

Here We Go (Again)

It is the middle of summer. Why do the months of June and July go so fast? By the time this newsletter is circulated it will almost be August. August means the start of clinics and tryouts for our travel and girls teams. Our House League kicks off in September.

People ask me “why are we playing hockey in August?” The answer to that is “It wasn’t always that way.”

When I started here in the early 80’s the travel clinics started in mid-September, then tryouts right around October 1st. Then slowly, and over time, the season started earlier and earlier. Many areas of the country actually have gone to spring tryouts for the following season. What if a player really gets better? What if a player grows and becomes much stronger physically? What if the porch light goes on in a player and he/she puts it all together?

Much of this has to do with ice rinks. Most ice rinks are privately owned both here in Chicago and nation-wide. The more ice they sell, the more income they generate. As a result, ice contracts that at one time were seven months of the year are now 10. The other part is that all the clubs in Chicago are competitive and want to do well; the teams that skate the most will likely improve the most. Stand still and you will be passed by.

So while we don’t have programs over the summer months, this is the time we achieve many administrative tasks and make improvements to the program. Here are some of the highlights:

- We “re-branded” the Winfield Hockey Club to the Junior Warriors. This is consistent with what many other clubs in our area have already done.
- We launched a new website on a platform called SportsEngine, the largest provider of websites for athletic programs in the U.S. We now have one website (www.winnetkahockey.com) that serves both the Winnetka and Jr. Warriors programs.
- Our Northshore Warhawks program continues to grow with the addition of an Under-16 team.
- Bobby Acri, a “rising star” in our coaching ranks, was hired as Director of Player Development and will coach two teams while also running clinics for both House and Travel players.
- We were sad, but happy, for our wonderful Registrar Kathy Gooch Culleton who announced last month that her, Bruce, and her children would be moving to Boston. She was a true professional in the way she approached

her position. We are excited to announce that Kerry Farley will assume the Registrar position effective immediately. Kerry is as vested in our program as they come and will do a great job in this position.

- After reading your evaluations, we wanted to “add value” to our programming. We have retained The Scorer’s Edge Development Group from Milwaukee to conduct an optional skills clinic over the Labor Day weekend to focus on the core skills our players need to improve.

This marks the 46th year of the INDOOR version of the WHC, or 79th year if counting the outdoor versions that once existed at Indian Hill Park. We are excited to kick off a great year for our club. With that, we need your help. **What can you do?**

- **Volunteer:** Help Kerry at one of the many check-in sessions over the coming weeks.
- **Manage:** Be a team manager. It’s a great way to be directly involved with your child’s team and every House and Travel team needs a parent to keep things organized.
- **Ref:** As we previously wrote in this newsletter, the shortage of referees in Illinois is at a critical stage. If you can skate, are willing to attend a clinic and learn the rules, you can make some money while being involved in the game; a WIN-WIN for everyone!
- **Hook a kid on Hockey!:** The more we can “spread the word” the better we are as a club. Encourage neighbors, friends, people you meet at school or the Park, about the WHC. There are lots of new families moving in to town, and not everyone comes from a “Hockey family”. Have them attend many of the free events we have coming up.

Together, we can make the program even better.

Let’s Play Hockey!