

FLORIDA JR BLADES

RECRUITING & PLAYER DEVELOPMENT





WHO ARE WE

Founded in 2010, the Florida Junior Blades program has been a destination for dedicated hockey players to continue their development as athletes and young men. Located in Estero, Florida the Junior Blades provide the absolute best in physical and mental training, player care, facilities, player exposure and much more. Since 2010 the Junior Blades have captured four league titles and earned three appearances at USA Hockey's Tier III Jr National Tournament. Numerous players have been propelled to play NCAA DI/DIII, ACHA and also to top level junior leagues such as the USHL, NAHL, OJHL, CCHL and NCDC.

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the Jr. Blades mission to help advance and develop serious, committed hockey players utilizing an intensive and progressive hockey-training format that will provide them future opportunities to:

- Achieve athletic and scholastic goals
- Advance to higher levels within the game to Tier I/II Juniors, Collegiate Hockey or the Professional ranks.
- Learn life skills centering on service, respect, discipline, dedication, work ethic, responsibility and commitment.
- Conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on themselves, their team and their community
- Contribute to the betterment of our community on a daily basis, being accountable to the community in areas such as volunteer work with youth groups and charities
- Provide top-notch hockey on game nights





PROGRAM HISTORY

PLAYER ADVANCEMENT

A key component to the success of the Junior Blades is advancing players to the next level. Over the last decade the Junior Blades staff has been dedicated to building relationships with coaches at junior, college and professional levels, to offer advancement that suits each individual players needs. Throughout the season countless hours are spent phoning, emailing and face to face meeting with these coaches and scouts encouraging them to look into players who are ready to advance to the next level. To date the Junior Blades have advanced over 70 players to college hockey, and now have multiple players playing professionally.



PROGRAM CHAMPIONSHIPS





FRONT OFFICE & COACHING STAFF

President



RON KINNEAR - With over 25 years' experience in junior hockey, Ron Kinnear provides valuable leadership to the Jr. Blades organization. Having helped found the N.Y. Bobcats of the AJHL and the Junior Islanders of the USPHL, Kinnear serves as the President of the Jr. Blades and GM of the Jr. Islanders

Ron has helped lead teams to 12 USA Hockey National appearances and won it all in 2008. Ron has produced numerous NHL, professional and collegiate players and continues to dedicate his time to the development of USA hockey.

General Manager



ERIC RICARD - will serve as the General Manager and oversee the day-to-day operation of the Jr. Blades. Originally from Quebec, Canada Ricard brings three (3) decades of hockey experience, spanning five (5) professional leagues including the AHL, IHL, CHL, WPHL, ECHL (Florida Everblades inaugural season), roller hockey, and skills coaching experiences.

His notable professional career included being selected by the Los Angeles Kings in the 1989 Entry Draft and receiving defenseman of the year honors while playing for the Fort Worth Fire (CHL) and the New Mexico Scorpions (WPHL).

After hanging up his skates, Ricard joined the ranks of the business world holding multiple executive positions within different companies including Marriott International. Most recently, he served as the Vice President of International Sales for Edge Systems, California.

Ricard has been actively involved with Hertz Arena since he first played here and cannot wait to push the Jr. Blades to new heights.



Director of Hockey Operations/ Head Coach



Rob Weingartner

Rob will be entering his first season as Head Coach and Director of Hockey Operations for the Florida Jr Blades. A level 4 USA Hockey Certified Coach, Weingartner brings over 30 years of hockey experience to the Jr Blades organization. For the past 8 seasons Rob has managed and coached the Wichita Jr Thunder of the WSHL, highlighted by capturing the Thorne Cup in 2017. Rob's coaching career began as an Assistant Coach for the Wichita Thunder (CHL) from

2005 to 2007 where he was then named Head Coach for the remainder of the 2007-08 season. Rob has also been instrumental in his commitment to develop youth hockey programs in his areas and has instructed numerous hockey camps throughout his career

Mostly noted for his relentless work ethic and his ability to always put the team first, Rob had an 8-year professional career as a player in the CHL, ECHL and IHL. Throughout his playing career, Rob has been fortunate to have been coached by great coaches that molded his coaching style, Doug Shedden (DEL Head Coach, 5X Champion), John Torchetti (former NHL Head Coach), Geoff Ward (NHL Head Coach and Stanley Cup Champion), Randy Carlyle (former NHL Head Coach) and Don Jackson (Former NHL Assistant Coach, DEL Head Coach, 5 X Champion). Rob notes Systems, Structure and Work Ethic are the base of any successful program and believes video analysis is key to a players development.

Born in New York and growing up playing hockey for long Island's PAL organization, Rob's hockey career wouldn't be a traditional route, but one that was based on hard work and commitment. He played two years of Midget Travel before playing two years at Broome Community College. Still having a year left of Junior hockey, Rob played his only season of junior hockey bouncing around a few different teams before finishing up the year in the NAHL for the Kalamazoo Jr Wings. Unable to earn a scholarship to play Division I, Rob tried out for several teams in the minor leagues before getting the call to go to Wichita, Kansas to play for the Thunder. In his four years with the Thunder of the CHL under coach Shedden, Weingartner won two championships and was named team captain. He then followed coach Shedden to Lafayette, LA in the ECHL, although there were no championships, there were two finals appearances and opportunities to play at the higher level. Rob was called up to the IHL for the first time during the 1996-97 season for a short stint then signed a contract the following year with the Ft Wayne Komets of the IHL. Playing in only 14 games out of the 26 for the Komets, Weingartner was sent back to Lafayette where he would post the best numbers of his career and in doing so was honored with an invite to the Edmonton Oilers training camp in 1998. Rob ended up playing two more seasons in the ECHL with Lafayette and Arkansas before his career ended at the end of the 1999-00 season.

Rob and wife Renee are in their 25th year of marriage and have 3 children, daughter Madison who is 24 and twin boys Jake and Carson who are 19.

Phone: 316-841-9274



Associate Head Coach Premier/Elite

Brian Jacque



With 18 years of hockey experience and 8 years of coaching experience Brian Jacque is looking to breathe new life into the Florida Jr. Blades as the new Associate Head Coach. For the past year Brian has coached the South Shore Kings Premier and 18U team of the USPHL.

Brian began coaching the Illiana Blackbirds of the MNJHL in 2014-2015 as the assistant coach. He then went on to work in multiple coaching positions until being named Head Coach of the South Shore Kings in 2019. Brian is a dedicated youth hockey coach whose experience and drive will in improving the Florida Jr. Blades organization.

Goaltending Coach

JOSH ROBINSON



Robinson joins the Everblades coaching staff after concluding a successful career as a goaltender in the ECHL and American Hockey League (AHL). Robinson amassed an 88-46-5-8 record, with seven shutouts, a 2.88 goals-against-average and a 0.915 save percentage in 150 ECHL games split between the Missouri Mavericks and Idaho Steelheads from 2012-2017.

Robinson shined during the 2015-16 season with Missouri, earning ECHL Goaltender of the Year honors after posting an impressive 28-2-1 record with a 1.88 goals-against-average and a .0.931 save percentage. Robinson set an ECHL record 21-game personal win streak during that season from November 4, 2015 through February 14, 2016.

The Frankenmuth, Michigan native has also appeared in 18 career AHL games split between the Texas Stars (2013-14) and Springfield Falcons (2015-16). In addition, Robinson played four seasons at Michigan Tech from 2008-2012.



OUR HOME

Hertz Area

Located in beautiful Southwest Florida, HERTZ ARENA serves as the Junior Blades home. Complete with three ice sheets including a 7,200 seat arena and two full-size practice sheets, pro-style locker rooms, pro-shop, media room, meeting rooms, video analysis rooms, sports bar/restaurant and state-of-the-art hockey performance training institute: Athletic Republic. Centrally located, the arena is just minutes from Florida Gulf Coast University campus, 10 minutes from SW Florida Intl airport (RSW), and is next door to Miromar Outlets, providing premiere shopping and dining.

Hertz Arena is the premiere hockey center of the south and is also home to the Professional Florida Everblades (ECHL), Florida Gulf Coast Eagles (ACHA), Junior Everblades youth program (A/AA), and Florida Alliance AAA programs.





High Performance Training - Hertz Arena

High Performance Training is the official training center of the Florida Everblades, Florida Junior Blades, FGCU Eagles Men's hockey, Florida Alliance AAA teams and Junior Everblades A/AA teams. Throughout the summer months, professional players from around the world return to AR-Germain Arena for their summer training programs. Currently, the AR staff has clients playing in some of the best pro leagues worldwide, including: NHL, AHL, KHL, ECHL, NLA (Swiss), DEL (German) and many more.



High Performance Training provides the team with a distinct on-ice advantage, as the Blades Strength and Conditioning program is second to none. The staff is able to tailor each player's program around injury prevention, speed, strength, and power development. Owned and operated by Junior Blades staff, the facility is at the players' disposal 24-hours a day, 7 days a week.

Included inside the facility is the High Performance Training - Hockey Treadmill, and the shooting room.

With the use of the Hockey Treadmill, the coaching staff is able to critique and adjust each player's stride to obtain optimal performance. It is also an excellent tool to keep players who may have an upper-body injury in hockey shape.

The shooting room gives the players opportunity to work on their shooting and puck handling outside of on-ice practice times. Specific shooting and stickhandling protocols are utilized to progress each player's abilities throughout the season.





ESTERO, FL



Located between Fort Myers and Naples, Estero is a relatively young development with plenty to do. Just 10 minutes away from Southwest International Airport makes for easy travel for both the team and families coming to visit. The area is home to the Florida Everblades Professional hockey team, Division I Florida Gulf Coast University, and plenty of shopping, dining and entertainment. A short 10 minute drive can take you to the areas sandy beaches, many golf courses, and state parks.

BILLETS AND HOUSING

All out of town players will be given the opportunity to be billeted. All billet families are interviewed and have background checks performed before players are placed in the home. The Junior Blades staff monitors players in billet houses to be sure both the players and families are comfortable with one another.

In correspondence with our “family first” philosophy, players are expected to be respectful, obey rules set forth by the family and team, and assist the family with household duties or chores. Families are expected to assist players with adjusting to a new city, and provide a comfortable and stable environment.

The Junior Blades staff spends extra time and care when matching a family and a player. Many factors are considered including: proximity to academic institutions, personal transportation, pet allergies, and more.



EDUCATION

The Blades are committed to encouraging players towards furthering their education through hockey. Regular contact is kept with many schools at the NCAA D-I / D-III and ACHA levels, and players will be provided every opportunity to further themselves towards their goals. College-aged players will have the opportunity to take courses at either Florida Gulf Coast University, Florida Southwestern State College, or online courses. For high school-aged players, Estero HS serves as the primary high school for the Blades.

Academic Counselor, Sheila May, keeps regular contact with all players and institutions regarding their progress, and is able to assist with tutoring. Parents and coaches will be provided with updates on their son’s progress at regular intervals throughout the season.



THE EXPERIENCE

The Junior Blades are proud to offer their players the absolute best in training, facilities, and opportunity for development both on and off the ice. Players are treated to a professional lifestyle and have everything they need to perform at their disposal.



THE LOCKER ROOM

The locker room, or “GATOR PIT” is complete with 27 individual stalls, a 55” flat screen TV, a stereo/sound system, Xbox gaming system, custom team floor mat and travel trunk. The room is decked out in blades colors and signature gator teeth, with the team’s championship banners hanging at the entrance. The locker room is kept by the Blades full time equipment staff, giving the players that professional feeling and is designed to be a comfortable home for the players while being at the rink.

THE UNIFORM

Known for the bold style, the Junior Blades offer a look that is unique amongst all junior hockey programs. The Blades uniform lineup consists of 6 jerseys- Home- White, Home- Grey, Road- Navy, Road- Green, Alternate- Stripe Alternate- Black. Specialty promotional game uniforms are also in the works: Pink In The Rink, Military Appreciation, and more!





THE GEAR



Along with the Blades providing their players with on-ice gear: Custom CCM 4-roll gloves, White CCM helmets, Navy pant shells, Green pant shells, and Gear bag; the Blades provide the players with apparel as well. Players receive a team hat, track suit, sweatshirt, workout apparel, gitch bag and travel bag.

CCM is the official stick partner with the Junior Blades, offering players sticks and other equipment for less than half the retail price.

The full time equipment staff makes sure the team is well taken care of. They are able to provide equipment repairs, skate sharpening, and take care of the player's laundry.

THE TRAVEL

Throughout the season, the team travels the entire East Coast of the US from Massachusetts to Miami, and does so in style. For lengthy trips to the northern part of the country the Blades will take a flight from nearby RSW airport. On overnight trips the Blades use a sleeper bus, equipped with 27 individual bunks for players to have their own space. In-state trips are typically taken on charter busses and don't last more than a few hours.





PLAYER EXPOSURE

UNITED STATES PREMIER HOCKEY LEAGUE

Founded in 2012, the USPHL has proven its superiority amongst Tier III Junior hockey. The USPHL operates in 19 of the 50 United States, is one of the nation's largest amateur ice

hockey leagues. The league is comprised of 110 teams representing 55 organizations. Over the past two years, the USPHL has seen over 350 of its players advance to the collegiate level and numerous others advance to the professional levels. As a result, The USPHL has been recognized as one of the top developmental leagues in the nation for midget and junior hockey.

JUNIOR BLADES SCHEDULE

The Junior Blades schedule is one that allows exposure to hundreds of junior and college scouts and coaches each year. The season will last from late August to mid-March, and will include 44 regular season games, and upwards of 15 playoff games. The team will attend 4 showcases in different parts of the country to maximize the players' visibility, and allow them opportunity to see potential schools they may wish to attend. In addition to the showcases, the team will play its conference games in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina.



MEDIA / PLAYER MARKETING

As soon as players sign with the Blades, the marketing team begins to create the player's media machine. Beginning with a welcome story, articles about team and personal achievements will be done throughout the season. Utilizing a number of media outlets; juniorhockey.com, usajuniorhockey.com, usphl.com, Facebook, twitter, and many local publications, the Blades are able to spread the news of their players across a vast landscape. Having moved many players on to NCAA hockey, the Blades staff has relationships with coaches all across the NCAA spectrum.

Additionally, Blades players will undergo media meetings at the start of training camp that covers a wide range of topics including: Facebook, Twitter, and other social network professionalism, speaking to coaches and employers, and how to create a hockey resume and professional cover letter. These meetings are intended to arm players with the knowledge of appropriate behavior and how to stand apart from their competition.



THE TRAINING

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The Junior Blades development system is comprised of four key components: on-ice skill development, performance training, film study, and overall character development. Our objectives are to prepare our players to move onto the highest levels of the game and ensure they have the competitive edge to achieve their goals for advancement within the game.



ON-ICE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The team typically practices Tuesday-Friday and will run from 60 to 90 minutes. Mondays will be used as a recovery day coming off of games during the weekend. Practices will cover all areas necessary to building a hockey player: Skating & stick handling, flow & timing, battle & competition, small ice games, system situations, special teams, and pre-scout game day preparation. Practices are designed to be high-tempo and challenging.

Aside from full team practices, players will have ample opportunities to obtain additional ice time in the form of weekly power skating classes, skills clinics, and assisting youth team practices.





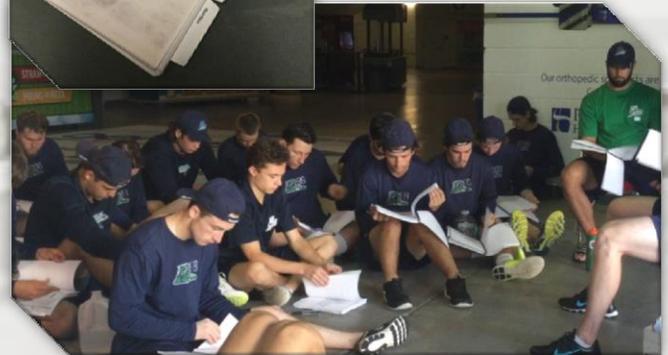
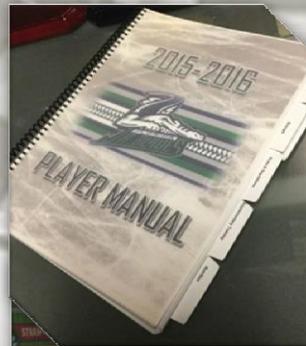
PERFORMANCE TRAINING

Hockey Performance Training has become an essential part of a successful hockey franchise. The Jr Blades provide their players the finest hockey performance-training center in junior hockey. What once was only available to professional players is now the official training center of the Everblades and Junior Blades. High Performance Training is designed to increase power, speed, agility, flexibility and core stability while reducing the incidence of injury. In addition Athletic Republic is able to track the player's progress through testing and provide photographic and video footage to achieve optimal positions.

Currently High Performance Training boasts well over 500 professional hockey players training within the facilities under their methods and technologies.

Each player is given a player manual that will outline his strength and conditioning program for the season. The training regimen will apply speed, quickness, power, strength, and flexibility components. At all times, the players will be monitored by the Blades coaching staff to ensure proper mechanics. Additional Performance Training activities include:

- Goaltender reaction protocols w/ hand-eye coordination
- Shooting protocols
- Stickhandling Protocols
- Hockey Treadmill Protocols
- Plyometric Training



FILM ANALYSIS

Junior Blades players undergo weekly video analysis sessions to sharpen their hockey intellect. Video will be broken down in a number of ways, such as: Individual, Position specific, Special Teams, Pre-scouting opponent and more. Video provides players instant feedback on positioning, and awareness giving our players every advantage. Coaches will also use video off ice to correct or improve mechanics related to shooting, skating, and anatomical positioning or posture.



CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT



The Junior Blades are committed to developing upstanding young men both on and off the ice. Having members from multiple different backgrounds each season, it is vital for the team to bond together as one unit and become the "FJB Family." Players will partake in multiple communication and team building exercises throughout the season to improve team chemistry and togetherness. Players are asked to put "team above all" and individual accolades will follow.

Players will also partake in many Community Outreach programs throughout the season. Past events include:

Reading at elementary schools for Dr Seuss day, bingo at the retirement community, Pink in the Rink game benefiting Southwest Florida Cancer Research, game day food drives for Harry Chapin food bank, clothing donations, and many more. In addition, players are assigned to a youth team and expected to assist with their teams weekly practices, and to be a mentor for the young players. Instilling philanthropy in our players will provide memories and a sense of good character years beyond their hockey careers.



TRAINING CAMP

To kick off the season, the Junior Blades will undergo a 10 day training camp. Several activities will be used to help improve team conditioning and team unity. Upwards of two on-ice sessions, two off-ice sessions and team meetings will take place daily to ensure they are ready when the puck drops in game 1.

Training camp will open with on and off-ice testing. This will provide a baseline for in-season testing showing the progress of each player. Testing will measure a player's aerobic and anaerobic conditioning, upper and lower body strength and power, body mechanics and potential for injury. This will also give the Strength and Conditioning staff a guide to base each player's strength program.





Thank you for your interest in the Florida Junior Blades. Be sure to follow us on social Medias like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. If you think that you've got what it takes to be part of the Florida Junior Blades Family, please contact Director of Hockey Operations/ Head Coach Rob Weingartner at Reingartnerjrblades@gmail.com

