

June 21, 2014

NEWS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING

The annual TAHA meeting was held today at the Doubletree hotel in Farmers Branch. A number of key updates from the USAH Annual Congress were provided along with information on new initiatives within the Affiliate. Here are the highlights:

PARTICIPATION

Participation in amateur hockey is up almost 10% over the prior year. The increase is due in part to the surge in adult players, but the Affiliate-wide focus on getting new players at the youngest levels is definitely paying off. TAHA has the largest group of 8U players in more than six seasons and the Dallas Stars have announced a goal of having the Little Rookies program launched in every rink in Texas by the end of the coming season.

UPDATES FROM THE ANNUAL CONGRESS

A number of changes and developments from the USAH Annual Congress were discussed including:

- New software is being launched for the 2014/15 season that will be web based and deliver added flexibility in managing rosters. A mandatory registrars meeting will be held in Dallas on July 12 with a second meeting in Houston on July 26
- USAH has been exploring a 40 inch-wide orange band around the perimeter of the rink (called the "look up line") that players can use as a guide to "look up" if they are sliding into the boards. The orange paint on the ice would be similar to the "warning track" for players. After much debate in Colorado the Executive Committee felt there was not enough data to suggest a mandate and determined further research is required.
- Rule 411 (progressive discipline) was passed that adds multiple game suspensions for players that incur three major penalties in the same season. While in the past discipline was served with the team a player was playing for when the penalties were received, the discipline will now "follow the player" and any game suspension in this category will be served by the player regardless of team.
- HS National Championships will now feature both a pure team division and a blended team division. TAHA will be assessing changes required to the State Tournament process to crown a champion in both categories to maximize our representation at the national tournament.

MEMBERSHIP

A number of changes in TAHA membership have occurred in past year with the non-renewal of the Ice Jets, the decision by the Dallas Stars not to operate a JR Stars youth program and the Lone Star Wolves recent decision to go dark.

In Tulsa, the Oilers Ice Center, Tulsa Youth Hockey and Full Tilt hockey have consolidated operations into a single program fully focused on delivering USAH based programs. This new consolidated approach to hockey in Tulsa is expected to help bring the participation numbers back up substantially.

The Sugar Land ice rink (operators of the Sugar Land Imperials NA3HL team) have taken over operations of the former Hitmen program and will skate their youth teams as Jr Imperials for the coming season.

And in Austin, the new 3/4 rink operated by "The Pond Hockey Club" was joined forces with TAHA to deliver adult and youth in-house programs.

TIER II 16U NATIONALS

TAHA has been awarded the 16U Tier II National tournament next spring. Games will take place at both the Plano and Farmers Branch rinks. Volunteers will be needed throughout the week so look for opportunities to be a part of this great event.

LEGAL UPDATE

After determining that Grapevine/Polar Ice was in breach of their Membership Agreement by filing their April 18 lawsuit, the TAHA Board voted this week to indefinitely suspend Grapevine/Polar Ice until such time as the breach of the agreement was remedied. The terms of the "cure" were identified in the May 16 order and include dismissal of all legal action and payment of all legal expenses to date for all defendants. Grapevine/Polar Ice may reapply for membership once all aspects of the order have been complied with.

The suspension is effective at 12:01 AM Monday, June 23 to allow for DSYHL games scheduled this weekend to be played.

ELECTIONS

Each year half of the TAHA Board is up for reelection by the membership. Here are the results of the 2014 elections:

VP - Mark Servaes (Reelected)

Secretary - Jay Ray (McKinney)

President Travel Section - Doug Ritter (Reelected)

President Disabled Section - Alfredo Corona (Reelected)

President Girls/Womens' - Sandy Fielder

FINALLY

It was all in all a very good year with the promise of many good things ahead for the 2014/15 season. We still have much work to do of course and for all of us our mission must continue to be to expose new players and families to our great game, make the experience of hockey fun, challenging and always a positive learning.

Thank you for all you do to make our game great!

Reggie