

Restructuring of SYHA “AA” Teams for 2026–27 Season

“We’re not debating whether our top teams “should be AA” — we’re showing why SYHA is an AA program by aligning AA teams with true AA development standards”-- Mark Elliott, SYHA Hockey Director

Why we’re doing this

- SYHA named its top travel teams “AA” two years ago. Under today’s training volume and commitment level, those teams compete closer to high-A/low-AA, not a consistent AA standard.
- Families compare development offerings across programs. If we don’t provide AA-level features, we risk losing players to programs that do.
- This shift protects SYHA’s credibility and strengthens our identity: clear development pathway + a competitive AA experience.

What’s changing for 2026–27 AA teams

1) A third weekly on-ice development session (integrated into tuition)

- AA teams will have a consistent third weekly practice delivered via Erik Nates (or equivalent) clinic structure.
- Instead of separate registration and chasing sign-ups, this is built into the AA season plan.
- Key unity point: Nearly 3/4 of current AA players already participate in these sessions. This change brings the remaining group into the same development track so teams train and improve together.

2) Weekly off-ice development expectation (structured, practical, low cost)

- AA players complete ~1 structured off-ice session and/or film per week on average across the season
- Partnership with Connecticut Sports Performance (CSP), which will allow us space for off-ice once the time changes and we have less outdoor space at TCR
- Program designed by trainers and run by HC (film), assistants and/or parent assistants.
- Adds consistency and maturity to the AA pathway — not just more ice.

3) Season start benchmark: Labor Day Tournament

- AA teams begin one- to two weeks earlier and participate in a Labor Day Tournament (most likely Danbury Labor Day Tournament).
- Establishes an early benchmark for readiness and creates a shared standard across age groups.

Goalies: fully included, deliberately developed

- AA goalies participate in the clinics with skaters and receive goalie-specific support at the same time:
 - Work with SYHA goalie coaches embedded in clinic sessions
 - Where appropriate, also integrate with skating skills coaches
 - Included in off-ice, film, and development sessions relevant to their position
- The point: goalies aren’t an add-on — they’re part of the AA development plan.

What's not changing

- SYHA remains an inclusive organization: **every travel player** will have access to pay the same price for the clinics (and now off-ice opportunities), even if AA has a defined standard.
- Financial aid rules stay the same. Eligibility and criteria do not change.
- We're not "making it exclusive." We're raising the standard for the AA label while expanding access overall.

Financial impact

- Expected AA tuition increase: under 20%, driven primarily by the third weekly session.
- In many cases, families already paying separately today will see this as consolidation + consistency, not a surprise add-on.
- Financial aid will be applicable to full price, including clinics, whereas a la cart clinics in the past have not been.

*Applies only to full-season co-ed AA Travel teams through Bantams

2026-2027 Travel Tuition Schedule

Program	Stamford Resident	Non-Resident	Goalie
Mite	\$4,000	\$4,250	\$2,125
Squirt AA	\$5,600	\$5,850	\$2,925
Squirt (non-AA)	\$4,600	\$4,850	\$2,425
Pee Wee AA	\$5,800	\$6,050	\$3,025
Pee Wee (non-AA)	\$4,800	\$5,050	\$2,525
Bantam AA	\$6,000	\$6,250	\$3,125
Bantam (non-AA)	\$5,000	\$5,250	\$2,625
Midget	\$2,800	\$3,050	\$1,525
Lady Sharks U8-U14	\$3,650	\$3,900	\$1,950
Lady Sharks U16-U19	\$2,600	\$2,850	\$1,425