

# Newark Ice Hockey Association

## 2026–2029 Strategic Plan

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### I. Executive Summary

The Newark Ice Hockey Association (NIHA) is entering a period of structured, mission-aligned growth. This three-year strategic plan establishes a sustainable development pathway from 6U through High School while strengthening retention, affordability, competitive alignment, and organizational control.

The objective is not rapid expansion, but disciplined growth rooted in our mission and community identity.

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### II. Mission Statement

**The Mission of the Newark Ice Hockey Association is to teach the youth of central Ohio sportsmanship, fair play, respect for coaches, referees, players and fans through the sport of ice hockey, so that they can continue to be good citizens and enjoy the sport of ice hockey forever.**

All structural, competitive, and operational decisions in this plan are aligned to that mission.

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### III. Organizational Vision (2026–2029)

By 2029, NIHA will:

- Operate a fully integrated development pathway from 6U to Varsity
- Sustain three High School teams (Varsity, JV, 16U Development)
- Achieve elite retention benchmarks across all age groups
- Maintain affordability below local market costs
- Hold full operational control of hockey programming at our home rink
- Be recognized regionally as a development-first, community-centered organization

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## IV. Strategic Pillars

### 1 Build From Youth

Reclaim early development and standardize progression across all levels.

### 2 Retention Through Community

Reduce burnout, increase connection, and strengthen family loyalty.

### 3 One Organization, One Culture

Integrate coaching and leadership across age groups.

### 4 Competitive Alignment

Place teams at appropriate levels including:

- B-level teams in the **Buckeye Travel Hockey League (BTHL)**
- Varsity and JV participation in the **Ohio Scholastic Hockey League (OSHL)**
- Strategic avoidance of unnecessary lower-level participation house leagues in the when local rink development models better support retention

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## V. Three-Year Implementation Plan

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### YEAR 1 (2026–2027)

#### Foundation & Structural Alignment

**Focus:** Program control, cultural alignment, and development clarity.

#### Key Actions:

- Implement structured 8U parallel development model

- Launch 10U localized competition pilot
- Formalize cross-age coaching collaboration
- Standardize practice schedules and rink consistency
- Initiate High School youth engagement nights

**Metrics:**

- +10% improvement in 6U → 8U retention
  - 90% roster return rate at 8U
  - Parent satisfaction baseline established
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## **YEAR 2 (2027–2028)**

### **Expansion, Performance & Infrastructure Control**

**Focus:** Enhanced development programming, competitive stability, and operational leverage.

#### **Player Development Enhancements:**

##### **1. Summer Training Programs**

- Age-specific skill development sessions
- Strength & skating emphasis
- High School leadership-led skill days
- Optional but structured offseason pathway

##### **2. In-Season Conditioning & Off-Ice Training**

- Structured dryland programming
- Age-appropriate strength and agility training
- High School performance integration
- Injury prevention protocols

##### **3. Film Study Implementation (12U & 14U)**

- Monthly structured film sessions
- Teaching hockey IQ and systems understanding
- Positive reinforcement model
- Introduce self-evaluation framework

This enhances player development while reinforcing respect, accountability, and team identity.

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### **Competitive Structure Actions:**

- Evaluate 10U localized model for scalability
- Fully implement tiered 12U/14U structure
- Strengthen B-level placement in BTHL
- Formalize 16U team planning

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### **Arena Partnership Initiative:**

**Objective: Secure 100% operational control of hockey programming at our rink.**

This includes:

- Full scheduling authority
- Programming alignment across age levels
- Branding consistency
- Revenue stream optimization
- Long-term facility stability

Operational control ensures:

- Consistent culture
- Practice time stability
- Financial sustainability

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### **Year 2 Metrics:**

- 75%+ retention through 10U
- 15% increase in High School roster depth
- Launch of summer and off-ice programming
- Formal arena operational agreement in place

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## **YEAR 3 (2028–2029)**

### **Program Maturity & Organizational Excellence**

**Focus:** Full pathway realization and sustainability.

**Key Actions:**

- Launch 16U Development team
  - Sustain three High School teams
  - Formalize coach mentorship ladder
  - Implement annual development reviews
  - Evaluate long-term ice needs and expansion capacity
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**Retention Benchmark:**

**Organization-wide retention above 90%.**

This includes:

- Age-to-age advancement
  - Reduced attrition at 10U and 12U
  - Strong internal promotion to High School
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**Cultural Outcomes:**

- Majority of Varsity roster developed internally
  - Unified coaching language across all divisions
  - Recognized as region's most stable and development-focused program
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## **VI. Key Performance Indicators (Board Oversight)**

The Board will review annually:

**Growth & Retention**

- Annual registration growth
- Age-to-age retention rates
- Internal High School promotion percentage
- Organization-wide retention (Target Year 3: >90%)

## Competitive Placement

- Stable placement in BTHL and OSHL
- Balanced roster sizes across tiers

## Financial Sustainability

- Revenue-to-expense ratio
- Ice utilization efficiency
- Program profitability by age level

## Affordability Benchmark

- Maintain player costs **below local market averages**
- Annual cost comparison to surrounding associations
- Financial aid availability metrics

## Development Metrics

- Participation in summer training
- Off-ice conditioning engagement
- Film session implementation compliance
- Coach retention and development participation

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# VII. Risk & Oversight Considerations

- Ice capacity limitations
- Coaching depth sustainability
- Regional league realignment
- Cost inflation pressures
- Arena partnership execution risk

Mitigation strategies will be reviewed annually.

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# VIII. Conclusion

This strategic plan aligns development, competition, retention, affordability, and operational control with the core mission of NIHA.

We are building:

- Skilled hockey players
- Respectful competitors
- Strong leaders
- Good citizens
- A sustainable community hockey institution

By focusing on youth foundation, structured development, retention, and operational stability, the Newark Ice Hockey Association will secure long-term strength both on and off the ice.

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If helpful, I can now provide:

- A formal Board Adoption Resolution
- A condensed Executive Summary for stakeholders
- A financial modeling framework for arena control
- A slide deck version for presentation night
- Or a risk assessment matrix for governance review