



NIHA April Board Meeting

"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"

Date: April 21, 2026

Time: 6:30-8:16pm

Location: LGRIA Conference Room

Members Present: Brad, Joycelyn, Rick, Ed, Tyler, Barry, Adam, Andy, Mike, Nandi, Jeff.

Non-Members Present: Kristan, John, Mike M. Julian

1. **Call to Order**- 6:31 p.m. Call to Order (Brad)
2. **Rink items** – (Kristen and John)
 - a. The rink will be closed May 15-31 for necessary maintenance
 - i. The May NIHA meeting may still be held at LGRIA, but Kirstan must be notified so staffing can be arranged.
 - b. When the rink reopens, Spring Skills Clinics and Stick & Puck sessions will resume.
 - c. Pond Hockey and classes will be offered over the summer
 - d. Temporary dasher boards present storage and labor challenges:
 - i. Used only 1-2 times per year
 - ii. Require 8-10 people to install/remove
 - iii. Currently stored outside due to indoor fire hazard concerns
 - iv. John W. recommended selling them and replacing them with lighter, easier to store boards.
 - e. The shed is in disrepair and needs repaired or replaced.
 - f. NIHA is asked to ensure training equipment is cleaned up after practices.
 - i. Brad suggested discarding damaged red pads.
 - g. LGRIA hopes to replace the dasher boards and glass next summer during the Ice Plant replacement. No definitive dates yet as negotiations continue.
 - h. LGRIA requested a meeting with NIHA board representatives regarding next year's scheduling.
 - i. LGRIA and the Blue Jackets organization are discussing the Blue Jackets Organization taking over the learn to play program. Further discussion with NIHA is needed.
3. **Approval of March Minutes**
 - a. Mike motions, Ed seconds. Approved unanimously.

4. Treasurer report

- a. Recent donations include \$5,000 from the Gaudreau foundation.
- b. HTP refunded NIHA \$3,500.
- c. NIHA is currently approximately \$35,000 positive, projected to finish summer around \$23,000-\$24,000 positive as expenses continue.
- d. Ed will be work with Barry on next year's budget as treasurer responsibilities transition.
- e. Board needs to discuss how to allocate donated funds.
- f. Approval of treasurer report
 - i. Brad motions, Mike seconds, approved unanimously.

5. Coaching Recommendations (Jeff)

- a. Coaches will not be announced until teams are selected
- b. No new coaches added
- c. No coaches dismissed, though some have moved on.
- d. Team Selection Discussion: The board discussed whether to waive the 48-hour deadline for announcing teams due to expected additions after tryouts. Consensus was to keep the 48-hour policy unchanged. Medical exemptions for tryouts were also discussed.
- e. Practice Squad Discussion: if more players try out than Varsity/JV rosters can support, do we release players not selected, form a practice squad, delay decisions until fall athletes return? Consensus was to create a practice squad to keep players engaged and skating. Mike proposed determining a fee for the practice squad. Brad suggested practice squad fees could help fund refunds for Varsity players not participating until November. General opposition to leaving players in limbo.
- f. Motion to develop a fee by May for the Fall Sports Stipend (Mike), Second (Brad), All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions.

6. Registrar Update (Jocelyn)

- a. Board needs new USA hockey numbers, safe sports, and background checks.
- b. Tryout numbers are up from last year.
- c. Discussion: Some players may be attending tryouts only for experience; clearer messaging may be needed.
- d. Discussion: Parent/player confusion exists regarding team levels. Consensus is to build the strongest possible teams by grouping players of similar skill level and assigning those teams to the appropriate tier.

7. End of Year Banquet Recap (Summer)

- a. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive
- b. Total cost: \$14,000
- c. Fundraising Covered: \$9,000
- d. Net NIHA expense: \$4,300
- e. Attendance: 375 guests
- f. Discussion: The board agreed the banquet should continue in some form, but current costs are unsustainable. A more affordable format should be explored.

8. Tournaments (Mike)

- a. NIHA has changed tournament companies to Big Bear Tournaments.
 - b. Scheduled Tournaments:
 - i. Grand Rapids, November 6-8
 - ii. Ann Arbor, December 4-6
 - iii. Lexington, January 15-18
 - iv. Oxford, February 12-15
 - c. Ann Arbor and Lexington offer 18U divisions if Varsity/JV wish to participate.
 - d. Julian and Ed will meet soon to discuss Varsity tournament scheduling.
9. **Practice Jerseys (Mike)**
- a. Proposal to require athletes to purchase practice jerseys.
 - b. Estimated cost: \$50/player, added to next year's fees.
 - c. Would eliminate annual storage, collection, and replacement issues
 - d. Julian suggested reversible jerseys for coaching convenience and potential savings. Mike will compare costs.
10. **Newark Invitational (Nandi)**
- a. Summer will take over administration of the tournament
 - b. Registrations and participation increased from last year.
 - c. Fundraising decreased by \$4,300.
 - d. General feedback was positive, except concerns about mismatched divisions.
 - e. Discussion: Newark teams continue to be overmatched. Visiting organizations are not sending true house teams. Do we transition the invitational into a travel tournament or find better ways to balance competition?
 - f. Discussion: Fundraising. The Newark Invitational has historically been a strong fundraiser, but concerns were raised whether the experience remains worthwhile. Possible alternatives include more adult league tournaments as a possible replacement for or in addition to the Newark Invitational.
 - g. 22 total teams participated vs 19 last year
 - h. Brought in \$15,750 in registrations (compared to \$14,000 last year) these numbers exclude the Newark Teams
 - i. Sponsorship or monetary donations:\$2950 this year vs \$7250 last year.
 - j. Many non-monetary donations helped with cost avoidance Raffle: \$1438 this year vs. \$1289 last year
 - k. Nandi recommends the creation of a Newark Invitational Committee to help organize and run the tournament as it is too big a job for just one person.

Total teams participated: 22 (vs. 19 last year)8 Newark – tournament fees were included in annual dues14 outside teams – brought in \$15,750 in registrations (compared to \$14,000 last year) THESE NUMBERS EXCLUDE THE NEWARK TEAMS Sponsorship or monetary donations:\$2950 this year vs \$7250 last year. Many non-monetary donations helped with cost avoidanceRaffle: \$1438 this year vs. \$1289 last yearOutgoing expenses: Such as banners, game sheets, medals, hats, ice time, refs, etc

11. **Survey Results (Nandi)**

- a. More players and families reported satisfaction with the program

- b. NIHA's location remains a major factor in choosing the program
 - c. Board agreed continued focus on the local community is important.
 - d. Families were pleased with competition levels, but less pleased with increased travel and related costs.
 - e. Many requests for more goalie specific training and a fulltime goalie coach.
12. **Volunteer Committees with Fee Incentives** (Nandi)
- a. Potential committees discussed:
 - i. High School (Varsity/JV) Committee
 - ii. Newark Invitational Committee
 - iii. Banquet Committee
 - iv. General Events Committee
 - b. Possible incentives for volunteers included:
 - i. Reimbursements
 - ii. Complimentary clinics (preferred suggestion from Brad for accounting simplicity)
 - c. Still to be determined are the volunteer hour thresholds and the reward structure.
13. **Miscellaneous Items** (Brad)
- a. New jerseys. Considering switching vendors to Pure Hockey for easier sizing access.
 - i. Discussed returning to twill fabric.
 - ii. Discussion to continue on Slack
 - b. Communication Platform:
 - i. Considering moving to a platform with archiving capability
 - ii. Discussion to continue on Slack.
14. **Motion to adjourn** 8:16 p.m. (Brad). Approved, unanimously.