



# ANNUAL MEETING

Monday  
October 6, 2025  
7:00 pm  
Willowbrook  
Aerodrome

***Houston Junior Aeros Hockey Association, Inc. (HJAHA)***

# Welcome



- Annual Meeting presentation will be posted on the Annual Meeting webpage.

# Meeting Agenda



- Introductions
- Past, Present & Future
- Organizational Philosophy
- THL
- Ice Scheduling
- Financial Accountability
- Apparel
- Registrar
- Fundraising
- Conduct
- By-Laws
- Questions
- Slate of Nominees & Elections, Meetings, and Conflict of Interest
- Adjournment

# Introductions



## Board of Directors – 2024-25

- President – Mike Zeibaq
- Vice President – Lindsay Cummings (Webmaster, Social Media)
- Vice President – Sarah Pederson (Ice Scheduler)
- Secretary – Vanessa Bassi (John Black) (Webmaster, Social Media)
- Treasurer – Rob Borne
- Controller – Brandon Herda (Ian Hass) (SafeSport Representative & Safety Coordinator)
- Hockey Director – TC Lewis (Non-Parent)
  - TAHA – Adult Section President
  - USAH – Junior Council Chair; Executive Board
  - USAH Team Leader Extraordinaire/travels nationally and internationally with multiple US Youth Team plus countless Boards and Committees: Youth, Adult, Junior, Disabled, Diversity, etc.
- Past President – Karen Young (Non-Parent)
  - TAHA – Travel Section President
- Member-at-Large – Steve Boswell



# Introductions

## Team Commissioners – 2025-26\*

(\*In accordance with the March 2019 Amended and Restated ByLaws, each team shall elect or appoint a Team Commissioner (1-yr term) to represent his/her team to elect individuals to serve on the Board of Directors pursuant to Article IV of said ByLaws.)

- |                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| • 10UA (Spaeth-Tuff)    | Stan Giller       |
| • 10UAA (Berkey)        | Andy Koch         |
| • 12UA2/White (DiBiase) | Jessica Demko     |
| • 12UA/Navy (Slobogan)  | Keith Vos         |
| • 12UAA (Erick)         | Toby Yalto        |
| • 14UA (Cotuno)         | Brian Livingstone |
| • 14UAA (Slobogan)      | Tim Marshman      |
| • 16UA (Heiser)         | Chuck Dyer        |
| • 16UAA (Smith)         | Jon Heger         |
| • 18UAA (Anderson)      | Bryan Hamula      |

# Introductions



## Support Staff

- **Coach-in-Chief** – Jeff Smith
- **Coaching Committee** – Coaches Smith, Zeibaq, Slobogan, Cotuno, Lewis
- **Ice Scheduler** – Nancy Berkey (Sarah Pederson)
- **Webmaster** – Vanessa Bassi (Lindsay Cummings)
- **Registrar** – John Morgera (Brandon Herda)
- **Apparel Coordinators** – Jordan Real, Karen Young (Rachel Hass)
- **HockeyShift Representative** – Chris Mills (Dan Mech)
- **Social Media Admin** – Vanessa Bassi (John Black)
- **SafeSport Representative** – Brandon Herda
- **Safety Coordinator** – Brandon Herda

# 37 Years – A Houston Hockey Tradition 1988 – 2025



Although we believe that the **HOUSTON JUNIOR AEROS HOCKEY ASSOCIATION, INC.** existed in some form or another prior to 1988, it is currently registered with the Secretary of State as being incorporated in 1988.

We are indebted to the countless volunteers who have built, and continue to build, onto the tradition.

# Organizational Philosophy



To foster a culture of development for the kids, both as hockey players and as young men and women, and to encourage the basic beliefs, concepts, and attitudes expected of and necessary to manage and cultivate a successful Youth travel hockey program, including but not limited to:

- Following the rules and policies set forth by governing authorities (THL, TAHA, USAH)
- Encouraging good sportsmanship and appropriate member conduct (coaches, volunteers, players, parents)
- Supporting and respecting all coaches, volunteers, players, parents, rink management/employees
- Fostering relationships with and contributing to other Youth hockey entities and communities for the betterment of hockey locally and statewide (House, Girls, Adult, Disabled, etc.)
- Working to minimize the 'controllable' costs of hockey for the parents
- **Most importantly – a responsibility to focus on the best interests of all players 10U-18U, regardless of their stage of development, and strive to find a balance between not selling out the future for the sake of the present...or the present for the sake of the future.**

# Past, Present & Future



## Past: 2024-25 Highlights

- **Teams – 163 players** were registered on 9 teams from 10U-18U with 2 teams at each age division except 18U / 1 team
- **Third-Party Scorekeeping**
  - Rinse and repeat! – very successful
  - Takes onus off TM's
  - Minimize 'parents-behaving-badly' in the scorebox
- **TAHA Tier II State Tournament / DSTHL Playoffs**
  - TAHA / DSTHL continued to join forces (7<sup>th</sup> year)
  - 10UAA, 12UAA (finalist), 14UAA (finalist), and 16UAA teams earned spots at Tier II/DSTHL AA tournament
  - 12A (finalist) team earned spot at DSTHL A playoffs
- **Coach Networking Gatherings**
  - HJAHA-hosted networking opportunities

# Past, Present & Future



## Past: 2024-25 Highlights

- **Match Penalties –**
  - 2 match penalties last year (racial)
  - USAH match penalty hearings are held by TAHA (Houston) on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month and semi-monthly by TAHA (DFW)
- **Player Development Camps (TAC/RMD) –**
  - TAC - generally held mid March; '11, '10, '09, & '08 – Boys and Girls (*\*must be born American citizen or have FULLY completed the citizenship or naturalization process and have permanent residence in TX or OK*)
  - HJAHA-hosted pre-TAC ice and informational parent meetings
  - Boys – 4 Junior Aeros players advanced to RMD (May '10-'08 /June '11)
  - Girls – 1 Junior Aeros player advanced to RMD (May '10-'08)
- **Spring Clinics**
  - >230 participants
  - Many thanks to:
    - Coach Smith, Coach Slobogan, Coach Zeibaq, Coach Cotuno – regular clinics
    - Coach Black – goalie-specific clinics
    - Numerous other HJAHA coaches
    - Volunteer clinic coordinators (Vanessa Bassi, Nancy Berkey, Allison DiMilia, Ashley Mills, etc.)

# Past, Present & Future



## Present: 2025-26 Season

### Tryouts (June)

- > **249** tryout participants
- Multiple professional-careered / independent evaluators
- **173 players** registered on 10 teams (10U - 18U)
- Welcome **40%** new HJAHA players/families this season
- Continued to utilize automated online USAH member and association tryout/commitment registrations

### Volunteers

- Coaching Staff
- Board members - many of whom have supplemental roles: SafeSport, Webmaster, Ice Scheduling, Safety Coordinator, Social Media, etc.
- Key support volunteers - Apparel, Registrar, TM's, TT's, HockeyShift Rep, etc.
- Additional volunteers - LRM's, clock/scorekeeper, penalty box, hotels, team meals, etc.

# Past, Present & Future



## Present: 2025-26 Season

### Hockey Shift Rep (Chris Mills)

- 5<sup>th</sup> year – third-party scorekeepers
- Works closely with THL Statistician

### Website – SportNGIN (Vanessa Bassi)

- Online registrations (tryouts, commitments, apparel, spring clinics, donations | utilize financial and player data)
- Valuable communication resource

### Social Media (Vanessa Bassi)

- Valuable updates and highlights across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter
- Encourage submissions re team achievements, charitable work, etc.

### USAH

- SafeSport
- Concussions

# Past, Present & Future



## Present: 2025-26 Season

### THL

- New league (THL) participation; ten (10) HJAHA teams
  - 10U – AA & A2
  - 12U – AA, A & A2
  - 14U – AA & A
  - 16U – AA & A
  - 18U – AA

### Goalie Development

- Coach Brennan Poderzay clinic(s) and remote support
- Team-to-team goalie-specific training led by Coaches Howard and Sencial and assisted by team coaches
- Association goalie clinics TBD now that schedules are in place
- Reduced goalie fees = financial relief

### Fundraising

- Individual team efforts (football squares, merchandise sales, Go Fund Me, etc.)
- All team fundraising ideas/any use of HJAHA logo must be approved by the Board (e.g.: good intentions for homemade beer, gun raffles, etc. need not apply)
- Sponsorship recognition (website, social media)

### Season Opener Tailgate Event at Willowbrook

- HJAHA-sponsored Bomber donut bags; tailgating events and prizes (thx Nancy!)

### Coach Networking Gatherings

- Coach Smith plans for HJAHA-hosted networking opportunities



## Makeup

- 6 “Tier II” Youth organizations (Warriors, McKinney, Penguins, Tigers, Jr. Brahmas, The Heat); to date, each permitted max 9 teams
- TAHA’s only “Tier I” organization DSE – Youth & Girls
- >107 teams (42 non-DFW teams)
- 14 associations + geography makes for incredibly difficult scheduling logistics in some division brackets:
  - 2 West – Amarillo, Odessa
  - 2 North – Tulsa, OKC
  - 3 South – Houston, San Antonio, Austin
  - 6+1 DFW – above
- 5 USAH age divisions (10U-18U) | 12 division brackets
  - 10U, 12U & 14U – B, A, AA
  - 16U – A, AA
  - 18U – AA



# THL (cont'd)

## Updates, Changes & Constants

- DSTHL (2012/13 – 2024/25)
- THL Board:
  - Executive Board (Chairman, Non-DFW Rep, DFW Rep)
  - Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner
  - Appointed Positions (Communications, Scheduler, Registrar, Admin)
  - Hockey Operations Board
- 2025-26 Scheduling Meeting (mid Sept) aside from veteran scheduler Erin Blake, rookie team of association schedulers (Nancy Berkey, Vanessa Bassi, Christina Choi, Tori Ellis)
- Scheduling Meeting format/logistics returned to status quo
- Mandate for medical trainers still lifted since COVID due to reduced medical resources
- Continue to use HockeyShift

# THL (cont'd)



## Playoffs

- **Fri/Feb 27 – Sun/Mar 1, 2026** (games may start early AM Fri/Feb 27)
- **TAHA Tier II Youth State Tournament** to include top 4 THL teams (as determined/ratified by TAHA) at 14UAA, 16UAA, 18UAA
  - New 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> rank team play-in option
  - Traditional tournament-style format competition with round robin play and championship between top 2 teams
  - Farmers Branch
- **A/A2 Team Playoffs** will be run by THL the same weekend
  - Tentatively Mansfield/Euless but Playoff Committee considering geographical options for alternate locations
  - Consideration for 8-team playoff format where appropriate
- Teams **ineligible** for playoffs are noted as such with \*\*\* on HockeyShift
- **TAHA Tier II Girls State Tournament** – 14UAA and 16UAA to be held in Houston Jan 30-Feb 1

# Ice Scheduling



## Dynamics of Local Scheduling

- 5 sheets of ice/4 facilities in Houston; HJAHA secures ice at EACH of those facilities
- Total of 10 Houston Youth travel teams
- Other users: rink grassroots programs, STARSkaters (sled/therapy), In-house/Select, ISHL, Adult, Storm (Girls), figure skating, curling, public sessions, private events (broomball, ACHA, meatcutters, etc.)

## Ice Scheduler – Nancy Berkey

- Very demanding role
- Greatest challenge is 10 teams, 4 ice facilities, and city-wide demographics within each team
- Continues to foster long-standing relationships with WB, MC, BIC, SL
- Interacts with other user groups regarding ice usage/needs
- Works directly with HIHOA to fulfill game officials needs
- Keeps unused ice to absolute minimum

# Financial Accountability



- HJAHA Ice Scheduler **tracks ice usage** for each team = end-of-season accounting/balancing. Outside of minimal overage/underage, teams who have not used all ice in their budget receive a refund (those who exceed budget have to pay for that ice)
- HJAHA Controller/Treasurer set up bank accounts for each team's use during the season. In addition to each TT, HJAHA Treasurer and Controller have **access/oversight privileges to all team accounts**
- All HJAHA teams must provide to HJAHA Controller an initial **team budget and periodic updates** throughout the season, along with reports to team parents
- TAHA **financial disclosure** policy (pre-tryout)
- HJAHA **General Account** used primarily by HJAHA Treasurer, but Controller, Member-at-Large (Steve Boswell), Past-President, President also have **access/oversight privileges**

# Fundraising



## Sources

- Individual sponsorships, corporate sponsorships, individual team fundraising

## 501(c)3 / IRS

- Stringent policy regarding team budgets and team accounts and reporting; at the end of the day, we **must be accountable to IRS, association, and parents**
- Goal is to keep fundraising within reasonable parameters; **“Fundraise With Purpose”**

## Brainstorm

- Open to new/creative ideas that meet the Association’s criteria (efforts v rewards, target market numbers, liability/legal issues, etc.)

# Apparel



## **Apparel Team – Jordan Real (12UA2/14UA), Karen Young (Non-Parent)**

- Tag team efforts

## **Monkey Sports**

- Partnership of several years
- Game/practice attire, polos, UA apparel, garment bags
- Fall – Online booster apparel/direct order (mid October)

## **JRZ**

- Equipment bags

## **Aerodrome**

- Bauer wind suits, helmet/car decals, pucks, puck/stick bags, medical back packs, coach back packs

## **Pure Hockey**

- Summer – Online booster apparel/direct order (early July)

## **Challenges Remain**

- Inventory/supply and shipping issues
- Estimate of projected numbers for custom/decorated items for future seasons
- Team-driven orders; use of HJAHA logos
- Managing inventory (CubeSmart 20+ yrs)

# Registrar



## Registrar – John Morgera

- Heavy emphasis: June, July, August
- Team rosters (1T's) and volunteers
- Very efficient working with TAHA/USAH Registrars and THL Registrar to ensure all USAH and THL roster criteria are met
- Specific credentialing requirements for coaches, TM's, TT's, LRM's, 18U players (if/when applicable), Board members, other volunteers, etc.
  - **NCSI Background checks** – submitted via USAH-wide vendor (2yrs)
  - **SafeSport** – certification/renewal (annual)
  - **USAH CEP** – certification/renewal (varies)
  - **USAH** – age-specific and goalie modules (varies)

# Conduct



## Conduct

- Several mechanisms in place:
  - USAH SafeSport
  - HJAHA Player Agreement and Codes of Conduct
  - Team rules
  - 24-hour rule
  - USAH Zero Tolerance Policy
  - THL parent suspension rule, etc.
- **Respect and common sense should prevail**
- Actions of players, parents, coaches, and volunteers have established the HJAHA as a highly respected organization throughout USAH...we'd like to keep it that way!

# Past, Present & Future

## Future: Plans and Considerations



- Continue to strive for a minimum of 9+ travel-competitive teams at 10U-18U
- **Committed to fostering hockey growth, development, and “eco-relationships” in Houston hockey community**
- Work closely with officials and coaches re continued education (e.g.: new USAH rules)
- Although awesome core volunteers, working to attract **new volunteers to Board and association support roles**; the next generation
- Secure and retain experienced, qualified, dedicated coaches; eliminate the burden of dual HC situations where possible
- Develop young coaches for future head coach roles
- Expand Outreach Program to in-house programs (e.g.: goalie developmental sessions)
- Create major fundraising opportunities that minimize volunteer hours
- Continue with coach networking and volunteer appreciation events

# ByLaws



## ByLaws

- 2002, 2009, 2015 & 2019
- Originally created when the association had upwards of 20 teams

## Amendment

- For multiple seasons, Board has discussed recommendations for certain changes to existing ByLaws
- Maintain the integrity and intent of the Bylaws as written by our predecessors
- Jan/2023 three-person committee compiled draft/proposed changes to the Board; changes include: majority/clarifications in the wording (e.g.: immediate Past President v Past President), staggered terms of office, etc.
- Once Board approves draft, will need – in accordance with the ByLaws -- **Team Commissioners' involvement to pass new ByLaws.**

# Questions

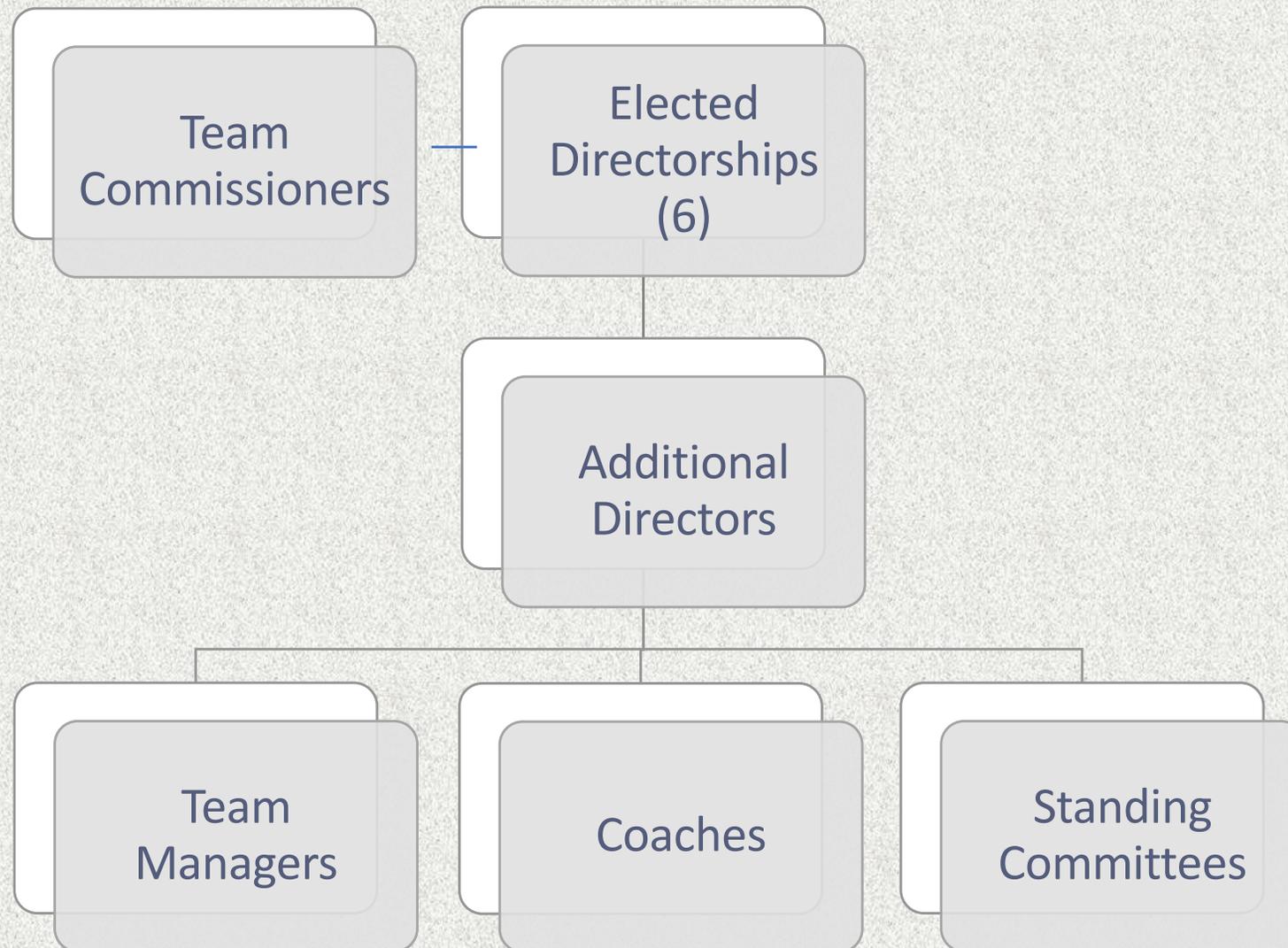




# 2025-26 Slate of Nominees & Elections

***Houston Junior Aeros Hockey Association, Inc. (HJAHA)***

# Organizational Structure





# Elected Directorships (5-6)

(elected by Team Commissioners)

President \*

Vice President(s)  
(1 or 2)\*

Treasurer \*

Controller \*

Secretary \*

\* Officers of the Association



# Additional Directors

(elected/appointed by the Board  
per Article VI of the ByLaws)

Director of Hockey

Past President

Member(s)-at-  
Large (1 or 2)

*Director of Player  
Development &  
Outreach*

# 2025-26 Slate of Nominees



- **President** Mike Zeibaq\*\*
- **Treasurer** Robert Borne\*\*
- **Vice-Presidents** Vanessa Bassi
- **Controller** Brandon Herda\*\*
- **Secretary** Christina Choi

(\*\*incumbent)

- **4.12 ELECTION OF DIRECTORS BY TEAM COMMISSIONERS** As the first order of business at the Annual Meeting, the Team Commissioners shall elect individuals to serve as the President; the Treasurer; at least one (1) but no more than two (2) Vice Presidents; the Controller; and the Secretary.
- **4.13 ORDER OF ELECTIONS AT ANNUAL MEETING** The Elected Directorships shall be determined in the following order at the Annual Meeting: (a) Elected Directorships for which only one (1) name appears on the Slate of Nominees;...
- **4.14 PROCEDURE FOR ELECTION OF ACCLAIMED POSITIONS** Any Elected Directorship for which only one (1) nominee appears on the Slate of Nominees shall be considered acclaimed and shall be affirmed by a show of hands of the Team Commissioners at the Annual Meeting.

# Meetings of the Board of Directors



## **First Meeting –**

- To be held no more than fourteen (14) days from the date of the Annual Meeting

## **Regular Meetings –**

- Traditionally held as predetermined at 7:00pm the first or second Monday of each month at a location TBD or at such other time, date, or place as the Board deems fit

# Conflict of Interest



## Signing of Conflict-of-Interest Policy

- Pursuant to Section 3.08 of the ByLaws, all Directors must abide by the Conflict-of-Interest Policy.

# Adjournment



*Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy.*

*You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.*

*~ Marjorie Moore*