



### **Delaware Jr. Blue Hens Youth Hockey Organization Mission Statement**

First and foremost, we want to provide a safe family-oriented environment where everyone feels welcome. We want to develop a program that suits ALL skill levels (AA, A and B). We want to provide the resources to make our players and coaches the best that they can be. We want to facilitate the learning of the necessary technical skills required to excel in the sport of ice hockey. We want assist in the development of individual characteristics such as leadership, teamwork, work ethic and commitment for our players which will go far beyond the sport they play.

We are uniquely positioned to accomplish this due to our valued relationship with the University of Delaware and the University of Delaware Ice Hockey program. Our university-based facilities and the university staff supporting us are world class in what and how they deliver.

Provide an environment where families can get what they want out of the Tier 2 youth hockey experience based on their own family goals.

### **Program Goals**

1. Maintain an enjoyable and secure family friendly environment.
2. Provide the resources to enable our players and coaches to become the best that they can be.
3. Grow the program.
4. Field nationally competitive Tier 2 AA and A National teams within the next 2-3 years.
5. Provide the best youth ice hockey value in the area for what our families invest in terms of time and money.

The person we appoint as the Director of Hockey Development will be instrumental in helping us achieve these goals. The Director and the coaching team will assess what we need to do and how we need to do it as we bring our program to the next level. We currently have an outstanding pool of candidates.

### **Strategy Overview**

Clearly the best way to improve youth ice hockey in Delaware is to provide an environment where everyone that wants to play can play. In order to accommodate this philosophy, we need to establish a program that creates two separate paths:

- Developmental Track - Teams playing A American, B National
- Competitive Track - Teams playing AA, A National

In addition to technical skill, the competitive track will require discipline, a strong work ethic, strong sense of team work and a high level of commitment. Player movement between tracks will always be possible as skill levels change and family needs change. The same skill development resources will be provided to everyone regardless of track. Primary developmental focus at all levels will be on power skating, stick handling, hockey sense, physical conditioning and endurance. The JBH organization will expand its player development efforts into the offseason as we pursue our goal to become more competitive.

There are nine Jr. Blue Hens teams, including mites, registered for the 2018-2019 season. The University has the capacity to support up to 11 teams from an ice availability perspective. Our goal would be to field six competitive teams and five developmental teams over the next two years. Actual growth is unknown at this point. There are other rinks that are within a reasonable driving distance that can be used to supplement any ice shortage we may incur based on larger than expected growth. Ideally our team rosters could fall within the 15-20 player range.

Program goals within next two seasons based on player pipeline forecast, player development plans and estimated growth forecast:

- 18U - AA and A National level (2 Competitive)
- 16U - AA and A National, A American (2 Competitive and 1 Developmental)
- 14U - AA or A National, A American or B National (1 Competitive and 1 Developmental)
- 12U - AA or A National, A American or B National (1 Competitive and 1 Developmental)
- 10U - AA or A National, A American or B National (1 Competitive and 1 Developmental)
- 8U - 2 Developmental teams

## Strategy Summary

Jr. Blue Hens Strategy	Developmental	Competitive
Typical T2 League Placement Level	A American B National	AA A National
Coaching Strategy	Parent Volunteer	Non-Parent Paid
Age Levels	ALL	ALL
Player Requirements	Skill Discipline Hockey IQ Physical Conditioning	High Level Skill High Level of Historical Performance High Level of Discipline High Level of Team Commitment Physical Conditioning
Developmental Activities	On Ice Practice Off Ice Conditioning League Games Non-League Games Tournaments Supplemental Specialized Clinics	On Ice Practice Off Ice Conditioning League Games Non-League Games Tournaments Supplemental Specialized Clinics Stretch Competitions

**Notes/Comments:**

- 1.) Paid Non-Parent Coaching is planned to initially start for the 14U, 16U and 18U competitive track teams. Parent volunteer coaches will be asked to coach all teams (competitive and developmental) at 8U, 10U and 12U levels initially.
- 2.) Stretch Competition - a coach may desire that his/her team "play up" in league, non-league or tournament games to "stretch" the players and accelerate their development. "Playing up" will expose the player to a higher level of competition. This strategy must be jointly agreed upon by the coach and the parents.