



TRAVEL TEAM OVERVIEW

Our travel teams compete in the Northern California Junior Hockey Association, NORCAL, and the member clubs are Berkeley, Capital (Roseville), Cupertino, Fresno, High Sierra (Reno and South Lake Tahoe), Oakland, San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Clara, Santa Rosa, Stockton, Tri-Valley (Dublin) and the California Northstars (Vacaville). NORCAL is a member of the California Amateur Hockey Association, CAHA, which is a member of the Pacific District of USA Hockey. Travel teams are formed at either the Tier, A or B levels based on the skill levels of the players. Tier teams are the most skilled followed by the A level followed by the B level. While Santa Rosa has not fielded a tier team in several years, we have fielded teams at both the A and B levels. The number of teams fielded by a club will be based on the number of players at each age level and most of the clubs will not field teams at every age level in both A and B levels. The Mite division in NORCAL has played at the B level for the last three years.

Competition within NORCAL is held in six different age groups. The Mite Division is for players aged 8 and under, the Squirt Division is for players aged 9 and 10, the Peewee Division is for players aged 11 and 12, the Bantam Division is for players aged 13 and 14 and the Midget Division is split two ways into a 16 & Under Division for players aged 15 - 16 and a 17.5 & under Division for players aged 15 - 17.5. The age cutoff date for all divisions is December 31.

Each A and B team in NORCAL plays 26 games, 13 at home and 13 away starting the weekend after Labor Day in September and ending in late March. The pre season schedule for all levels is typically the first 8 games leaving 18 regular season games. The mite level is an exception to this and the mites play a reduced schedule of 12 games starting in October and ending in February. NORCAL games are only scheduled on Saturdays and Sundays. Typically each team will play one game per weekend although there will be the occasional weekend where a team will play two games and an occasional weekend when a team will not have a game scheduled. NORCAL does not schedule games over Labor Day Weekend, Thanksgiving Weekend, President's Day Weekend or from Christmas through New Years. In addition, NORCAL does not schedule Midget games on weekends when SAT tests are scheduled.

Performance in the regular season games is used to determine which teams go to the NORCAL Playoffs. Once again, the mite level is an exception to this and the mites play in a season ending jamboree and do not participate in the playoffs. NORCAL holds separate playoffs at both the A and B levels with the top 4 teams in each age division following the regular season qualifying for the playoffs. The playoff format for each age division is a round robin with the top two teams, after round robin play has concluded, playing for the NORCAL Championship. These top two teams also qualify for the CAHA California State Playoffs, which are held at both the A and B levels. The top two teams from NORCAL compete against the top two teams from the Southern California Amateur Hockey Association, SCAHA, to determine a state champion at each age level. The playoff format for the state championship is the same as used in the NORCAL Playoffs. The NORCAL Playoffs are held in late March and the CAHA Playoffs are held in early to mid-April. The NORCAL Playoffs are held at one of the NORCAL member club rinks. The CAHA State Playoffs are held in either a NORCAL or SCAHA location based on which clubs bid to host the playoffs.

NORCAL does not allow travel teams to be formed for the A and B levels until after the Tier teams are formed and that tier selection process completes on 7/15. The clubs can then hold tryouts after that date for the A and B level and initial team declarations are due to NORCAL on 8/15. Teams do not declare as A or B, instead, the pre season games will be used to determine whether a team should play at the A or B level. For the first 4 pre season games, the schedule will be built at the end of August, for play in the month of September, based on seeding all teams

at an age level. The schedule for the remaining 4 games will be built at the end of September, for play in the month of October, based on the results from the first 4 games. Following the completion of play in this second schedule, NORCAL will hold a team placement meeting to split the teams into A and B divisions. NORCAL will produce a schedule for the first 3 or 4 regular season games in late October right after the team placement is completed to get the season going and then a full season schedule will be available within 2 - 3 weeks after that date.

In order to register a team in NORCAL, it must have a minimum roster of 12 players not exceeding more than 2 goalies and a maximum roster of 20 players not exceeding more than 2 goalies. This team size restriction and the need to assess player skills are the two major reasons tryouts are held. Based on the number of players who sign up at a given age level, the coaches must determine how many teams a club has, what level they play at and who has the skills to make the team. Ideally, you need 14 - 15 players to form one team, which means that you need 28 - 30 at a minimum to form two teams at one age level. Typically, teams at the midlevel need a larger number of skaters due to the players having jobs and missing games due to work. Teams at the younger levels can usually play with smaller rosters. If the coaches have enough players for two teams, they will typically try to create an A team and a B team with the better players being selected for the A team. If there are only enough players for one team, the coaches have to decide whether they have an A or B team based on the skill level of the players. Perhaps 7 or 8 of the players are skilled enough to make an A team but adding in less skilled players to fill the roster may mean that the overall level of the team moves to the B level. The coaches evaluate skills to make sure that they are not putting someone into a potential injury situation due to lack of skills or a combination of skills and size. The A teams are the most competitive with the highest skilled players while B teams typically have players whose skills still need to be developed. If a coach can see at the tryouts that he has a B team he will be more open to selecting less skilled players and give them the opportunity to develop and improve their skills. If he can see that he has an A team he will only select the players that can compete at that level. The club has Team Formation Guidelines that the coaches use during the tryout process.

Travel teams should generally expect either two practices and one game or one practice and two games each week starting in late August through mid March. Most travel teams will play in tournaments over Thanksgiving and President's Day weekends. Santa Rosa has hosted a President's Day Tournament for the last 5 years and the divisions in the tournament are built around the teams that the club has formed for the season. Snoopy's Home Ice sells us ice slots on Thursday and Friday evenings, which are used solely for practices. They also sell us ice time on Saturday and Sunday mornings and Saturday and Sunday nights. The weekend evening ice slots are usually used for home game slots and the weekend morning ice slots are used for practices starting as early as 5:00 AM. We provide NORCAL with the dates and times of our game slots and they schedule the games according to how they put the schedule together. Our ice time covers all of our programs including travel team practices and games, house and basic sessions. December is an exception for our club. Since the ice arena holds a Christmas Ice Show during the month of December, no practices or home games will be held at our arena. The teams will play away games during the first half of the month and we generally will get our practice ice back by about the 28th or 29th of December. The teams will generally try to schedule practice ice time at other rinks such as Vacaville or Berkeley during December.

The registration fee for travel team players is \$275, which covers tryout ice time, USA Hockey, CAHA and NORCAL team and player registration fees and a club registration fee. The club provides a \$50 discount if players register by June 30. Membership fees are \$1500 for the season with a second player discount also available. The fees cover all practice and game ice time and referee costs. In addition, they also cover some additional costs such as NORCAL and CAHA playoff fees for teams that make the playoffs, end of the season trophies for all of the players, and other club operational costs. They do not cover, any equipment, jerseys or socks that the player may need or travel costs that may be incurred such as gas or lodging.

Travel team hockey requires a significant commitment from both the players and the parents in both time and money but it can be a very rewarding experience for everyone involved.