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Here



Concerning our Hockey Michigan community operating within the Amateur Athletic Union

June 1st 2012

HOCKEY MICHIGAN
2011-2012

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***SPORTS FOR ALL,
FOREVER!***

AAU MICHIGAN - BI-ANNUAL MEETING

On May 20th 2012, AAU Michigan hosted our Bi-Annual Meeting in Battle Creek. This meeting concerned all AAU sports (not just Hockey), bringing AAU Officers and Sport Directors together from around our state. Louis Stout (AAU national president) also attended and addressed our members. A summary of president Stout's statements are included on the following page.

Since this wasn't an election year (that will be in 2014) the agenda was rather short. Regular business involved a few updates and reports from the State Officers, as well as the individual reports from each AAU sport operating within Michigan. A written Ice Hockey Report was submitted by Director Kloock, which is now available online at: hockey-Michigan.org/Documents.html.

2013 MULTI-SPORT GAMES

During our Bi-Annual meeting, we learned of the 2013 Multi-Sport Games, which are being planned for early to mid August of 2013. Representatives from Battle Creek and Kalamazoo have been creating these games, which will be sanctioned by AAU. Yet the events will be open to non-AAU teams and organizations as well. This will expose community-based Parks & Recreation programs and other athletes to the organization and benefits of the AAU.

These events are intended to be open to age classifications of 14U and younger and will likely include; Basketball, Diving, Gymnastics, Karate, Taekwondo, Track & Field and Volleyball. As well as other events still to be determined.

AAU NATIONAL PRESIDENT STOUT

AAU national president Louis Stout attended our Michigan Bi-Annual Meeting in Battle Creek and spoke expressing his desire that we return to providing opportunities for the average and even for struggling athletes, rather than merely focusing only upon the elite. Recalling that our motto at the Amateur Athletic Union is ***Sports For All, Forever!***

President Stout only recently took over the helm at AAU, although he has been heavily involved within the Union for 40+ years. Louis also served for many years as the Commissioner of the Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA).

Members were reminded that the **2012 AAU Junior Olympics Games** are being held in Houston Texas from July 25 through August 4, 2012. The events for 2012 include; Baton Twirling, Bowling, Cheerleading, Diving, Field Hockey, Gymnastics, Inline Hockey, Jump Rope, Karate, Powerlifting, Sport Stacking, Swimming, Table Tennis, Taekwondo, Track & Field/Multi-Events, Trampoline/Tumbling, Weightlifting and Wrestling.

In addition, the president provided members with an update on plans for the **2013 AAU Junior Olympic Games**, which is being held in Detroit Michigan from July 24 through August 3rd 2013. The games will feature well over 15,000 athletes and members from around the nation competing within at least 20 sports. Detroit has previously hosted the Junior Olympics in 2003 and 2008.

MIDWEST JUNIOR HOCKEY LEAGUE

Yet another junior league has now been sanctioned with the AAU. Our newest arrival is the Midwest Junior Hockey League (MWJHL). The league expects to host 14 teams for the 2012-2013 season and hopes to double that number through 2014. They already have teams within Michigan. They currently have teams in Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois (6 within Michigan alone).

The Midwest Junior Hockey League (MWJHL www.mwjhl.com) joins the Northeastern Junior Hockey League (NJHL www.thenjhl.com), the Western States Hockey League (WSHL www.wshl.org). Collectively, these leagues now give AAU junior hockey a coast to coast presence approaching 40 teams (and still growing). Clearly, more than enough teams to justify a national tournament.

Several other junior leagues will be considering a switch to the AAU over the summer.



AAU YOUTH HOCKEY - EXPANSION

Obviously the 2011-2012 season was a year of great transitions within AAU Ice Hockey, especially at the Mites and Junior levels. High School and JV hockey had already existed, primarily within the state of New York. Yet in 2011, the Western States Hockey League (WSHL) moved to AAU at the junior level and has already begun to expand and thrive. In addition, our own Hockey Michigan began offering full-ice Mite hockey, initially expecting only 8-10 teams and instead expanding to 32 Michigan teams for the regular season.

Even with MAHAs spring pilot program (allowing a return to full-ice Mites) and predictions that everyone would now return to MAHA, we still saw AAU Michigan expansion with an additional 172 Mite players added this spring.

Our Mites and the Juniors have led the way for others throughout the US as well. AAU Hockey has continued to expand and both Mites and Juniors now span coast to coast.

Mites

Later this month, USA Hockey will vote on its plan to mandate Cross-Ice for Mites across all of their affiliates. This proposal is expected to pass, although there are some questions concerning when the mandate will take effect. However, it is important to note that most USAH Districts have already mandated Cross-Ice. Many of these District mandates took effect for 2011-2012 and some take effect for 2012-2013.

As a result of these mandates and our own success at AAU, we've seen new AAU programs forming around the US. Other such programs are likely to form as well, as more groups realize that AAU is available.

Here within Michigan, MAHA has suspended their mandate for spring and this July will vote upon drastically changing their mandate for 2012-2013. Of course, any MAHA change could be very short-lived, since they ultimately must follow the lead of USAH.

It is important to note that, even if MAHA were to completely reverse their mandate for 2012-2013, AAU Michigan will still sanction Mite hockey within Michigan. Keep in mind that those heading to MAHA will struggle in order to find any Full-Ice Mite teams or tournaments elsewhere within the US (except for those sanctioned by AAU).

Squirts and older

The big question now facing AAU Michigan is whether we can expand into other age classifications. Both Mites and Juniors had major issues facing them, which have effectively driven players and families to AAU. However, are there any similar factors that can lead to AAU expansion within other age classifications. Well, the short answer is yes.

We find a disturbing trend in Michigan. Too many young players have come into our sport only to leave a few years later. We've lost over 13,000 youth players during the past 10 years (that's one-third). Some are the most advanced and some the least advanced.

Why are we losing so many players! I would suggest that some of the causes are; restrictive District rules, a lack of parity at almost every level, high costs, denial of

opportunities and the over emphasis upon creating elite athletes and elite teams while ignoring those seeking simple recreation. If we can begin to correct some of these problems then AAU will expand and do fine at all age classifications.

Restrictive District Rules: AAU currently doesn't break Michigan into separate districts. This can be a major benefit to Rinks, Associations, Teams and Families that fall near any MAHA District boundaries. Please note that in the future AAU Michigan may create District or Area playoffs in order to advance to the State playoffs. However, we don't plan to restrict players from participating wherever they choose.

Historically, our state has restricted player movement across District boundaries. This may have even been well intentioned (probably related to the parity issue), yet such rules were always bad ideas. Entire communities have been separated by artificial boundaries drawn on a map. Many have called for re-districting. However, regardless where any borders are drawn, we will always see negative impacts upon any association or community that falls near such a border.

A classic example of this problem is the intersection between Districts 2, 4 and 6. We find Wayne and Westland within D2, yet only a few miles away we see Canton, Livonia and Plymouth within D4 and yet only a few miles to the west is D6. Often times, cousins, friends and school-mates aren't able to play on the same teams or even within the same Association, because teams would have too many out-of-district players. We see similar problems on the borders between D3 and D4 as well as between D3 and D5.

Clearly, there isn't anything wrong with having Districts for the purposes of Playoffs. However, Districts shouldn't prohibit players from participating closer to home or with their cousins, neighbors or school-mates. Similarly, players with extraordinary skills should be free to play at an appropriate competition level, regardless where those opportunities are centered.

Parity of play: What we should really be working towards in Michigan youth hockey is providing opportunities for all, while at the same time trying to achieve a degree of parity at each level of play. There should be a place for the advanced players to be challenged by advanced competition. There should also be a place for those just starting out, those who maybe aren't as advanced or may merely want to play with their friends.

We all need to be challenged in order to grow. When we have teams or programs lacking in parity then our young athletes don't grow as they should. It can be argued that many adults spend too much time trying to create elite athletes and are ignoring kids who merely wish to play. For example, Michigan is completely upside-down with far more Travel and our House programs are almost non-existent.

However, it can also be argued that the worst thing we can do to young athletes is to create a one-size-fits-all program, which forces advanced players and beginners into the same programs. Truly advanced players should be competing against others of similar ability. A system allowing extremely advanced players and teams to compete against those just beginning or severely lacking in skills helps no players. The advanced don't progress and get cocky because they aren't challenged. The less advanced players get frustrated because they are in way over their head. And we see players of all skill levels leaving our sport.

HELP WANTED @ AAU HOCKEY

Obviously, the AAU Michigan - Ice Hockey Committee was begun in a hurried fashion during 2011-2012. Currently we are working on our By-Laws and a structure needed for moving forward.

We are seeking resumes, interest and/or nominations for volunteers to serve in several positions. Keith Kloock was initially appointed to get our AAU Michigan's Ice Hockey operations up and running. Keith has been serving as the Director-Treasurer-etc. However, eventually all positions will need to be filled through elections.

After creating our formal By-Laws (a vote will likely occur in July of this year), then we will schedule our first formal election of officers. It may be wise that we create staggered elections, in order to maintain some continuity from our officers.

At the moment, our most urgent needs are:

- Coach-In-Chief
- Referee-In-Chief
- Secretary

Please contact Keith @ (734) 692-5158 if you are interested in any of these volunteer positions or if you are interested in serving on our 2013 State Playoff Committee.

HELP WANTED @ AAU MICHIGAN

AAU Michigan currently has several vacancies at the State level. Please be advised that these are also volunteer positions.

Lt. Governor: This position is normally a 4-year office and was set to expire in 2014. However, with a recent resignation the position is now vacant. AAU Michigan is researching options under their By-Laws (whether to appoint or to hold a special election).

This position is generally considered to be a stepping stone for someone who is interested in becoming the governor of AAU Michigan. Obviously, it's important to get members thinking about whether they may wish to step up now and learn the ropes from some very experienced state officers.

Sport Director - Taekwondo and/or Martial Arts: AAU currently offers the sports of; Chinese Martial Arts, Judo, Karate and Taekwondo. Unfortunately, at present AAU Michigan doesn't have a Sport Director. Obviously, we have a very large community of martial artists within our state. AAU offers outstanding insurance at a rather low cost. This position could provide a great opportunity for someone to draw programs together from around our state for more widespread cooperation and competition.

Please contact AAU Michigan - governor Cindi Trombly cinditrombly@aol.com if you have any interest in these positions or even if you merely wish to help out at the state level.

AAU MICHIGAN - ICE HOCKEY ANNUAL MEETING

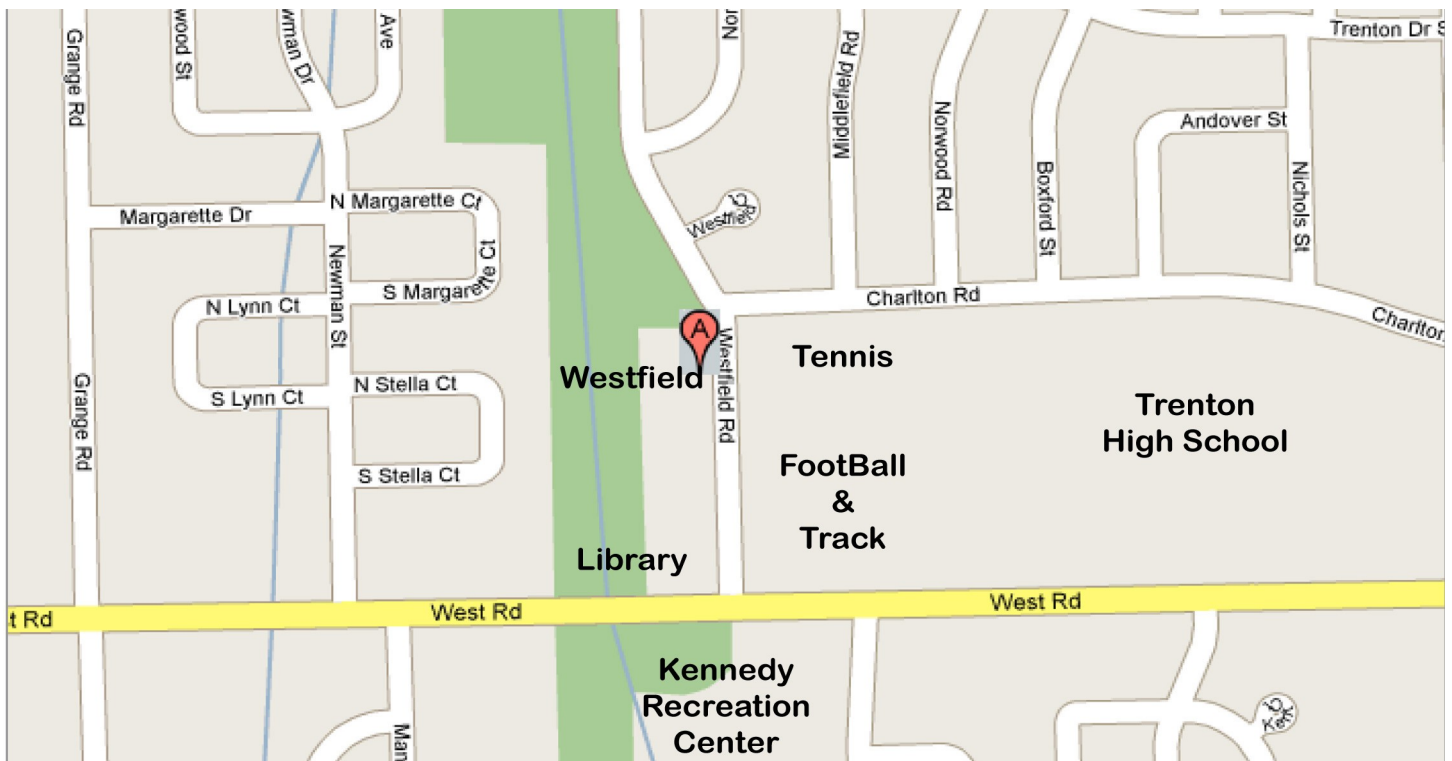
The AAU Michigan - Ice Hockey Committee will be hosting its Annual Meeting on Sunday **July 22nd 2012 at 11:00am** @ the **Westfield Activity Center** (the Westfield is located at 2700 Westfield in Trenton Michigan).

Each AAU ice hockey club will be permitted to cast one vote on any given issues (only individuals who are listed as a Club Representative possess voting rights for that given club). However, all AAU members are welcome to attend.

Additional notices will be repeated and an agenda will be provided as we approach the date of the meeting. However, initially expect that topics will likely include (but not be limited to):

- a report on the 2011-2012 season and plans for 2012-2013.
- a review of USA Hockey (USAH) and Michigan Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA) changes.
- a review-update of likely; Age Classifications, Division and Team for the 2012-2013 season.
- Plans for State Playoffs in 2013.
- Votes affecting AAU Michigan - Ice Hockey; By-Laws, Rules & Regulations, etc.

We would also like to begin forming a State Playoff committee. Hopefully we can utilize our State Championships to continue our theme concept. Last season our Mites State Championship was used as a platform to allow Military Moms United to collect materials and funds to aid our armed forces serving overseas. Hopefully, each Championship can be used to benefit a separate charity.



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MEMBERSHIP: \$14.00 YOUTH & JUNIORS
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PROGRAM - \$10 MILLION LIABILITY PER
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ENTRY FEES PAYABLE TO: ONLINE REGISTRATION

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**PROGRAM LEADERS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE MANAGEMENT
OF THEIR PROGRAMS - PARENT REPRESENTATIVE INVOLVEMENT
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Established in 1888 - philosophy is "sports for all, forever"

The Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) is one of the largest, non-profit, volunteer, sports organizations in the United States. A multi-sport organization, the AAU is dedicated exclusively to the promotion and development of amateur sports and physical fitness programs.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PLAYER, TEAM OR ASSOCIATION
MEMBERSHIP, CONTACT AAU OFFICES at 407-934-7200 OR VISIT
www.aauhockey.org**