

Dear Sharks Parents & Players:

Welcome to the 2017-18 hockey season! There are a lot of hockey organizations to choose from and we thank you for putting your trust in the Shoreline Sharks. Because of your support, we are now the largest girls program in Southern Connecticut, with over 230 girls participating! We are very excited about the upcoming year as we have worked hard to offer more opportunities while remaining true to the Sharks' principles. A heartfelt thank you to our returning players and over 72 new players who are now part of our *Sharks Family*.

Look-Back

At the outset, we must acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Bill Greim, who co-founded the organization with Gary LaChance and recently stepped down as President after serving 17 years. His values, vision, and leadership have shaped the organization and set a strong foundation for its continued growth. Bill will continue to serve on the board and has taken on a new role as Clinic Director. His dedication to the sport within and outside the Sharks organization have greatly impacted the success and growth of girls' hockey in Connecticut.

Our 2016-2017 U14 Black team deserves recognition for winning USA Hockey's Tier II National Championship title in April, beating teams from Michigan, Colorado, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin. Joe Buccheri and I were lucky to have coached this talented team; whose players constantly inspired us with a combination of commitment, talent, and teamwork. They've made Sharks families and friends proud, and their championship banners now hang at the East Haven and Hamden rinks on the Sharks "wall of fame" with our other championship winning teams.

Positive Environment

Team sports are a fantastic opportunity for young people to develop in a setting that can be supportive yet challenging. It is critical to remember that we are their role models. The players play the game, but the parents are on display as well. While you may be watching the players, they are watching you and your interactions with the officials and with other parents. As Bill Greim always reminds us, "The glass is two-way." Let's treat each other, our opponents and the referees with respect. I assure you that our program is judged not only by the players, but by the behavior of our coaches and, yes, the parents and fans.

Upcoming Season

Our goal is to continually make the Sharks experience better for our players and families as we grow as an organization. Here are some of the enhancements to this year's program:

- Joined the prestigious New England Girls Hockey League (NEGHL)
- Expanded to twelve (12) travel teams (U08 to U19)
- Added National tournament-bound teams at the U16 and 19 age levels, bringing us to four (4) teams eligible for USA Hockey regionals and nationals

- Increased our Connecticut Girls Hockey League (CGHL) teams to seven (7) with multiple CGHL teams at the U10, 12 and 14 levels
- Broadened our best in class goalie training program
- Grew our Sharks Hockey Development Program (Learn to Play/Skate)
- Incorporated every other week skill sessions for players in addition to their normal team practice

Player-Centric Focus

All of these changes are being implemented to provide more opportunities for players of all abilities. Our primary focus is centered on being the best player development program in the region. This does *not* mean turning every player into an all-star; this does mean offering the right level of support and challenge so that each player can realize her full potential and gain confidence that will benefit the girls inside and outside the rink.

Our organization embraces the USA Hockey American Development Model (ADM) which prioritizes skill development ahead of playing games. Our coaches are fully trained on the ADM model and how to implement skill-based, age-specific practices that take the girls through a skill development progression throughout the year. During a normal game, a player may have the puck on her stick for less than 90 seconds, but ADM practices provide the girls with hundreds of repetitions each week. Our coaches are focused on ensuring that your daughter finishes the year with a passion for this great game and is a better player than she was at the beginning of the year.

Top-Tier Coaching Staff

Our coaching staff has expanded to almost 40 in number, and we are very pleased to announce that we have added eight female coaches to the staff, some of whom were Sharks themselves. This is the most talented, experienced group we have ever had.

Thank You

Lastly, I would like to thank all our coaches, managers, volunteers and board members in advance for all you do for the Sharks Family. Your dedication, hard work, and energy are critical to the success of our organization.

Please let me know if there anything we can do to make your Sharks experience positively memorable. We look forward to working together to create another year of growth, great memories and success for the girls!

Ed Rodham

President

CT Shoreline Sharks Youth Hockey