

Dubuque Youth Hockey Association

Travel Team Policy

2008/2009

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A. Mission Statement

The Dubuque Youth Hockey Association (DYHA) strives to create and sustain an environment where participants exhibit pride and a desire to remain. DYHA will be successful by aligning solid leadership principles with positive coaching, strong member relationships and fiscal responsibility. DYHA will cultivate mutually supportive relationships connecting parents, players, coaches and staff while providing the opportunity for hockey players to develop life skills that will serve them well beyond the ice rink.

DYHA honors the core values of USA Hockey.

USA Hockey Core Values

The following core values of USA Hockey are adopted to guide the association's members in their planning, programming and play, both now and in the future.

SPORTSMANSHIP - Foremost of all values is to learn a sense of fair play. Becoming humble in victory, gracious in defeat. DYHA fosters friendship with teammates and opponents alike.

RESPECT FOR THE INDIVIDUAL - Treat all others as you expect to be treated.

INTEGRITY - DYHA seeks to foster honesty and fair play beyond mere strict interpretation of the rules and regulations of the game.

PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE AT THE INDIVIDUAL, TEAM AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS - Each member of the organization, whether players, volunteer or staff, should seek to perform each aspect of the game to the highest level of his or her ability.

ENJOYMENT - It is important for the hockey experience to be fun, satisfying and rewarding for all participants.

LOYALTY - DYHA aspires to teach loyalty to the ideals and fellow members of the sport of hockey.

TEAMWORK - DYHA values the strength of learning to work together. The use of teamwork is reinforced and rewarded by success in the hockey experience.

B. ABOUT TRAVEL HOCKEY

The DYHA travel hockey program is designed for players who want to make a serious commitment to the game of hockey, in turn, DYHA is seriously committed to the quality of our program.

The DYHA offers the opportunities for a developing hockey player to play competitive travel hockey.

DYHA travel teams will play games both in Dubuque and outside of Dubuque.

The number of games played at each level will vary but will generally increase at each age level. There will be separate travel team practices at each level. The number of practices will vary but the DYHA will strive to dedicate as much ice time as possible to the development of the travel teams.

During the course of a season, you can expect to have upwards of 40 practices (including House League), 20-60 games (depending on level), special skills clinics and the opportunity to go with your team to tournaments both locally and out-of-town. All tournament participation is decided on a team-by-team basis, voted on by each team's parents.

Team Skills Development

DYHA travel hockey program is designed to increase both the individual and team skill levels. The skill level progressions as laid out by USA Hockey will be used as a guideline when it comes to teaching skills at the various age levels. The skills taught will also depend on the skill level of the team even though some individuals may be ready for more advanced skill training.

League Play

The DYHA generally fields travel teams in both the Dane County Youth Hockey League and the Midwest League as determined by the coaches and parents. The former league consists of teams from the Madison, WI area while the latter consists of teams from Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.

Note: DYHA conducts a separate House League program for those who enjoy hockey but do not want to make the time and financial commitment that the travel teams require of participants. All Mite and Squirt Travel Team players are required to participate in all House League practices and games. The Pee Wee and Bantam Travel Team players have the choice on whether they would like to participate in the house league program.

Age Appropriate Play

Youth hockey is organized by the birth year of the participant into these levels:

MITE - players who were born in 2000 or younger

SQUIRT - born in 1998 & 1999

PEEWEE - born in 1996 & 1997

BANTAM - born in 1994 & 1995

These levels are based on the USA hockey age category guidelines shown in the chart to the right.

DATE OF BIRTH	AGE CATEGORY	AGE DIVISION
1994	14 YEARS	Bantam 14 or under
1995	13 YEARS	Bantam 14 or under
1996	12 YEARS	Pee Wee 12 or under
1997	11 YEARS	Pee Wee 12 or under
1998	10 YEARS	Squirt 10 or under
1999	9 YEARS	Squirt 10 or under
2000 & YOUNGER	8 & under	Mite 8 or under

DYHA intends to field travel teams in the following categories. The number of players wishing to participate will dictate how many teams, if any, there will be at

each level.

Lower Mite: The lower Mite is for young players that want a taste of travel hockey and competition. An average of 1 practice a week will be scheduled for this group. They will play around 20 to 25 games in a season. There is a minimal amount of travel involving games and tournaments that the lower Mite team plays.

Upper Mite: This is our competitive Mite team for young players. An average of 1 practice a week will be scheduled for this group. The Upper Mite travel team will play around 30 to 35 games in a season.

Other Travel teams: Usually 2 teams, dependent on the number of participants. Each team will seek to have 1-2 practices a week on average. The parents at each level will have input on how many tournaments each travel team participates in.

Squirts: Squirts play around 35 to 45 games.

Peewees: The Peewees will play around 45 to 55 games. This is the level where full check hockey begins.

Bantams: Last step before high school hockey. Bantams play 50 to 60 games.

C. Travel Team Committee

The Travel Team Committee is appointed by the DYHA Board that has responsibility for running the DYHA Travel Hockey Program. A few of the responsibilities include: attending evaluations, reviewing and approving travel team rosters, maintaining uniformity, handling grievances, communicating with travel team managers and promoting the travel teams of DYHA.

D. Evaluation Process

Evaluations

Players are selected for the DYHA travel teams during evaluations by team coaches from the Mite to Midget levels. The evaluation process is designed to place skaters according to ability. This will usually result in an upper level team and a lower level team dependent on the number of participants. Representatives from the Travel Team Committee or additional unbiased evaluators will attend all evaluations. The Coach or Team Manager must notify the Travel Team Committee of all evaluation dates and times a week before they are to be held. The Coach will present the selections to the Travel Team Committee for review and approval, before posting or distributing to the players.

Team Selection

DYHA will attempt to make the evaluation process as fair as possible by following the guidelines below. DYHA encourages all parents to sit down with your young skaters and tell them that no matter what happens during evaluations, if they try their hardest and if they do their best, there is nothing else that anyone should

expect of them.

Number of Teams and Players on Teams

The number of travel teams that DYHA will field will be determined before evaluations. These decisions are based on the number of skaters, skill levels and recommendations of coaches. Each coach may select the appropriate number of players within DYHA guidelines. Travel teams will be composed of players of comparable skills. DYHA guidelines for the number of players each team can consist of are:

- The minimum number of players at all age categories will be 10 skaters and 1 goalie.
- The maximum number of players at all levels will be 20 (19/18 skaters and 1/2 goalies).
- The recommended minimum number of players will be 14 players consisting of 13 skaters and 1 goalie. This number will not be lowered if it results in a player(s) exclusion from participating in travel hockey. Travel Team Committee approval is required for selected teams of under 14 players.

In the event that there are insufficient skaters to formulate a travel team(s) within a particular age group, the coaches, team managers and/or Travel Team Committee members can recruit players. The goal of the recruitment efforts is to obtain enough players to establish manageable teams and provide the players with the opportunity to develop at a level commensurate with their skill. The following are post recruitment guidelines are for establishing the number of players per team:

- An evaluation will be conducted in all cases unless there are an insufficient number of players to field even one team.
- If the number of registered players supports the creation of two teams (~ 24), an evaluation will be conducted. The number of players per team will be determined by the Coaches and Travel Team Committee taking into consideration the age and skill level of the players.
- If the number of registered players is above that required for 1 team but insufficient for two teams the Coach, Team Manager and/or the Travel Team Committee will work at recruiting new players to fill a 2nd team. No players skating at the Mite or Squirt level will be cut from playing on a travel team. At the higher level of play, the coaches must have a good cause and the Travel Team committee's approval to not place a player on a team.

The actual number will depend on the following:

- Total amount of players at a given age group.
- Skill level of the entire group of skaters.
- Age of the player.
- Division (lower level teams may be able to participate with fewer numbers as skill level is reduced).

The total number of players for each given level at the age group will fluctuate

depending on the above. If the coaches can see a clear division in skill levels within a group of skaters, one team being selected could have fewer players. This will be done particularly at the upper level where our travel teams strive to be the most competitive. For further information on this process see Player Evaluation Process.

When at a given age level we have more than one goalie per team the following will be used to place the candidates at a given level:

- Skill level of each goalie
- Total number of goalies available
- Previous year coach evaluation

When at all possible, two goalies will be placed on a team. If the number of goalies available is not even, goalies will be placed by skill level. This will mean one or more teams could have two goalies and one or more teams could have one goalie. At no time will it be allowed to have more than two goalies per team if one team has only one goalie.

Travel team rosters are final on November 30. Prior to that date player movement is possible within rules as defined by DYHA and USA Hockey.

Player Evaluation Process

The selected Coaches for each level will conduct an evaluation to assess and select players for the team(s). The Coach will develop the evaluation agenda. A minimum of two evaluations will be conducted. A player should attend all scheduled evaluations to be considered for selection. There may be a fee administered for the evaluations to cover the cost of ice.

At the discretion of the Coach, the evaluation may be conducted through:

- Drills
- Scrimmages
- Skills test

Areas identified for evaluation may include and are not limited to the following:

- Ability to take direction
- Skating Skills
- Stick handling skills
- Passing, both giving and receiving passes
- Positioning during play
- Checking (at levels allowed)
- Hustle
- Attitude
- Previous year coaches evaluation

An unbiased representative(s) (coach, Travel Team Committee/DYHA Board member) will attend the evaluation sessions at each level.

Travel Team Registration

During the registration for the DYHA, players should sign up indicating their interest in participating in Travel Team hockey. If a player is intending to be evaluated at a higher age category, they will need to indicate that preference at player registration.

E. Skating at a Higher Age Category

The DYHA board of directors' strongly encourages play at the level that a player's age would indicate. The Policy governing the potential of a skater to participate at a level above their age is included in the DYHA By – laws. Any player wishing to play at a higher age category should attend all evaluations at the higher age category.

F. Coaching

Travel Coaches Selection

- No later than July 1st, of each year the DYHA President will post a notice in the DYHA newsletter asking for resumes for travel coaches. Interested parties shall submit their resume and return it to the President no later than August 1st. The travel season begins with evaluations for travel teams in September or October.
- The DYHA Board approves all Coaches and selects Head Coaches for each team. The Head Coaches select their Assistant Coaches from the list of approved Coaches.

Interviews deemed necessary by the coaches selection committee will take place no later than August Board Meeting.

Coaching Overview

It is the intent of these rules and regulations to insure the best possible coaches available for the DYHA. It is our goal to establish a comfortable position for both the coaches and the Board. It is not our intent with these rules and regulations to restrict the coaches' involvement or the Board's controls.

For all coaching positions, the Board will actively pursue and consider non-parent and parent candidates inside and outside the association. The DYHA Board will select Head coaches.

Coaches must attend coaches meetings as required by DYHA.

DYHA has adopted the USA Hockey methods of effective coaching as a model for its coaching staff. The role of the coach is to be a leader, teacher, and organizer.

DYHA will register one head coach and not more than two assistant coaches per team.

Coaches must be at least 18 years of age. A junior coach (as defined by USA Hockey) may serve as an assistant coach. A Coach must be able to demonstrate competency in skating, hockey skills, teaching techniques, strategies, and skills in communication with parents and players. Coaches must meet the minimum acceptable coaching level requirements as outlined by USA Hockey. Coaches are encouraged to attend as many clinics as possible. A Head Coach should have some prior coaching and/or playing experience, if at all possible.

Criteria for Selecting Head Coaches

The DYHA Board shall consider the following factors (listed in no particular order of importance) in determining an appointment:

- Seniority as a Head Coach in DYHA.
- Previous coaching performance
- Experience as a coach in the age level requested
- Experience as a coach in other age levels
- Attendance to and certified for that level by USA Hockey
- The coach's knowledge of ice hockey

Coaches who are parents of hockey players are generally assigned to the age level of their child.

Monitoring of Coaches

The Travel Team Committee will have the primary responsibility for monitoring the travel team coaches to make sure that they are adhering to this policy as outlined herein.

The DYHA Board reserves the right to review the performance of Travel Team coaches by offering recommendations for improvements when deemed necessary. Based upon the review of the individual's performance, the DYHA Board may elect to remove a coach from his or her position. This decision requires a two-thirds majority vote.

Individual conflicts and discrepancies can be raised with the League Commissioner or the President of DYHA.

G. Travel Team Management Policies

The Head Coach selects the Travel Team Manager for his respective team. It is strongly recommended that the selected Team Manager not be a related to the Head Coach.

Team Manager

Each team will have one team manager. The Team Manager is what makes each team go by coordinating the many different needs of the team.

Responsibilities may include but are not limited to the following:

- Produce a team roster for each player and coach with player names, numbers, parent's first names and phone numbers.
- Prepare copies of a team roster with player names for tracking practice attendance and for tracking of any phone calls or face-to-face notification of practice or game changes, schedule handout, tournament interest, etc... (Probably the most useful tool to make sure all are informed).
- Responsible for all correspondence that needs to be given to parents in order to keep them informed of team events.
- Handling the team's registration, with the help of the Registrar to USA Hockey.
- Tournament Coordinator for any DYHA home tournaments.
- Work with coach in identifying season tournaments and be responsible for all registration needs for chosen tournaments. Including sending in fees, block hotel rooms for team, all communication with that tournament coordinator.
- Coordinate with coach which leagues the team will play in (Dane County, Midwest League, scrimmages games) and be responsible for maintaining the schedule for those games.
- In the event of absence at a practice or game, prior coordination with a parent to handle taking practice attendance, notification of any changes, etc.
- Jersey distribution.
- Help coordinate photo day for team.
- Money collection and hand off to Treasurer (includes scheduled fee payments, tournaments, etc.)
- Notify the parents that their fees need to be paid as follows:
½ of their travel fees are to be paid by Dec. 1st
Remaining fees are to be paid by Feb. 1st or the player doesn't play!
- Manage end of year party.
- Be familiar with DYHA's rules & policies. Mutual responsibility with the coach for the enforcement of above and any duties spelled out within, i.e., game/match penalty notification.
- Coordinate with coach all team meetings.
- Handle score sheet requirement for all games and recruit a timekeeper and penalty box attendant.
- Ensure medical kit is available and stocked.

H. Team Finances

Estimated Budget

A list of fees and estimated budget will be provided to you at the pre-season travel team meeting. The initial fees are estimates based upon the fees that have been incurred in the past. The final fees will be determined by the actual number of games, practices, tournaments, etc. that the travel team participates in. They could end up being higher or lower than the original estimate. The Travel Team Manager should track the estimated budget as the year progresses (December 1, February 1) and communicate this to the Treasurer of the DYHA and parents so that there are no surprises at the end of the year.

Payment Obligations

Payment obligations will be disseminated and managed by the Travel Team Manager. Additional information on Fees and Dues can be found in the DYHA Bylaws.

I. Conduct

The DYHA Board has adopted the USA Hockey conduct guidelines for players, parents and coaches. The DYHA Board takes this very seriously and will address situations that are in conflict with the USA Hockey guidelines when necessary.

J. Travel Team Grievances/Discipline

Address all complaints to the team Head Coach, Assistant Coach or the Team Manager in private. The 24-hour rule must be followed (24 hour “cool-down” period). If the Coach, Assistant Coach and/or Team Manager are unable to resolve the problem, he or she will present the problem to the Travel Team Committee for resolution. If the Travel Team Committee cannot resolve the problem, then the DYHA Board will be addressed for resolution. **At no time should a parent involve other Board members or parents with individual or team problems.**

K. Miscellaneous

Medical Kits

DYHA will provide each Travel Team with a medical kit. The medical kits will be the responsibility of the Travel Team Manager. If additional supplies are needed during the course of the year the cost should be borne by the travel team and included in their expenses. At the end of the year, the Team Managers will be asked to turn the medical kits back to the Travel Team Committee. DYHA will re-stock the medical kits for the next season.

Jersey Policy

Travel Team jerseys are the responsibility of the individual player. DYHA does not provide any monetary reimbursement for the purchasing of jerseys. The respective Travel Team Managers will keep a record of all player jersey numbers so that there are no conflicts between new and existing players. All jerseys should be purchased from the same company and should be of the same style throughout all of the travel teams.

Equipment

The equipment necessary to play travel hockey is the responsibility of the player. If DYHA has equipment available for use it will be made available for rent. The exception to this is for goalies. DYHA has goalie equipment available for use if needed for the Travel Team goalies.

If new equipment needs to be purchased, it's recommended that all equipment be the color black (helmet, gloves and breezers).

Ice Time

DYHA will strive to provide practice hours each week for all teams as ice availability allows.

Younger age groups will be given preference for earlier weekday practice ice hours. Early morning ice hours on weekends will be shared equally among teams at each age level.