



Jackson Area Hockey Association

Mites Program 2023/2024

FAQ

What can I expect from the JAHA Mites Hockey Program?

JAHA follows [USA Hockey's American Development Model \(ADM\)](#) which focuses on age-appropriate training, skill development, and creating a positive and enjoyable hockey experience for young players. Our program provides structured practices, competitive opportunities, and a supportive environment to foster the growth and development of youth hockey players. We focus on developing athlete's skills by practicing with like-skilled players and participating in various competitive events.

What does it mean for JAHA to have an in-house Mites league?

The 2016 birthyear is a large cohort, combined with the rest of the Mites age group, JAHA has the opportunity to run an in-house league. The collective Mites group will be divided into smaller equalized teams forming the in-house league. These teams will compete against each other allowing more opportunities for games throughout the year combined with games played outside of JAHA.

Why is JAHA combining 6U and 8U?

There are several benefits to combining the 6U and 8U program. This is a common practice that is supported by the Michigan Amateur Hockey Association. The combination allows the Mites League to split into more teams which provides additional in-house league competition and less travel.

Primarily however, it opens the span for like-skilled players to be more intentionally grouped across the ages.

For example: an 8 year old who is new to hockey will not be expected to practice at a level with 8 year olds who have been playing for several years. Alternately, a 6 year old who started young and has been playing for several years will have the opportunity to practice with more experienced players.

Combining the program also increases the number of coaches. Players will have access to a wider variety of experience, teaching styles, and personalities, which will provide a well-rounded environment and opportunity for all skaters.

What will practices look like?

- We follow USA Hockey's recommendations for age appropriate hockey and practices. Information on this model can be found on their [8 & Under ADM website](#).
- Players will be redistributed from their equalized teams to like-skilled groups to ensure that each athlete is challenged and can progress at an appropriate pace.

- Practices are [station based](#) - there are 5-6 stations, and players rotate through each station in groups of similar abilities.
- This combination helps create a positive learning environment and maximizes individual skill development.

What types of events/games will my child participate in?

Your child will have the opportunity to play in a range of local games and Michigan Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA) sanctioned jamborees. These events offer a competitive environment where players can showcase their skills and have fun competing against teams from other associations.

- [JAHA in-house league games](#)
- [Games against other local associations](#)
- [Jamborees](#)
- [Statewide tournaments](#)

Tell me about JAHA in-house league games!

League games are scheduled at a minimum of bi-weekly intervals, this is when our in-house teams will compete against each other. These games provide a fun and supportive environment for players to apply their skills and further enhance their game understanding.

Schedule will be determined by number of teams we are able to field. There are several options available that we will be able to decide once registration numbers come in.

One example would be, Teams will only play a couple in-house teams every other week. Each Teams will play at minimum two 20-minute Games per in-house league week, unlike in previous years where teams rotate every 12-15 minutes and play every team. This will allow our in-house teams to not play the same teams for several weeks.

Tell me about games against other local associations!

We plan to compete regularly with nearby associations as well. In past years we have often played associations such as Chelsea, Adrian, Battle Creek, and more.

Tell me about jamborees!

We are currently planning on the jamborees listed below:

- Kalamazoo Jamboree & Chili Challenge
- Salute to our Veterans, Chelsea
- Thanksgiving Weekend, Jackson Turkey Time, Jackson
- Others to be added as available

Tell me about statewide tournaments!

We are currently planning on tournaments listed below:

- December 1-3: Silver Sticks Tournament (8U Only)
- December 9: Plymouth Tournament (6U Only)
- February 16-18: Traverse City Tournament
- State Cup (specific dates to be determined)
- Others to be added as available

MAHA tournaments are categorized into three skill levels for entry. To provide opportunities for higher levels of competition, our athletes will not play in their equalized in-house teams but will be re-grouped to create skill-based teams similar to practice groups.

Last season we traveled as far as Detroit for a game, will those games still be included?

Games in Detroit and Dearborn (further into southeast MI) are hosted by the Little Caesars Amateur Hockey League and there is an additional cost associated with these games. JAHA is discussing how we may be able to offer some of these opportunities to players and families who are interested in a higher level of competition. If you know you are interested in these games, please let us know at admprogramjaha@gmail.com.

How will the in-house teams be selected?

At the beginning of the season, players will be evaluated to assess their skills, abilities, and overall capabilities.

With information from the evaluations, our coaching staff will conduct a snake draft to select players for each team. This process helps create equalized teams with a mix of talent levels, promoting healthy competition and player development throughout the mite league.

The number of teams will depend on the total number of registered players for the season.

How are players evaluated?

At the beginning of the season, players will be evaluated to assess their skills, abilities, and overall capabilities:

- During the first 2 scheduled skates in mid-September players will be evaluated on multiple levels (Skating, Stopping, Puck Handling, Shooting, etc.)
- Players will be evaluated by all coaching staff, results will then be combined and used for selecting teams.
- Players will continue to be evaluated throughout the year. These evaluations will be used to select the teams for tournaments and Jamborees.

How will my child's tournament team be selected?

As mentioned under [statewide tournaments](#), players will be re-grouped into skill-based teams for MAHA tournaments. Teams will be assigned based on player evaluations as well as observations at practices and during games throughout the year.

What does the coaching set up look like for an in-house league?

The Mites program currently has 24 coaches interested in volunteering this season giving us an approximate 3 to 1 player to coach ratio (based on estimated registrations).

For practices, multiple coaches will be assigned to each station and will assist players with instruction and skill development. Each in-house team will have an assigned coaching staff which is being developed.

Will there be a girls program?

We are committed to providing opportunities for girls in hockey, and it is our goal to have a girls program. However, the formation of a girls program will depend on the number of registrations and the level of interest from female players. After the registration period, we will assess the numbers and make a determination on whether we can establish a dedicated girls program. We highly encourage interested families to register their daughters, as their participation will play a crucial role in shaping the formation of a girls program.

We are dedicated to fostering inclusivity and ensuring that all players, regardless of gender, have the opportunity to enjoy and develop their skills in hockey. If you have further questions or would like updates on the potential girls program, or you know you are interested in a girls team, please let us know at admprogramjaha@gmail.com.

My child has never played hockey before. Can they still join the JAHA Mites League?

Absolutely! We believe in providing an inclusive environment for players of all skill levels. The Mites program is open to any player 8 and under (born in 2015 or later), regardless of their prior experience in hockey. We are dedicated to giving beginners a safe, positive, and supportive introduction to the sport, focusing on fundamental skills development, and fostering a love for the game.

For additional questions, please contact us at jahahockey@gmail.com and admprogramjaha@gmail.com