

HANDBOOK
JUNIOR FALCONS MITE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

THE FALCONS: The Junior Falcons Mite Hockey Association (JFMHA) is one of the largest youth mite hockey programs in the state of Illinois, empowered by a dedicated Board of Directors and Hockey Professionals.

PHILOSOPHY: The JFMHA believes children develop a passion for hockey if they are having fun, making lifelong friends, are guided by positive role models, taught by inspirational mentors and achieve both personal and team success.

JFMHA OPERATIONS: The JFMHA is a not-for-profit corporation incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois.

PROFESSIONAL HOCKEY STAFF: Nick Meo - JFMHA Director

HOCKEY PROGRAMS: The JFMHA offer year-round hockey AAU Mite hockey programs for all skill levels of play, from beginning skaters to advanced.

HOCKEY SEASON: The JFMHA year-round hockey programs are divided into three hockey seasons: Regular Hockey Season, Spring Hockey Season and Summer Programming.

HOCKEY LEVELS OF PLAY: The JFMHA offers hockey only at the mite level.

LEARN-TO-SKATE PROGRAM: **JFMHA Hockey Professionals and local park district employees have joined forces to enhance the Junior Falcons' Learn-to-Skate program.**

HOUSE LEAGUE HOCKEY: The JFMHA offers fun, inter-squad recreational hockey for all youth players, regardless of skill. JFMHA Hockey Professionals and volunteer coaches teach the players.

HOUSE LEAGUE COMMITMENT: During the Regular Season, the House League teams typically have two ice slots per week either on Friday, Saturday or Sunday. Attendance is not mandatory and no penalties are enforced if a player misses a practice or game. The Post-Season Playoffs start in early March, with a two -week round robin tournament of inter-squad games

HOUSE LEAGUE ATTENDANCE: Attendance, although important and encouraged, is not mandatory. No penalties will be imposed on players who miss practices or games.

HOUSE LEAGUE PRACTICES: Practices are one hour in length. Players should arrive on time for their respective ice-slots. .

HOUSE LEAGUE CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATIONS: All teams are assigned a Team Manager. If you have a question, problem or concern, please contact your team manager.

HOUSE LEAGUE EVALUATION AND TEAM SELECTION: The JFMHA Hockey Professionals conduct a series of evaluations sessions in an effort to field teams of equal strength. It is very difficult to gauge the pace at which each player develops. Occasionally it is necessary to make roster changes during the season to maintain balanced teams. All efforts are made for a smooth transition.

HOUSE LEAGUE TEAM PLAY POLICY:

- 1. All players share equal playing time during the Regular Season.**
- 2. Players absent from practices or games are not penalized playing time.**

VARSITY-TRAVEL HOCKEY: The JFMHA offers fun, highly competitive AAU Mite travel hockey at all levels of play whenever possible. If a competitive travel team cannot be formed, the remaining players are eligible to play in the JFMHA House League program. The Varsity-Travel program focuses on achieving a high degree of competitive success by developing the skill of its players at least four days per week to include intensive on-ice practice, off-ice conditioning and weekly games. The teams are coached by Hockey Professionals and paid Assistant Coaches

VARSITY-TRAVEL OBJECTIVE: The Varsity-Travel Teams' objective is to compete successfully in each respective division. Committed players will reach their fullest potential, on and off the ice, with emphasis on teamwork, leadership skills and sportsmanship.

VARSITY-TRAVEL PRE-SEASON CLINICS: The JFMHA Hockey Professionals conduct optional pre-season conditioning clinics in late August prior to Varsity-Travel tryouts.

VARSITY-TRAVEL TRYOUTS AND TEAM SELECTION: Varsity-Travel tryouts begin in early September. The JFMHA Hockey Professionals conduct a series of on-ice evaluations. Efforts will be made to ensure all players are placed on the proper teams according to their skill level, athleticism and maturity. Please respect the decisions of our qualified Staff. Parents are encouraged to support the players and Hockey Professionals in a positive, sportsmanlike manner regardless of the outcome at tryouts.

TRAVEL TEAM LEAGUES: Our Varsity-Travel Teams play in CUHL - Chicago United Hockey League.

VARSITY-TRAVEL COMMITMENT: The coaches, parents and players alike must be fully committed to the Varsity-Travel program in order for teams to function properly and remain competitive in their respective divisions. The guidelines are as followings:

Attendance: Players are required to attend all practices, games & tournaments. If a player is absent from a practice or game, the child will sit the bench at the next game (one period per infraction). There are four exceptions:

- a. Illness
- b. Bereavement
- c. * Religious Commitment
- d. * Academics

** If academics or a religious commitment stand in the way of regular weekly attendance, the player is best suited for the JFMHA House League program. Excused absences of this nature should be reserved for extraordinary circumstances.*

VARSTIY-TRAVEL LEAGUE POLICY:

1. Travel-Varsity teams are playing to win. It is the coaches' decision how to distributed ice time among players in game situations. Not all players can expect equal playing time at this level.
2. Any player who elects to withdraw from his/her team after selections are made (excluding a season-ending injury) will not be eligible to participate in the Varsity-Travel program for the following year (not only will the player sit out the current year, but the following regular hockey season as well).
3. All JFMHA Varsity-Travel hockey players are only allowed to compete for JFMHA during the regular Fall Season.
4. All Varsity-Travel players represent the JFMHA on and off the ice. Players are expected to exhibit proper behavior at all times.
5. Tournament play is mandatory for all Varsity-Travel players. All individual family expenses, to include travel, food and lodging at out-of-town tournaments, are the responsibility of each family. Team expenses, such as coaches' reasonable expenses and tournament entry fees are shared by the team.
 - a. Driving Tournaments: A Driving Tournament is defined as any tournament within 300 miles of the Falcons' home ice arenas. A team can enter a Driving Tournament if 60% of the families agree (one vote per family) and the Director of Hockey and the JFMHA Board have approved its location. Voting may be done in a closed ballot manner if preferred.
 - b. Air Travel Tournaments: An Air-Travel Tournament is defined and any tournament greater that 300 miles from the Falcons' home ice arenas. The guidelines of the decision process are as follows:
 - i. The team manager, coaches and at least one representative from each family are present for a team

meeting to discuss the selection of away tournaments prior to any vote. At that time, one option for Air-Travel Tournament and one option for Driving Tournament must be discussed and agreed upon and approved by the Director of Hockey and the JFMHA Board of Directors. The two options will be voted on at the next Team Meeting.

- ii. 75% of the families (one vote per family) must agree for acceptance.
- iii. Voting process may be done in a closed ballot manner.
- c. Penalties for missing a tournament: Player penalties for non-participation in any tournament will be at the discretion of the Rules and Ethics Committee.

UNIFORM POLICY: All Varsity-Travel players are issued two team jerseys included in the registration fees. If a replacement jersey is needed the replacement expense is the responsibility of the player.

ATTIRE POLICY: Travel-Varsity players represent the JFMHA both on and off the ice. Your game day attire will be determined by your Head Coach

CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION: Each team is assigned a Team Manager. If you have a question, problem or concern regarding your team, please contact the Team Manager. There will be no tryout fee refunds for players selected to a Varsity-Travel team who decide not to play on that team.

SPRING HOCKEY: At the conclusion of the regular CUHL and House League regular season, the JFMHA offers a Spring League of tournament play teams, local travel teams and clinics for all players.

FEES: The JFMHA is a not-for-profit association, governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and paid Hockey Professionals and Support Staff. League fees are derived from the projected budget of the upcoming year. Every effort is made to raise additional money to cover the JFMHA expenses through corporate/family sponsors, fund-raising events and a volunteer base of members to keep league fees as low as possible. All players must pay their fees according to the schedule outlined in the registration information to be eligible to play.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM: The JFMHA is committed to allow any player, regardless of financial means, to enjoy the great game of hockey.

GENERAL JFMHA POLICIES: The JFMHA prides themselves as one of the most respected youth hockey programs in the country. Our favorable reputation is earned by the

wiliness and dedication of our coaches, parents, players to adhere to the JFMHA Code of Conduct and Behavioral Policies.

JFMHA PARENTS AND PLAYER BEHAVIORAL POLICIES: The JFMHA members are encouraged to take an active role in their child's hockey experience. A positive attitude is the first step towards a successful hockey experience at any level of play. To ensure youth hockey success for our program, it is imperative the coaches, players and parents work constructively with the JFMHA Board of Directors throughout the season to address problems, concerns and issues as the season unfolds. If something develops that you would like assistance with, please follow the proper channels of communication to ensure that each situation is addressed accordingly. Please allow ample time for the Team Manager to address each situation. Helpful, constructive participation bring positive results - heated exchanges and negative attitudes have no place in a youth hockey program. Thank you in advance for your time and patience regarding these matters.

CODE OF CONDUCT: JFMHA follows the AHAI and USA Hockey Code of Conduct as stated and signed during registration. You may contact the Registrar for a copy. Additionally JFMHA demands the following from its families:

1. Parents & Players will conduct themselves in a manner which will exemplify good sportsmanship and fair play.
2. Parents & Players will be supportive of all players and coaches both on and off the ice.
3. Parents & Players will refrain from negative or derogatory comments about players, coaches and officials.
4. Parents & Players will be responsible to see that their child attends practices and games on time.
5. Parents & Players will be aware that their conduct at games and off-ice is a reflection on the JFMHA. As such, they will strive to ensure it is a positive reflection.

While the Junior Falcons Mite Hockey Association makes every effort to clearly and completely state the policy of the organization in this handbook, it is merely meant to be used as a guide and source of information for the parents of our skaters. The Board of Directors and the Executive Board expressly retain the right to change policy in accordance with the By-Laws, and in no event shall any Board Member or parent be held personally responsible for a decision of the Association.