



Santa Clara Valley Hockey Association

BLACKHAWKS

January, 2015
www.blackhawks.org

NorCal Select Camp

Revisited



Select Camps, held at the local, state, and regional levels, are USA Hockey's official route to the national team. Each successive camp encompasses a broader region than the last, and each successive camp is more exclusive than the last. It starts with the NorCal select camp in December. NorCal players who are selected in December move on to CAHA camp with their SoCal peers in January. Those who make CAHA camp join top players from Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, and Hawaii at Pacific Regional camp in May. Those selected in this exclusive camp will then move to National camp in July, along with participants from the other 12 regions in the country, for selection of the U17, U18, and U19 U.S. National Teams by the USA Hockey's National Team Development Program.

This year's NorCal camp was held in the Stockton Arena on Saturday December 13, 2014 for the birth years 2001, 2000, 1999 and 1998. We had a handful of current Blackhawk players attend, and are very proud of Forwards Ryan Amirsehhi (2001) and Adam McGill (2000) who were selected as alternates at select camp. Congratulations to both!

The number of players allotted to NorCal each year is pretty small. At each birth year, only 9 Forwards, 6 D, and 3 Goalies are chosen. Given that Tier I AAA is supposed to be the highest level of hockey in the country, it would make sense that the majority of players chosen at a Select Camp come from that level. However, each year we do see a number of players selected from non-AAA programs.

NorCal has experienced limited success on the bigger stages at the successively more competitive camps. Of the 56 NorCal players selected in the 3 oldest birth years at last season's NorCal camp, only 7 made it to the National camp. However, of those 7 total players who were invited to National camp last season across the '97, '98, and '99 birth years from the Pacific Region, 3 are former Blackhawks!!

Having 3 former Blackhawks in that pool of players going to the highest camp in the U.S. underscores our clubs

continued on Page 2

One Timers



- **Peewee A** went 4-0 and finished in 2nd place (against a PWAA team) at Silver Sticks and had lots of fun in Anaheim at the Jr Ducks tournament, both on and off the ice (hotel knee hockey!). Looking forward to warm weather and strong competition in Phoenix for MLK.....
- The **Midget 16AA** team finished up the year on a strong note with a convincing victory over the Bellarmine Bells Varsity team during the Bellarmine College Prep Holiday Invitational Tournament in San Jose over the holidays. Max Palmer's hat trick (the team's first this season) helped power the Blackhawks to a 6-3 victory over the host team. The team hopes to carry that momentum over to the next CAHA weekend in Valencia January 9-11 and then will travel to the Arizona Cactus Cup tournament in Phoenix over Martin Luther King weekend....
- The **Squirt** team has continued to improve as they build on the ADM each practice. The team just completed a 4-1 run at the Sharks Holiday Jamboree. Every player has now recorded a goal and the team is excited for the second half of the season.
- The **Peewee B** team recently competed in the San Jose Holiday Jamboree. They were thrilled to get a locker room visit from Vancouver Canuck's goalie, US Olympian and former Santa Clara Blackhawk **Ryan Miller** (right). After talking to the team he gave each player a fist bump. Not a bad way to end their tournament! The team is gearing up for games in Lake Tahoe and are looking forward to playing in Las Vegas during an upcoming tournament.
- At the December Silver Stick tournament in Las Vegas, the **Peewee AA** team went 5-1 and finished in 2nd place. The team travels to Lakewood for the next CAHA weekend and then to Phoenix for the Arizona Cactus Cup.
- **Midget 16A** will be heading to San Diego in February/President's Day weekend for the CA State Games. Since the last newsletter, our team has welcomed two new players, Jake Colombo #18 and goalie Kevin Tieck #29.



NorCal Select Camp, continued

contribution to producing top players in NorCal – development at the B, A and AA level. We do not field AAA teams, so our goal is always to move our top players through our B and A programs to AA, and then on to AAA when appropriate. In this year's NorCal camp, in the 2001, 2000, and 1999 birth years, there were a total of 36 players selected for the primary (non-alternate) spots. Over 40% of these top NorCal performers played Mites, Squirts, PeeWees, or Bantams with our club.

Our focus on hockey fundamentals during their critical development years is a key component to our role in NorCal hockey. We expect that these numbers will, without question, continue to grow in the next couple of years. As our top kids move on to the next levels, we look to California AAA programs to put together teams that keep pace with the rest of the country and develop legitimate top-end players.



SUMMERHAWKS 2015 SPRING HOCKEY

Dr. Ron's Dining Digs

With many of the Blackhawk teams flying south to Phoenix for the Arizona Cactus Cup over the MLK weekend, here are some local dining favorites.



Chompie's- NY style deli. Don't miss the Jewish Sliders: mini challah rolls filled with brisket, potato pancakes, cheese and gravy or the giant fresh sliced Hot Pastrami sandwich. Locations in Phoenix, Chandler, Tempe and Scottsdale.



Lo-Lo's Chicken & Waffles. Juicy Southern fried chicken paired with waffles. Add some sweet tea and red velvet cake and even your most rambunctious Blackhawk will be ready for that afternoon pregame nap. In Phoenix, Scottsdale and opening in Gilbert sometime in January. Often a wait, but the fried chicken is phenomenal.



Rudy's BBQ. Moist and tasty Texas brisket, ribs, chicken and jalapeño sausage. Add a Shiner Bock from the cooler to celebrate those Blackhawk victories. Located in Chandler and Goodyear.

6-week Spring Program

Squirt through Midget

Skill Development &
Strong Fundamentals

High-level Talent
Game Reading Ability

Valuable Tournament
Experience

A/B and Tier Teams

The Blackhawks will be hosting open tryouts for their spring tournament teams. Details to be announced soon!!



Hockey Talk

Q&A with the Blackhawks Director of Hockey Operations



Hockey Talk, continued

Q: Most college and pro hockey players spent time in Juniors – what is it and why do they play there?

A: Junior hockey provides a transition from high end youth hockey to college and pro levels. Hockey is vastly different from other mainstream North American team sports. It's infinitely harder to excel at hockey because of the skating aspect. I heard Jamie Baker say that to understand the challenge of playing college and pro hockey, take the best basketball team in the world and swap their basketball shoes for 4 inch stiletto heels. How long would it take Stephen Curry to master hitting a 3-pointer off a screen in a pair of DKNY 4-inch pumps with rhinestone straps? If you answered "longer than it would take in a pair of Nike's", you're correct. Hockey is the ultimate "late-blooming" sport and few players are ready for college or pro hockey straight out of youth hockey.

So hockey has Juniors, which extends the development period and allows players to continue playing high-level hockey through to about 20 years old, if needed. Juniors is also a collection of the best youth hockey players, so players can actually jump to Juniors from youth hockey at age 16 and play at a much higher competition level and against older players.

For many high end players, Juniors is an important bridge, since youth hockey is played in 2 year increments, whereas the College game crosses 4-5 birth-years, and the Pro game can be played across 25 birth-years! Juniors helps former youth players to acclimate to playing against older players.

Q: What are the top Junior leagues?

A: The top level (Tier I) U.S. Juniors is represented by the United States Hockey League (USHL), which operates a 17-team league. Historically, this has been the top place to consider for high-end U.S.-born hockey players who have a desire to play college hockey. For Junior leagues producing NHL talent, the USHL is currently ranked about 3rd in North America behind the Ontario Hockey League (OHL, or "the O" - think Joe Thornton, Logan Couture, Steven Stamkos, Wayne Gretzky, Bobby Orr), and the Western Hockey League (WHL, "the W" - think Patrick Marleau, Ryan Getzlaf, Joe Sakic, Jerome Iginla, Ryan Nugent-Hopkins), and is about even with the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League (QMJHL, or "the QJ" - think Patrick Roy, Mario Lemieux, Luc Robitaille, Sidney Crosby, Nathan McKinnon).

These top 3 Canadian leagues (OHL, WHL, and QMJHL) comprise the Canadian Hockey League (CHL), which is also called "Major Juniors", or "Junior A" in Canada. The hockey is actually regional, in that OHL players must come from

Ontario, QMJHL players must come from East of Ontario, and WHL players must come from West of Ontario. The CHL is the powerhouse of Junior hockey, but there is a considerable downside for players, in that one shift on the ice in the CHL makes you lifetime ineligible to play NCAA hockey. The CHL is also open to U.S. players within similar regions, where the OHL only draws from states in a band directly south of Ontario, the QMJHL only draws from states in New England and the Eastern seaboard, and the WHL only draws from states essentially west of the Mississippi. So, elite level U.S. players have a difficult choice to make between the USHL and CHL. Historically, the CHL has been the better route to the NHL, but between the two the USHL is the only route to NCAA hockey. A tough choice for many kids to make.

The USHL is much younger and has nowhere near the historical resume of the CHL for producing NHL hall-of-famers, but the conduit to college hockey in the U.S. is a huge draw for the USHL and is helping it gain ground quickly on its Canadian counterpart. Younger NHL talent from the USHL includes Joe Pavelski, David Backes, Kyle Okposo, Justin Braun, Alec Martinez, Matt Nieto, TJ Oshie, Max Pacioretty, and Patrick Sharp.

Santa Clara Blackhawks alumni at this level include Alec Martinez ('87), and last season Robby Jackson ('97) was rookie of the year for the Chicago Steel of the USHL. The USHL is also unique in that it includes the U17 and U18 U.S. national teams. Our own Patrick Khoderenko ('98) is on the US U17 team and also plays in the USHL.

*Junior Hockey continued next month:
Tier II and III Juniors, getting to Juniors*



Annual mid-year parent survey coming soon!

