

President's Message...

February 15, 2013

The New Year is well under way and while the season is beginning to wind down, there is still a lot of hockey to be played. We are just one week away from the puck dropping on the 2013 TAHA State tournament where we will see six State Champions crowned and determine representatives for the Tier II National Tournament at 14U, 16U and 18U. Both Tier I organizations will send two teams to the Rocky Mountain District tournament in Utah where they will compete for the opportunity to advance to Tier I Nationals. TAHA and the Dallas Stars Elite are also hosting the Girls/Women's District (Tier I) Tournament the first weekend in March at the Starcenter at Farmers Branch. And...League playoffs are beginning in the DSTHL, and High School City and State Championships are just weeks away, as is the Texas Assessment Camp (TAC).

This is a very exciting time of year and I encourage all of you to get to the rinks to enjoy some of the great hockey that will be played over the next six weeks.

As always there are some updates that I want to share to keep you up to speed on the happenings within the Affiliate and around the country.

Hockey Weekend Across America

This is a great weekend for our sport as we celebrate our game and strive to introduce new players via Try Hockey For Free day on Saturday. Several rinks in our Affiliate are conducting events and from what I hear the registrations are running ahead of plan. The following rinks will be conducting events:

Event Location (Rink Name):	Host Name (Association Name):	Event Start Time:	Event End Time:
Oilers' Ice Center	Tulsa Youth Hockey Association	2:15 PM	3:15 PM
Nytex Sports Centre		1:45 PM	2:45 PM
Aerodrome Ice Skating Complex	Aerodrome Hockey	3:40 PM	4:40 PM
Amarillo Civic Center	Amarillo Hockey Assoc.	12:30 PM	1:30 PM
Allen Community Ice Rink	Allen Community Ice Rink	1:15 PM	2:15 PM
Space City Ice Station	Bay Area Hounds Hockey Association	3:00 PM	4:40 PM
Kay Yeagar Coliseum	Wichita Falls Wildcats	9:30 AM	4:30 PM
Dr Pepper StarCenter-Euleess	Dallas Stars	11:45 AM	1:15 PM
Dr Pepper StarCenter at Craig Ranch-McKinney	Dallas Stars	10:45 AM	12:15 PM

Invite any interested potential families to attend one of these great events as the rinks have worked hard to put together a great experience.

Outstanding Debt List - ODL (UPDATE)

In December I shared with you several updates regarding the name and process for managing players that have not completed their financial obligations. We have one additional change to pass along that will give you added flexibility to address this issue of non-payment. Effective immediately, the deadline for adding players to the ODL has been changed to **5:00 PM the second day after the conclusion of the National Tournament**. You may still add players during the season if they fail to maintain their contracted payments to your organization, however you will now be able to add players until the second day after the conclusion of the National Finals.

I would reiterate again that the ODL is NOT intended to be a retaliatory device if a player decides to play in another organization. It is established to allow you to capture your contracted fees from a player that fails to pay. Once on the ODL, players are not eligible to take the ice with ANY organization, including the one that listed the player. Please review the TAHA Guidebook for specifics and financial penalties for violations of the ODL policy.

Greene Lawsuit

We had hoped the Greene lawsuit would be resolved by now but it appears such is not the case. Mr. Greene continues to attempt to exhaust all avenues and drive up our legal expenses as he pursues this frivolous action. We remain committed to aggressively defending this suit and will utilize all possible means to recover our legal fees so that we can properly devote our financial resources to the growth of our game across the Affiliate.

Trial is still set for April of 2013.

Tournament Sanctions

Tournaments conducted within the Affiliate **MUST** be sanctioned by the Affiliate and the Rocky Mountain District registrar. There is a process spelled out for this on the TAHA web site. The appropriate paperwork must be completed in advance so that you may receive a sanction number from TAHA signaling to all other teams that the games will be sanctioned under USA Hockey. If you conduct a tournament and do not have a sanction number then the games will not be considered legal USA Hockey contests and officials may not work the games. Further, non-sanctioned tournament games will invalidate insurance and open up organizers and any teams participating to potential suspensions.

If your teams are considering playing in a tournament, please make sure the tournament is a sanctioned USA Hockey tournament and abiding by all appropriate rules and procedures.

There are a number of organizers that are attempting to run tournaments outside of USA Hockey oversight which means insurance coverage is null and your teams may be subject to penalties for playing unsanctioned games. In one such situation we learned a rink based tournament was recruiting older players to play DOWN on younger teams to help fill rosters. The risk of injury is significant in situations like this with organizers ignoring the rules and officials who may either not be trained, registered or aware of USA Hockey rules.

If you are unsure....contact a member of the TAHA Board for guidance.

Medical Personnel At Games

Last month in Boston a High School player suffered a severed artery during a game and his life was saved due to the quick action of a trainer who came off the bench and took steps to slow the bleeding until EMTs arrived.

In a recent high school contest I witnessed a frightening event when a player was hit and knocked unconscious before he landed on the ice face down. A teammate ignored the play up ice and bent over to check on the injured player. Seeing that the player was out, the teammate panicked and grabbed the injured and unconscious player and rolled him over. Fortunately the trainer arrived at that moment and shoved the concerned teammate away to prevent any further movement. Thankfully the motionless player was not severely injured and the concerned teammate's action didn't make things worse...which so easily could have been the case.

Fortunately, these types of injuries are rare and in most games medical personnel aren't required to spring into action but in those cases where they are needed...they may literally be a life saver.

It is not currently a requirement for games to be staffed by medical personnel and I realize there are cost and logistic implications given the sometimes random nature of our games. But TAHA has now adopted a policy that will see medical personnel at all TAHA run events (State Tournament, HS Tournaments, TAC) and we are going to evaluate mandating medical staff at Bantam and Midget games for next season. I would strongly encourage that all Associations consider securing medical staff for all Bantam and Midget contests voluntarily. It may cost a little more to run the games but the return will be worth it.

Patches and Awards

USA Hockey recognizes players who achieve a Hat Trick, a Playmaker (3 assists in single game), and goalies who record a shutout. This process is coordinated by Becky Marshall on behalf of TAHA. Historically we have required copies of scoresheets be sent to Becky to validate the accomplishments but effective immediately you may simply send an email to Becky at becky_joe@hotmail.com with hyperlinks to the scoresheets showing the player or goalie and his/her Hat Trick, Playmaker or Shutout.

Texas Assessment Camp (TAC)

The deadline for TAC submissions is just days away. Please make sure your organization provides TAHA the list of recommended players by February 22nd as late entries will not be accepted.

In Closing

The next few weeks will be full of exciting games and the crowning of Tier I, Tier II, DSTHL, High School City and State champions. This is the culmination of weeks and months of hard work, sacrifice and commitment by your players, coaches, and parents. There will be cheering and dreams fulfilled for the teams that win and heartbreak and disappointment for the teams that fall short. As important as our role is at teaching the game to our athletes, it is as much or more our responsibility to provide guidance and direction on how to act regardless of the outcome of a game or series.

Encourage your teams to win with class and humility and accept defeat with dignity and grace. Be unyielding in demanding professionalism from your coaches, players and yes, parents. Winning is a great reward and losing can be painful but the tragedy is in failing to learn from both.

Good luck to all our teams!

See you at the State Tournament

Reggie