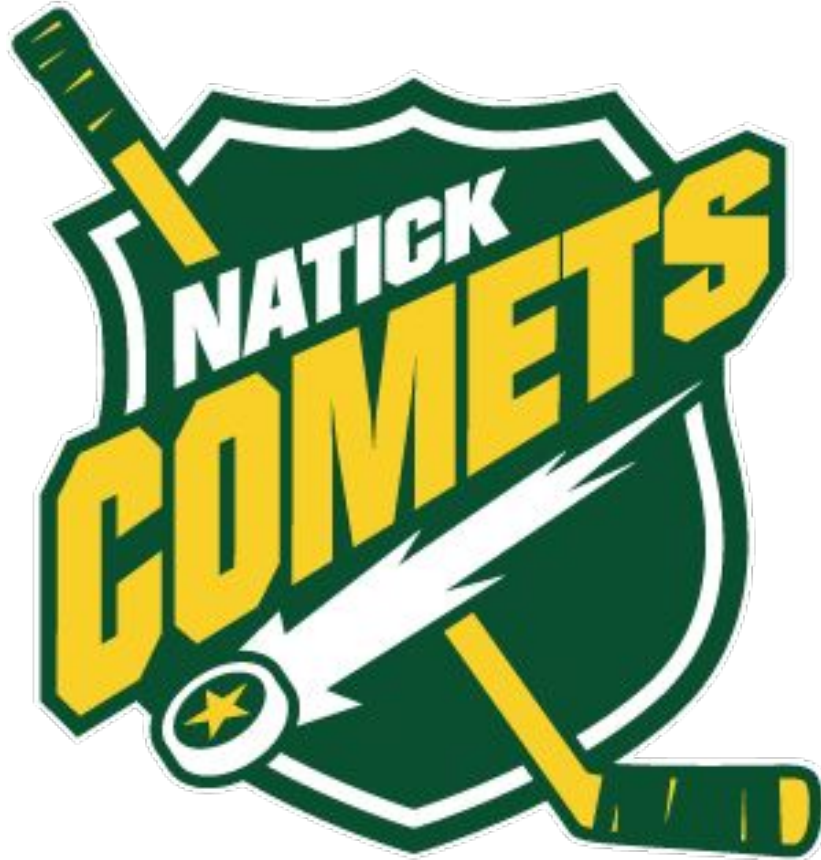


Natick Hockey Program



Mid-Season Survey Summary

Mid-Season Survey Purpose

- **Improve the services we deliver (youth hockey development)**
- **Build and expand the program.**
- **Identify issues and gaps.**
- **Identify unmet needs and/or new requirements.**

Survey Response Rates

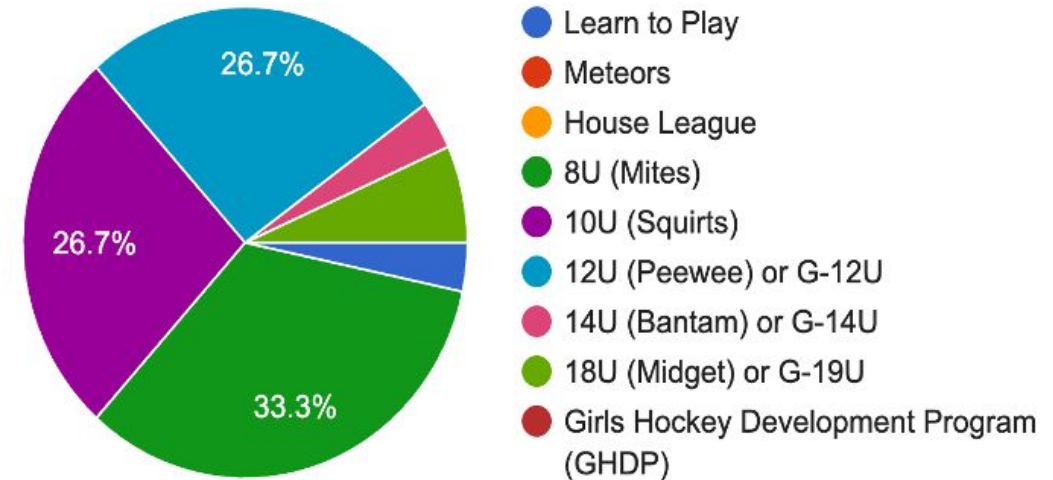
- **Coaches: 73%** (27 of 37)
- **Goalies: 40%** (8 of 20 (15 Coed and 5 Girls))
- **Travel Families: 28%** (99 of 348 families)
- **In-House Families: 9%** (14 of 153 families)
 - * LTP (80 total) /House & Meteors (54 total) /GHDP (19 total)
- **Players: 6%** (30 of 501 players)

About our Players

- 40% of respondents have played for 4-6 years, 53% have played for 1-3 years.
- 70% of respondents only play for the comets; 30% play for multiple hockey teams.
- 76% of respondents play hockey 3-4 days per week; 20% play 5-6 days per week.
- 86% of our Comets players participate in multiple sports (with the majority playing baseball/softball, soccer, lacrosse, basketball, and football).

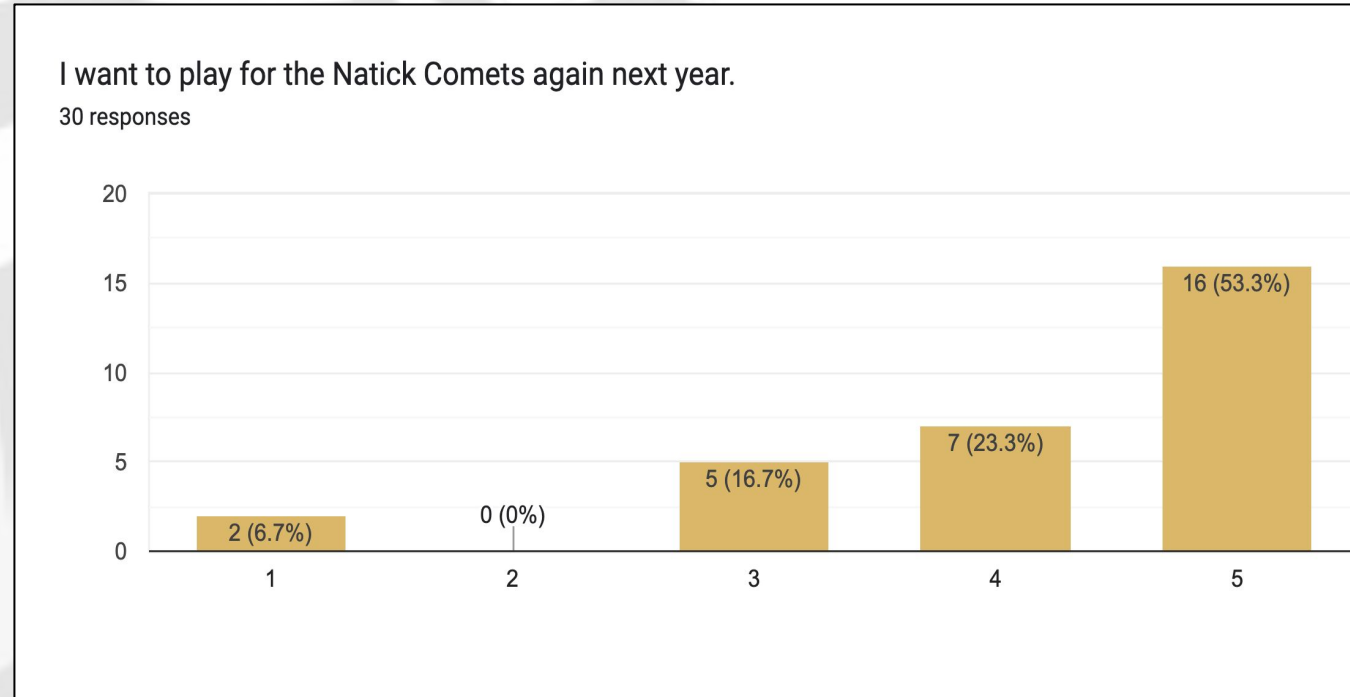
What level do you play?

30 responses



Player Satisfaction

- 80% of respondents have fun playing with the Comets.
- 76% of respondents want to play for the Comets next year.
- 83% of respondents believe they have enough practices each week.
- 89% of respondents feel respected by their teammates.
- 90% of respondents feel comfortable in their locker room before and after games.



Overall, players report a highly positive experience, with over 90% feeling they are learning significantly and receiving clear instructions during drills. While a strong majority also appreciates the emphasis on sportsmanship, the data suggests a slight area for growth in practice organization, which received the lowest satisfaction rating at 70%.

Overall Player Sentiment Player

- **What do you like best about your season so far?**

- Players emphasize that they most enjoy the social and competitive aspects of the season, specifically highlighting time with friends and teammates alongside participation in fun, evenly matched games and tournaments. They also value their time on the ice, including skill sessions, ample playing time, and the opportunity to play goalie. Furthermore, players expressed appreciation for the quality of their team, the practices, and their coaches.

- **What do you like the least about your season so far?**

- Players primarily dislike the repetitive drills during practices, specifically noting that the same drills and stations are used too frequently each week. They also highlighted logistical and structural frustrations, such as late practice times, game cancellations, and large roster sizes that lead to inconsistent shift lengths. Finally, players expressed dissatisfaction with being mixed with other teams or age groups during sessions.

- **If you could change anything about the program, what would it be?**

- Overall, the feedback suggests a desire for more quality ice time and a better team experience. Players want smaller teams and more opportunities to practice and play together, including full-ice scrimmages, more games, and increased or more frequent practices. There is also concern about practices being too short or too late for younger players, too many skill levels combined, and overcrowded ice sessions. Many emphasized making the program more fun and school-focused, with greater emphasis on puck-handling skills, and scrimmages.

Overall Coach Sentiment

Coaches report a positive, enjoyable season with strong player engagement, solid organizational elements, and clear development progress. There is a shared sense that many foundational pieces are in place and producing results. Coaches feel that team culture, player development, ice availability, and collaborative practice structures are working well. Station-based practices, combined ice sessions, strong assistant coaches, and external clinics are seen as major positives. Many coaches believe these strengths provide a solid foundation to build on moving forward. Key Highlights:

- **Positive team culture and sportsmanship**

- Players demonstrate good attitudes, respect, and teamwork.
- Teams are having fun while learning and growing—both as players and people.
- Active team managers play a meaningful role in supporting team culture.

- **Player development and skill progression**

- Coaches see clear improvement in individual skills and overall hockey IQ.
- Small-area games and station-based drills are especially effective.
- Tryouts did a good job placing players at appropriate levels, resulting in balanced teams.

- **Well-structured practices and collaboration**

- Station-based practices are well organized and manageable.
- Combined practices allow coaches to share ideas, divide responsibilities, and support one another.
- Coaches value having fewer teams on the ice (2 vs. 3) for better flow and instruction.

- **Strong coaching support**

- Assistant coaches are making a big difference.
- High school clinics and guest-led skills sessions (e.g., Bruce) are highly valued—both for player development and giving coaches planning relief.
- Coaches appreciate opportunities where they don't have to design every practice.

- **Effective communication and parent engagement**

- Communication with parents is generally strong.
- Parents are supportive and maintain positive attitudes, which helps reinforce team culture.

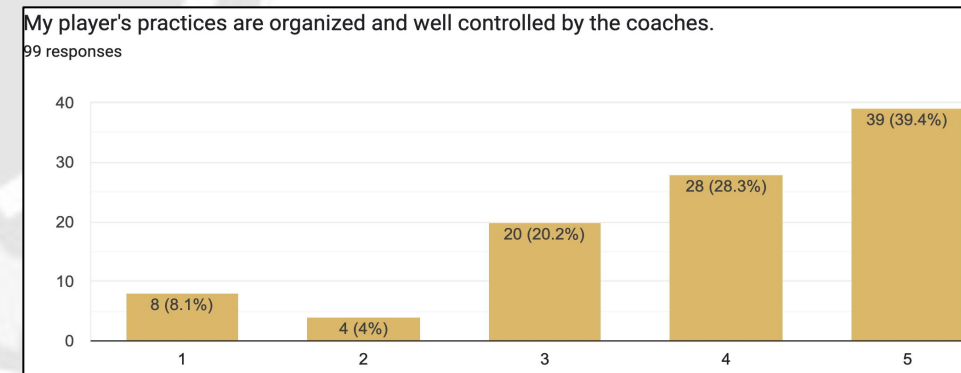
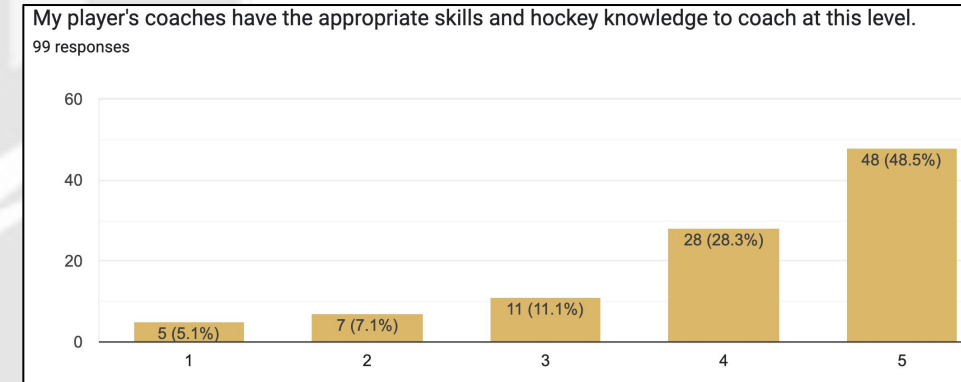
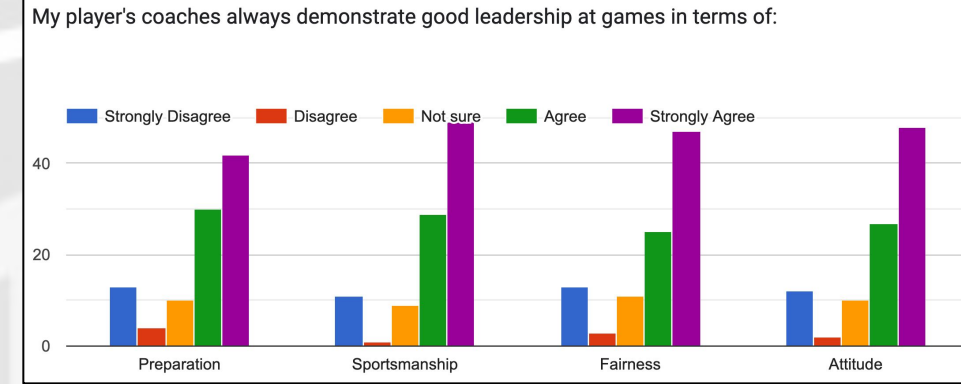
- **Adequate ice time**

- Coaches are satisfied with the amount of ice time for both practices and games.
- Consistent ice access supports steady development throughout the season.

Travel Family Comments on Coaching

Overall, parents **recognize and appreciate the time, effort, and commitment** our volunteer coaches are giving. There is a strong sense that coaches are **working hard and doing their best within the current system**. However, many parents feel that the **structure and support around coaching can improve to support the program and player development**.

- Most respondents believe their coaches are well prepared for games, demonstrate good sportsmanship, are fair, and have a good attitude.
- The overwhelming majority of respondents believe the comets coaches have the right skills and knowledge to coach.
- The majority of respondents believe their coaches foster a positive team environment.
- The majority of respondents believe the coaches communicate effectively.
- Over half of respondents believe their players practices are organized and controlled.



Plan of Action for Coaches

- **Rebalance station-based training with team practices.**
- **Empower coaches to coach.**
- **Better manage skill variance within teams.**
- **Provide more instruction and individual feedback.**
- **Optimize scheduling and staffing.**
- **Provide more consistent communication and organization.**
- **Reinforce coach support and recognition.**

Goalie Satisfaction and Plan of Action

Only 8 of 20 goalies responded to the survey; the data is not statistically significant enough to draw firm conclusions, but some trends regarding goalie retention, support, and training are visible in the responses provided.

Survey Feedback

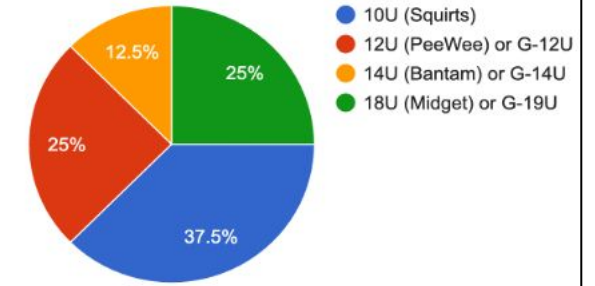
- Less than half of our goalies who responded to the survey plan to play for the Comets next year.
- Half of our respondents feel supported by their team when they're in net.
- Goalies want more practice on footwork/edge work, positioning, tracking, breakaways, angles etc.
- **More than half of respondents have not attended any of the Comet's goalie specific training sessions.** One has attended 1-4 sessions, and the other one has attended 10 or more.
- **Less than half of respondents have attended Stop-It through the Comets.** Four have not and one did not know it was an option.

Plan of Action

1. Rebranding the goalie program and increase early exposure.
2. Improve Communication with goalies and goalie parents.
3. Educate goalies and goalie parents on training opportunities and available equipment.
4. Review available opportunities and find options that better support our goalie community (especially our younger goalies).

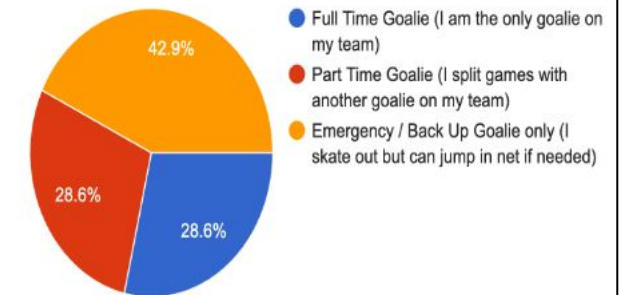
Player Level

8 responses



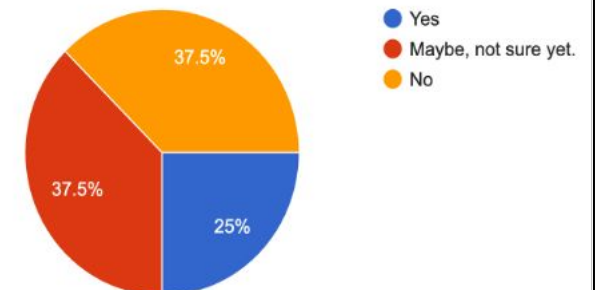
I am a _____

7 responses



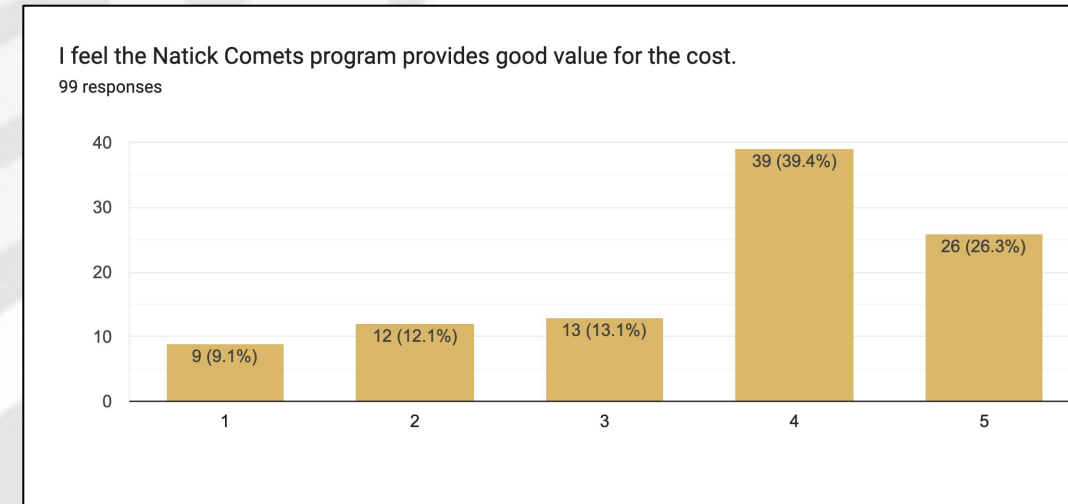
I will play goalie for the Natick Comets next year.

8 responses



Overall Travel Family Satisfaction

- Just over half of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the comets program; about a third are dissatisfied, and the remaining 20% felt neutral about their experience with the Comets so far this year.
- Most of respondents believe the Comets offer a good value for the cost.
- Families see value in the Comets as a community-based, affordable town program that offers predictable ice time, and the potential for team-centered development in a familiar environment with friends.
- When team sizes are appropriate and coaches are empowered, the program can deliver a solid hockey experience at a reasonable cost.



Travel Program Action Plan

- Ensure teams are appropriately sized next year; ensuring every team has a goalie and allocate ice so no more than two teams share a sheet whenever possible.
- Ensure practices are more organized, team-focused, and skill-driven, with stronger emphasis on skating, puck movement, sportsmanship, and goalie development.
- Better support coaches.
- Try to improve scheduling, with fewer late nights, no unnecessary midday holiday sessions, and guaranteed makeup games when cancellations occur.

In-House Program Assessment & Action Plan

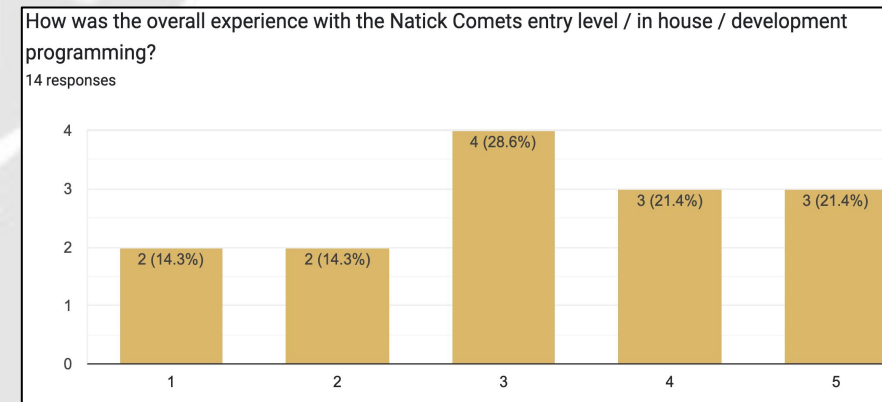
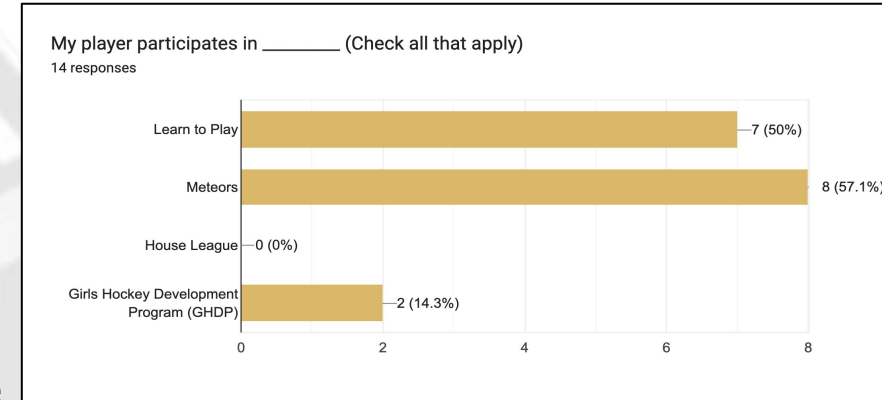
Although less than 10% of in-house families responded to the survey, the data suggest the Comets must reinforce in-house programming.

Survey Feedback

- Most of the respondent's believe the inhouse and entry programs provide good value for the cost.
- 10 of 14 respondents stated their player has fun on the ice and most respondents stated their player's skills and confidence improved.

Action Plan

- Bring back house league for older kids who don't want to do travel.
- Go back to 2 separate groups; ages 5-8 together and 9-12 together
- Ensuring bigger/ higher skilled players are matched smaller-younger-entry level skaters.
- Communicate more with parents.
- Increase team bonding opportunities such as LTP and House nights at FLEET or Providence Bruins etc.
- Continue to provide actual team jerseys.
- Consider integrating more instruction regarding positioning and play during house league.
- Closely monitor Steady State to ensure they're providing appropriate skills / training.



Thank you for your feedback!

While we learned many things that are working well, we also heard your concerns and recommendations to improve the program.

Since 1952, the Natick Comets have been a non-profit, volunteer-led pillar of our community. However, the landscape of youth sports is shifting. The rise of “for-profit” club teams and declining Comets registrations makes it increasingly hard to deliver a quality town program. The Comets Board is committed to ensuring the action items identified above are addressed to provide you with the best hockey youth experience for your players and for your family.

The Comets Board will incorporate all feedback from this survey, and will implement immediate changes for the remainder of the season where possible. The remaining concerns and recommendations will be addressed and implemented during the tryout process and team development over the spring and summer months.

The Natick Comets Hockey Club is truly ran on the backs of our volunteer coaches and board members and we’re looking for motivated community members to join our team next year to continue to provide a quality experience for our community. We need coaches and volunteers off the ice too (no hockey experience required!). For the board specifically, we are looking for:

President

Treasurer

Clerk

Director of Communications

Director of Events / Fundraising

Director of Goalies

Director of Learn to Play / House League

Director of SafeSport

Director of Team Managers

Equipment Manager