



# HAWKEY NEWS

## Volume 3

### January 2019

## An Update From Our President, Paul Gaustad

Happy New Year to you, our PJW family!

In 2018, our association was faced with great progress and change. From 6U to 18U, the future of our association is strong as hockey continues to grow in the Pacific NW. As our neighbors in Seattle welcome their new NHL team – we certainly expect to see more and more boys and girls excited about hockey!



As we look ahead to another great year, we want to look back on some of the highlights from a fantastic 2018:

### **Our largest Metro Division (ever)! – 10U**

We have a six-team metro division at the 10U level comprised of almost 100 athletes. In an effort to promote skill development at this age level we first implemented half-ice game play last season and

coaches, parents, and athletes alike have witnessed substantial improvement in overall hockey skill. The half-ice action has been amazing to watch as well as being such a great tool for the players to accelerate learning with compressed small area games. I look back and am envious that I never had the chance to play 10U on half-ice with the excitement it brings and the learning it creates.

### **and.... USA Hockey Recognizes Bold and Innovative PNW for Half-Ice at 10U!**

USA Hockey recently recognized the PNW's bold new approach in their January edition of the USA Hockey magazine (See [jrwinterhawks.com](http://jrwinterhawks.com) for the story) in which three members of our PJW Board were quoted. Seeing our program highlighted speaks volume to the success of this format!

The opportunities for our players to make quick decisions in tight spaces with little time, coupled with more puck touches for players at all skill levels makes for a great season. Not to mention the excitement at the rink with two games happening at the same time. Wow! The kids love the roar of the crowd.

In case you haven't had a chance to read the article, we expanded half-ice this year to our 10U A travel team and the results are just as exciting. Starting out the season playing half-ice against Washington State teams in the Metropolitan Hockey League (MHL) has seasoned our players to improve in those battle and read-and-react opportunities in small spaces, which translates to all aspects of the full ice game. **(Continued on next page)**

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Hockey is a game of battles, even on the big ice and our 10U A travel team has made the most of their half-ice experiences and brought them to their full ice games, recently winning a tournament in Spokane on full ice. Our partnership with the MHL is also a great opportunity as Seattle hockey continues to grow with the recent announcement of an NHL team coming to the region in the 2021 season.

Half-ice hockey at 10U is not only growing in Portland, but throughout the region. Alaska has implemented some half-ice this season and Washington and Oregon USA Hockey affiliates require it at 10U. USA Hockey has taken notice, not only for the benefits to players, but also for the opportunity it presents for goaltenders. More shots, more action, more tracking of the puck, means developing goalies faster and a step towards USA Hockey goaltending goals.

Some people think half-ice is not “real hockey” because it is not played on an adult-sized sheet of ice, but take a moment and compare that to other youth sports. Baseball is huge in the NW, but youth baseball doesn’t put 10-year-olds on the mound at Safeco Field. They aren’t roaming that outfield or running those 90-foot bases. Soccer at this age group is not played on a full-size field like the pros either and the goals are smaller.

These sports would be very challenging for the kids and the skill development would be minimal on those larger adult playing surfaces. That’s not what we want for our 9-10 year-olds in hockey either, and if you ask our kids if half-ice is real hockey, they will give you a resounding yes. More action and puck touches equal more fun for our kids. Even Hockey Canada is seeing the benefits and has already begun moving all of their 8U to half-ice.

We are excited to be innovating and breaking ground with our partners in the Northwest and look forward to the half-ice game spreading across the west and the country.

## **Two Teams at 18U (Midget): PJW Athletes Look to Be Nationally Bound!**

Having two travel midget teams (18U A1 & 18U A2) this season has proven to be a great success! The development of these athletes is a sight to behold!

Both the A1 and A2 teams have the potential of being nationally bound; the A1 team will be attending AAA regionals in Las Vegas in March and the A2 team will be attending nationals in San Jose.

Our 18U A1 team has received national attention in rankings at the highest level of youth hockey in the country and we couldn’t be prouder of them. This is the first AAA PJW team since the 18U team in the 1998-99 season (which graduated on 5 players to juniors, college and pro levels of hockey).

## **Bylaws & Board Elections 2019**

The PJW bylaws have not been updated for a number of years and are in need of a refresh. In the fall, we requested membership feedback on the bylaws and appreciate the comments we received. We are in the process of finalizing modifications/updates and will forward the proposed bylaw revisions to the membership for approval in February.

One of our Board members is up for re-election in the February 2019 election. Our Vice President, Jason Vaillancourt, is up for re-election and has chosen to run for a three-year term.

Any member, in good standing, may run for a seat up for re-election. If interested, please reach out to our Secretary, Meerta Meyer, at [secretary@jrwinterhawks.com](mailto:secretary@jrwinterhawks.com) for more information and look for a more formal announcement soon.

## Alumni Game Honors The Past & Looks To The Future

On December 22<sup>nd</sup>, PJW alumni squared off in our inaugural Alumni Game vs. our 18U A1 team. It was a great evening of hockey, community and fun as we raised almost \$3000 for PJW.

A very special thanks to Coach Jason Nissen who took the initiative to bring back the alumni game. The inspiration was to create an event that would raise money for PJW and to allow a chance for our current PJW players to meet and watch players that have gone on to higher levels of hockey from Portland. We have so many stories of past PJW players who have had careers in hockey, whether that was playing, scouting, officiating, management or coaching.



We as an association felt that it is an important part of growing our culture and giving back to the kids. It was great to see the alumni out there together again.

Like our current PJW athletes, they built lifelong friendships during their days playing and growing up together and it is a great example to show to our

younger players. It doesn't matter where your hockey career takes you, it matters what you do with it and the lessons you learn along the way.

It was so exciting to see a packed house that night with our PJW hockey family, past and present. Thank you to Summer Facchini, Jennifer Shidler and all those who volunteered and donated items for our silent auction. We look forward to growing this event and making it even bigger and better next season. And by the way, the old guys won 4-2.

### PJW & Community Partnerships

- Our partnership with the Winterhawks continues to grow and we will further our efforts to create learning opportunities for our coaches and players.
- We've worked to ensure the Train Station supports off-ice development and fitness and saw some amazing gains by our older players who used the program this summer. As Paul Gaustad promised at our Annual General Meeting in June, when the Train Station becomes profitable, he will donate 100% of any direct profit made back to PJW.
- Our partnership with Rose City Hockey Club continues to expand in support of girls hockey. In addition to the girls development program, we have also partnered with Rose City for our Try Hockey for Free events as we work to grow our sport in Portland.
- And a very special thanks to all of our sponsors, including our newest sponsor, Cascade Orthopaedic Group.

### The Membership Has Spoken...And We Listened!

In our survey last year, our members – you – clearly communicated that we needed to implement opportunities for metro players to level up to travel hockey. Because of this great interest, the Development Team program model was implemented; the goal with this new program is to create a pathway for athletes who wish to compete above a recreational (metro) level. While it's a bit too soon to gauge overall success, we believe this will be a successful tool for players to develop at a higher rate and help them reach their goals of playing travel hockey.

## Coaches Corner with Director Chris Meyer – *Remember: It's always a good day to thank your coaching team!*

Our association places high value on our Coaching Staff's experience for the betterment of all hockey programs. To coach in our association, all coaches must meet stringent training requirements through USA Hockey's multi-level training programs. Requirements include but are not limited to attending in-person clinics, passing comprehensive background checks, completing Safesport and age-specific online classes before even being eligible to step on the ice. Coaches invest not only significant time to continuing education but also invest their own money toward credentialing and background checks so they may volunteer their time and offer best practices for the kids in our association!

Currently we have 105 "active" coaches in our association and **all of them** have completed their training requirements for the 2018-2019 season.

We'd like to recognize coaches Austen Potter, Chris Lewis and our PJW Vice President, Jason Vaillancourt, who recently attended USA Hockey's National Summit in Lake Placid, New York and are completing their thesis requirements to achieve USAH's highest Level 5 coaching certification – we are rooting for their success and wish them well!



Additional congrats to our very own President Gaustad who completed his Level 4 back in Nashville, while also teaching some of the class to other coaches. Who says NHL veterans can't continue to learn more about how hockey continues to evolve? Way to go Paul.



To ensure coaches remain engaged and knowledgeable throughout the season, our association offers ongoing education opportunities. On December 3rd, the Portland Winterhawks Coaching Staff, led by Mike Johnston, hosted the Jr. Winterhawks coaches for an exciting educational Coaching Symposium at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum. The Winterhawks Leadership shared various presentations teaching real world hockey principles and concepts.

The symposium was well received and coaches learned many new skills they could apply right away during their own practices. It is such an honor for our Coaches to have a professional platform to continue learning and growing. Special thanks to Kyle Gustafson, Mike Johnston, Don Hay, Josh Dye, Adam Purner and the rest of the Winterhawks Organization for sharing their time and coaching expertise with us.

Finally, thanks to all of you who spent time completing the recent survey about our coaches. I have been compiling the results and will share the details with coaches during our upcoming mid-season reviews. It has been great to see all of the constructive comments from our 6U-18U families. We will share more detailed results of the survey soon. If you haven't filled out the survey yet, please consider doing so as your feedback is welcome and appreciated; the survey closes on January 15<sup>th</sup> (Survey Link: <https://goo.gl/forms/xo2SwArf324Qg6Zu2>)

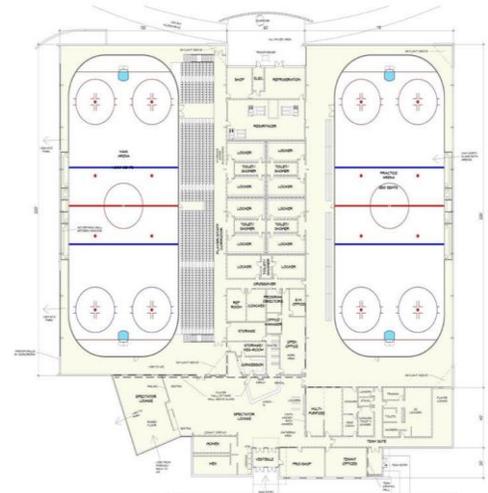


## **WE WANT MORE ICE! And, We Know...You Do Too!**

The Winterhawks have been working on the new two-sheet ice facility with their partners, THPRD, for some time now and Winterhawks President Doug Piper recently provided the PJW Board with an update.

The Winterhawks ran into a significant snag when the \$12 million facility they had planned for turned into a \$24-\$33 million project due to construction costs in the Pacific Northwest skyrocketing in the last few years. Fortunately, the construction boom is tapering off and prices are settling down. This fact, along with some other adjustments, has brought down the estimated cost to around \$18 million which, although much higher than originally planned, falls within the range the Winterhawks are comfortable to pursue.

The Winterhawks completed the Operating Agreement with THPRD and are finishing the Development Agreement. The Winterhawks are working with the Klash Group and these experts are preparing a request for proposals for architects and general contractors to be sent out this month.



Simultaneously, the Winterhawks are working hard on the fundraising / finance portion of the project to secure the final revenue requirements. So far, they have had many meaningful conversations and are very optimistic at this stage. As far as timeline for ground-breaking and completion dates, they will wait for the architects and general contractor to give an opinion once they are on board, but the Winterhawks feel at this time that opening in 2020 is still a realistic goal and one for which they are working very hard to achieve.

## Winterhawks Varsity Hockey League (WVHL)

This season, 36 high schools are represented in the WVHL! Varsity athletes must meet a minimum GPA of a 2.0 to play for the Portland Jr. Winterhawks although we're pleased to report that most high school athletes not only exceed this minimum grade point average but also spend many hours volunteering for PJW and other local organizations *and* many of our athletes also maintain jobs. We look to our high school athletes to set a tone for the other divisions and we are abundantly proud to see the hard work and dedication they commit to not only PJW but to the community at large.

WVHL 2019/20 Leadership Opportunity Available:  
As our WVHL Director, Meerta Meyer, was elected to PJW Board Secretary and appointed Advisor to the PJW Disciplinary Committee she provided notice to the Board that she will no longer serve as WVHL Director for the 2019/2020 season. In the event you have an interest in taking on this leadership role, please let Meerta know!

## Change & Opportunity- A Final Note from President Gaustad

It's no secret that change brings opportunity. While the association has witnessed/experienced changes – some of which may be perceived either positively or negatively – undoubtedly, we are afforded opportunities to continue to improve upon an already successful association. In this 2018/19 season, with nearly 600 athletes and countless volunteers – we've witnessed player improvement, random acts of kindness and humility, love of the game, community support, and so much more!

I am truly grateful for the countless hours our volunteer board members invest in creating a great environment for all families. Our coaches, team managers, locker room monitors and parent helpers are so vital to what we do. It goes without saying that our association is fueled by dedicated, passionate volunteers who work countless hours to promote a positive player experience and I look forward to the rest of the season in 2019 and offer a heartfelt thank you for all that you do!

Contact us: [communication@jrwinterhawks.com](mailto:communication@jrwinterhawks.com)

### Upcoming Events:

- Rose City Challenge MLK Tournament (14U)- Jan. 18-21- WSC
- President's Day Cup Girls Tournament, 10U Travel and 6U Jamboree- Feb. 16-18- WSC
- Hockey Week Across America- Feb. 18-24
- Try Hockey for Free Day- Feb. 23
- Metro Playoffs- Weekend of Feb. 22-24
- 8U/10U State Jamboree- March 8-10 (Portland hosts)
- 12U State Jamboree- March 15-17 (Medford hosts)
- 14U State Championship- March 8-10 (Klamath Falls hosts)
- High School State Championship- March 15-17 (Eugene hosts)
- National Championships in San Jose, CA- Early April
- End of year PJW meeting- Early April 2019