Dear Parents and Players,

I, Chris Cook and Sean Langdon are grateful for the opportunity to be the U9MD coaches for the upcoming 2023-24 hockey season.

I have been involved in sports my whole life. In hockey, I played locally within Kingston Minor Hockey. I was lucky enough to continue playing hockey in the Ontario Hockey League for 4 seasons. I then played at St. Thomas University in Atlantic Canada while I completed my post-secondary degree. I have been coaching for the past two season with KAMHA AA program leading the U9 AA program 2021-22 and again with U10 AA program 2022-23.

Sean is originally from Ottawa ON, and played AAA minor hockey with several centers in the HEO Hockey League. At 16, he was drafted Ontario Hockey League and played for 4 seasons in the Ontario Hockey League. In 2003 Sean had a tryout with the Ottawa Senators. Sean then went on to play at York University while he completed his post-secondary degree. Sean has been involved in coaching with competitive hockey programs from the AAA to AA levels including multiple years with KAMHA since concluding playing.

We are certain you and your child notice a significant difference as we make the transition from House League to Competitive Hockey. We hope to clearly outline the expectations to make that transition as seamless as possible. The time commitment is the most obvious difference. There will be two practices (full ice) during the week and up to two games on the weekend. Players are expected to take part in all practices and games. Practices will be run with more intensity. It is expected that players show up to every practice ready to focus, work their hardest, play with discipline and support their teammates. In games our goal will be for players to have equal ice time. For the first half of the season, we will play half-ice games which will be organized with other area teams that have U9MD teams. Starting January 15th, we make the transition to a mini season within the Lakeshore League that is full-ice.

Our focus for this year is to create a fun, positive environment in which players develop skills that will help them to excel both on and off the ice. We will consider this season a success if each player develops their hockey skills and loves the game of hockey more at the end of the season than they do right now!.

Below is some preliminary information we would like to share to hopefully answer some questions.

**Tournaments:**

This team is only allowed to participate in three tournaments. One of these tournaments is March Championship Weekend held in Kingston. This tournament is the league playoff championship and is counted as one of the three tournaments. The team will participate in two other tournaments that are yet to be determined. You may have heard of Jamboree tournaments; these are half ice tournaments which we will not be attending. They count towards our three tournaments and their purpose doesn’t fit the development we seek for the players.

**Fundraising:**

Depending on fundraising activities families should expect to contribute over and above the KAMHA team dues. We can limit or eliminate this extra financial commitment through fundraising. I have an approximate estimate from years past that our team will require an additional $10,000 raised in order to operate (tournaments, buses, etc.).

Bussing: Are a requirement as of November 1st 2023 for teams travelling past Belleville ON,. This is a KAMHA policy we must follow.

**Team Operation:**

Our responsibilities and time commitment do not extend past coaching duties. We. are volunteers and receive no compensation for our time, so please keep this in mind. In order for this team to operate many volunteer positions will need to be filled. Any required hockey certifications are reimbursed by KAMHA. If you’re interested in any of the following positions, please reach out to me via email (chris.cook@kamha.ca). The duties and commitment can be discussed upon request after the team is formed.

* **Assistant Coaches (1)** – Hockey Canada Certification required;
* **Trainer** ­- Hockey Canada Certification required;
* **Team Manager**
* **Fundraising Coordinator**
* **Parent Representative**
* **On Ice Help for Practices As Required**

**Tryouts:**

There will be four pre-skates (unevaluated) prior to the tryouts beginning. The pre-skates will begin after the Labour Day long weekend. The tryouts will last approximately 7 days. Sign-up process: families register by paying the house league fee followed by the tryout cost. If the player is successful, then your competitive hockey fee is extra.

The following are the core hockey priorities that I will look for when evaluating players trying out for the team.

1. **Attitude**
* Shows respect for the game, teammates, coaches, officials and opponents
* Supports teammates
* Desire to learn and show discipline at all times
1. **Skating:**
* Sound agility and balance on both feet
* Speed and acceleration in all directions
* Ability to have speed with and without the puck
1. **Hockey sense:**
* Ability to make teammates around them part of the play
* Ability to read the ice and react to the situation
* To be creative
1. **Puck control**:
* Skill to handle puck at high speed in traffic and open ice
* Ability to make hard and accurate passes
* Skill to place their shots on net
1. **Complete player:**
* Strong in battles in all areas of the ice
* Relentless work ethic
* Keeps emotions under control

**U9MD Program Extra Information:**

KAMHA is an evolving organization that understands the game of hockey is changing and a player’s development is instrumental early on. KAMHA has made additional commitments to the U9MD players by bringing Power Skating coach Ben Russenholt on for sessions in the fall until Christmas break. Our goalies will get to work with Kevin Druce. The team will also be afforded 5 team sessions at Stone City Athletics Gym. This will introduce the players to off ice training and serve as some team building. Also, for the U9MD program the player’s Bauer tracksuit (worn to games), as well as their home and away jerseys are included in your fees. This commitment by KAMHA is a significant contribution towards the players development and cost savings for the equipment side.

**2016 Birth Year Tryout Information:**

As per OMHA every player has the right to try out for an age group older than his/her age group. Each association must have its own guidelines in place outlining underage player eligibility criteria. For KAMHA these are the guidelines:

* This only applies to the AA level (not the A level)
* You must be evaluated in the top 3 of all skaters in the age group you are trying out for
* Making the team is not solely based on skill but maturity as well
* The coach has full discretion to only select player born in the year of that age group

I hope this has given you some insight into who Sean and I are, what our expectations are for this coming season. I know there are details not covered in this introduction letter.

If you have any questions before then, feel free to contact me. The best way to reach me is by email at chris.cook@kamha.ca. I look forward to the upcoming months ahead.

Go Canadians Go!