



May 2021

Newsletter



WE ARE MEDALISTS!

Congratulations to our 14U - Bronze Medal.

16U - Silver Medal

19U - Bronze Medal

We are proud to represent Pittsburgh by competing with the top national teams and bringing home three medals.

Congratulation to the Steel City Selects Girls/Women's 14U, 16U and 19U teams



The Steel City Selects 16U team brought home a silver medal from the Chipotle-USA Hockey National Championships in Denver. After three close losses in the round robin portion of the tournament, the team still progressed to the quarterfinals. A 2-1 overtime win against the #3 ranked Casco Bay Mariners in the quarterfinals allowed the team to progress to the semifinals.

Farmington Hills Little Caesars was a familiar opponent to face in the semis, and Steel City came away with a 2-1 win in regulation. The championship game took place the next morning.

The opponent, Minnesota Premier Prep Orange 16U, had not been previously ranked. On a rainy Monday morning in Denver, the game atmosphere was exciting and tense. Steel City took the now #5 ranked Minnesota team into overtime, but ultimately lost 3-2. This team, who had the most wins in the regular season, should be proud of the silver medals that hang around their necks.

The Steel City Selects 14U earned the bronze medal at USA Hockey Nationals in Denver, CO. They beat 8th ranked Naperville Sabres 4-3 in a shootout, 12th ranked Florida Alliance 3-1, and 9th ranked Rome Grizzlies 4-2. The teams' losses both came in overtime losing to 2nd ranked East Coast Wizards 2-1 in a shootout and 3rd ranked Mid Fairfield CT Stars 1-0 in the Semi-Final Game. The team finished the season with a record of 41-15-1 and ranked 6th in the country.



The first time in Mid Am History we medaled in all age groups at Tier II Nationals in Denver! To make it even more special, all three times were from the same organization. Congrats to Steel City Selects. The 14U and 19U teams brought home Bronze medals The 16U team went to the finals and brought home the Silver! The 16 and 19 team both lost in overtime to be eliminated but it was so exciting to see all the teams going the distance.

In the Tier I level I was in West Chester watching our girls there. Gilmour was representing our 16U division for the first time in many years. They had a strong showing and played with energy but succumbed to Minnesota. The Pens

Elite 14U & 16U both played strong as well and the 19U was again represented by Culver coached by Cory Whittaker.

New Tier I program starting in Columbus. The Blue Jackets are in the early stages of having a Girls 14U program. Stay tuned for more information.

New this summer; in the past, Kent St. had hosted our multi-district camp for girls. WE ARE MOVING! The camp is now being hosted at Bowling Green. If you have not seen their facility, you need to check it out. It is top notch!

On Wednesday, May 19th Ladd hosted an informational Zoom Call for girls across the district. Over 90 parents/players attended the call. He had Heather Mannix USA ADM manager, Logan Bittle, Pens Elite coach and previously RMU D1 Women's coach as well as Shannon Webster, Penguins Community hockey director. The call discussed options for girls across the district, how coaches could benefit from ADM as well as college scouting tips. There was a lengthy Q & A session lasting about 30 minutes. It was recorded and is now available on the website to review.

Glad we are back on the ice and look forward to catching you at the rinks.

It is a Great Day for Hockey!
Ladd Wagner
USA Hockey Mid-Am District
Girls'/Women's Section Representative
I am here for you.

Member Registration

2021-2022 Season is now open!

Why not register today?

Join today as a player, coach, referee, or volunteer



ANNUAL MEETING



The Mid-Am Annual Meeting will be held June 26,2021 via **ZOOM** only. The following positions are up for re-election:

President	2-Year term	Paul Day	Up for re-election
Secretary	2-Year term	Biff Cummings	Up for re-election
USA Hockey Director	2-Year term	Tom Cline	Up for re-election
Indiana State Vice President	3-Year term	Roy Davis	Up for re-election
Kentucky State Vice President	3-Year term	Elisa Millet	Up for re-election
Ohio State Vice President	3-Year term	Mike Mankowski	Up for re-election
Western PA Vice President	3- Year term	Rich Hixon	Up for re-election
High School Representative	3-Yeear term	Kathy Santora	Up for re-election

Our Mid-Am administrator will be e-mailing each association a registration for this zoom meeting. Included in this registration will be a nomination form for you to complete for the above positions that are up for election.

It is highly recommended that you have at least one person from your association attend this meeting so you can hear the information from the USA Hockey annual meeting and any changes that are occurring. Keep in mind that this was a rule book year change. Also, there may be possible structure changes happening within the Mid-Am Board of Directors and we want you to have a voice in this change.

We look forward to seeing you on this call!



Culver advance at Quarter Final Action at Nationals

Two goals apiece from **Dean Bauchiero** and **Nicholas Rexine** helped Rochester defeat Culver Academy, 8-1, to advance to the semifinals of the Chipotle-USA Hockey National Championships.

Rochester led, 3-0, after the first period with two goals from Bauchiero. The scoring began 7:05 into the first period when Bauchiero found the back of the net off a one-timer just below the faceoff dot after **Sam Deckhut** dished him the puck from below the goal line.

Culver's **Timofey Spitsеров** attempted to even the score when he landed a shot on net and cleaned up his own rebound, but both attempts were deflected away by Rochester goaltender **Austin McNicholas**.

Ryan Walsh extended Rochester's lead to 2-0, when he chipped in a pass from Deckhut right in front of the net with 6:54 to play in the first.

Bauchiero scored his second of the game thanks to a 3-on-2 rush with 4:09 to go in the first to make it 3-0, in favor of Rochester.

Just as the first period was coming to a close, Culver's **Slade Streeter** passed the puck off to **Patrick Brandenburg**, who rifled a shot that deflected off the top of McNicholas' stick.

Rochester claimed a four-goal lead to kick off the second period with a goal from **Liam Lesakowski**, who added two assists on the night to finish with three total points.

Walsh saw another good opportunity on the power play with a quick-release wrist shot, but Culver goaltender **Cole Evans**, who entered the game at the start of the second period, deflected it into the corner. Just past the halfway mark in the second, Rochester added three goals in six minutes to take a commanding 7-0 lead. **Jared Mangan**, Rexine and Deckhut took credit for the goals.

Culver got on the board with less than 10 minutes to play in the third after Spitsеров capitalized on the power play. Rexine added an insurance goal for Rochester, his second of the game, to solidify the score at 8-1.



Pittsburgh Penguins Elite advance at Quarter Final at Action Nationals

MARYLAND HEIGHTS, Mo. - Pittsburgh scored four unanswered goals, including two from **Grant Dietz**, to defeat the Oakland Jr. Grizzlies 4-1 to advance to the semifinals of the Chipotle-USA Hockey Youth Tier I 16U National Championship.

“It was high energy from both teams there’s no question about that,” said **Kevin Muller**, head coach for the 16U Pittsburgh Penguins Elite. “Oakland had a really nice start and they pushed really hard, but our guys stuck to it. They stuck to their game plan. We were able to pop a couple goals in the second period, which really flipped the momentum of the game. As we have been doing all year, the boys really stuck together and fought for each other.”

Ryan Cartwright and **Camden Davis** had back-to-back scoring chances for the Penguins as time expired on a Pittsburgh power play with over 10 minutes to play in the first, but the game remained scoreless.

The Grizzlies opened the scoring with 9:43 on the clock in the first when **Jack O’Hanisain** capitalized on a one-timer right in front of the net off a backhanded pass from **John Emmons** from just below the faceoff circle. Pittsburgh looked to answer immediately with a shot from Cartwright at the point, but it was scooped up by Oakland goaltender **Rocco Stolz**, who finished with 32 stops for the Grizzlies.

With 7:45 to go in the first, Stolz stopped Pittsburgh’s **Eddie Paulissian** on a breakaway attempt to preserve the Grizzlies’ 1-0 lead. Pittsburgh looked to even the score again with 3:19 to go with a shot from Dietz and a follow up from **Jaxon Wilson**, who went after the rebound, but Stolz came up with saves on both.

Oakland’s **Travis Bryson** started off the second period with a chance for the Grizzlies, but it was gloved down from Pittsburgh goaltender **Jeffrey Kreidler**. The Grizzlies followed that up with back-to-back scoring opportunities, but the score remained 1-0.

Pittsburgh scored two goals within 40 seconds of each other to take a 2-1 lead with less than a minute to play in the second period. **Caden Pendo** tied the game up with 1:21 left on the clock in the second. Pendo tapped in the rebound on the back doorstep off an initial shot from Pittsburgh’s **Matthew DiMarsico**.

Less than a minute later, **Cole Bianchin** found the back of the net off of his own rebound to give the Penguins a 2-1 lead going into the third.

In a one-goal game and a trip to the semifinals on the line, the first 10 minutes of the third period went scoreless on both sides, but there was no shortage of opportunities for either team.

Similarly, to the end of the second period, the Penguins registered back-to-back goals within two minutes, both from Dietz, to close out regulation.

“This is what we’ve worked so hard for all year long,” Muller said. “We’re finally here. So now, every day counts, every shift counts and every minute counts. For us to be here, it is kind of nice we get to mentally reset and watch our 18U team tonight and support them and that is important as a program that we come support each other. They were here supporting us today so that was fun. It’s then really about us sitting down, doing our pre-scouts for tomorrow and we’ll get back to work and get the minds right.”

Officials share their national tournament experience.

USA Hockey's national tournaments are the pinnacle of competition for thousands of youth and adult hockey players nationwide. Coaches, players, family, and friends gather annually each spring at locations scattered across the country as USA Hockey pits the best against the best to crown a champion at multiple age levels for girls, boys, women, and men alike.

But none of them step on the ice without the game's unsung heroes, the women and men in stripes who are charged with maintaining the safety, fairness, and integrity of each game. The referees and linesmen are certainly not in it for the accolades; they do it because they love the sport and want to ensure it is played the right way.

For officials, the national tournaments are every bit the zenith of competition at the youth level as they are for the players and coaches. Only the best of the best officials is selected and the honor of representing their district, state and local associations is similar in weight because of what it takes to get there.

"If you want to get to a national tournament, you've got to put in the time and you've got to put in the effort," says Kevin Cassidy, a New Prague, Minn. native. He worked his first USA Hockey national tournament in 2010 at the age of 22 when he was chosen to officiate the Junior A tier 3, Junior B, and Junior C National Tournament held in Marlboro, Massachusetts where he worked the Junior C national title game.

"That starts with USA Hockey's educational material, which is very good, even at Level 3, which would be the most basic level that they would allow a linesman to work a national tournament," Cassidy said. "When you step up to Level 4, you're with the best and you're willing to put in the time required."

Cassidy's officiating journey began at the age of 14, following in the skate strides of his father. What began as a means to stay connected to the game and make a little money blossomed into a career which led Cassidy, 33, from youth hockey to high school to juniors to the NCAA and, ultimately, the pro ranks.

Included in the Level 4 certification requirements are a skating test and a challenging closed-book exam. "I can't sit here and say that I passed every single Level 4 exam I took," Cassidy said. "The closed books are hard, so you've got to know the rulebook."

Once that benchmark is reached, officials can begin to apply for national tournaments and work with their district supervisors to assist them in achieving their goal by notifying them of their interest.

After certification and advocacy comes evaluation and that, Cassidy says, comes from working games and executing on the ice over the course of the season resulting in what hopefully culminates with: recommendation.

The local supervisor evaluates an official's performance and, if merited, passes on his/her recommendation to the state referee-in-chief whose endorsement is required for the application to move on to the district and national level.

Rocky Mountain District referee-in-chief, Ken Reinhard, says he is on the lookout for officials who are committed to the program and work hard.

"I only ask five things from my officials in the district," Reinhard said. "That they be professionals, that they know the rulebook and apply it to the best of their knowledge each and every time out, that they hustle, that they treat disrespect with respect and that they have fun. If they are doing those five things, chances are they are going to be a pretty decent official. Sarah Buckner says the two biggest challenges a national tournament pose.

for her are skating with and learning the on-ice nuances of officials she has never worked with before and the positioning of working a system she is not accustomed to. The Duluth Minn. native says she rarely gets to skate in the three-official system with one referee and two linesmen outside of national tournaments, which she says requires an adjustment.

“Especially the first game or two, just getting reacquainted with that system, especially as the referee, with quite a bit more skating up and down the ice,” Buckner said. “But just kind of remembering your basic conditioning and the skating lanes we should stay in, that’s always a challenge the first couple days.”

Buckner’s rise from entry-level officiating to working games at the national and international level has been meteoric.

Buckner competed at the Division-III level from 2012-2016 for Augsburg University in Minneapolis. After her senior season, Buckner turned her attention toward officiating as means to remain involved with the game.

She got her feet wet as an official working a limited number of games in the 2016-17 season and by the spring of 2018 was in Boston working USA Hockey’s Senior Women’s National Tournament. Buckner met several nationally and internationally experienced officials who made a lasting impression.

“I definitely took on the ‘I’m going to be a sponge and learn as much as I can,’ kind of mindset,” Buckner said.

After working the 2019 Girls Tier I National Tournament in Anaheim, Buckner attended USA Hockey’s Elite Officiating Experience that summer where she earned her international license, which she later put to use working a tournament in Mexico City. Most recently, Buckner returned from Lake Placid where she worked the National Women’s Hockey League’s bubble season.

“Here in Minnesota, we have quite a few higher-level officials who have skated a lot of international stuff and are now on the supervising side of things for different leagues,” Buckner said. “They definitely helped point me in the right direction and got me introduced to the right people and, you know, got me on the right path to do some pretty cool stuff, fairly quickly.”

Cassidy, a St. Cloud State graduate who is currently the Ice Arena Manager at his hometown New Prague Area Community Center, says the challenge of working at the national level comes down to how he measures up against his peers.

“When you get there, you're with some of the best officials that USA hockey has to offer,” Cassidy said. “And that's USA Hockey’s goal, to provide the best officials that they can possibly get so the national tournament goes off well, and that starts with really good teams and it starts with really good officials.”

As the teams battle it out in search of a national championship for all to see, a far more subtle competition unfolds right in front of their eyes but without knowledge and fanfare.

“We work together on the ice and, you know, everybody wants the same outcome as a crew,” Cassidy said. “But at the end of the day, everybody's going there wanting to work the national championship game. It’s no secret.”

While it may be no secret to those charged with keeping the games safe and fair, most of the competitors and fans are likely oblivious to the tournament within the tournament taking place amongst the women and men in

stripes. Officials are constantly being evaluated throughout the tournament with the top performers chosen to advance deep into the tournament and, ultimately, to the national championship game.

“Those experiences, and the memories that I have leading up to that point and then being on the ice I'll never forget,” said Cassidy, who has worked three national championship games. “That's why we go there, we work really hard to get to those points and try to be the last crew.”

Cassidy says knowing that is what he is skating for has served as a driving force in expanding his knowledge of the rule book and improving his on-ice abilities, his communication skills, and his confidence.

“You're learning from extremely experienced officials,” Cassidy said. “Not only from the evaluators and supervisors, but you're also learning from the guys in the room, the guys that you're working with.”

Buckner agrees with Cassidy on the educational and development aspect but sees an added benefit to the championship environment.

“You meet new supervisors as well, so you get lots of feedback, good coaching, different perspectives on the game and, you know, how your conditioning is,” Buckner said. “And then the hockey is usually really good too. It's super intense, everybody's there to win and they want to play hard.”

Additionally, both Cassidy and Buckner raved about the social aspect of the experience that comes with creating and rekindling friendships via their strong common bonds.

“I've made some really great friends at all the different tournaments I've been at and now I've been to multiple tournaments with the same group of people,” Buckner said. “I have friends out in California, Colorado and Montana and then I have friends on the east coast in the Boston area, so it's really cool to get to see everybody again.”

Cassidy added, “I was fortunate that I got to go to a couple national tournaments, both with friends from Minnesota. Looking back on it, I always can give one or two of them a good ribbing or conversation about our time spent in Michigan together.”



Future June Newsletter

- Results from the USA HOCKEY Annual Meeting
- Results from the Mid-Am Annual Meeting