

AAU Ice Hockey

February 1, 2014

Volume 1, Issue 11

Western States Hockey League (WSHL) AAU Juniors of the United Hockey Union

Usual Suspects atop WSHL

Story by Brent Maranto, WSHL Director of Communications

With an all-time high of 24 teams, competing across four divisions, the 20th season of Western States Hockey League play has been as unpredictable as can be; aside from the four teams currently atop their respective divisions.

The battle for one of the 16 playoff spots has been heated from the get-go and was taken to another level at the All-League Showcase in mid-December, where inter-division games played in front of numerous college hockey scouts brought out the best in every team.

After the two-week holiday break gave players and coaches time to relax with family and recover prior to embarking on the stretch run, 2014 has already begun with a bang, as teams continue to jockey for position.

As they say however; the more things change, the more things stay the same and although playoff positions can change in a hurry, the four teams currently atop their respective divisions aren't much of a surprise at all.

The inaugural United Hockey Union and three-time defending Thorne Cup Champion Idaho Jr. Steelheads came into the 2013-2014 season with a new head coach and a re-tooled roster but it hasn't made any difference, as the "Steelies" currently hold the best record in the league, at 30-3-0 and are running away with the Northwest Division.

The El Paso Rhinos, who have been a force since joining the league in 2005, didn't lose a game until a December 18 defeat at the hands of the aforementioned Steelheads and are currently reigning supreme over the rest of the Midwest Division. Cory Herman's hard-hitting squad is already a shone-in for the 2014 Thorne Cup Finals, as El Paso will host the event for the second time in three years but don't expect that to slow them down one bit.

- continued on page 2 -

Sports for all, Forever



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The Fresno Monsters have had their share of post-season struggles over their four seasons of WSHL play but this year's squad looks like they will be able to carry their regular season momentum over. With a throng of veterans combined with highly skilled newcomers, Bryce Dale's team looks more poised than ever to get the job done, as they continue to cruise atop the Western Division yet again.

The Phoenix Polar Bears were WSHL royalty for nearly a decade, winning Thorne Cups and National Championships regularly. Just a few years ago, ownership and management changed hands and re-named the team the Knights. After two up and down seasons, the Knights have risen to power in year three, with former Polar Bear Tyler Ramsey at the helm. The Alberta native recruited hard over the summer and brought in a number of players from his home province, which he combined with a core of veteran returners. Although they are a completely different organization now, the Knights have given many around the league flashbacks to the Polar Bears of yesteryear.

With most teams still having about 15 games left on their regular season schedule, anything can happen but you can be sure that the four top dogs won't be going down without a fight, as there's a reason they've been there from the first puck drop in September.



Sofie Alexandra Kitterød

Photo Courtesy of Sofie Kitterød

New York State Club Hockey tournament

The High School Hockey League of Nassau County will be hosting all 3 divisions of the New York State Club School Hockey Tournament this year on February 28th through March 2nd. The tournament includes Large School, Small School and Open Divisions.

Both Large and Small are for clubs from one school district. These divisions are broken up by population. The Open Division is for teams from multiple districts, or teams with kids from districts that do not have teams.



Award Patches Available Soon

AAU Hockey award patches will soon be available for order by clubs. The 3 award patches shown below were designed by Kara Cutting, one of our Hockey Illinois members who volunteered her time and talents to this effort. These iron-on patches measure 3" X 2.5" and will be available for Zero Goals (Shutout), Playmaker and Hat Trick awards at \$3 each.

In addition to the awards patches, AAU Hockey will also be offering AAU Shield patches (measuring 2" X 1.5") at \$1.50 each, as well as Helmet Stickers.

Watch for ordering information and order form at: www.aauicehockey.org



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Page 6

BATTLE OF THE BISCUIT

MiteA/MiteAA/Squirt A Spring AAU Hockey Tournament

Travel Division Teams with birth years 2005, 2006 & 2007

April 4 - 6, 2014

- 4 Game Guarantee
- \$850 per team with early registration and full payment received by February 28, 2014 (**400.00 non-refundable deposit due asap to reserve your spot**)
- \$925 total due if paid in full after February 28, 2014
- All games played at the DISC - Dearborn Ice Skating Center
14900 Ford Road
Dearborn, MI 48126
(313) 943-4098

All payments due by March 20, 2014 and are non-refundable

Contact Joan Greig to register:

Email: 2005cobras@gmail.com

Phone: 313-903-5599

HOCKEY COLORADO

ELITE SPRING LEAGUE 2014

MARCH 22 - JUNE 8

BIG BEAR ICE ARENA · 11 GAME SEASON

BOYS & GIRLS

- *New league offers a one-day-a-week hockey game experience*
- *Designed to appeal to 7-18 year old players who enjoy playing the game & want continue after winter season*
- *Organized, fun, non-threatening, no-check hockey*
- *Certified officials for all games and team standings are kept*
- *Players are encouraged to bring their friends and play on the same team*
- *All games late Saturday & Sunday afternoon or early evening*
- *Registration open to both full teams & individuals*

**TEAM FEE - \$2,600
INDIVIDUAL FEE - \$260**

Register online @ <https://hockeycolorado.sportngin.com/register/form/856639221>

For more information, contact Vassiliy Larchenko, League Director, 303-343-1111 · vlarchenko@bigbearice.com

AAU Ice Hockey

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Volume 1, Issue 11

Page 8

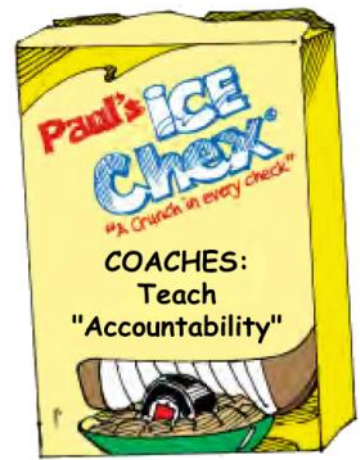
Larionov and Slava Kozlov) to secure a clear picture in your minds-eye of what I am referencing. Five players moving in-and-amongst each other (regardless of the zone) in awesome harmony and with a real, identifiable, scalable sense of purpose. Now - THAT was beautiful hockey as it was "meant" to be played and couldn't have been performed if the players weren't not in the "FPU" alignment/mode I reference.

Defensively - this is even easier. Five-players positioned strategically - all within clear eye-sight and EAR-shot allow for the required COMMUNICATION to take place that fosters switch-offs at a split-second notice. What results when executed efficiently - is a "smothering" effect of the opposition. A "blanketing" (eliminating their time and space through gap control) of any high-powered scoring machine can take place with the "support" created by this style. I have coined this the "SOS Technique" representing SUPPORT, OUTNUMBER and SMOTHER). If your goal is to win via defense-first, this is the way to do it. Always be reminded that when your team possesses the biscuit, you/they are actually playing offense and defense simultaneously - what a concept! What a bonus!

Best of luck.

BONUS TIP

You should also take the time to consider the "five-person unit" theme as it relates to a Power Play breakout. Why on earth would you want to try and stretch the defense with a north-south "bomb-breakout pass" to gain entry in an erratic/unbalanced fashion, when you can crash-in-unison with five players? That sort of trickery rarely results in sound possession and/or effective/efficient nor consistent zone-entry. Quite the contrary. So coaches, play the most intelligent, unselfish and tenacious five competitors on your roster and let them enter the offensive-zone with the simplicity of the "FPU" mindset. It will pay big dividends-trust me.



Hockey Tips is a column written by: **Paul Lubanski of Hockey Weekly**

Paul's company, "Wilderness Xtreme Sports" creates dynamic new takes on traditional sporting competition-visit www.wxsports.net for information.

HockeyWeekly.com

