



July 2026 Newsletter

Fall Registration is Open!

Visit kankakeehockey.com to register.

Irish

- Illinois West had the first meeting with the new president on June 24. They anticipate 16 varsity level teams and 15-18 JV teams. This will make regular season game totals between 24-26 games. They are implementing a tiering system. Tiers will be determined by the beginning of August and clubs will start scheduling toward the end of that month. The next Illinois West meeting has been set for July 29th via Zoom.
- Mark will be continuing as our head coach. Once we have an idea of how many players register, we can determine the total number of coaches that will be needed to cover the Irish and Coyote Midget team. Thank you again to those that had applied for either position.
- Coach Mark has shown interest in conducting a series of Saturday clinics in August before practices start. Exact details are in the works as Ice Valley is undergoing changes. We will announce dates and times once things are set.
- Reminder to all Irish players that have a 2008 or 2009 birth date, SafeSport training is a requirement in order to play this year and has to be completed prior to the start of practice. The link to SafeSport training can be found on the KYHC website under player resources.

Family Fundraiser:

These fundraisers go directly back to families as a credit on their account.

Hockey season brings great memories... and some legendary smells. Help support your favorite player while tackling the toughest opponent of all—hockey gear odor. With our first FAMILY fundraiser of the year, you're selling high-quality soaps that are perfect for players, families, and anyone brave enough to ride home after practice.

Stock up, share with friends, and help us "Defeat the Stink!"

Please see the attached flyer for details. (also available in the parent resources tab on the website.)

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/kyhc-shop>

Smells Like Hockey... Let's Fix That

The next board meeting is 8/10/26 @ 6:30 at Ice Valley.

Coyote

- At this time, our intent is for our Mite and Squirt teams to continue competing in the NWHL.
- NWHL will be holding their annual meeting soon.
- Our current plan is to field teams at the following levels: Pee wee, Bantam, and Midget (additive to Irish) with Central States Developmental Hockey League. This is pending approval of our application. If the application is not approved, we will field these teams in the Northwest Hockey League (NWHL).

Irish Highschool Committee

- We are in immediate need of volunteers to represent the following schools: **Manteno, Clifton, and Reed Custer**. If you are interested in representing one of these schools, please reach out to volunteer@kankakeehockey.com.
- The committee plans to order HS logo patches next month. **We still need jpegs for Clifton Central and Reed Custer.**

Community News

- **Kankakee Irish has a new Instagram page** for this upcoming season. Unfortunately, we were unable to properly transition ownership of the previous page from previous administration. We hope to prevent this problem in the future, so the new page is attached to the Irish chair email. Please follow **@Kankakee_Irishhockey** for all things Irish this upcoming season.
- Zach Mullady has stepped down from his position with KVPD. We appreciate working with him these last few years, as he has always been an advocate for youth hockey in the community. We wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.



Tier II FAQ

At this time, we do not have as detailed information to present as we would like. New information is coming at us incrementally, and the board is working to find clear answers to all of your questions and more. We will be following up with an additional board update to address all of this with the membership soon.

What will the travel look like?

We know that CSDHL is structurally a regional "Tier II" travel league specifically designed for elite competition spanning multiple states (including Illinois, Missouri, Wisconsin, and Iowa). We believe that the league tries to be fair about the amount of travel per team. For example, this may look like one weekend spent in the St. Louis to play any teams from that area. However, we have no guarantees how it will play out.

What is the Peoria Rule?

Teams that are accepted into the league are guaranteed a balanced home-and-away schedule. However, teams from northern Illinois (For example Rockford or Gurnee) may invoke the Peoria Rule, which means that they may request that we play our home game at their rink. The team invoking this rule would be required to pay for the ice and referee for the said games. With this in mind, we hope that most teams will not invoke this rule.

Some of our teams played in a Tier II league (NIHL) for Spring, and it wasn't a great experience. Should we be concerned with the experience being the same?

Spring season in any league or tournament is not a good indicator of what the experience will be like in the Fall/Winter. Based on discussions with AHAI representatives and other club leaders, Central States (CS) Prospects will be a very similar level of play as we are accustomed to seeing in NWHL. There are 3 divisions of play in CS Prospects - Red is the highest level, White is mid-level and Blue is the lowest level. We anticipate we will fit best in the Blue division for this first season and likely the foreseeable future.

What levels will be considered for Tier II?

Nothing is definitely set yet, but the way we are currently thinking about this is that Mite and Squirt would remain with NWHL with continued emphasis on development and preparing them for the next level. We see Tier II being a good next step for Pee wee and Bantam levels but may depend on the make-up of the roster from season to season and what is determined best fit. Regardless, development and continuous improvement would be a focus at all levels. In order to provide more options for our 16U players, we are also intending to field a Midget tier II team. This is intended to be additive to our Irish High School Hockey offering.

Will there be try-outs?

It is not the club's intent to exclude any players. We will continue to be a club that focuses on development at all levels. All players will have a place to play so long as we haven't met roster maximums. If we have enough players at any level that will allow us to field multiple teams at that level, then we would likely have an NWHL team and a Tier II Central States Prospects team at that level. In this scenario, we would need to have an evaluation to determine which players will be on each of those teams.

What happens to Balanced Ice Time (BIT)?

Balanced ice time isn't a requirement at Tier II, but that doesn't mean we as a club have to throw it out completely for our Tier II teams. We would likely see use of Power Play and Penalty kill lines but it would remain an expectation that all players get reasonable playing time.