

President's Message...

April 21, 2013

It has been a very exciting last couple of months of the season. During the State Tournament we had some great series at Tier I and some extremely competitive games at Tier II and in both divisions we had strong champions emerge at every age group.

The Stars Elite won all three Tier I series and advanced one team (16U) to the National championships. At Tier II, the Americans captured both the 18U and 16U State titles and represented Texas well as the 18U Americans eventually fell in the semifinals. The Houston Wild captured the 14U Tier II State crown and also sent their 18U team to Nationals, and that team went 3-0 in pool play, losing in the quarterfinals. Oklahoma was also well represented as the Oil Kings sent their 18U team to Nationals.

The Stars Elite girls captured District titles at both 14U and 19U in their first year at Tier I and laid the groundwork for a strong and consistent program for the future.

The Texas Assessment Camp last month put some of the most talented players in the 96, 97, 98 and 99 birth years on display and we are very eager to monitor the progress of the evaluators' selections at the District Camp next month.

The Dallas Stars Travel Hockey League completed its inaugural season with 14 champions crowned while the Southwest Series completed its season with tournament champions crowned in nine age and skill divisions.

Jesuit captured the HS State Championship at the Gold level and along with Plano West attended the HS Nationals in Florida. Congratulations to Frisco for winning their first ever HS State Championship at the Silver level with a hard fought 1-0 win over Marcus in the Finals.

Just last week, TEAM TEXAS competed in the Americas' Showcase in Pittsburgh going 5-0 and capturing the B-Pool crown with reports so far of more than a dozen players invited to Junior and college tryouts. And the USA Hockey sled team won the Silver Medal in South Korea at the International Paralympic Committee World Championships with our own Taylor Lipsett leading the way.

The hockey has been very good this spring and I want to extend our congratulations to all the players, organizations and teams for a great season.

Here are some important updates in our hockey community.

Tryouts

With the start of tryouts less than 60 days away, it is important to remind everyone that TAHA has issued timing and team requirements that must be followed by all organizations. Issued on March 10, 2013, the allowable tryout dates by age and level can be found [here](#).

New this year are penalties (and a fine) for conducting tryouts on a Tier weekend and failing to register a team as a Tier team. Any team that touches the ice during a Tier tryout weekend MUST register as a Tier team and apply for the state tournament.

Outstanding Debt List (ODL)

And speaking of tryouts, just a reminder that players on the ODL may not touch the ice for tryouts (or any other USAH activity including skates and camps) until they have satisfied their financial obligation and been removed from the list by the listing organization or rink.

And while on the topic of the ODL, we are currently working with Sport Ngin to move the ODL list to a secure section of the TAHA web site where it will be accessible only by password. Once this has been completed, each organization will have a security clearance to access the list and it will no longer be available to the general public. More info to come on that.

Greene Lawsuit

After almost two years, the courts have finally confirmed what we believed all along...that Mr. Greene had no standing to bring his lawsuit against TAHA. As a result, on March 4th TAHA was granted Summary Judgment (essentially a dismissal) of the suit. While there are still a couple of small allegations and assertions that we must deal with next month from Mr. Greene, this decision allows us to aggressively proceed with our counterclaim for recovery of legal fees.

Mites

During the USA Hockey Annual Congress last June, the Executive Committee and Board of Directors adopted **MANDATORY** cross ice for Mites beginning in the 2013/2014 season. This decision comes several years after making cross ice a strong recommendation and finally puts the entire country on the same plane. (As you know, TAHA got an early start on cross ice for Mites as it was mandated here in our Affiliate two years ago.)

Although USAH is accepting waiver requests for some full ice games, we understand there will be very few such waivers granted and given the progress we have had within TAHA we are debating whether or not to request any for the rinks in our Affiliate. More to come on this as we get closer to the waiver deadline next month.

All other provisions of the Mite policy will remain in effect and we are not contemplating any changes to the "two-mite play up rule".

Ice Jets Non-Renewal

By now all organizations will have heard that TAHA has made the decision to "not renew" the Jets' Member Agreement. This was not an easy decision for the Board to make but was one that we made unanimously and for what we believe are the best interests of our game. There has been much "misinformation" and "disinformation" spread around the last couple of weeks since the decision was rendered so let me clear a few things up.

First, all members of TAHA sign a contract (or Member Agreement) that spells out the terms and conditions of membership in our Affiliate. Member Agreements are for one-year periods and renew annually. All of our Member Agreements contain a cancellation clause. Just like any contract between two parties, **both** parties have the option to discontinue the contract with appropriate notice prior to the annual renewal date.

Last December after several years of rules violations and failed (and costly) legal challenges to TAHA decisions, the Ice Jets were put on notice that TAHA would take up the matter of continued renewal of their Member Agreement early in 2013.

The TAHA Board began discussing the Ice Jets membership in January and brought members of the Jets' leadership team in to meet with the Board in February at the State Tournament. In March the Board concluded that the operational direction and business strategies of the Jets were simply inconsistent with the goals and direction of youth hockey and the decision was made to advise the Jets that their Member Agreement would not be renewed. On April 9th the President of the Jets was notified of the Board's decision.

Despite the clamoring of outside influences being introduced to this equation, there are no agendas or conspiracies at play here. The attacks of a personal nature and unfounded accusations against the TAHA Board are an attempt to change the narrative and focus attention away from the real issues that drove this decision. In spite of the seemingly well-orchestrated campaign to make this about me or the TAHA Board, this is about the history of decisions and actions of the Jets organization. Nothing more. Nothing less.

There will be much more to this as procedures are determined.

Finally

As some of you may have noticed we are updating the design and navigation of the TAHA web site. We have made a number of improvements and more are on the way. Thanks to those who sent in pictures. If you have additional ideas on improvements feel free to email those to me as well.

Thanks for your continued involvement in our game and your offers of support.

Reggie