



**Squirt Hockey**

**Parent Welcome Packet**

**2025-2026 Season**

## **Squirt Parent Meeting September 11, 2025**

### **Welcome/Intro:**

#### **Welcome Parents,**

Thank you all for being here tonight as we kick off an exciting chapter for your children in the Buffalo Youth Hockey Association. Whether your first player is starting travel level or you're an experienced travel parent, we're thrilled to have you as a part of our community.

This season marks an important step in your child's development, both as a player and as part of a team. Travel hockey introduces a new level of competition, commitment and of course, fun! We understand this can feel like a big leap, so tonight is all about helping you feel informed, prepared, and confident in supporting your child through this journey.

We'll cover everything from practice schedules and travel logistics to expectations for both players and families. Our goal is to ensure that everyone—parents, players, and coaches alike—can work together to create an environment where our young athletes can thrive, learn, and, most importantly, love the game.

We know it's a lot of information, but don't worry! We're here to answer any questions you have and guide you through every step of the process. Together, we can make this season a fantastic experience for your child and your family.

Let's get started!

### **Meet your Squirt Coordinators:**

**Aaron Johnson:** [johnson.aaron9@gmail.com](mailto:johnson.aaron9@gmail.com) or [squirts@buffalohockey.net](mailto:squirts@buffalohockey.net)

Aaron is our resident expert, he has 19 years of coaching experience and 13 as Varsity boys Head Coach for Buffalo and is also our current Squirt Co-Coordinator. We also have the luxury of having him as a Squirt Coach this year as he heads into his second year of Travel hockey! This is his second year of travel hockey as a parent, but he has been in the hockey world his whole life and part of BYHA. We are SUPER lucky to have him involved with the youth program! He is a teacher at Buffalo High School and he has 2 boys; Bennett & Robby (2nd year squirt and 4<sup>th</sup> year Mite). He played hockey all of his life, up to the highest college level. He enjoys teaching the game to our young hockey players and helping develop great coaches! His boys also enjoy all of the things and he stays busy coaching a lot of their sports and any down time they have you can catch them on the boat!

**Michelle Munn:** [michmarie15@hotmail.com](mailto:michmarie15@hotmail.com) or [squirts@buffalohockey.net](mailto:squirts@buffalohockey.net)

Michelle has been a part of BYHA for ten years and served on the HOC for three years as the SafeSport co-coordinator. She has a daughter, Myla, who is very competitive in barrel racing/rodeo, and two sons; Jace will be trying out for High School hockey this year and Owen is a second year squirt.

## INTRODUCTION TO OUR GUEST SPEAKERS:

### **Darren Glur: President of West Suburban Officials**

Information about Refs, shortage of refs, being an official, zero tolerance.

Parents – BE KIND! Be a positive role model for the skaters on the ice & the families around you.

### **Risa Peterson: BYHA Hockey Operations Committee Vice President**

## BYHA/Team Culture:

- The Buffalo Youth Hockey Association provides hockey education and development programs for students in School District 877 (Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose) and 876 (Annandale). Check out our website to familiarize yourself with the programs, teams, fundraising, board, and so much more! Welcome to the BYHA Hockey Family and we hope you enjoy your experience and share your love of Hockey! Below will be all the information you will need to know to get your season started!

## Expectations of Parents:

- **Be Present/On Time** – Please arrive about 30 min before practice time to make sure your child has ample time to get ready and on the ice. Coaches plan practices/drills based on how many kids they have, if you are not able to make it, please notify via Sports Engine. This really helps make it a successful year! Game expectations will be communicated by your coach/team manager once teams are formed.
- **Communicate:** In order for us to succeed, we want to hear your feedback in a constructive way. We love positive feedback and hearing what we are doing well and where things can improve. We encourage parents to communicate with the coaches and managers, if they are not able to handle it, please bring it to the Squirt Coordinators. We are all adults and ask for respectful dialogue. The association is run by volunteers and we know that not everyone communicates the same or understands how things are run, and that can cause conflict. Frustration and conflict occur when expectations and disappointment collide. We can't help you if WE don't know about it. Go to the RIGHT people vs spreading negativity (This is advice not just in hockey, but life!)
- **Together we can achieve more! = TEAM**
- **Be their biggest cheerleader/supporter:** Encourage your child, cheer for your child, help them elevate themselves and have confidence in their abilities! The more fun they have, the more success they will have.

**Cost of Hockey:** \$1,275 for squirt skaters for 2025-2026 season

## **BYHA Expectations:**

- **Coaches** - Remember youth hockey is for the kids. **Our focus must be on the players' development** and teach players in a manner that allows them to enjoy **their** experience.
- **Parents/Fans** - Encourage and Support. **Avoid being critical of players, referees, coaches, or any others in front of your skater.** That breeds negativity. If you are upset,

please use the 24-48 hour rule to calm down before bringing the matter to a coach or higher authority. Never challenge or approach a referee.

- **Players** - Be a team player, and work on the skills that the coaches are teaching.

### Safesport:

USA Hockey has an extensive SafeSport program that provides resources to ensure the safety of all involved in the game both on and off the ice. This online training is free of charge to any employee, coach, official, volunteer, or parent that is registered with USA Hockey as a Coach/Player, Official or Manager/Volunteer (at no charge).

- Note: All Coaches, Managers, BOD/HOC Members, and Volunteers are required to complete the SafeSport Training Program EVERY SEASON! This training is to be completed PRIOR to any participation with youth players.
- The SafeSport website will direct those eligible to the Refresher course.
- A background check is to be completed and cleared before any coach touches the ice which includes pre-season clinics.

For more information visit the BYHA website- [www.buffalo.pucksystems2.com](http://www.buffalo.pucksystems2.com)

### Clinics/Try-outs

Tryout Coordinators: Mike Peterson & Josh Hawkinson

\*\*\*\* As of August 1st, 2024 ALL PLAYERS MUST WEAR A NECK LACERATION PROTECTOR per USA Hockey/MN Hockey rules and regulations.

This includes during all pre-season clinics, practices, scrimmages & games.

### **Goal/Process of Tryouts:**

- Place skaters on a team with similar skills to promote **development**.
- The clinics
  - Opportunity to get back on the ice
  - Will practice Try-out drills
- The try-outs
  - Closed to parents first couple days, then open a couple days mid tryouts and the end portion will be closed again.
  - Please arrive at least 30 mins early to all tryouts to allow proper time to check in, receive a jersey and get fully dressed.
  - Remove ALL stickers from helmets and wear BYHA color or similar socks
  - Players issued a try-out jersey (Black or White) with a number
  - Return jerseys after each session
  - On-ice coach volunteers will lead drills
  - Evaluators will score drills at the press table
  - Any absences MUST be ok'd by Tryout/Squirt Coordinators
  - Team Announcements
    - Teams posted on the BYHA try-out page within 24-48 hours
    - First team practice the next day.

## Goalies

- **Goalie Tryouts:**
  - Skills - only goalies on the ice. Goalies are evaluated during goalie-specific drills under controlled situations
  - Tryouts are **CLOSED** to outside viewers. If your goalie needs help getting dressed, you will be allowed to assist them but as soon as you are done you will need to leave the rink and wait for your goalie in the lobby.
  - Please arrive to all tryouts at least 30 minutes early and you will get a jersey to wear throughout the full tryout process.
  - If your goalie **CANNOT** make tryouts (Both Goalie only and Skater group tryouts) you **MUST** contact Nathan Dixon and Matt Griffith prior to tryouts to discuss reason for absence and to discuss further options.
- **Full Time Vs. Part Time:**
  - **FULL-TIME:** goalies **MUST** attend Goalie Tryouts as well as their assigned skater tryouts group.
  - **PART-TIME:** goalies **MUST** attend Goalie Tryouts as a goalie and attend their assigned skater group tryout session dressed to skate out to receive their skater evaluation scores.
    - Part time goalies are placed on teams based on their skating scores. The goalie score may be used as a tie-breaker or to fill a need on a team without a goalie. **YOUR GOALIE SCORE CAN NOT MOVE YOU DOWN, BUT IT MAY MOVE YOU UP.**
- **Gear Rental:**
  - Squirt/10U Goalies can borrow equipment from the association with a damage deposit check of \$150 which will be returned to you or shredded when equipment is returned.

## Sports Engine

Sports Engine is our primary source of communication to parents. You will need to download it on your device and make sure all guardians are linked to your players account.

- Schedule/Synching
  - Most of the time it works! Occasionally like all technology, it can have bugs. Sign out, sign back in.
  - You can also check our website calendar if you are unsure
  - Managers should communicate out any last minute changes via SE Chat.
- RSVP function
  - USE IT! Managers, remind parents politely to RSVP. This helps tremendously to plan practices and games accordingly and get the most development for all players.
- Chat
  - Primary source of communication.
  - You may get a weekly email or your manager may send weekly updates in the chat.

## Typical Squirt Schedule

Typical Practice - Squirts is **developmental**.

- Practices will be focused on skating and skills as opposed to systems.
- Rough outline of practice example;
  - 15-20 minutes of skating each practice.
  - 20-25 minutes of stations/skill development
  - 10-15 minutes of small area games/battle drills/systems/game focus

### **Games/Scrimmages/Tournaments**

- MN Hockey is broken up into Districts. We participate in District 5
  - Roughly 10-15 games will be district games (starting roughly 11/1)
- We will be participating in 3 tournaments this year
  - Roughly 4 games a tournament (12)
- USA Hockey recommends 25 games with a max of 35 games including Tournaments, District and Scrimmages
  - Remaining games will be scrimmages either ref controlled (Counts as a game) or coach controlled (does not count as a game but takes a practice time so if you are counting practice to game ratio...keep that in mind, that is a convo with your manager/coach!).
- Scrimmages scheduled by Coach and Team Manager
  - Coaches and Managers work with the Ice Schedulers to schedule these.
- Practices will be 1- 2 per week **plus** games and scrimmages
  - 3v3 will NOT be included in this count this year as we are classifying it differently to ensure it doesn't get pulled into this count.

### **Additional Scheduling Information:**

- We shoot for a total of 3-5 touches a week, that can be heavier on some weeks and lighter on other weeks depending on tournaments etc..
- Power skating will be incorporated into practices vs. separate times. This will be coordinated by your coach.
- Dryland – we have dryland scheduled for all travel teams. Great way for them to brush up on their skills!
- Skills Night
- The general rule is to have Squirts/10U off the ice by 8:30pm.
- Parents can expect to see the schedule through October once teams are out. Practice schedule gets released on a monthly basis (general rule) District5 game scheduling starts in Oct and continues throughout the month which hinders the ability to publish the schedule.
- D5 Blocks games around 5 days over Christmas, but there may be some pond hockey during this time (this is optional)
- Nothing scheduled ON Thanksgiving, Christmas Day or Christmas Eve

## **Bison 3V3 League**

This is an optional program for development that is offered to squirts/10u only. This is free, no additional costs to Squirts/10U. It is built into the fees across the board (similar to mites...the association covers the cost of mite ice by building those fees across all teams/fundraising/gambling etc..). You can opt out of the program if you would like, however there is no reimbursement as again, there is no additional fee. PLEASE FILL OUT THE 3v3 SURVEY to let us know if you skater/goalie will be playing this season!

### **Program Goals:**

for players...

- Players get exposure to skaters at all levels and build relationships with new teammates/friends on other teams
- Develop leadership skills
- Increase puck touches, quick decision making, learn to play with head up
- Create more opportunities for skill development & increase competitiveness
- Increase creativity – work on new things and get comfortable with them
- Ability to figure things out in a small area, the game teaches you, players more involved on offense and defense, players roam, goalies much more involved with lots of reps

for parents...

- 6-8 free sessions in addition to regular team practices & games
- Teams are rostered in Sports Engine just like your Squirt team schedule
- 3v3 has been a huge success around the state and has been shown study after study to be one of the best small area development tools for young hockey players
- Its local...right here in Buffalo vs. going to a Velocity in Osseo/Eden Prairie

### **Program Format:**

Team Structure –

- One division for Squirts and one division for 10U
  - Full time goalies can play both sessions so part time goalies can skate out.
- Designated team names for Sports Engine Rostering/Schedule
- Schedules will be published in Sports Engine.

Game Structure –

- 90 mins of total ice time (no resurfacing)
- 45 minute sessions (2 sessions each game day)
- Half Ice games with boards up
- 1 min rolling shifts, change on the fly with buzzer
- Teams can't go up by more than 5 goals during game
- Coaches will keep score with flip boards on each game
- 2 Seasons
  - Early & Late Season- 3-4 games each season
- Preferred time will be mid Sunday afternoon/early evening & non school days~ 10/19, 10/26, 11/1, 12/29, 1/19, 2/16, will possibly add 1-2 more at end of season
- Goalies will be dressed for each session and can put a note in SE
- One coach assigned on each half to "ref"

### **Uniforms:**

Jerseys and socks issued in October. This year we will get NEW reversible uniforms for the regular season. We will also use these uniforms for 3v3 and Home/Away will be specified in Sports Engine.

## Dibs/Team Duties

Dibs:

- 15 volunteer hours (20 hours for families with 2 or more skaters- REQUIRED)
- There are many opportunities. Look for Dibs opportunities on the BYHA website

Team Duties:

- Team duties are NOT part of your dibs hours. These are required for each family to do for every game/scrimmage.
- Managers typically create a sign up and make sure ALL families participate, even if your spouse/partner is a coach or manager as these are NOT team volunteer hours.
- Team game day duties include; (Instructions on all of this are located on the DIBs page as many of these are also dibs when it isn't your team).
  - Locker monitor (Background check/safesport needed)
    - Making sure no pictures/phones are being used
  - Playing Music (home games only)
    - No explicit music
  - Penalty box (home and away)
  - Scoreboard (home only)
  - Game Sheets (home only)

## Team Manager /Team Fund

We are looking for Managers for each team. This is similar to Mite Managers but there is much more involved. Typical manager duties include but not limited to:

- Collecting team funds from all parents & tracking and managing team fund
  - Team fund examples.....referees/additional ice, apparel, team snacks/gifts, coach gifts, team events/parties etc..
- Working with head coaches/schedulers to schedule scrimmages
- Communicating weekly schedule & any pertinent information to the team
- Making sure all families are participating in team duties
- Making sure all parents are getting communication on SE/Email etc.
- Update team page & Sports Engine with events

Reach out to Heather Knight if you are interested. [hknight@borderfoods.com](mailto:hknight@borderfoods.com)

## Coaches

If you are wanting to be a coach for Squirts/10u and have not signed up yet please do!

## Other Development Opportunities

- [10,000 Puck Club](#) - Off ice training is one area our players can use to really increase their strength, shooting ability and puck skills. Goalies can participate too & have a program!
- [Additional Skating Opportunities](#): BYHA has a page that adds new and updated skating opportunities frequently for your skaters. It is hard to stay on top of everything but this is a great source as well as networking and asking others what they are doing! When in doubt, reach out!

## **Fundraising:**

There are a couple opportunities to help the association and to help make hockey less expensive.

- 1) [Annual Wreath Fundraising event](#). The current turn in date is October 26th so you can still get in on this! A portion of the proceeds go DIRECTLY toward your Ice bills!
- 2) Support Local Businesses and if you are going to play pull tabs pop in at one of these places. A portion of the sales go to BYHA.

## **BINGO:**

- **Thirsty Buffalo Saloon:** Monday's @ 7:00 PM

## **Meat Raffle:**

- **J's Down Under:** Saturday's @ 4:00 PM
- **Thirsty Buffalo:** Sunday's @ 4:00 PM & Thursday's @ 5:30

## **Pulltabs:**

- **Thirsty Buffalo Saloon:** Sunday's 12 -10 pm, Monday - Thursday's 12- 11 pm, Friday & Saturday's 12 pm - Midnight
- **The Heights:** Sunday - Saturday 11 am - 11 pm
- **J's Down Under:** Monday-Thursday from 3:00-11:00 PM; Friday-Sunday from 12 PM - 12 AM.
- **Evelyn's Wine Bar:** Tuesday - Friday from 4:00-9:00 PM; Saturday from 12PM - 9:00 PM.
- **Hayes' Public House Brewery & Taproom**
- **Tap Inn by R Social at Wild Marsh**

## **I have read this all....now what?**

- Download the Sports Engine App on your phone and find your team! That will show you your practice times so you can be prepared for the season. For now you can subscribe to SQUIRT CLINIC 1 or SQUIRT CLINIC 2 for pre-season dates.
- Check out the website and familiarize yourself with the DIBS/Volunteer program
- Make sure you are listed on the email list for info on BYHA and your team
- Don't be afraid to communicate to your coach/manager or the Squirt Coordinators!
- WE ARE HERE TO HELP & MAKE THIS A SUCCESSFUL SEASON FOR ALL!