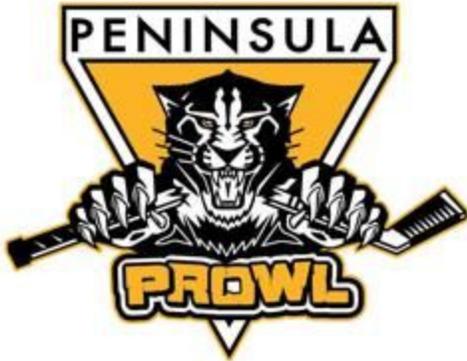


# Local Youth Hockey Club Continues to Grow

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Peninsula Prowl Youth Hockey Association has been spreading the love of hockey for more than three decades. (Courtesy of the Peninsula Prowl)

YORKTOWN — Hampton Roads is a sports region in its own right. The Seven Cities have produced hundreds of professional athletes for just about every major sport. Baseball, basketball, football, track and field, the list goes on...until you get to ice hockey.

There are only a handful of people born and raised in Virginia, let alone Hampton Roads, who have played professional hockey. However, just because there has not been a Hampton Roads-native to break into the National Hockey League (NHL) yet does not mean that there is not a strong hockey presence in the area.

While the game might be harder to come by in a warmer climate such as Southeastern Virginia, hockey has had a place in Hampton Roads on and off since the

1970s when the Hampton Gulls of the Southern Hockey League played four seasons at the Hampton Coliseum. Then in 1989, the Admirals came to Norfolk with varying success through the years, both in wins and ticket sales.

This region has a vibrant youth hockey scene for more than three decades. The Peninsula Prowl Youth Hockey Association (PYHA) has been fostering generations of hockey players and fans through its leagues, clinics and skating lessons.

Mark Ross is the PYHA president and the father of a Prowl player. In an interview with WYDaily, he said that the proliferation of professional hockey fandom has benefited the PYHA considerably over the years.

“There are a lot of families with in the Prowl who are say Pittsburgh Penguins fans or Washington Capitals fans,” Ross said. “Even though the love for the game starts at the pro-level it filters down to a love for the game right here at this level.”

The PYHA is headquartered at the Hampton Roads Iceplex, which is tucked away off Victory Boulevard in Yorktown. The association has young athletes from all over the Peninsula as well as Hampton Roads’ Southside coming to play.

The Prowl has teams for every age and skill level. For ages 6-18, there are teams that will help players gain skills for every aspect of the game. With in-house teams, which play locally, and for the more skilled players, there are joint select teams that travel to play teams in other

localities.

For families who are looking to get their kids started in the sport, Ross says that the PYHA participates in the [Try Hockey For Free](#) program. For one day in February and November respectively, youth hockey leagues across the country invite the general public to come out to the ice rink and see what the game is all about.

For those who do not want to wait until November to start their hockey journey, Ross says that the YPHA strongly encourages newcomers to take skating lessons.

“An important aspect to learning and enjoying the game of hockey, is learning how to skate,” he said. “Once kids get a handle on skating and skating well, the game of hockey comes to them. They learn the game quickly and it’s such a unique experience to glide and move on the edge of a piece of steel.”

Click [here](#) to find see the different skating lessons offered at the Iceplex.

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