

Why have PLYHA and CIAYHA paired at some levels? As most of you are already aware, PLYHA and CIAYHA have paired at the Peewee, Bantam, and Girls 10U & 12U levels again for the 2009-2010 hockey season. We would like to take a moment and explain the reasoning behind this pairing for both our boys and girls programs. The primary reason for the pairing is player development and preparing players for the High School level. Both the PLYHA board and the CIAYHA boards have agreed that both program's goals are to develop a competitive hockey program and not a recreational program. The goal of a recreational program is simply fun and games and being with your friends. The goal of a competitive program is fun and games but more importantly to develop each player's hockey skills to their full athletic potential so that they will continue to enjoy the game and not lose interest as they get older. The majority of players who continue playing hockey after Mites do so with the goal of playing high school hockey. By pairing we have larger numbers thus allowing us to have multiple teams of various skill levels. This is necessary to fully develop player's skills so that they hopefully succeed in playing high school hockey. It is a fact that players of all levels develop better and faster when they compete with and against other players of the same skill level. They enjoy competing with and against players who share the same level of passion and commitment for the game. It also provides competition among players to encourage them to work harder and get better. Competitive sports teach teamwork, compromise, respect, pride, courage, effort, and many other life lessons including dealing with adversity and disappointment at times in a positive and constructive manner. With this pairing our boys programs will now have the multiple teams necessary to developing a competitive program. With the pairing at the girl's levels we hope to see an increase in the numbers for the future years, number one to sustain the new Girls High School Team and to hopefully someday have multiple teams for better player development just like the boys programs.

Why and how should I support the pairing? Parents should support the pairing for the good of the players as well as the youth and high school programs. Both boards believe that in the long run the pairing will make our youth programs and our high school programs stronger. Obviously, some do not like change and will not like the pairing and will not want it to succeed. Unfortunately, many of these individuals will not be able to bring themselves to look at the big picture of the program and what is really in the best interest for the majority of the players and the programs. They will simply focus on their own individual personal needs, wants, and what is convenient for them, their family, and their player. They will not be willing to sacrifice for the good of the programs, the sport, or the kids. So when you hear those few complaining, always stop and ask yourself why they are complaining, is it legitimate and for the good of the program or for the good of their own personal needs and wants. The PLYHA board and the CIAYHA board have appointed a hockey committee of members from both associations with hockey knowledge to oversee the paired teams. Bryan Henrichs is the chair of the committee which includes both associations president's Kevin Stangel and Scott Snyder, as well as; Shawn Chambers, Tom Ayd, Dan Haasken, and Tony Maucieri. This committee is responsible for governing the hockey aspects associated with the teams. It has been decided by the committee that we will field an A team and B team at the Peewee level and B team at the Bantam level for the 2009-2010 season. Due to low player numbers at the Bantam level, we are only able to field one team this year and the committee has decided that the B level is the appropriate level for this group for this season. The ultimate goal of the pairing is to allow our players and program to develop a high level program that will benefit the current players and future players when they

get to High School. Obviously, this will not be a popular choice with some. Many parents may simply judge the season by wins and losses and the scoreboard. The committee and coaches fully understand that we are going to take some lumps at these levels but are willing to do so for the future good of the players and the program. A competitive hockey program's job is to prepare players for High School hockey. In the short run playing B2 or C hockey may be more fun because winning is fun, but our players will end up paying the price in the long run when they get to High School hockey. Playing A & B hockey will force players to step up, work harder, play harder, and become better hockey players. The coaches understand what they may be in for this season but are committed to keeping the players positive and focused on the long term goal of getting better rather than winning games. Players need the parents to be on the same page and support the good that will come from playing A and B level hockey and not the negative. Some of you may remember 6-8 years ago when our PLYHA B teams could not even compete at the B level, many teams remember the double digit losses game after game, many that started with a 2. But our teams never quit working and playing and there was no C level to step down to so that they could win, they just kept trudging forward working hard and slowly improving year after year. Well the last 4-5 years we have seen many of our top B teams dominating the B level in District 15 and recently even getting to region's and the state tournament. The committee and coaches feel it's important to continue this trend of improvement and step up to the next level. We will take our lumps and losses and use what we learned with our history at the B level to develop our A level. There will never be a perfect or easy time to make the jump and now is as good as any. Because we have been waiting the last few years we have lost several players over that time that would have stayed if we would have made the jump sooner. It might be difficult for a few years and the first year will be the toughest but it will all pay off these current players when they get to High school.

Thank you for your anticipated patience and understanding.
-The Joint Hockey Committee