



Mites Program



Mite Levels for 2011/2012 Season:

Mite Level	Age Group	Practices
Mites Level 1	Ages 5 or 6 (or 7 yr olds that are new to hockey)	1 or 2 practices per week
Mites Level 2	Ages 6 or 7 (or 8 yr olds that are new to hockey)	2 practices per week
Mites Level 3	Ages 7 or 8 (who have sufficient skating skills)	2 – 3 practices per week PLUS up to 15 games
“Intro to Hockey”	Ages 4-6 new to hockey	1 practice per week

“Hockey Age” – As defined by Minnesota Hockey, a child’s hockey age is the age they are on June 30th of the year the season starts. Thus, if a child turns 5 on August 15th, they are technically considered a 4 year old at season start. If they have turned 9 by June 30th, they are not eligible to participate at the Mites level for the upcoming season. Please contact the FLHA Registrar for clarification.

Detailed descriptions of each Mite Level:

Mites Level 1:



This level is generally for boys and girls ages 5 or 6 who have completed 1 year of the Mite / Intro to Hockey program OR have basic skating & hockey skills (ie ability to glide and move around on the ice) OR for 7 yr olds that are new to skating. Mite 1 skaters practice more often and there is a greater focus on further development of skating skills and on learning the basics of hockey but with a continued emphasis on having fun.

Cost for Season: \$300 (\$175 with raffle sales*)

- Costs include Jersey, Socks and primarily ice time costs
- Families have the option to sell FLHA raffle tickets to reduce player costs
- Kids will skate indoors 1-2 days per week (generally Saturday or Sunday) and an occasional mid-week outdoor skate is possible.
- Most hockey sessions will be practices that focus on skating and hockey skills. Small area games will be incorporated into practice sessions.
- Game days will occur 1x per month, beginning in December. Games will be cross-ice or half-ice, and will be with other Forest Lake teams.
- There will be a game day in January and a “Jamboree” hockey event at the end of February to conclude the season.
- Skaters can expect to have approx 28-32 hours of ice time during the season.

** \$300 cost includes \$125 of FLHA raffle tickets. Although it's not required that the raffle tickets be sold, any and all sale proceeds are retained by the Individual who pays the registration fee.*

Mites Level 2:



This level is generally for boys ages 6 or 7 who have completed at least 1 – 2 years of the Mite program OR for 8 yr olds that are new to skating. Girls are also welcome to participate in the Mite 2 program. The focus of Mites 2 is on improving basic skills learned in Mites 1 and learning more advanced hockey and skating skills. Practice frequency increases and mid-week outdoor practices may be added. This level also spends more time on small area games and 3 on 3 drills.

Cost for Season: \$400 (\$275 with raffle sales*)

- Costs include Jersey, Socks and primarily higher ice time costs
- Families have the option to sell FLHA raffle tickets to reduce player costs
- Kids will skate indoors 2 days per week (generally Saturday or Sunday) and an occasional mid-week outdoor skate is possible.
- Most hockey sessions will be practices that focus on skating and hockey skills (i.e. forward strides, forward crossovers, stopping, backwards skating, stick handling, backwards crossovers, transitions, puck protection, etc).
- Small area games will be incorporated into practice sessions (ie cross-ice, half-ice and 3 on 3 play).
- Game days will occur 1x per month, beginning in December. All games will be “in-house” against other FLHA teams.
- There will be a game day in January and a “Jamboree” hockey event at the end of February to conclude the season.
- Skaters can expect to have approx 32-36 hours of ice time during the season.

** \$400 cost includes \$125 of FLHA raffle tickets. Although it's not required that the raffle tickets be sold, any and all sale proceeds are retained by the Individual who pays the registration fee.*

Mites Level 3:



This level is generally for boys ages 7 or 8 who have completed 2 -3 years of the Mite program AND whose hockey skills have advanced to a level sufficient for Level 3. An informal review of player skill levels will occur at the start of the season to insure proper placement. Mite 3 skaters will focus on more advanced skating and stick handling skills, and will introduce team play and rules of the game to prepare for advancement to the Squirt level.

Cost for Season: \$600 (\$475 with raffle sales*)

- Costs include Jersey, Socks and ice time for practices and games. Ice time is significantly increased at this level which is reflected in the cost.
- Families have the option to sell FLHA raffle tickets to reduce player costs
- An informal Clinic/Evaluation will be conducted at the beginning of the season. We reserve the right to request a child play at Level 2 if deemed necessary by the coaching staff. Such a request will be based solely on the skating/hockey ability of the child. There are not a set number of roster openings at Level 3, and thus no child will be “cut” based on available roster openings.
- We highly recommend that kids are not pushed to a level that is higher than their ability would dictate solely to provide more game opportunities. This can be counter-productive and typically diminishes a player’s interest in the game. Being out-skated by everyone on the ice is not a fun experience for a young skater.
- Kids will skate indoors 3 days per week on average (Saturdays, Sundays and mid-week – possibly Wednesday evening). An occasional mid-week outdoor skate is possible, in addition to the indoor skates.

- Most hockey sessions will be practices, focusing on skating and hockey skills along with an introduction to game skills (rules, positions, basic strategies). The ratio of practices to games will be approximately 3½:1
- Approximately 14 full ice games will be played during the season, including the Jamboree event at the end of the season. Games will begin after December 15th. Games will be played against teams outside of the Forest Lake Hockey Association. Approximately ½ of the games will be at the FLAAA Sports Center, and the other ½ at other District 2 arenas.
- Skaters can expect to have approx 50 hours of practice ice time during the season, in addition to the games.

** \$600 cost includes \$125 of FLHA raffle tickets. Although it's not required that the raffle tickets be sold, any and all sale proceeds are retained by the Individual who pays the registration fee.*

Interest in Coaching?

All coaches in the Forest Lake Hockey Association are parent volunteers who have donated their time and effort for the betterment of youth hockey and kids in general. If you have an interest in helping out on the ice, your assistance would be greatly appreciated and will likely be a very rewarding experience. You are encouraged to contact the Mites Director in you are interested in coaching or in other volunteer opportunities.

Questions?

Please direct any of your questions to the Mites Director:

Jeff Dzurik – ph# 612-481-1671 – email flmitehockey@gmail.com

What Equipment is Required

- ✓ **Hockey Skates** – available to purchase OR for lease at Forest Lake Cycle & Skate (located inside the arena) and other sporting goods stores. Other sources include garage sales or from other parents with kids in hockey, etc
- ✓ **Body Pads** – full body pads includes shoulder pads, breezers (pants), elbow pads, gloves, and shin guards. Inexpensive “starter sets” are available at Forest Lake Cycle & Skate and other sporting goods stores.
- ✓ **Helmets** – youth size hockey helmets must have facemask/shield and can be found new or used through a variety of sources.
- ✓ **Hockey Stick** – beginner hockey sticks (wood with straight blade) are recommended for young skaters and generally are less than \$20 at most hockey retailers.
- ✓ **Jersey & Hockey Socks** – these items are **provided** free-of-charge for players on all Mite teams.
- ✓ **Mouth guard** – these can be obtained at any sporting goods store.

Other optional/suggested items:

- **Protective Gear** – protective cup or pants are encouraged for boys
- **Thermal underwear** – most kids prefer to have either thermal underwear or light clothing under their equipment
- **Hockey Tape** – this will be needed to tape up the hockey stick
- **Skating socks** – generally kids are more comfortable in their skates wearing a thin, breathable sock
- **Neck Guard** – an optional item that parents may want to consider

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the minimum age for Mites? – Generally a child should have turned 5 by June 30th of the preceding summer to play Mites Level 1. A new 4 year old skater will likely find the “Intro to Skating” program to be more age appropriate. For those parents of 4 year olds that would like to register for Mites, it is recommended that you contact the Mites Director to discuss.

How do I know what level to register my child for? If you are uncertain about which level is most appropriate for your child, please consult the Mite level descriptions in this document which will guide you in the right direction. For unique situations that make the decision unclear, it is recommended that you contact the Mites Director.

Should I sign my child up for a level that will be especially challenging? – It can often be counter-productive to overly challenge your child when it comes to hockey (and probably many other things as well). The FLHA Mites program works diligently to insure that skating groups are put together with thought. Your child should be challenged but not overwhelmed. Some days they might skate with a mix of skill levels and other days with those of their own skill level. By carefully combining levels, we hope to motivate and inspire your skater and bring out the best of him/her that we can.

Does our family need to live within the Forest Lake School District? – If your child attends a school within the FL School District, they are eligible to enroll in this program. You do not need to reside within the district boundaries.

Is there a way to reduce the registration fees? – Hockey can be a bit expensive due to the cost of ice-time, but the Forest Lake Hockey Association is sensitive to that and offers way to reduce costs to families. The most common way is by selling the FLHA raffle tickets. Each family is provided a booklet of tickets that total \$125 and the proceeds from the sale are retained by the family. Also, there may be volunteer opportunities through FLHA. Please contact any FLHA board member to inquire about those.

Will a pre-season Parent's meeting be held? – Yes, we will conduct a special parents meeting that is exclusive to the Mite level so that the information is pertinent and applicable to your skater. This meeting is generally held in early October and the exact day and time will be communicated to you a few weeks in advance.

Do I need to stay at the arena during the practice? Yes, it is required that at least one parent/guardian be available during the practice just in case their child might need something.

When will the kids be able to play games? – all Mite levels will play games but it is very limited and especially for the lower levels. USA Hockey guidelines strongly discourage excessive game playing at this level. Although games are much more entertaining to watch for parents, each child has a relatively small amount of time with the puck and therefore skills acquisition is severely restricted. Nonetheless, we will mix in some games and also finish the year with an exciting Jamboree that the whole family can attend! Game scores are not tracked/recorded at any Mite level (per MN Hockey & District 2 rules)

Are the teams based on the elementary school the players attends? – For Mite levels 1 & 2, we try as best as possible to keep classmates together on the same team, but it cannot be guaranteed. For Mite level 3, other factors play a more significant role in team formation. If there is a special situation that needs to be addressed, you are encouraged to discuss it with the Mites Director.

When does the season begin and end? – For Mites, the season will typically begin in mid-October and go until the end of February (right up until spring break).

What time are the practices and on what days? – Practice times will vary from week to week and will be communicated through the Team Manager and the FLHA website. The ice scheduler makes every attempt to balance the team's distribution of practice times to try to accommodate family schedules and plans.

Should I sign up my skater for the FLHA Development Clinic? – The Clinic is not a required item for Mite skaters but it does offer a way to give them a great jump start into the season. Half-Clinic options are also available for Mites only.