

## Mite Parents/Coaches Guide:

- Introduction

This document is meant to provide parents and coaches new to mite hockey with all the information they need to get through their first couple of years successfully.

- Association Hockey

- Season

Association hockey for Mites in Minnesota generally runs from the end of October until the beginning of March.

- Organization

- USA Hockey ([www.usahockey.com](http://www.usahockey.com))

USA Hockey is the national organization that sets the rules and guidelines for association hockey in the United States. This applies to the rules of the game, how many games a given team may play, what the requirements are for coaches, etc. USA Hockey decides things such as whether or not there will be checking in Peewees and what the ages are for each level of play.

- Minnesota Hockey ([www.minnesotahockey.com](http://www.minnesotahockey.com))

Minnesota Hockey is the state level organization, under the umbrella of USA Hockey, that takes their rules and guidelines and interprets them to best fit them for association hockey in our state. They may petition USA Hockey for exemptions to national rules and they may further define USA Hockey regulations that are left to interpretation.

- District 10 ([www.district10hockey.org](http://www.district10hockey.org))

District 10 is the regional level organization, under the umbrella of Minnesota Hockey, that implements the guidelines and rules for association hockey in our area. At the Mite level the District is less important than at higher levels of play where there are playoffs and state tournaments.

- District 10 Associations:

- Andover
- Anoka
- Becker/Big Lake
- Blaine
- Cambridge-Isanti
- Centennial
- Champlin Park
- Chisago Lakes
- Coon Rapids
- Elk River
- Irondale
- Hinckley
- Mora

- North Branch
  - Pine City
  - Princeton
  - Rogers
  - Spring Lake Park
  - St. Francis
- Coon Rapids Youth Hockey Association (CRYHA)  
([www.coonrapidshockey.com](http://www.coonrapidshockey.com))  
CRYHA is the local affiliate of District 10. The association implements the rules and guidelines handed down to it by District 10, Minnesota Hockey, and ultimately USA Hockey. It is at this level that the day to day operations are handled and decisions are made. CRYHA decides things like how often teams practice, what investments to make in facilities or equipment, what fundraising events to hold, etc.
  - Board of Directors  
In any given association the Board of Directors is the governing body that is responsible for the health of the association. They are the ones making the decisions on behalf of the association. These decisions include things like when to purchase equipment, how much to charge for registration and ice assessments, etc.
  - Board Members  
These are the individuals that hold positions within the board. Each of them has differing responsibilities. All them are volunteers and have had background checks. Some of them are voted into their positions while others are appointed. The list of board members can be found under the Board tab on the website. For Mite parents and coaches the positions to know are:
    - President  
This is the leader of the board. They are ultimately responsible for the association and probably put in the most volunteer time of anyone in the association.
    - Mite Director  
This is the leader of the Mite program. They are ultimately responsible for all things Mite-related. With the help of the other board members and Mite coaches, they decide things such as: what camps to hold for Mites, who will be the head coach of each team, how many teams there will be, how many players are at each level of play, etc. Please direct all questions that aren't sufficiently answered by either the equipment managers, the player representative, the coaches, or the team managers, to this individual.
    - Registrar

This is the person who keeps track of all the paperwork for the coaches, players, board members, etc. All documents should be given to this person. In some cases they can be emailed to this individual. In other cases they can be placed in the drop box at the rink and this individual will collect them.

- Equipment Managers

These individuals are responsible for managing the associations equipment. They will set up equipment hand out and collection events. They will monitor the equipment and ask the association for new equipment when needed. Direct any equipment related questions or concerns to them.

- Player Representative

This individual is the advocate of the kids. Should there be any reason your child's safety or well-being is a concern this individual is there to assist with helping that child. This would include concerns that the child is being unfairly treated or abused by coaches, other players, board members, rink staff, parents, etc. Hopefully, and typically, this individual is not busy.

- Coaches

At the Mite level, coaches are the principal people that affect the hockey related operations for Coon Rapids Hockey Association. Together, with guidance from the Mite Director, they decide things such as how often teams practice, what the plans are for those practices, how to communicate with the kids, etc. They teach the kids about the game and how to play hockey. More on their requirements, responsibilities, impact, and benefits below.

- Team Managers

Team Managers assist the parents of the team with their paperwork and other responsibilities. Each team, at all levels of Mite hockey, will have a manager. More on their requirements, responsibilities, impact, and benefits below.

- Equipment

In CRYHA we are blessed to have a large stockpile of equipment for players. Most of our equipment is geared towards younger players such as Mites. The equipment can be borrowed from the association and remain in your possession until your child no longer needs it. This includes all the equipment needed to play hockey (skates, sticks, shin guards, hockey socks, jerseys, breezers, shoulder pads, elbow pads, and helmets). The equipment is located within a room on the top floor of CRIC.

Generally there are a couple events throughout the year where the equipment is handed out. However, it is possible to set up individual appointments with the

equipment managers if you cannot make one of these events or equipment needs to be replaced (e.g. because it broke or your child has outgrown it).

It should be noted that the association does not provide tape, skate sharpening, pucks, protective cups, garter belts, undergarments, cold weather gear, nor mouth guards. These types of equipment are up to you to acquire on your own. See the advice section for more on this.

- Season Summary

- Jr. Cardinal Camp

Twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall (just before the start of the season), our association puts on a camp called the Jr. Cardinal Camp. This camp is generally designed for beginners, but often younger returning players attend as well. It is at this camp that beginners will learn how to start skating. Here they will also get a taste for hockey. It is inexpensive and all the equipment is provided. The camp takes place at CRIC and meets about 2-3 times a week, for a few weeks, for 45 minutes at a time.

- Fall Mite Camp

Around the same time as the fall Jr. Cardinal camp is a camp designed for returning Mites. This camp is run by the Mite Director and coaches for the association. It generally focuses on the fundamentals of hockey (skating, shooting, passing, stick handling, body contact, etc.). It is inexpensive and equipment can be provided if needed (though likely the kids still have it from the previous season). The camp takes place at CRIC and meets about 2-3 times a week, for about a month, for 1-2 hours at a time (consisting of both on-ice and off-ice training).

- Registration

The start of the season begins with registration. This is both an event and process. The event kicks off the season and at the event parents can register their kids for the upcoming season. Here they will turn in documents and provide an initial payment. If the event cannot be attended, the documents and payment can be turned in to the drop box at CRIC.

- Skills & Evaluation Camp

After registration the season begins. For Mites this starts with a skills and evaluation camp. The camp generally has 3 ice sessions, one for beginners, one for younger returning mites, and one for older returning mites. The focus is slightly different at each level, but the fundamentals of hockey are again stressed. This camp runs for about 2-3 weeks and meets 2-3 times a week for 1 hour each. It is included in the cost of the season.

During the camp the coaches will be attempting to teach the kids while also assessing their level of play. Towards the end of the camp the kids will go through some timed testing (HEP Testing) to help in the evaluation process. This camp is used to begin preparing our players for the upcoming season and for the

coaches to properly place each player at the level that will allow them to further develop and to succeed.

- HEP Testing

This is a series of timed tests that will be used to help evaluate each player's skill level. It tests their ability to stop and start, perform turns, their backwards and forwards speeds, and their ability to skate with the puck. The results of the testing will be held confidential until the end of the season (more on this below).

- Team Placement

Towards the end of this camp the players will be assigned to a level of play. At some levels there may only be one team. At other levels there may be several. Typically there is 1 A team, 1 B team, 1 U8 team (all girls A/B equivalent), 6 C teams, and 6 D teams. The A level is the highest level with older players while D is the lowest level with younger players.

For the levels with multiple teams there will be a drafting process to determine which team within the level each player is placed on. The idea being to create as equal teams as possible. The draft process is done in a manner where each team gets players from the upper, middle, and lower ends of the level of play.

The level your child is placed on does not reflect their potential in the future. All younger beginners will be D mites. All older beginners will be C mites. Players placed into C mites for their last year of Mite eligibility does not mean they can't become A Squirts or that they will never make the Varsity team. Conversely, players placed into A mites are not destined to be A squirts or NHL players.

At the Mite level, the players will be placed into a level according to their current development at the time of the HEP testing.. This is the level that we believe the player will be both pushed to develop further and have success. It is extremely detrimental to a player's development for them to be placed at too high of a level. In those cases the player will not get opportunities to improve. They will not touch the puck during games. They will get demoralized when they are not able to keep up with their peers.

This cannot be stressed enough. The level your child is placed at is what the entire group of coaches and the Mite Director feel is best for them. It is not a reflection on you the parent nor, again, a reflection on your child's potential. It is also not a reflection on how well your child is liked, who they are friends with, how badly the coaches want to win, what

occupations or friends the coaches have, etc. **It is purely based on the child's current hockey ability.**

Sometimes this can be an extremely stressful situation. Player placement will have an enormous impact upon each player. It is very important and we fully understand any concerns. Again, understand that the coaches and Mite Director are doing their very best to make certain that the impact player placement has on your child will be a positive one. We want what is best for them. Should you have any concerns, please communicate them to the Mite Director.

- Parent Meeting and/or Team Party

Following team placement the players will be notified about which team they are on. Typically that is done through that team's coaches or team manager. Often the team will get together for introductions and to establish expectations for the upcoming season.

- Typical Season

- D Mites

D mites are usually beginners and younger players. Usually we will have 6 teams at this level. It is mostly an in-house league where the 6 teams play each other throughout the season. Once in a great while they may play a D mite team from another association, but this is rare. They will have practices on Saturdays and play games on Sundays. Sometimes they will have an additional practice during the week. All ice times will be an hour.

The practices will use the American Development Model (ADM). ADM was developed by USA hockey to serve as a guideline for running practices for kids at this age group. There will be 6 stations with different drills at each station. All the D mites will be on the ice at one time. The kids will move as a team from station to station with the coaches remaining at their designated station. This means that each coach will interact with each kid.

The games will be cross-ice. There will be 3 of them going on at one time. The ice surface will be divided up with partitions. The games may vary in whether they use little nets or big nets, partitions or nothing or goalies (not wearing special goalie gear), and how many kids are on the ice at one time. The shifts will be timed with the horn blowing to indicate shift changes. Each player will get equal playing time. The score is not kept and penalties are not enforced.

- C Mites

C Mites are usually older beginners or middle-aged returning mites. Usually there will be 6 teams at this level. It is mostly an in-house league

where the 6 teams play each other throughout the season. Occasionally they may play a C mite team from another association, but infrequently. They will have practices on Saturday and play games on Sundays. Usually they will have an additional practice during the week. All ice times will be an hour.

The practices will also use the American Development Model (ADM) and/or line drills. There will be 6 stations with different drills at each station or 6 lines each performing the same drills. All the C mites will be on the ice at one time. The kids will move as a team from station to station with the coaches remaining at their designated station. This means that each coach will interact with each kid.

The games will be half-ice. There will be 2 of them going on at one time. The ice surface will be divided in half by partitions. Usually big nets will be used with goalies (in goalie gear). Each kid will have a chance to play goalie for a game. The games may vary in how many players on the ice at one time. The shifts will be timed with the horn blowing to indicate shift changes. Each player will get equal playing time. The score is not kept and penalties are not enforced.

- **A/B Mites**

A/B mites are usually older and advanced players. Often they have been skating for 4+ years. Usually there will be only 1 team at each level in Coon Rapids (other associations may have more than 1 or may have none). These levels are travelling levels in that they play other associations (most often from District 10). They have home and away games. They play in tournaments/jamborees. They have practices and games during the week and weekends. Usually they will have at least 4 ice times a week. All ice times will be an hour.

The practices will use the ADM and other models. There may be stations, there may be lines, there may be other groups. The practices vary based on the players, the coaches, the time of year, the facilities, etc.

The games will be a mixture of cross-ice, half-ice, and full-ice. The surface size is arranged with the other association. There are rules governing how many full-ice games are allowed. Score is not kept in regular games. The teams will also play in tournaments and jamborees. The difference is that tournaments are not full-ice and score can be kept while jamborees are full-ice and no scoring is kept. Shifts are changed on the fly. Penalties are called, but the punishment will vary. The players will receive close to equal playing time, but changing on the fly makes it difficult to keep it exactly even.



Each child must be registered with USA Hockey and the association. Registration involves filling out a few forms. The following must be turned in for each child:

- USA Hockey Confirmation
  - Consent to Treat
  - Birth Certificate (if new to the association)
  - \$300 volunteer check, post-dated April 1, 2016.
    - This check is only cashed if the Volunteer Hours commitment is not met.
- Cost
- First Year Mites:  
First year mites are only charged \$100 total.
  - All Other Mites:  
Returning players are charged \$175 at registration. They will be charged two ice assessment fees throughout the year. Typically one is due in December and the other in January. The total varies based on the number of hours of ice used and the number of kids on the teams on the ice.

For example, an A Mite will be charged about \$150 each time. A mites have only 11-15 players on the team and the team practices or plays games often with only 1 other team on the ice. On the other hand, C mites have less ice time, have up to 60 kids on the ice at each practice, and have 4 teams on the ice during games. Therefore, C mites will be charged only about \$40 each time.

- Multiple Child Discount:  
If you have multiple children in the program you will receive a discount. The 2nd child will receive a \$50 discount. The 3rd, and all subsequent children, will each receive a \$100 discount.
- Fundraising  
Throughout the year there will be a few opportunities to help offset the costs. The majority of our fundraising is completely optional except for the calendars. 1st year players are required to sell five calendars while every other player is required to sell 10. We also run a Holiday wreath fundraiser and the Butter Braid fundraiser which are optional. A portion of each player's Butter Braid and/or Holiday wreath sales is returned to the player in the form of a voucher. These vouchers can be used toward registration cost or ice payment.
- Financial Aid  
The association values its members and the community around it. We want people from all walks of life to join us in enjoying great sport of hockey. For those requiring additional financial help, the association has in a place a process to apply for aid. If your family qualifies for free or

reduced school lunch please apply for a scholarship. The scholarship application is located on the CRYHA website on the Season Cost tab on the left side of the website. The application is located at the bottom right of this page.

- Volunteer Hours

To help keep the costs low there are a variety of tasks that must be completed by volunteers. Each family must complete 10 hours of volunteering. This can be accomplished by coaching, by being a team manager, or through a variety of other opportunities. The other opportunities include things like running the clock and score keeping during games (not including mite games), helping with equipment handouts and turn-ins, attending open houses at schools, selling t-shirts during tournaments, etc.

If the volunteer hours are not completed by a family then the \$300 deposit check will be cashed at the end of the season.

- Coach Requirements, Responsibilities, Impact, & Benefits

Coaches are the lifeblood of the organization. They have the most impact on the kids, a position that brings with it much responsibility, but is also a very rewarding experience. The requirements to be a coach are not extremely demanding. The more coaches on the ice at this level the better. Typically we have enough coaches that any new coaches will have plenty of opportunity to learn from the existing coaches before being thrust into a larger role. If you are considering coaching at all, please become a coach.

- Paperwork

- USA Hockey Registration Confirmation
- Background Check
- Consent to Treat

- Training

- Coaching Education Program (CEP) - Level 1 Certification
  - Coaching Clinic
  - Age-Specific Module
- Concussion Module
- Safe Sport Module

- Experience

In order to be a coach in Coon Rapids at the mite level you need no previous playing or coaching experience. It is helpful, but not required. There should be plenty of coaches around with that experience already.

- Attitude & Goals

More so than experience, the right attitude and goals are required.

Coaching requires you to pay as much attention to other children as your own. This can be difficult, though it is something that can be overcome. However, to be a good coach it is necessary.

Coaching also requires you to treat all the kids fairly, including your own. Parent coaches have a tendency to be either too hard or too easy on their own children. Again this can be difficult, but it is something that can be overcome.

Coaching mites requires patience, positive reinforcement over negative, and constant reiteration of the teaching points. It requires a desire to be a part of improving the overall program. It requires working with other coaches that may have different opinions than your own. It requires proper expectations, especially with the younger mites, as they are very inconsistent and may not be capable of even basic skills (e.g. stopping well on both sides, or raising the puck) for many years.

Coaching mites requires you to be a good example to the kids whose lives you are impacting in potentially a significant way.

- Benefits
  - Volunteer Hours Covered  
One direct benefit for all the hours put into coaching is that the volunteer hours required for your children will be covered.
  - Rewarding Experience  
As a coach you get to take a direct role in the success of the program and each individual skater. The kids will gain an appreciation for the game and learn how to skate, shoot, stick handle, etc. all because of your involvement. You will get to know the players, what they struggle with, and will get excited right along with them when they learn to overcome their obstacles. They will learn lifelong lessons including determination, sportsmanship, hard work, dealing with defeat and success, teamwork, commitment, etc. all because of you.
- Team Manager Requirements, Responsibilities, Impact, & Benefits
  - Paperwork
    - USA Hockey Registration Confirmation
    - Background Check
  - Training
    - Safe Sport Module
    - Team Manager Meeting  
A Team Manager meeting will be conducted in order to inform team managers of the complete list of duties. This will include an in-depth list of the responsibilities of the team manager as well as the volunteer and fundraising requirements of the team and players families.
  - Experience  
In order to be a Team Manager in Coon Rapids you need no previous managerial experience, though it is helpful. A Team Manager should have good organizational skills as well as communication skills.
  - Attitude

A Team Manager should have a positive and somewhat outgoing personality. The Team Manager will be required to communicate frequently with the parents/guardians, coaches, and association members on a frequent basis. He/she should be able to manage multiple tasks and pass along information in a prompt manner.

- Benefits
  - Volunteer Hours Covered  
One direct benefit for the time put into managing is that the volunteer hours required for your children will be covered.
  - Rewarding Experience  
As a Team Manager you will receive all of the information regarding the season first. You will get to know the families within the association. You will have a direct impact on the hockey experience of your child and the families with children on the team.
- Advice
  - Coaches
    - Rely on the experienced coaches
    - Find a good team manager early
    - Recruit an assistant if you are a head coach
    - Try and coach your kid exactly the same as other kids
    - Focus on play of the kids on your team, not on the score
    - Remember that we coach all kids on the ice, even the ones currently dangling around your team, and you had a part in the success of that child. So be happy for the dangler and help the defenders to improve.
  - Parents
    - Keep this in perspective. This not the NHL, NCAA, or even high school. At this age hockey is about learning and having fun. Being a D mite does not mean your child doesn't have any skill. It just means they are young. Being an A mite doesn't mean your child is destined for great things. It just means they are an older mite who is having fun and is currently successful.
    - Your kid is most likely to succeed if they love the game. They tend to love the game more if they receive positive feedback and support. They tend to grow to dislike the game if they feel they have failed you in some way.
    - If you or your child needs help with something ask someone. There are plenty of coaches, parents, board members, etc. running around the rink with lots of experience.
    - Use the website ([www.coonrapidshockey.com](http://www.coonrapidshockey.com)) as it is loaded with the information you need.
- Facilities & Resources
  - Rinks
    - CRIC

Coon Rapids Ice Center is our new home facility. This is where a majority of practices, events, and games will take place.

[www.coonrapidsicecenter.com](http://www.coonrapidsicecenter.com)

11000 Crooked Lake Blvd

Coon Rapids, MN 55433

- SR

Schwan Super Rink is located next to the National Sports Center in Blaine. It is a massive skating complex with 8 ice rinks (4 of them are olympic sized). Some practices or games may take place at this location. Coon Rapids has an agreement with the Super Rink to host some events there. One of the rinks within, Rink 1, is called the Coon Rapids rink.

[www.superrink.com](http://www.superrink.com)

1700 105th Ave NW

Blaine, MN 55449

- Cook

Cook was the name of our previous rink. It has since been demolished.

- Training Facilities

- Acceleration

Acceleration is a dryland training facility. It has a plyometrics area and a skating treadmill. A/B mite and U8s will have training classes here. It is located on the second level at CRIC.

- Mega?

- Website

Most any information related to Coon Rapids Hockey can be found on our website, [www.coonrapidshockey.com](http://www.coonrapidshockey.com). Get to know this website well. The roster, coaches contact info, team manager info, and the team's schedule will be found on this site. All announcements about upcoming camps, volunteer opportunities, training opportunities, costs, rules, etc. will be found on this website.

- Off-season Hockey

- AAA

"Triple A" hockey is a loose-knit collection of unaffiliated, for-profit hockey teams, that are not associated with USA Hockey, Minnesota Hockey, nor any association including Coon Rapids. Usually there are several teams, at different age levels, and skill levels, associated with one parent company. The age levels are by birth year and referenced as such. For example, one may say that their child is on the 05 team (meaning their birth year is 2005). The teams practice and play in tournaments (there is the occasional non-tournament game, but they are rare).

These teams hold tryouts (usually in the fall), have paid coaches, recruit players from all over, and charge a higher fee. However, generally they are very competitive, there are no volunteer hours, they skate more frequently, and they allow kids to play with other kids not from their city. They also play all full-ice

games, have touch-up offsides, true penalties, keep score, and have rewards for only the victors. Often these teams are active during the spring and late summer (March to June and August), though some programs run throughout the year.

There are a variety of AAA opportunities. Some of them conflict with association hockey, others do not. Regardless, playing AAA hockey is a significant decision. USA Hockey recommends that children have a true off-season. They recommend both a break from hockey and that children play multiple sports. Sometimes playing in the off-season can have a negative effect upon a child's physical health and interest in the game. Please consider your child's specific situation when considering AAA hockey.

If AAA hockey is something of interest, there are a variety of teams in the area. Hometown Hockey (Andover), Jr. Moose (Coon Rapids), Miracle Gold (Blaine - SR), Warrior (Blaine - Fogerty) to name a few. The internet and the parents with experience in these matters are good resources for more information on these types of programs.

- Camps

Hockey camps are a traditional way to continue to develop in the offseason. They come in many shapes and sizes. There are local camps that meet for a couple hours a day, local day camps, and a variety of long distance camps. These are best found through advertisements in magazines like USA Hockey and on ads found on bulletin boards within many rinks.

At Coon Rapids, in addition to our annual Fall Mite Camp and Jr. Cardinal Camp (both discussed above), there are several other camps in the area. At CRIC there are camps for other age groups. If your child is transitioning to Squirrels or U10 following the season keep your eye out for various boot camp opportunities. In addition there is a spring Junior Cardinal camp and a summer all-girls camp for all ages. Keep an eye out for information on these camps on the website and in your email.

- Training

In the past the association has arranged off-season training opportunities with our partners Acceleration and Mega. Keep an eye out for emails or postings on the website for more details.