AMHL
ATLANTIC METROPOLITAN HOCKEY LEAGUE

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

March 3, 2016

Dear Players, Parents, Prospects and Members:

As you can see by our press release dated February 21, 2016, there are a lot of exciting developments in the AMHL. We want to share with you that our member clubs are more invigorated and united and looking to the future for the betterment of our league.

Next year, we will celebrate our 35th season and our longevity is a credit to the strength and commitment of our Member Clubs and to thousands and thousands families who have entrusted this League as the best possible hockey experience for their children. You only need to look at the results of our AYHL Playoffs to understand the strength of the League; with 19 members overall, 14 Members appearing in at least 1 of the 9 Championship games, and 8 different members being crowned an AYHL Playoff Champion…and there were a few upsets.

There is a fair amount of confusion in the hockey environment. The purpose of this memo is to alleviate the confusion, at least as it relates to the AYHL and the MJHL.

I am pleased to report that the AYHL is thriving. From what we do in the League to how our member clubs operate, from our All Star Events, Showcases and Playoffs, together we have created a consistently exceptional experience for our players.

We have thousands of AYHL and MJHL Alumni advance to the highest levels of the game from NCAA College Hockey to the National Hockey League and every level in between. That doesn't happen by accident; it happens because the AYHL Members and their Hockey Directors understand the needs of the Elite Player.

While we are proud to boast about our past, we are preparing for YOUR future. We are currently vetting some new potential members who have a strong National reputation. In addition, the League's Competition Committee has created a method that will have the top teams competing more frequently.

Over the last several weeks, we have received numerous calls from concerned parents regarding announcements made by two of our members. They announced the formation and their participation in league that they wish to operate under their own direction. The AMHL Board has adopted various policies that require each member to comply with; dual-league participation is one such policy. Both member clubs were provided an opportunity to respond formally to the League and given a deadline to comply or advise of their intentions to leave the League. Neither organization responded as directed and are not conforming to league policy, therefore the league is required to enforce the unanimous decisions of the AMHL Board, making these two organizations ineligible for participation in the 2016-17 Season. (Member Clubs for 2016-17 Season listed below subject to ammendment pending the approval of new members).

The AYHL is looking forward. The members of the AYHL are becoming increasingly more demanding of each other. They want to work with like-minded organizations and leaders who truly understand the challenges of Tier I hockey & Tier III Junior Hockey and want to work together to raise standards, accountability, while understanding the challenges of our families. This is all in the effort to improve the player experience.

Claiming to have a great League or Club is one thing; but the AYHL walks the walk and has the history to prove it. Since the AYHL's inception, its members have captured 12 Gold Medals,12 Silver and 27 Bronze from the USA Hockey National Championship and our alumni list and their achievements are unparalleled by any other Tier I Youth League on the east coast. The AYHL is not without detractors. Some clubs we have dismissed from the League or refused to admit to the AYHL aren't very flattering about us. That's ok. It comes with the territory.

Let me address Tier III Junior Hockey. Tier III Junior hockey is facing some serious challenges. We are aware of a practice called “scholarshipping”, where Tier III Junior teams provided tuition relief to certain players based upon ability and performance, and not based on need, thereby making it more expensive for the rest of the players on the team. This practice may be problematic from an NCAA standpoint and is prohibited by USA Hockey rules (see page 154 USA Hockey Annual Guide).

I often hear about Tier III Junior players being offered the opportunity to play in the USHL or NAHL mid-season, only to have the player’s Tier III team refuse to release the player, denying him the experience. This is also happening with certain youth clubs as well. This is unacceptable to the AMHL and its members in their support of the true ladder of development.

We welcome the opportunities of the NAHL and the USHL for our players, and have enjoyed strong relationships with both Leagues. The facts about these leagues are undeniable. According to U.S. College Hockey Online, there are 477 Division I College Freshman appearing on college rosters this 2015-16 Season and here is the breakdown of their previous amateur team experience:

PROGRAM	# of Div 1 Freshman	%
USHL (18 Teams – NTDP Included)	**169**	**35.43%**
CANADA TIER II (154 Teams)	167	35.01%
NAHL (24 teams)	**79**	**16.56%**
TIER III (176 Teams)	40	8.39%
US HIGH SCHOOL, PREP & EUROPE	22	4.61%
TOTAL	**477**	**100.00%**

The proof is overwhelming: 52% of NCAA Division I College Hockey freshman are developing in the USHL and NAHL prior to entering college and by percentage to teams, that's 10% of the “Elite” teams developing 52% of the players just prior to entering college. So it begs the question, why would any other league or team prevent a player from moving to a USHL or NAHL Team? I encourage every parent and player to ask that question during tryouts this year and look at the Club’s track record of allowing movement to legitimate Tier I and Tier II Junior hockey.

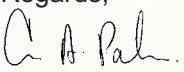
Any club that looks to hold its players back from great opportunities does not have it’s players best interest in mind.

For the reasons above and more, we have finalized and agreement with the NAHL for our Junior program for the 2016-17 season. Additional information will be forthcoming, however the most significant development is that our Junior program will be under the direct management and branding of the NAHL family of programs. The the NAHL relationship will not present any barriers to the USHL and we will continue to have a strong working relationship with the USHL as well.

I realize this is a lot of information to absorb. We certainly welcome your questions or feedback.

Best of luck to those teams advancing to State or District Playoffs.

Regards,



Gene A. Palecco
AMHL President
AYHL Commissioner
USA Hockey Director & Youth Council Member

2016-17 AYHL ORGANIZATIONS
CT Oilers
Junior Titans
Long Island Gulls
Long Island Royals
Lehigh Valley Phantoms
Mercer Chiefs
New Jersey Colonials
New Jersey Devils Youth
North Jersey Avalanche
Philadelphia Jr. Flyers
Philadelphia Little Flyers
Ramapo Saints
Team Comcast
Team Maryland
Valley Forge Minuteman
Washington Little Capitals
WBS/Jr. Knights