

**Helena Area Youth Hockey Association
Board Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2019
5:30 pm at Helena Ice Arena**

HAYHA Board Members:

Kurt Moser – President and Squirt Rep
Ryan Lilletvedt – Vice President and PeeWee Rep
Judy Merickel –Secretary and 8U Rep
Lance Wilson – Registrar
Scott Petersen – Member at Large and SafeSport Coordinator
Mekell Lybbert – MAHA Rep
Justin Steckelberg – 8U Rep
Robert Whited – Bantam Rep

Guests:

Bob Richards – Coach-in-Chief
Shawn Schroeder – Bantam Head Coach
Adam Senechal – Squirt Head Coach
Ben Butler – Squirt, Mite and Termite Parent
Darlene Moyer – Squirt Parent
Amber Zietz – Squirt Parent
Stan Senechal – Rink Manager
Jon Flynn – House League Coordinator

Absent Board Members:

Sarah Garcia – Treasurer and High School Rep

Meeting Call to Order 5:32 p.m.

Minutes

Lance motioned and Mekell seconded to approve the December board meeting minutes.
Motion passes.

Public Comment

None.

Rink Update – Stan Senechal, Rink Manager

Stan presented a proposal to the board asking HAYHA to pay half the \$7,500 cost of building and installing a new scoreboard at the rink. He said the current scoreboard is as old as the building and the sockets are starting to fall out from the back. It's breaking down and the bulbs are super expensive to replace. The new one would have LEDs and would include a second

smaller scoreboard to go near the crow's nest that would list the timeclock, score and period. The main large scoreboard would hang in the same location as the old one and it would have a timeclock, score, period and penalties. The \$7,500 estimate includes two controllers as well, whereas the old scoreboard only had one controller. It will be custom built and take 6 weeks to arrive. Robert Whited was concerned about HAYHA donating money to a fixture of the rink and wasn't sure that was smart decision for a non-profit. Justin Steckelberg asked about getting a sponsor to pay for the scoreboard. Stan said he didn't think a sponsor would pay for the scoreboard. Judy Merickel asked if the Bighorns or Figure Skating Club were asked to pitch in for the cost. Stan said neither the Bighorns or Figure Skating have money to contribute. Mekell asked if the second scoreboard could be operated with a separate controller so the U8 program could keep track of two half-ice mite games at the same time during weekly scrimmages and the large 8U tournament. Stan said not in the current proposal, but he would ask. The board decided to discuss the request later in the meeting.

Stan said Adult Hockey has grown by 20% with 6 intermediate teams, 4 advanced teams and 2 novice teams. The over 50 group is full. Youth Hockey has grown with its House League. All this growth has helped the rink. The problem now is needing more hours or a second sheet of ice to accommodate the growth. The owner of the rink, Oren, is pleased he hasn't had to send any money. The rink is cleaner than it's been in the past and the board members agreed. The new floor cleaning machine works well. Brandon Vonada has been a great addition to the rink staff as well as Damon Hanson.

Coach-in-Chief – Bob Richards

Bob has watched practices at each age division, and he reports that things look good; coaches are following ADM. He is going to do a power skating clinic with the PeeWee division. Judy asked if the goalie training that was planned at the last meeting is happening. Bob has not booked goalie training yet but is working on that. Scott Petersen asked if Bob would sit in on High School video sessions and offer his feedback. Bob said he would if asked.

Revised Tryout Policy – Bob, Adam, Shawn, Judy

Judy read through the revised Tryout Policy proposed by the committee who included Adam Senechal, Bob Richards, Shawn Schroeder and Judy Merickel. Board members and guests offered feedback. There were many areas of discussion. Ben Butler felt a good tryout policy should be a mix of objective and subjective decision making by evaluators and head coaches. He said no matter how hard we try there is no perfect evaluation process. For example, Edina, MN, one of the largest programs in the State of Hockey, cut three players in their tryout process that went on to play in the NHL. Mekell Lybbert felt strongly that the Coach-in-Chief should not be an evaluator, nor should anyone who has coached these kids at high performance skating or elsewhere. The evaluators are supposed to be as anonymous and unbiased as possible. She also feels that three coaches instead of two should sit in on the final decision-making meeting to make sure there is a coach present who knows each of the two birth years of players who

are trying out. For example, there should be coaches in the room who know both the 2010s and 2009s next year at squirt tryouts. She reported this year Bill Shropshire was the only coach in the decision-making room. Whereas he coached some of the 2009s two seasons ago in U8 program, it had been too long ago to provide input on their work ethic, aggressiveness, attitude, etc. Adam Senechal said the committee had discussed this concern but felt since the revised policy asks for 2 coaches (Head A Coach and Head B Coach Representatives) to be in the room, these two coaches will most likely have had experience with more of the players. If not, the coaches should not hesitate to call and ask 8U coaches for input. This way they would get the input but reduce the number of people in the decision making so it doesn't last all night. Mekell also felt evaluators should not sit together. Robert Whited felt the board didn't need a new tryout policy, the old one was perfectly fine, the new one stripped away the detail and left things too ambiguous and subjective, that coaches could not whatever they wanted. Judy felt after five years it was time to sharpen and revise the policy especially after feedback from head coaches and HAYHA members after this year's tryouts. Adam felt it wasn't too subjective because with three people in the room and a fourth (evaluation coordinator), coaches wouldn't be able to just pick whoever they wanted, they would have to justify pulling up someone who received a poor evaluation. The Coach-in-Chief, Head Coach Reps and the Evaluation Coordinator would keep each other in check. Ryan suggested getting more detailed about the tryout dates by listing which weekend in October it will be held and which month the board would pick the Evaluation Coordinator. The board seemed to like the addition of Head Coach Representatives being available to talk to players after teams are posted. The revised policy has the Division Rep post the teams at the rink at a specified time and then the two Head Coach Representatives will be available for two hours to provide feedback to players who tried out. The board also agreed that having tryouts earlier in October before the practice season starts was a good idea. Other topics of debate included:

- Should tryouts be on a weeknight or weekend? Which would best accommodate kids playing football?
- Should we offer practice skates before tryouts or should we expect that kids wanting to make A or B teams should be putting in the effort to do 3 on 3, summer camps, open skating?
- Should we offer three sessions for tryouts, with the first two open to everyone and the third session is invitation only, which trims the group size down to only A and B players for the third session? Bob Richards explained that some players look really good when they are on the ice with lower level players, but when you put them on the ice with all of the A level players, then you realize they fall in the mix. Also some players up their game when they are on the ice with higher level players. This is the advantage of making the tryout group smaller after two sessions, allowing the evaluators to do a better job of evaluating less kids the third session.
- Should the evaluation sheets be changed each year?
- Should the evaluation sheet be approved by the board?

- Should the evaluation sheet should have a wider numbering system (instead of 1 – 3 grading, it is 1 – 5 or 1 – 10 grading)?
- Should evaluators sit together or not together? Some felt they should be apart to form their own unbiased opinions. Some felt they should be allowed to sit together to discuss players. All agreed they should sit away from the parents.
- Should the head coaches have the final say or should we rely solely on evaluation sheets? The past tryout policy was heavy on the evaluation sheets and only allowed head coaches to provide input on “bubble players”. The revised policy gives head coaches the final decision with evaluation sheets, past experience with players, attitude, work ethic, commitment to team and commitment to travel, and goalie interest all playing a part in the decision.
- Should we prohibit the Coach-in-Chief and anyone else who has previously coached these kids from being evaluators?

Kurt asked board members to email their suggested changes to Judy to compile for the upcoming board meeting in February.

Refs

The Referee-in-Chief wasn't in attendance. Several divisions reported frustration with the lack of calls made by refs at games. Judy and Justin described an incident at the 8U Bozeman Tournament where a ref wasn't calling anything and coaches were concerned for player safety. After the game, the ref said to the coaches “these kids are covered in plastic, they'll be fine” and “kids can't control themselves at the mite level”. Judy, Justin and Ben Tiller (Head Mite Coach) were all concerned by this ref's philosophy (because mites can control themselves and they can also get concussions and otherwise injured when checking and pushing aren't being called by the refs) and expressed these concerns with the tournament director. The tournament director and Bozeman hockey director had witnessed this ref in action and had similar concerns. The directors attempted to discuss with the ref, which didn't go over well, so they filed a report with the local reffing association. MAHA asked associations to try and handle reffing situations locally and this is an example where this was done successfully. Player safety in other divisions is a concern. Robert and Scott expressed frustration with refs in recent Bantam and High School games. Kurt has invited Rob LaChappelle, Ref-in-Chief, to attend meetings to discuss. Kurt also reminded everyone that the shortage of refs doesn't help the situation and HAYHA should figure out how to help in recruiting refs next season.

Treasurer

Sarah Garcia was not in attendance. Lance and Kurt reported that all dues were paid up, except one family still has outstanding dues, but Sarah is working on that. Any other outstanding dues from previous years have been sent to collections.

Registrar – Lance

The tournament registrations have been working well. Judy reported 15 8U kids who did not return for second session, but 9 new 8Us started second session. In House League, Lance reported 3 new kids started second session. Lance is going to make the Athlete/Parent Concussion Form an electronically signed document in registration.

Division Updates

8U: Judy reported that the Helena 8U Jamboree is full with 16 Mite teams and 10 Termite teams. There will be around 275 kids from around the state. All divisions are asked to put together a raffle basket for the 8U Tournament. The 8U Tournament typically raises anywhere from \$6,000 - \$9,000 for HAYHA. Helena Mites took home 1st and 2nd place trophies in the Bozeman tournament of 16 teams from ID, MT and WY. They played one another in the championship game. Helena Mites also took home the 1st place trophy in the Great Falls tournament last weekend. The second team nearly made it to the championship but lost to Great Falls in a shootout. The energy and cheering for their teammates was amazing and many families stayed to watch their buddies in the championship. It was a great weekend.

Squirts: Kurt reported that the A team was very competitive this last weekend and the B team continues to have an excellent season at 10-2-2. The A team heads to Jackson Hole next and the B team to the Salmon, Idaho tournament.

PeeWees: Ryan reported they are done with regular season games. The A team is pretty evenly matched with the state's other A teams and at the Billings tournament they went 2-1-1. The B team is having a good season too and they are headed to Glasgow next weekend.

Bantams: Robert reported that the Bantam team has really meshed well this year. Half of the team will be in Salt Lake with Team Montana games this weekend.

House League: Kurt reported House League is going extremely well. Board members are hearing a lot of positive feedback. Jon Flynn is doing a great job leading this brand-new program.

Kurt mentioned the board needing to make a decision soon about adding two board members – one for House and another so the board remains at an odd number for voting purposes. Judy and Kurt suggested a Growth & Development Rep who could look at growing both Girls Hockey and 16U Hockey in Helena. Justin and Robert liked the idea of having a Girls Hockey Rep. It will take a vote by membership to add additional board members. Judy asked about online voting and Robert said Lacrosse did that by purchasing an online voting tool. The board will discuss again in February.

SafeSport – Scott Petersen

There haven't been any SafeSport complaints issued this season.

MAHA Update – Mekell Lybbert

Mekell said USA Hockey is continuing to talk about doing away with checking at the Bantam level. She said the entire country is experiencing a shortage of refs. She said the whole state is experiencing an increase in parents being out of line in the stands with reports of parents approaching players and refs after games. MAHA has asked all associations to remind parents of appropriate behavior.

Scoreboard

The board discussed whether it made sense for HAYHA, with its non-profit status, to help the rink purchase their scoreboard. Some board members expressed that while HAYHA may be the largest user/customer of the rink, HAYHA is a non-profit customer of the rink (HAYHA rents ice from the rink) and shouldn't be contributing thousands of dollars to a fixture of the rink. They felt that any upgrades to the building should be done by the rink, not by an entity that rents ice time from the rink (HAYHA). HAYHA expects the use of a working scoreboard. Some board members also suggested that the rink should try to find a business to sponsor the new scoreboard. It is an excellent amount of exposure to have their name/logo on the scoreboard or next to the scoreboard for the next 20 plus years or however long the scoreboard lasts. Board members also questioned why the Bighorns aren't being asked to pitch in, since they are the second largest user of the rink and get first dibs on practice times. The board decided to table the discussion until the next meeting.

Other Business

Judy reported expected numbers for 10U (Squirt A, B and House) for next season. There are 22 2010s in Mites, 3 2010s in Termites, 22 2009s in House, 15 2009s in Squirt A/B teams. If all keep playing, there will be 25 2010s and 37 2009s in the Squirt division next year, which is 62 kids. Our 10U program is not getting smaller; it's getting bigger.

Raffle tickets are due Feb. 19th to Mekell. Reps/Managers should collect from their families before this day so all can be turned in on time.

Next Meeting: Monday, February 11th, 5:30 p.m. at Helena Ice Arena
Monday, March 11th, 5:30 p.m. at Helena Ice Arena

Meeting Adjourned 8:00 p.m.

Signed by President: _____ Date: _____

Signed by Secretary: _____ Date: _____