

# **Palo Alto Vikings High School Hockey**

**VIKINGS**

**PALO ALTO**

2025-26 Team Information

## **Palo Alto Vikings Team Background**

The Palo Alto Vikings inaugural season was 2018-19. The team has been a contender for the League championship in seven of eight seasons. Last season we were undefeated in the regular season.

The team has no formal affiliation with Palo Alto High School or PAUSD.

## **Sharks High School League – Varsity South Division**

The league age range spans four birth years and includes players from all eligible youth levels (in-house through AAA). Each team played 14 games in the 2024-25 regular season. The season runs from early October through February, not including playoffs. The two teams that advance to the Sharks League championship game advance to the CAHA state playoffs.

## **Regular Season Game Schedule**

Varsity South games are played on Monday evenings at Tech CU Arena at Sharks Ice San Jose. There are three games every Monday. The first game starts at 5PM.

## **Team Organization and Rostering**

The majority of players play for club teams and it is recognized that club events such as games and travel take priority over high school games. Current CAHA policy stipulates that players may miss club practices for high school games.

Although high school hockey is a lower priority with respect to club teams, we keep score in games, the league has standings, and therefore our goal every season is to win all of the games and the league championship. This is full contact hockey. Keep in mind that many teams have multiple 18AAA players on their roster. The game pace is typically at or approaching 16/18 AAA speed.

Youth club events, school-related priorities, injuries, and other important commitments often cause players to miss High School games. At the same time, the coaching staff would like to make sure we have a quorum of players dressing for each game.

The League allows each Varsity team to roster up to 30 players. Within that 30 person League roster we construct a **Major Roster** and a **Minor Roster**.

## **Major Roster**

- Coaches will select up to 17 skaters and up to 2 goalies
- Typically these are the most skilled and oldest players
- The Team fee is split among these players
- Players have priority to play in all games

## **Minor Roster**

- Coaches will select a number of players, possibly filling in all of the remaining League roster spots
- These players are typically the second tier of players, usually younger, but who we believe can compete near or at the varsity level
- These players will be eligible to be called-up to dress in games when Major Roster players cannot play
- There is no cost to participate in varsity games as a Minor Roster player

Last season we had at least one Minor Roster player in 13 of 14 games.

## **Coaching and Game Operations**

The Sharks High School League has an unusual mix of attributes compared to club hockey. The pace of most games is at or near the AAA level in terms of skill, size, strength, and speed. At the same time it's a side-line for most players and often players think that it is an opportunity to have fun playing a less structured style - for example hogging the puck. The coaches don't see it that way. In games we:

- roll the lines 95% of the time
- reserve the right to shorten the bench when there is something on the line such as at the end of a close game
- enforce playing real ice hockey, which requires a pass-first, move the puck mentality
- provide constant feedback and instruction to players during the game, e.g. you need to get the puck in deep before you change
- do not coach a system (even when we have practices) – we can do well if players have a basic understanding of positional play, an adequate skill level, and are motivated

There is no team policy for game arrival time. The 5PM game start is challenging to say the least for players in our districts. We don't have a group warm-up. At this age, players and families can determine what is appropriate for arrival and preparing physically and mentally for games.

## Practices

The Vikings have had a weekly practice for the first six years in the league, we did not have a practice the past two seasons. We prefer to have a weekly practice but it depends on the roster head count and available ice time. Assuming there is one, it is required to attend unless there is a conflict with some other event.

Practices are almost always skill based because it's the foundation of being able to play the game and is lacking in many players. You cannot be too skilled, and the game is fun in proportion to your skill level. The Vikings club developed players using the **Power Edge Pro** training system since 2020. This system was developed by a skills coach while he trained youth players at a hockey academy in Toronto. One of those players was Connor McDavid who continues to use the system. If you want more information you can contact me or search on youtube for *McDavid power edge pro*.

## Uniforms

Major roster players are required to buy home and away uniforms which are relatively low cost. Minor Roster players have the option to purchase a game uniform, or purchase a home and away practice jersey (with Vikings logo and number).

## JV Team

We intend to ice a JV team, ideally with a practice, but it is dependent on the number of committed players.

The purpose of the JV team is: 1) fun, 2) develop players in game play, 3) give advanced players leadership experience, and 4) familiarize players and coaches. The focus is on participation, not winning. There is usually a wide range of skill.

## Tryouts and Selection Process

At least one tryout session will be scheduled at the end of the summer. Last year we had 50 players attend the tryout. Due to the high player count and the number of new players we do not announce player selections the day of the tryout as we need time to assess the players including via LiveBarn video.

We select the Major Roster first and individual offers will be sent via email. Depending on the acceptances, some players who were designated as Minor Roster players may then be selected for the Major Roster.

All players who are not selected for the Varsity team rosters will be able to play for the JV team, assuming we have one. Players at or below 14U are eligible to play in both Varsity and JV games.

What are we looking for in players:

- skill level commensurate with high school age range and game pace
- high compete level
- coachable (mainly good listening skills)
- signs of hockey IQ
- good teammate
- passionate and committed to ice hockey
- belief that the player has watched at least a portion of an NHL hockey game

**Varsity Team Costs** (estimated, based on previous seasons)

Home and Away game uniforms: \$206

Home and Away practice uniforms: \$60

Team Fee (no practices): \$750

Team Fee (practices): \$TBD

**Coaching Staff**

Craig Janik, Head Coach

Terrence Sweeney, Assistant Coach

Gabe Brown, Assistant Coach

**Team Manager**

TBD

The Vikings staff are volunteers – we are not paid. All of the fees paid are to cover League fees, uniforms, ice time, and team-associated expenses such as the SportsEngine web portal.

Do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions:

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