly displayed in the Essex Skating Facility.
- **Frederick J. Reidy Award** - The Board of Directors nominate adult volunteers. The President selects the recipient of the award. The Frederick J. Reidy Distinguished Service Award recognizes individuals who made significant contributions to EYHA. The criteria for the award are as follows:
 - One committed to the goals and philosophy of EYHA.
 - One who puts ALL the youth of the organization as a priority.
 - One who is a servant to EYHA and whose work has made a difference.
 - One who is a credit to the organization.
- **“Johnny O” Coaches award** - This award is selected by a committee of the board made up of the EYHA Head Coach, VPs of Travel and House and the President. Coach Johnny O passed away peacefully in his sleep on Sunday Feb 18, 2007 at the too young age of 51. Johnny was the on-ice lead for the Novice Program for five years and coached the House Girls team for the two years it existed. Johnny gave unconditionally to Essex Youth Hockey without ever having a child in the program. His love and compassion for the kids and his love of teaching kids to skate was unparalleled. Johnny's energy and enthusiasm encouraged even the most timid and overwhelmed child to believe in themselves and succeed. He pressed them to keep trying and keep learning, falling down was just a bump in the road. Johnny O instilled his love of hockey into many, many children. He taught kids in our program, from 2nd year Mites to 2nd year Peewees, to skate and love being on the ice. He will be dearly missed, and we are all very sad for his passing, but glad and proud of all he did for our organization.
- **Weston Lea Spirited Player Award** Is selected by the Board. In the winter of 2003, EYHA lost one of its family members, Weston Lea. During his years with EYHA he was often one of the smallest players, but that did not stop him from going up against a larger opponent. He always gave 100% effort. He played with heart, passion, and persistence. He was a wonderful young man with an endless smile, great sense of humor, and was a dedicated teammate, brother, and son. We will cherish our wonderful memories always. Each year a deserving participant who exemplifies Weston's qualities will receive this award. This award will represent always giving 100% effort, playing with heart, dedication to the team, having a great love for the game, and most of all enthusiasm and spirit.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Parents and players are reminded that your actions on and off the ice represent EYHA. Please treat all players, coaches, officials, and parents with respect and dignity. All members are reminded of USA Hockey's Zero Tolerance for Verbal Abuse Rule which requires players, coaches, officials, parents, and spectators to "maintain a sportsmanlike and educational atmosphere before, during, and after all USA Hockey sanctioned games."

Based on past behavior of its members overall, EYHA has built a reputation for teamwork and sportsmanship, both on and off the ice. In the interest of continuing that ideal, the EYHA Board requests that all who participate either as a spectator, coach, or player abide by the USA Hockey Code of Conduct. Any violations reported to EYHA administrators will be investigated and may result in consequences for players, coaches, parents, and spectators. It is expected that all participants will follow these Codes. Disciplinary action may be taken with those who violate these behavioral expectations and may lead to suspension or termination from the program depending on the severity or volume of violations. Please take these expectations seriously.

The EYHA has a detailed Policies and Procedure Manual on the Website. Contained in the manual includes many items not covered in this Handbook. All EYHA members should read the policy and familiarize themselves with the expectations of the Association.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

As recommended by USA Hockey, EYHA has adopted a policy regarding the consumption, use, and abuse of mood altering substances. These are defined to include: intoxicating beverages, including, but not limited to:

- alcohol;
- any controlled non-prescription drug;
- prescription drugs when used to an excess in violation of doctor's recommendation, or to produce a state of intoxication

On Ice: EYHA prohibits any participant (player, coach, official or any other person involved in a game or practice) from using, or being under the influence of any mood altering substance during active participation in any on ice activity. Upon discovery of any such violation, EYHA shall remove that person from participation immediately and thereafter, for a reasonable period of time to be determined. No financial refund will be made for a suspension or expulsion under this policy.

Off Ice: EYHA has adopted a policy that no participant (see participant definition in "On Ice") should use or abuse any mood altering substance in any illegal manner or in any manner that threatens the participant's active participation in EYHA's activities.

FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCESS

EYHA maintains a formal grievance process in an effort to bring a consistent and organized means to conflict resolution. Details on this process are located in the association's Policies and Procedures document found on the EYHA website.

RINK RULES

The Essex Skating Facility is one of the premiere facilities in Vermont. We need your help in keeping the facility looking top notch. Accordingly we are asking all parents and coaches to police the rink to prevent the following activities:

- Horseplay in or around the elevators is strictly prohibited.
- Floor hockey is prohibited in all areas of the rink.
- The locker room hallway is off limits to all non-player personnel.

Please do the following as a member using the rink:

- Leave the facility cleaner than how we found it - we will be better off.
- Parents should oversee the behavior of the children visiting the rink.
- Parents of players should assist in enforcing these rules.

Please review these rules with your family and hopefully we can preserve the beauty of our facility for years to come.

MAKING IT ALL WORK

EYHA has been and continues to be a very successful organization. The Association relies on **volunteers** to make it work. Your help and ideas are appreciated. EYHA Board Meetings are usually held the 3rd Thursday of the month at the Essex rink classroom and are a good way to become involved. Check the website calendar for actual notices. Please feel free to contact any of the members of the Board with questions, ideas or to volunteer to help either on or off the ice. See board member contact information on the webpage. <http://www.essexyouthhockey.org>