



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

December 23, 2014

As we approach the middle part of the season and with most teams taking some time off for the holidays, I wanted to send out a quick update to close out calendar 2014.

Thankfully It has been a quiet season “off the ice” so far with just a few relatively minor issues and challenges to contend with. This has allowed our focus to be on the actual playing of games, growth and development of our players. Of course as we move into 2015 there are a number of activities and events that will come in a short period of time that you will want to be prepared for.

Here are the updates:

BOARD ADDITION

As indicated in my last message, Corky Brown has resigned his position of President of the Adult Hockey Section. We have been searching for a replacement and I am pleased to announce that Chris Margiotta (Allen) has been selected to complete the current term (up for reelection in June 2015). Chris is an energetic talent currently serving as the Adult Hockey Director at the Allen Event Center. Chris is originally from Arizona but has been in Texas for several years and was part of the launch of the Allen Event Center. He currently coaches at Allen High School and with the McKinney Lightning youth programs in addition to overseeing the Adult hockey program at Allen. We are very pleased to have Chris contribute his time and talent to the adult hockey community.

NEW SAFESPORT COORDINATOR

After serving for several years as the Affiliate's SafeSport Coordinator, Mike Hoskins (OKC) has resigned due to a career change that has placed more demands on his time. Thankfully we have relatively few issues that rise to the TAHA/USAH level but when we did Mike was a great resource for conducting investigations and hearings. We wish Mike the best in his new real estate career in OK.

Following several weeks of searching, TAHA and USAH have named Bryan Ford as the new SafeSport Coordinator for the Affiliate. As many of you know Bryan managed the DJHA organization for several years and brings a great deal of hockey leadership experience to this role. If you have questions or need assistance with any SafeSport issue please feel free to contact Bryan directly. Your Association appointed SafeSport coordinators will be hearing from Bryan regularly as we strive to get some consistency in surfacing and dealing with complaints that may be submitted.



NEW STATE SUPERVISOR OF OFFICIALS

Over the summer the District Referee in Chief for the Rocky Mountain District; Gary Pariseau, resigned and Ken Reinhard has been appointed by USAH to that position. This is a great accomplishment for Ken and a recognition of his contributions to our officiating program within Texas and Oklahoma. Ken's appointment resulted in the need to appoint a new State Supervisor of Officials. On behalf of the TAHA Board we are pleased to announce that USAH has appointed Steve Henderson as the new State Supervisor effective immediately. Steve is an actively working official that has been providing leadership within MHOA and assisting TAHA with disciplinary hearings. Steve is highly regarded across the Affiliate and will be a valuable resource to the various officials' groups across our geography.

Congratulations to both Ken and Steve for their appointments.

BACKGROUND CHECK PROCEDURES

In September we reviewed at length the new process for conducting background checks within the Affiliate. Although there have been a handful of minor issues with the new procedure we appear to have worked through them and now all background checks will be completed through the TAHA web site with the selected vendor (NCSI). If you are having any issues with the process, the log on credentials or getting your Association set up with direct billing please contact either Bryan Ford or Don Girard for assistance.

And just a reminder, TAHA will certify no rosters if background checks are not completed using the new process and approved vendor. And consideration for hosting TAHA events/activities will be restricted to those Members/Associations adhering to the background procedures.

PROGRESSIVE PENALTY RULE

In June and again in my last update we touched on the new progressive penalty rules that went into effect this season. I was hoping we would not see any players or coaches caught in this but we are now seeing the first instances of suspensions from this new rule come to the surface. The new national game reporting system works quite well and we are notified when teams, players or coaches are facing suspensions. Please review the rule with your coaches, players and Team Managers so they can work to minimize the potential for additional discipline.

HIGH SCHOOL STATE TOURNAMENT

The HS State Tournament will be held the weekend of February 6th. There were two teams that applied in the "Pure" division and they will play a best of three series. There were 10 teams that applied in the blended division and playdowns will begin early next month. After a couple of play-in games the top eight teams will begin playdown series (best of 3) getting us to the four teams that will compete at the State Tournament in February.



If you have questions about the HS Tournament process, please contact Todd Plott.

TIER STATE TOURNAMENTS

The Tier I and II State Tournament will be held the weekend of February 20-22. The Tier II playdowns are underway and should be completed early in February. The 18U and 16U Tier I teams from the Elite and HCD will face off in a best of three series beginning on Friday night February 20th. The four teams at Tier II that advance in each age group (14U, 16U and 18U) will begin their round robin play on Friday as well. The three Tier II championships will be decided on Sunday.

If you have any questions about the Tier playdowns or the State Tournament please contact Doug Ritter.

TIER I APPLICATIONS

TAHA will be accepting applications for Tier I designations until February 1, 2015. By now all Member Associations should have received the application packet that included updated Tier I rules and requirements. Tier I designations when granted will be for a period of two years PLUS a one-year option at TAHA's sole discretion. Interested organizations should examine the rules and expectations for Tier I within our Affiliate and complete the application if you believe your Association would be a good choice for the Tier I award.

The Tier I Committee will consider all applicants but please note that simply providing all requested information will not necessarily result in being awarded the Tier I designation. The decision to award Tier I will be based on a variety of factors that consider current player pool, contracted/proposed facilities, coaching staff, organizational history, image and reputation. TAHA will award one or more organizations with Tier I status.

If you have questions about the Tier I application process, please contact Doug Ritter.

TIER II 16U NATIONALS

As we have mentioned on several occasions TAHA has been awarded the 2015 Tier II National Tournament for the 16U age group. This is a massive undertaking that will take place over a five-day period in two rinks this April. We will need a tremendous amount of support and volunteers to deliver a world class experience to the teams and participants from all across the country. This is a great opportunity for your Association or individual parents to be involved with this exciting event. We are currently needing the following roles filled:

Hospitality Coordinator: Responsible for planning, organizing and implementing the hospitality requirements for USA Hockey representatives, college scouts, VIPs and pertinent tournament officials and volunteers.



Media Relations Coordinator: Responsible for planning and implementing an effective public/media relations campaign prior to, during and after the USA Hockey National Championship.

Advertising/Sponsorship: Responsible for soliciting and securing advertising and sponsors for the tournament.

Penalty Box Monitor: Need individuals to work the penalty boxes during each game played

Credentials/Door Monitors: Need individuals to monitor spectators entering the rink to make sure they have a tournament pass or sell them a pass.

While there is no pay involved, we will do our best to take care of all volunteers with food and tickets to the events. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Mark Servaes.

AND FINALLY

We enjoy opportunities to play, coach and watch the best game in the world. We are passionate about our sport and most of us can easily spend hours on end at the rink hanging on every shot or rush up ice...no matter who is playing. The smell of the rink (maybe not the gear so much) and the emotion of the games can at times overtake our best efforts to watch or play with respect for our opponents, their coaches and fans. It is imperative that we work together to protect the game we love and preserve the enjoyment for players today and tomorrow. Stress with your coaches, players and parents the importance of sportsmanship and at all times to let our actions and words honor this sport that does so much to help our athletes grow and mature. We should all behave as if the entire world is watching...because as we know all too well, they are.

At this special time of the year as you draw your loved ones near to you, let us not forget the men and women in uniform that serve and sacrifice so that we can live in a Country with unparalleled freedoms and opportunities. I could not end this update without a word of support to those brave members of law enforcement and fire departments that protect us here at home. Make it a point at every opportunity to let them know they are appreciated and respected for the work they do.

Thanks to all the volunteers that work tirelessly to make this game great!

Wishing for you all a safe and happy holiday!



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We are working hard to get you a YES answer!



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