



## A NOTICE FOR ALL 2<sup>ND</sup> YEAR NOVICE PLAYERS REGARDING PLAYING COMPETITIVE HOCKEY IN 2009-2010:

Now that the Novice House League season is winding down, it is now an appropriate time to provide information about the Raider Competitive Program to players and parents, in particular the Minor Atom program.

The 2009-2010 season marks the debut of the Minor Atom "A" program which will differ in a number of ways from the Minor Atom "B" program. These differences are:

- The A League structure will be District based and will be similar to the existing AA/A Leagues. The League will consist of teams from Nepean, Ottawa Silver Seven (Stittsville), Gloucester (Ottawa), Ottawa Sting (Ottawa), Jr. Grads (Cumberland), Eastern Ontario Cobras (St. Isidore), Seaway Valley (Maxville) and RSL Kings (Spencerville). Travel will be more extensive for this Division.
- The level of competition will be higher in this Division and a higher level of commitment will be expected of both players and parents.

The B League should remain unchanged for 2009-2010.

### *Some common MYTHS about Competitive Minor Atom hockey:*

- ***It will cost \$5000.00 to play in 2009-2010!*** FALSE. Team fees will range from 1000-1200 per player and will be payable over 3-4 months (whatever the team decides). Also, most teams can reduce that amount through fundraising activities. In addition to the team fees, most Minor Atom teams will participate in 2 out of town tournaments and these travel costs are extra (hotel, gas, food etc).
- ***We could have mid-week games as far away as Hawkesbury!*** FALSE. The Minor Atom B League is split into an East and West League, which is all Ottawa-based. Nepean plays in the West division with Stittsville (multiple teams), West Ottawa and Kanata (multiple teams) etc.  
*For the A Division, the League has rules regarding earliest allowed game start times (6:50 pm) and latest start game times (8:00pm) for weekdays for the Atom Division. The League recognizes the age of these young players their requirements for schoolwork and appropriate rest.*
- ***My son/daughter will be on the ice 6-7 nights a week!*** FALSE. Most teams will average around 3-4 times a week on the ice with a mix of full-ice practices, games and power skating. This is great lead-in year to competitive hockey where parents' increased time and financial

*commitment pays great dividends in the development of their sons/ daughter: kids stay active, learn in a structured team environment, make new friends and build self-esteem.*

- ***If I only played Novice “B” in 2008-2009, I have NO chance of making a competitive team.*** FALSE. (1) The NMHA has so many players registered that sometimes kids are overlooked in the Novice sort out process. (2) Players develop at all different speeds and so the best players in April might not be the strongest players come August try-out time. (3) Many players participate in extra summer power skating, hockey schools etc. that help with their development in the off-season. (4) “Potential” is judged differently than “skill”. With our Minor Atom B teams, we want a mix of both so as to develop the best NMHA players for the future.
- ***The Minor Atom Coaches will only pick their friends or the players they know.*** FALSE. In 2007-2008, we implemented a new tryout process for Minor Atom. The coaches were part of the process but they were not allowed to just select their own players. Numerous evaluators were used during the tryout week and every evaluator was given a chance to look at each player in a small group setting. In the end, at least 5 Novice B players made one of the teams and the whole committee agreed on the 47 selected players.
- ***Competitive parents are crazy and they all want their kids to make the NHL!*** FALSE. We all want our children to have the opportunity to reach their maximum potential in a fun, structured and organized team environment. Because we spend so much time supporting our kids, competitive hockey creates a great social atmosphere where parents and kids alike will meet new lifelong friends and business associates.
- ***The kids are allowed to body check in tryouts.*** FALSE. There will be no body checking allowed early on in tryouts. As the tryouts progress, some coaches allow bumping and angling to take place in scrimmages or exhibition games but there will be no open ice hitting allowed. In addition, Hockey Canada has eliminated body checking in Atom starting with the 2008-2009 season. We will still run some body checking clinics over the next 2 years so the players are more prepared for body checking in Minor Pee wee.

### **Some FACTS about Competitive hockey and Competitive tryouts:**

- Tryouts for Minor Atom will start in late August/early September and will run for approximately 10 days.
- There is a separate competitive tryout registration form that parents need to fill out before July 2009 Ask at the NMHA office or check at **[www.nepeanhockey.on.ca](http://www.nepeanhockey.on.ca)**
- Tryouts will consist of skill sessions (skating, stick handling etc), competitive races and scrimmages. Please refer to our sample tryout drills.
- Players who are released early on in the tryout process are given a “release letter”. Players who are released later usually have a meeting with the coach and their parents. The NMHA is sensitive to the age of the players and how this situation can affect their self-esteem. Therefore, rookie coaches usually have an experienced convenor or board member present to help with these situations.
- Season will consist of roughly 30 regular season games, 20 tournament games, 5 exhibition games and 2 practices per week.
- The “A” team will have 15 skaters and two goalies. The “B” teams will consist of a **maximum** of 13 skaters and 2 goalies.
- NMHA Competitive players are required to use Raider colours for helmets, gloves and pants.
- Both the “A” and “B” Leagues will start in late September or at the beginning of October.

### **Continuing for 2009-2010:**

- *Players will be selected by an evaluation committee that includes the Head Coach. As in 2008-2009, the Head Coaches are not free to choose their own team.*
- *All Minor Atom teams will take part in power skating clinics during the 2009-2010 season. These sessions will take place most Tuesdays at 5 pm at Carleton University. 2 of the 3 teams will take part each week.*
- *All Minor Atom teams will take part in 10-week off-conditioning program at the ACC at the start of the season. Specific session times will be determined by your coach and/or manager.*
- *Head Coaches must have all Assistant coaches approved by the NMHA Competitive Committee.*

### **What can we do to improve our son/daughter's chances of making a competitive minor atom B team?**

- *Players should register for the **NMHA Spring 3-on-3 program**. 3-on-3 is free-flowing and informal but Novice players will be mixed with current Atom Competitive players and it is great for skating.*
- *Players should try to skate at least once a week in the summer. Please see our **NEW “Keep Skating”** program that takes place every Sunday at WB in June and July.*
- *Players should participate in a full-day hockey camp prior to tryouts. See **“NMHA Full-Day Summer Camp”**.*
- *Players could practice all types of “agility” skating or take part in our **Spring Power Skating**. Skating is the biggest indicator if a player is ready for competitive hockey. The first few tryout sessions in Minor Atom B will usually consist of (a) Pivots (b) Stops and Starts (c) Crossovers (d) Backward skating and the kids who can't do these are usually part of the initial releases.*
- *All programs listed above can be found at **[www.nepeanhockey.on.ca](http://www.nepeanhockey.on.ca)***
- *Stay positive and supportive!*

*James Hanlon  
NMHA Technical Director*