



**October 2018**

Dear Sharks Family:

Welcome! Our 2018-2019 season is well underway, as our travel teams started their seasons in September and our Learn to Play participants are showing progress in just three weeks! Before we look ahead, let's acknowledge some important accomplishments from last season:

**2018 USA Hockey U16 Tier II National Champions:** Our U16 Black won the USA Hockey Tier II National Championship by beating teams from New York, New Jersey, South Dakota, Michigan, Alaska, and Vermont. They were undefeated in national tournament play, outscoring the competition 21-3.

**2018 CHC State Champions:** Our U12 Black won the CHC state tournament after a phenomenal season (undefeated against CT U12 Tier I teams).

**2018 CGHL State Finalists:** Our U12 Green and U10 Green played hard in the state tournament, advancing to the finals.

**2017 New England Regionals Participants:** Three teams (U12 Black, U16 Black, and U19 Black) qualified to play in the New England District Regionals of the USA Hockey National Tournament.

**2017 Pittsburgh Elite U14 Tier II Thanksgiving Classic Winners:** Our U14 Black won the championship title at one of the largest and most prestigious tournaments in the country with participating teams coming from all over the US and Canada.

**USA Hockey Selects Tryouts:** Fifteen players from our U14 and U16 Black teams qualified for the Selects Tryouts, with three advancing to the U14 National Camp in Saint Cloud, MN. The National Camp is the gateway for participation on a USA Hockey national team.

**Prep School Admission:** Eight players from our U14 and U16 Black teams headed to some of the country's best prep schools to play hockey including The Gunnery, Loomis Chaffee, Pomfret, Millbrook, Taft, Westminster, and Williston Northampton.

Additionally, we would like to recognize Bill Greim, who co-founded the Shoreline Sharks eighteen years ago! His hard work and dedication to the advancement of girls' hockey at the local and regional levels were recently acknowledged by the Connecticut Girls Hockey League, who bestowed upon him their [2018 LaChance Leadership Award](#). We thank Bill, and co-founder Gary LaChance, for their dedication to the sport and laying the foundation for the culture that anchors the Sharks organization today.

## Growth and Opportunity

We continue to strengthen and grow the program. Looking back, in 2014 we had four travel teams, 56 players, and 12 coaches. Since, we've heightened our focus on our learn to play programs, created a tiered travel team structure, extended our geography, and joined new leagues to offer more opportunity for new and existing players. We are now the largest girls' hockey program in Southern Connecticut, with nearly 230 players registered.

Over the past several years, we've accomplished the following:

- Increased the number of coaches from 12 to 40, adding 7 females to the staff
- Affiliated with three leagues (NEGHL, CHC, and CGHL) to offer multiple levels of play, including national tournament-bound teams
- Expanded our ice footprint to three rinks (East Haven, Hamden, and Northford), allowing us to better serve a larger geography
- Expanded our travel teams from 4 to 11 (U08 – U19)
- Broadened our best in class goalie program
- Amplified our grow the game efforts with 70+ girls ages 3 – 19 enrolled in this year's Learn to Play initiative
- Garnered USA Hockey gold level model organization status

Our expansion has allowed us to create additional options for more girls, regardless of experience or level of competitiveness, giving all our players the best opportunity to succeed.

## Program Enhancements

We head into this season with momentum. We continue to focus on building the best player/goalie development program in the region and providing a first-class experience for players and families. Some changes to our programming for 2018-2019 include:

**Created U8-U10 Development Team:** In support of the principles of the [USA Hockey American Development Model \(ADM\)](#), this team places skill development over playing games. They utilize the cross-ice format to increase puck touches and has limited long-distance travel.

**Added a U16-19 Full Season Team:** Once girls reach the U16 level, the hockey season is dominated by High School commitments, which is why teams typically have a condensed, or "split," season. Based upon demand from girls without access to a high school hockey program or from those wanting added ice time and game play during the high school season (allowed for the girls, whereas prohibited for the boys), we created a new full season team with 15 rostered players.

**Partnered with Pro Crease:** Board Member John Barto, a former Division I college goaltender, was appointed Director of Goaltending to ensure the quality and effectiveness of our goalie program. This season, we've partnered with [Pro Crease Goaltending](#) because of all the goalie instruction offerings we found their overall approach to instruction most aligned with ours. Plus, they have a number of female instructors.

**Formalized Skill Sessions:** To complement the development taking place at the team level, we have added dedicated skill sessions throughout the season.

## Sharks Difference

Families new to the organization consistently tell us that our culture and approach is refreshingly different from other programs. Our positive environment started 18 years ago when Bill Greim and

Gary LaChance founded the Shoreline Sharks, using praise and encouragement to build confidence and accelerate advancement.

We've continued to build on that foundation, fostering a player-centric approach that we execute in a competitive and fun environment. Our decisions are made with the long-term best interest of our players and the intention to grow and develop our girls – on and off the ice.

We are proud of our team of coaches and believe they are some of the best in the state. They work hard each week to craft the right balance of support and challenge to help their players and teams reach their full potential, realizing that success and failure are equally critical to achieving growth.

Our 90% player retention rate suggests we are doing something right!

### **Thank You**

We acknowledge our players, parents, coaches, volunteers and board members for consistently striving to demonstrate the integrity, sportsmanship, gratitude, and respect that are synonymous with the Sharks organization.

Your shared passion for and commitment to the sport enables us to continue to work to be the best youth girls' hockey program in the state. We look forward to another successful season filled with fun, friendship, accomplishment, and lasting memories.

Thank you for selecting the Shoreline Sharks.

Ed Rodham  
President