



## Changing Landscape of Tier II Hockey in the AAHA

A recent announcement by the Atlantic Hockey Federation (AHF) declared its intentions to operate as a full-season league for the 2022-23 hockey season. As a result, several Tier II clubs have made known their intentions to depart either the Delaware Valley Hockey League (DVHL) or the New Jersey Youth Hockey League (NJYHL) and participate with the AHF on a full-season basis. In addition, some Clubs have stated they will remain in their current League while also partially participating in the AHF for the 2022-23 season.

The Affiliate respects each club's choice to associate and align their program with other clubs and leagues that best suit the needs of their members. We hope each Club has performed their due diligence and communicated with their membership on issues of team and league sanctioning, travel, time-commitment, cost, eligibility for District and National Tournament play so their families fully understand how these issues may impact their youth hockey experience.

Since the inception of the AAHA, the Affiliate has significantly relied on organized non-profit leagues like the DVHL and NJYHL to manage and educate their respective member Clubs on USA Hockey Registration & Rostering, Playing Rules, USA Hockey and AAHA policy compliance, disciplinary process, and offer competitive scheduling to create an enjoyable playing experience and to advance teams to District and National Tournament Competition. Our leagues have built the infrastructure for youth hockey that has allowed our Tier II teams to thrive for these many years. The Affiliate remains committed to working with our District Tournament Sanctioned Leagues now and well into the future.

The Affiliate will continue to examine the impact this will have on the advancement to District Tournaments. The Affiliate wants to be clear for all of its approved Tier II Clubs and their teams; the AAHA has an obligation to provide a pathway for its qualified Tier II teams to advance to Districts and Nationals, irrespective of the League (s) the teams participate in. For Tier II, advancement to Districts has been almost exclusively based upon the schedule and results of games played within either the DVHL or NJYHL, with minor exception, and that process will continue.

Keeping in mind that Tier II advancement to District Tournaments is State-based; with the likelihood of a fair number of teams scheduling games outside their State in which they qualify for District tournament play, the Affiliate will require teams seeking to qualify for Districts to play an appropriate schedule **amongst all teams** seeking to qualify for the same District tournament for that State. This will be required irrespective of the League (s) each team participates in, and the Affiliate scheduling requirement will take precedence over all other scheduling.

The Affiliate recognizes this changing landscape in Tier II hockey has caused some anxiety for rinks, clubs, coaches, and our hockey families. We share some of the same concerns, and we want to do everything practical to mitigate unintended consequences. On behalf of the AAHA, we are committed to working with each Tier II Club, and our Affiliate sanctioned leagues so you can continue to provide a rewarding hockey experience for your players and families.

As custodians for the sport of amateur ice hockey, we have a shared responsibility to provide a safe, enjoyable and affordable experience for all participants. The legendary Bob Johnson once said, "it's a great day for hockey." Let's all do our part to make every day "a great day for hockey."

Yours in Hockey,

Glenn Hefferan  
AAHA President