



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

May, 2016

It is hard to believe another hockey season has come to a close. From all indications it has been a very exciting and productive year for amateur hockey in Texas and Oklahoma. While some are happily taking a break to rest and recharge, others are already starting prospect camps, coaches' skates and Junior tryouts. Whatever your plan this Spring/Summer we trust it is safe and productive.

In the meantime, we have some updates and news for you. Let's begin with a quick review of the 2015/16 season.

Season in Review

Our house programs continue to flourish with more teams and players each month. We can't say enough about the great work that all of our rink members are doing as they work to expand the game at the grassroots level. Our participant numbers maintained an upward trend as the number of new players at the 8U and 6U levels continues to climb which can only mean good things for our game as those players age into older divisions.

At the Tier I level, after months of discussion across the District, all Affiliates in the Rocky Mountain District decided to send only State Champions to the District tournament to help intensify competition, shorten the time commitment and reduce the travel and expense involved. Accordingly, we sent our State Champions at the 14U, 16U and 18U (Boys) divisions. All three Stars' Elite teams made it to the District Finals with the Stars Elite 18U winning and advancing to Nationals.

The 14U (Girls) Tier I Stars' Elite also advanced to the National Championship Tournament.



At the Tier II level, we sent two boys teams at 14U to Nationals (HCD and Houston Wild) with HCD falling in the semi-finals to Michigan who went on to win the National Championship.

At 16U, we had three boy's teams at Nationals. The Oklahoma City Oil Kings in the 1A Division, the Brahmas in the 2A Division and Dallas Penguins in the 3A Division. The Oil Kings lost in the finals to Wyoming, while the Brahmas lost in the semi-finals. The Pens made it to the quarter-finals before falling to #2 Missouri.

At 18U the Texas Warriors competed in the 3A Division missing the quarter-finals due to a tiebreaker.

In the High School category, we sent three teams to compete at Nationals including State Champion JPII in the Pure Division and both McKinney (State Champion) and Frisco in the Blended Division. Frisco advanced to the quarter-finals before falling to Florida. At the High School Showcase in Pittsburgh last month, TEAM TEXAS won their division and advanced to the quarter-finals for the second time in seven years and finished with a 2-2 record.

The San Antonio Rampage Sled team competed at Nationals compiling a 2-1 record and we had two of our Women's teams also compete at Nationals with the Texas Stampede (50+) falling in the finals to Mid-Century and the Texas Stampede (40+) squad winning the National Championship for their age division.

The 2016 Texas Assessment Camp (TAC) was one of our best ever and we have record numbers of players advancing to the Rocky Mountain District Camp. TAHA had 13 players selected for National camps this summer.

TAHA continued to invest in the growth of our game as we issued close to \$20,000 in Grow the Game grants during the 2015/16 season, in part funding equipment purchases, hard dividers and assorted marketing activities.

So congratulations to all our rinks, organizations, players and families for another tremendous year.



As always we have some information and updates we wanted to share with you before the summer kicks off.

Tryouts

The tryout schedule for the 2016/17 season has been posted on the TAHA web site and all should be aware of those dates. As a reminder, while organizations may conduct “prospect” or “coach” skates during the Spring, no player can be contracted prior to the tryout dates identified for the player’s age and skill level. And please don’t forget that any organization that tries out on a “Tier” weekend is **required** to apply for the State Tournament “at that level” and compete in the playdown process. Failure to apply for the State Tournament carries a substantial fine to the organization as well as potential sanctions.

Annual Meeting

The TAHA annual meeting will be held June 25th in Farmers Branch, TX at the Doubletree Hotel on Luna Road. Lunch will be served at 12:00 noon and the meeting will run from 1:00 PM until 5:00 PM. All TAHA members (rinks, associations) are **REQUIRED** to have at least one representative present for the entire meeting. Please email Rick Hall (rickidhall@yahoo.com) with your scheduled attendees by Monday June, 20 so we can order the correct number of meals.

Member Associations may submit agenda items for consideration via email to me at reggiehall@tahahockey.org. Suggestions must be received by midnight on June 10th.

Associate members of TAHA (players/parents/officials/coaches) are invited to attend.

Board Elections

During the Annual Meeting in June there will be five (5) TAHA Board positions up for election. They include Vice President, Treasurer, Travel Section President, Disabled Section President and Girls/Women’s Section President.



At this time, all incumbents will be seeking reelection EXCEPT for Sandy Fielder (President of Girl's/Women's Section). Nominations for these positions will open on May 28, 2016 and close at midnight on June 14, 2016.

Any individual may self-nominate or be nominated by another. For all Board positions the nominee must be a current or former Associate member of TAHA. Nominations may be made during the nomination period by emailing the President at reggiehall@tahahockey.org.

Registrars Meeting

The annual Registrars meeting will be held Saturday July 23rd in Farmers Branch, TX at the Doubletree Hotel on Luna Road, beginning at 12:00 noon. This is a critical meeting reviewing registration software and updates, rostering requirements and eligibility for State and National tournaments.

Organization Registrars and Team Managers are STRONGLY encouraged to attend. Please email Darla Thompson (txregistrar@gmail.com) by Monday July 18th to confirm who from your organization will be attending.

Discussions are currently underway about adding a second Registrars meeting in Houston later this summer. Stay tuned for updates.

Tier III Junior Eligibility

As most are aware TAHA has restricted players in high school from participating in pay-to-play Tier III Junior programs that operate within our Affiliate. While we continue to believe that for "most" players the better alternative would be to remain at home and play at the youth and/or high school level, we do recognize there are some players whose abilities and playing objectives are better suited to a more rigorous Junior practice and game schedule.



With that in mind, we have worked with the North American Hockey League and their affiliated NA3 Tier III League to construct an amendment to this policy granting limited Junior waivers to current High School age players.

Effective with the 2016/17 season, each USA Hockey sanctioned Tier III team in the Affiliate may request waivers on two (2) high school age players each year. To be eligible, players must be either 17 or 18 years of age and the waiver request must be submitted in writing "by the Junior team" to TAHA for review and approval.

Watch our website for more details on the waiver procedure.

Concussion Protocols

Perhaps no topic dominates as much of our time as that of player safety. TAHA and USA Hockey continue to focus substantial attention on making our game safer for our athletes. Dealing with concussions and avoiding long term effects is at the forefront for all of us.

While USA Hockey has some basic guidelines on concussion management protocols, we believe a more structured approach to dealing with a diagnosed concussion is the right direction for our Affiliate. Toward that end, effective with the start of the 2016/17 season we are implementing the following treatment protocol that **MUST** be followed before a concussed player can return to the team for either on ice or off ice activity.

It is highly recommended that all players obtain baseline concussion testing prior to the start of the season.

Stage 1 - Upon medical diagnosis of a concussion – player must experience seven (7) days symptom free. This would be seven days of rest with no TV, video games and plenty of rest. Player may **NOT** move to Stage 2 until there have been seven continuous days' symptom free.



Stage 2 – After seven days’ symptom free – player may participate in light 15-minute workout off ice to include bike ride, sit ups, pushups, etc., with slight head movements. If the player experiences no symptoms on Day 1, the player can engage in slightly more strenuous activity on Day 2, to include moderate jogging, brief run or moderate intensity stationary bike.

Stage 3 – after two symptom free days of activity – player may return to the ice for non-contact skating for 20-30 minutes on Day 3. Player should be checked every 5-10 minutes for potential symptoms during this session.

Stage 4 – after three symptom free days of activity – player may return to the ice for full “skating only” practice without contact.

Stage 5 – after four symptom free days of activity – player may return to full contact practice and games.

NOTE: If at any time during the protocol the player experiences any concussion symptom, the player MUST return to Stage 1 and again go seven (7) symptom free days before advancing to Stage 2.

A concussion protocol form must be completed for each player diagnosed with a concussion during each stage of development. A doctor’s note certifying the player as fit to compete will be required before the player is allowed to play a game.

Coaches Helmets

On March 25th of this year the USA Hockey family was rocked when well known college official (and regular RMD volunteer) Butch Mousseau died tragically following a head first fall prior to a WCHA playoff game. An experienced official, Butch took warm-ups without his helmet. He caught a rut in the ice and fell and with his hands in his pockets he was unable to break his fall.



This fatal accident reminds us all exactly why helmets are to be worn on the ice and that even the most accomplished skaters are not immune to an accident.

The mandatory helmet rule has been in effect for all coaches/volunteers while taking part in any practice on the ice for nearly seven years. When initially implemented the policy included multiple warnings before a coach was disciplined for not wearing a helmet.

Effective immediately, there are **NO MORE WARNINGS!** Any coach determined to be on the ice without a helmet will be suspended for 10 days. That includes practices, games, meetings. A second violation in the same season will see the suspension doubled to 20 days. A third helmet violation will carry an automatic 30-day suspension and will result in a required hearing with the TAHA Disciplinary Committee. The coaches' organization will be subject to additional discipline.

New TAHA Website

As some of you may already know, the TAHA web site has been redesigned and features a sleeker, more modern look. We have eliminated the left side navigation and now all access will be from buttons across the top. We hope to be able to add more photo stories, videos and continue to make the site more user friendly.

If you have ideas or suggestions for content or have updates to information and data we have posted please forward to me at reggiehall@tahahockey.org.

Tier I Update

During the USA Hockey winter meeting last January, the USAH Board elected to add a 15U Tier I National Tournament for the coming season. This will be a two-year pilot program and may or may not be adopted after the two-year trial.

All teams hoping to qualify for the 15U Tier I National Championship will follow all existing Tier I rules and teams must be entirely comprised of 15U players. There will be



NO 14U players allowed to play up, or 16 year old players allowed to play down. The 15U category will be a pure birth year championship.

Locally, TAHA has granted the Stars's Elite the single 15U Tier I team for the coming year.

New Texas College Hockey Conference

This fall college hockey in Texas will take a big step forward with the formation of the new Texas Collegiate Hockey Conference (TCHC), which will feature two divisions (North and South) and a season ending championship tournament that will come with an automatic berth into the ACHA Division 2 West Regional.

The Northern Division will feature Texas Tech, TCU, North Texas and Dallas Baptist, while the Southern Division will include UTEP, UT, A&M and Texas State. Teams will play a 20 game regular season.

The TCHC has announced plans to conduct an annual "College Hockey Showcase" to allow high school aged players an opportunity to get acquainted with the teams in the conference and to learn more about the ACHA.

The Showcase will take place July 28-31 at the StarCenter in Farmers Branch. Watch the TAHA site for more information.

16U Tier II Nationals Returns to Dallas

In 2015 TAHA was host to the 16U Tier II National tournament and it was a tremendous success. Led by Mark Servaes, our volunteers demonstrated the degree a professionalism and commitment that was widely praised by attendees and USA Hockey. Thanks to that effort, and the continuing support from the NHL Dallas Stars, USA Hockey has awarded TAHA the 2017 16U Tier II National Tournament. We will again need tons of volunteers and if you are interested please contact Mark Servaes at Mark.Servaes@us.nestle.com.



Adult Hockey State Tournament

I am pleased to announce that next year we will hold our first ever Adult State Tournament at the conclusion of the 2016/17 season. Adult Section President Austin Sutter (Amarillo) has been working with the Dallas Stars and many of our rink members around the state to coordinate the event.

With more than 6,000 adult players in our Affiliate we are excited to be able to coordinate this championship event.

Watch for details regarding dates and divisions over the summer.

5 Nations 17U Tournament Coming to Dallas

I am pleased to announce that the prestigious 5 Nations Tournament will be hosted in Frisco, TX in early August. In partnership with the NHL Dallas Stars and USA Hockey we will see some of the best young athletes in the world take the ice as the national teams from Germany, Slovakia, Switzerland and the Czech Republic will join the U.S. team in this annual affair.

Volunteers will be needed and are encouraged to email Mark Servaes for information on how you can help. (Mark.Servaes@us.nestle.com).

Watch for details over the summer.

And Finally...

While our game is imperfect it remains the best sport in the world for young athletes and their families. Countless volunteer hours are spent each year to try and improve our sport and the influence we are gaining nationally is easy to overlook.

Many of the policies and leading edge positions we have adopted over the years served as prototypes for other Affiliates and USA Hockey. Our volunteers serve on the USA Hockey Board, now operate our District Development Camp, coordinate and host national championship tournaments and travel each year with U.S. national teams as they continue to expand our reach.



Our rink members are tireless in their efforts to expand our participant base and the results speak for themselves as we are surging at the youngest age groups. It is now up to all of us to deliver an experience that will keep those youngsters energized and eager to play for years to come. And we must continue to find ways to keep the game affordable so they will be financially able to play.

Congratulations to Tom Gaglardi, Jim Lites, Jim Nill and the entire NHL Dallas Stars organization for a great year and an exciting return to the post season.

As always, please keep our men and women in the military and law enforcement in your thoughts and prayers.

Have a great summer!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Reggie".

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We are working hard to get you a YES answer!

