Do You Believe in Miracles?

Lake Placid

Join us in Lake Placid, NY on April 23-26, 2020 for the CanAm Special Hockey Festival and we just might prove b y that they are real! In speaking with Deb McQuilkin, CanAm Festival Coordinator, her enthusiasm for this fabulous event is contagious.

"Lake Placid is the perfect venue for special hockey: there’s one street, it’s easy to navigate and there are plenty of family activities nearby." says McQuilkin. "It’s all inclusive. No out of pocket expenses. Meals and hotels are all included in the fee. Just come and play hockey! " she adds.

Teams can expect to play a minimum of three games and be matched according to their skill level. Single players, half teams are also welcome and will be grouped with similarly skilled players. A surprise NHL Stanley Cup winner on hand for phobs, T-shirts, awards, party and many friendships will highlight this amazing tournament. Sign up, and be a part of the miracle! Registration has begun and space is limited. Secure your team's spot today to be a part of the CanAm Special Hockey Festival.

A Friendly Games

The American Special Hockey Association is always looking for ways to better serve our players of all levels of play. In September, ASHA hosted the second annual A Friendly Games in Marlboro, Mass. Special thanks to Coach Ray LeBlanc and Colleen Markow of the East Coast Jumbos for their help with this year's event. The weekend started with skills clinic and then players were welcomed into Friendship Games Squads coached by guest ASHA Coaches. ASHA is committed to providing challenging opportunities for special hockey players who are playing in the "A" level with a focus on growing opportunities and events. With over 50 A players teaming up for a weekend of friendship and games, the atmosphere was filled with sportsmanship, inspiring plans for next year's planned games in Washington, D.C.

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Thank You!

Each season, ASHA members host dozens of festivals, tournaments, matchups and events. Every opportunity for a special hockey player to play is a chance for families to gather, coaches & volunteers to engage and for players to achieve goals. These events not only bring the special hockey community together, they have inspired an unprecedented growth in access to hockey for individuals of all abilities.

The American Special Hockey Association has expanded its network of over 50 special hockey organizations. Each brings their love for this sport and combines it with acceptance and inclusion, providing opportunities which meet the needs of an extraordinarily diverse community and their teams. ASHA works individually with each organization to ensure that they have the support they need to sustain and succeed. However, our greatest resource is the collective knowledge and experience of our membership. Over this next season, ASHA will continue to encourage you to connect with each other, and often.

Thank you to every team founder, head coach, assistant coach, team manager, junior coach, volunteer, parent, family member, rink owner, equipment manager and player for all you do! You are why ASHA is "Not Just Special" but... together we are Extraordinary!

Summer Camp Recap

This past summer, ASHA’s summer camps in Marlboro, Massachusetts and Woodbridge, NJ helped players stay in shape and connected with special hockey. These camps welcomed hundreds of players and family members for skills development and friendship. Thank you to Ray LeBlanc (East Coast Jumbos) and his team, as well as, John Eberhardt (Woodbridge Warriors) and his team, for ensuring that we had a cool Summer! We look forward to adding new camps in the Southeast, Midwest & West.
Support That Sticks!

What do you do with old, unusable broken sticks and equipment? You can trade in your old sticks with our partners at Requip’d for opportunities for your team! This season, ASHA is helping hockey teams to repurpose their broken hockey sticks, keeping the composite material out of landfills. Not only does the eﬀort support a healthier environment, but the unique partnership helps raise funds for ASHA and its members!

Requip’d is partnering with ASHA to collect used/broken sticks to be upcycled into products that can be used for your team’s fundraising needs. The sticks that are collected will be distributed between Requip’d, RinkRove and rewarded.

Requip’d will also be supporting gently used gear donations to be distributed to ASHA Members, along with hosting some great fundraising events! Visit www.requip.com to learn more and contact asha@specialhockey.org to learn more about how your team can “Go Green”.

Teamwork In Action

The SASA (St. Alban’s Amateur Hockey Association) in Northern Vermont has welcomed Special Hockey to their program. The idea came from John Boomhower whose son, Tristan, had played hockey on a special needs team in NJ before they relocated back to Vermont. John looked up his childhood friend Luke Cioﬀi, who he knew was very involved in local hockey programs. Luke and his brother, John Cioﬀi, the President of VASHA (Vermont State Amateur Hockey Association) walked through the process of getting the program started. Ice time was secured, equipment donated, volunteers showed up and the first season was very special. The smiles on our athletes’ faces when they achieved obstacles that seemed insurmountable are priceless as are the tears of joy from parents to see their son or daughter skate for the first time. The conﬁdence that our athletes gained and the experiences that our volunteers shared with our athletes have built our hockey community even stronger on and oﬀ the ice.

“We just want to give kids the opportunity to play” said Boomhower. “And you most certainly are!!!”

Frankenfest Fun

On October 12th & 13th, the New Jersey Dare Devils hosted their 11th annual Frankenfest Tournament. From the amazing snack room, tricky hay and party – the New Jersey Dare Devils spend nearly a year planning every detail for a successful event. This year’s event was ASHA’s largest ever! With nearly 1,200 people in attendance (Over 500 registered on ice participants) representing 27 special hockey teams, from 8 states, the NJ Dare Devils welcomed everyone to the season with a sense of belonging and a great deal of teamwork. The joy and laughter shared has set the tone for the amazing season for players, coaches, and families. Special thanks to the New Jersey Devils for supporting this event, for your commitment to seeing opportunities grow, and your gratitude to the New Jersey Dare Devils for bringing everyone to the season! Mark your calendars, plans are already underway for next year’s event.

The New England Bombersformation could almost read like a perfect love story. Melf Brown has a son, Silas with special needs who attends Project Walk Boston. Johnny Minahan and Daniele Cribber both work at the Project Walk Program amongst many others. Melf was looking for another physical outlet for Silas when she heard about ASHA at an event and learned about special needs hockey. Both Daniele and Johnny are hockey players in their spare time. So this connection could not have been more perfect or meant to be. The Bombers are in Southern NH and are here to break down barriers. Coach Daniele says “we see the ability in these kids and we will jump over any hurdle to get them on the ice.”

The Great Blizzardsof Massachusetts Special Hockey are a welcomed addition to our New England area. Founder, Steve Nearer man states, “my autistic son, Jonathan, was hooked on hockey when he played with the NOVA Odd Cats in the Washington, DC area. But two years ago when I moved our family to Plymouth, MA, to seek a better life for Jonathan, the closest ASHA program was nearly an hour away. In fact, there were only two ASHA teams in hockey-rich Massachusetts. So for two years, we made the Saturday morning drive, as did another transplanted Cool Cats family, Erick and his son, Nathan McCroskey. One day, like many other ASHA teams, Erick and I just decided to start our own team closer to home; the first ASHA team in Southeastern Massachusetts and Cape Cod. I don’t think we were tired of the commute!! And thus was born The Great Blizz, with our motto “No Hockey Player Left Behind.” From left – coach Hilary Jorgensen, coach Mike McCook, parent Erik McCroskey, Blizz founder Steve Nearer, players Jonathan Nearer and Nathan McCroskey.
The MASHI

The Columbus Blue Jackets’ Special Hockey Annual Monster MASHI
Mid America Special Hockey Invitational

The Columbus Blue Jackets’ Special Hockey team hosted its 4th annual Monster MASHI (Mid-Am Special Hockey Invitational) this year on November 2nd. The event was a huge success!

Eight Special Hockey teams from Indiana, Michigan, Western PA, and Ohio competed in Special Hockey games Saturday morning and afternoon. The festivities included an All-Star Skills competition that featured events like Best Celly, Snowiest Superman, and Fastest Goalie. And then the teams and families attended the CBJ vs. Calgary Flames NHL game that evening.

Blue Jackets players and coaches were on hand to encourage the teams. And FOX Sports Ohio interviewed several players and will feature the event in an upcoming Blue Jackets Live pregame show.

Tuning In To Ability

Special Hockey has a way of connecting abilities that are not always seen, but can be heard. Whether that’s the sound of a parent cheering; or a coach’s encouraging word. You can hear the love for this sport in a player’s laugh, or in Evan’s case, his play by play from the bench. Evan got a chance to audition reel of his game call with the AHL Binghamton Devils.

“What’s Next? Stay Tuned!!!”

Binghamton Devils

“There is so much that myself and others would assume about autism. Initially, one might think disability, however, it is an ability. Everyone needs to find their strengths in order to succeed in this world. Seeing the potential in those strengths and helping others see (and hear) the possibilities will achieve hopes and dreams. Evan couldn’t stop talking about hockey, numbers, stats, history – and there’s a whole lot of talking in broadcasting so I think this is the perfect fit for him.”
– Rob Jacob, Broadcasting/Binghamton Devils

Back To School

The Catholic University Ice Hockey, came out to practice and host a charity game for the Washington Ice Dogs on Nov 10th. We’re not sure who’s smiles were bigger! Both teams are looking forward to the next time!

A Plan In Motion

In Dover, Massachusetts the Cocheo Blades are taking off under the leadership of Janet Gnall. Newly funded last season, Gnall combined her love of ice hockey and her career passion as a paraprofessional to special needs children and set the Blades in motion. One parent, Ryan Reed, a former hockey player himself, gets to now share this with his special needs son. “He’s always wanted to play, but there just wasn’t an opportunity,” he said. “My wife actually heard about it through someone at my son’s school. So we signed up and here we are. He loves it. We watch hockey all the time together; now he gets to actually play it”.

The Western Michigan Broncos welcomed the Motor City Stars, Ann Arbor Rockets and Capital City Condors for a friendly scrimmage & pizza party. Special thanks to the Broncos Booster Club and the Capital City Condors for the invitation!
New Safety Policies

What makes Special Hockey so special is the diversity of our players, their skills and their abilities. We adapt to welcome each and every individual with a shared love for the sport. From Equipment to the Locker Room, we must consider the many needs of our Association’s diversity. When we consider safety on the ice and in the locker room. On February 14, 2018 the “Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017” was signed into law and became effective immediately. This law will result in some changes to ensure the safety of all of our participants.

The American Special Hockey Association makes the safety of our programs our first priority. We will be working with each of our member teams to institute policies and procedures to help protect its participants from physical abuse, sexual abuse and other types of misconduct, including emotional abuse, bullying, threats, harassment and hazing. The policies are designed to maintain personal privacy as well as to reduce the risk of misconduct in locker rooms and be compliant with the new laws and the state regulations. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any question you may have about this new regulation and compliance.

Coaches Corner

Coaches Training Opportunity!

We are excited to continue with The Coaches Corner Sessions. Coaches are invited to interactively join an online presentation and conference call with other Special Hockey Coaches and Professionals. We invite coaches to RSVP November 15th @ 7:30pm for “Locker Rooms and Codes of Conduct.” This session will review the new Safety and Locker Room policies and procedures and help your team communicate codes of conduct. In December 10th @ 7:30pm for Festive Festivities and Events (A Q&A Session with experienced coordinators to help you make your event a festive one!)

These sessions are designed to be interactive and innovative support for special hockey coaches on and off the ice. Other upcoming topics will include, a Q&A with therapists on adapting practice plans, and a review of good governance practices. Please RSVP to specialhockeyathletics.org to register. Registered participants will receive the presentation links and call information.

New Friends & New Opportunities

Thank you to Ed Sneddon from the Atlanta Spark! and Tracey Boozer (ASHA Southeast Regional Director) who join Mike Skeels and the Nashville Predators Youth Hockey Coaching Staff for fun night of Special Hockey Training and a “Try Special Hockey For Free” Event at the brand new Ford Ice Center at Bellevue. We couldn’t have asked for a better kick off of the Preds All-Stars Special Hockey Program.

Healthy Eating

Boost Your Energy Without the Sugar! By Erica Hunter, Health and Wellness Consultant

Welcome to November! Schedules, activities, homework, and packing lunches. Ahhh... the joy of the school year, the upcoming holidays and Hockey Season! The transition from school to summer is so easy. Three months of summer really makes re-entry to the school routine and fall a bit challenging for everyone. There is something refreshing about the structure of the school year but it can be exhausting until we adjust. Resist the temptation to use sugary snacks to boost your energy. It will create false energy leading to a crash and burn out. You'll feel worse...trust me!

Instead try these delicious energy balls! They're no bake, super nutritious, and can be frozen for a lunch box snack or a quick bite during the day. These are easy to prepare and great way to get your kids hands on in the kitchen. Bonus... they taste like chocolate chip cookie dough!

No Bake Cookie Dough Protein Balls

yield: 12 cookie dough balls

Ingredients:
1/2 cup natural almond butter (nut free option: sunflower butter)
1/2 cup vanilla protein (dairy free option: plant-based protein powder)
1/3 cup coconut flour
1 1/2 tablespoons honey — or pure maple syrup
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
2 tablespoons unsweetened almond milk (nut free option: coconut milk)
2 tablespoons dark chocolate chips — dairy free if needed

Not sure where to get these ingredients? Check out Thrive Market www.thrivemarket.com

Erica Hunter is a Certified Holistic Health Coach and owner of NOW Health and Wellness. She specializes in food sensitivity testing and the elimination of inflammatory foods. Learn more at www.nowhealthandwellness.com or Contact Erica at Erica@nowhealthandwellness.com
Buffalo Fall Festival

When special hockey teams get together, you will find coaches and parents who will welcome every player, and embrace every ability to encourage the champion in everyone. You can easily spot players greeting old friends with the warmest of welcomes, and including new friends as if they had always been there. On the ice, the games are fun, and yes, they can get competitive, but sportsmanship and teamwork are always present.

The sixth annual Buffalo Fall Friendship Festival brought teams from the US and Canada together for a weekend full of wonderful memories and great hockey. The “Silly Sock Penalties” and the “Too Many Sticks On The Ice” penalty are now legendary coaching calls and the sound of laughter and applause from the benches and stands alike will stay in the hearts of everyone who attended. To say that fun was had by all would be an understatement. Mike & Pam Steffen, along with their team, went out of their way to create a caring and positive environment which inspires everyone to bring back to their communities. It wasn’t just a special hockey weekend... it was an extraordinary one!

Teammates

Tuevo Teravainen of the Carolina Hurricanes hosted the CAT 5 Canes Special Hockey Team for a great night of Hockey on Nov 11th at the Hurricanes home a game against Ottawa. Teammates were welcomed into an all-inclusive suite and received tickets, food & beverage, and an autographed Teravainen poster and puck.

& Advocates

Congratulations!

Coach Marianne Livengood of the Winston Salem Ices Hawks was named the “Citizen of the Year” for helping to establish sled hockey and wheelchair hockey by the Winston Salem Mayor’s Council for Persons with Disabilities for her work with adaptive ice hockey.

Hometown Hero

Jim Maener couldn’t be prouder of his two sons, Tim & Andrew. When Andrew recently returned from active duty with the Marines, he wanted to make a difference and be there for his brother Tim.

After the first practice, we caught up with Jim and asked him what it was like to see his two sons on the ice together. Jim replied “I haven’t stopped smiling since they hit the ice.” Jim said “It’s also extra special as Andrew just got out of Marines and the first thing he did was sign up to coach.”

Tim always wanted to be like his big brother. When Andrews played high school hockey, Tim was always at the rink watching. While Andrews was away, Tim worked hard to strengthen his skills on the ice, so he could make his brother proud. Tim & Andrew have always been each other’s greatest heroes.

Andrew was honored as the Philadelphia Flyers’ Hometown Heroes on November 13th, and Tim was beside him, and they cheered for each other, with the entire arena cheering for them.

Thank you Andrew for your service, and to the Maener family for sharing their story.

Friendship Goals

The Lehigh Valley Polar Bears faced off against the York Polar Bears on Saturday, November 9th at the PPL Center, home of the AHL Lehigh Valley Phantoms. All Polar Bears from both teams were pumped to be able to skate on the same ice as their local Pennsylvania pro hockey players. The Phantoms surprised the players and coaches with team hats as well as individual names of every single player going up on the jumbotron during their game.

After a hard fought game filled with great skating, passing, and a few first goals (with first goal pucks of course) both teams celebrated with a banquet to celebrate the fun and friendships made. They were joined by a local adult hockey team, the Lehigh Valley Whalers, who are the hosts of the Lehigh Valley Polar Bear’s annual fundraiser the Lehigh Valley Winter Classic. The Whalers have now raised over $130,000 for special hockey (with more to come at this year’s event on January 25th).

Our Whaler friends were excited to celebrate this fun day with dozens of hockey players who are equally enthusiastic about what we all know is the greatest sport out there. The Polar Bears’ return to the PPL center to enjoy watching their local AHL Phantoms take on the AHL Hershey Bears and win the game in style in overtime! The Phantoms mascot, Melvin, hung out with both teams and joined the Lehigh Valley mascot, Puck alongside Melvin. They really put on a show in our section! Thank you to the Lehigh Valley Phantoms for hosting both teams and for showing everyone a great day of hockey!

In Memoriam

With ASHA, we are connected by our love for this sport and by the support we give each other. Please join us in remembering Tammie Henrickson, team manager and beloved wife of Richard Henrickson, of the Salt Lake Stars... We are very grateful to the Henrickson family for all they have done to bring opportunities to individuals in the Salt Lake area. We offer our thoughts, prayers and support to Rick and their family. It’s more than 60 minutes on the ice, it’s the lifetimes of memories we share.
The Game Plan

We Are On Your Team

The American Special Hockey Association is here to Support, Sustain and Serve special hockey organizations in the United States. Our commitment to our teams, players and their families goes well beyond the ice time. ASHA supports its members with the following benefits:

- A Committed Board of Directors who are dedicated to serving with a focus on our mission.
- Providing specialized support for special hockey organizations who serve individuals with special abilities.
- Providing administrative support for not for profits and good governance practices.
- Sharing the message with marketing and awareness campaigns to grow special hockey.
- Advocating and representing member teams to grow opportunities for special hockey.
- Caring and stewarding fiscal support to sustain member special hockey teams.
- Connecting a network of over 90 teams Nationwide.

Network of Teams!
A network of opportunity!

Being an ASHA Member is more than just a piece of paper. Our Member Clubs come with experience, ideas, support and encouragement. Together we are all on the same team! Connecting to other member teams through our network of members is one of the greatest benefits of being connected! We work to make sure the information online is kept up-to-date, so you can connect with each other to create new opportunities!

Alaska Avalanche Challenge, Anchorage, AK  Long Island Blues, Inc., Long Island, NY
Albany Cougars, Albany, NY  Mercer Bulldogs, West Windsor, NJ
Anahiem Ducks Special Hockey, Anaheim, CA  Michigan Flyers, Farmington Hills, MI
Ann Arbor Rockets, Ann Arbor, MI  Mission Special Edition, Peoria, AZ
Atlanta Sparks, Atlanta, GA  Monarch Special Hockey, Stockholm, NJ
Bakersfield Oilers, Bakersfield, CA  Montgomery Hurricanes, Rockville, MD
Baltimore Saints, Baltimore, MD  New England Bammers, Derry, NH
Beaver County Ice Sharks, Pittsburgh, PA  New Jersey Dare Devils, Woodbridge, NJ
Black Swamp Ice Frogs, Bowling Green, OH  New York Raphers, Elmsford, NY
Blues Special Hockey, St. Louis, MO  NJ Avalanche, Hackensack, NJ
Boston Bear Cubs, Boston, MA  Northern Bravehearts, Brewster, NY
Brick Stars, Brick, NJ  NOVA Cool Cats, Arlington, VA
Buckeye County Admirals, Bucks County, PA  Oakland Special Sharks, Oakland, CA
Buffalo Sabres Thunder, Buffalo, NY  Panthers Special Hockey Broward, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
Burlington Bobcats, Burlington, VT  Panthers Special Hockey Palm, Palm Beach, FL
California Condors, Simi Valley, CA  Pixes Peak Thunder, Colorado Springs, CO
CATS Canes, Raleigh/Durham, NC  Pittsburgh Penguins, Pittsburgh, PA
CCSC Cougars, West Chester, PA  Preds All Stars, Nashville, TN
Central Park North Stars, New York, NY  RI Special Hockey, Pawtucket, RI
Charlotte Dragons, Charlotte, NC  Rochester Ice Cats, Rochester, NY
Cincinnati Special Hockey, Cincinnati, OH  RSK Wings, Frederick, MD
Cleveland Rockin’ Wildcatters, Cleveland, OH  Salt Lake Specials, Salt Lake City, UT
Cocheo Blades, Dover, NH  San Diego Chill, San Diego, CA
Colorado Golden Eagles, Denver, CO  San Diego Special Hockey, San Diego, CA
Colorado Ice Wizards, Lafayette, CO  San Jose Special Sharks, San Jose, CA
Columbus Blue Jackets, Columbus, OH  SE Wisconsin Pirates, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Connecticut Chasers, Ltd., Simsbury, CT  Sharks One Stop, San Mateo, CA
Coyotes ACE, Peoria, AZ  Southern Connecticut Storm, Bridgeport, CT
Coyotes One Stop Bobcats, Peoria, AZ  Space Coast Freeze, Rockledge, FL
Denver Mustangs, Denver, CO  Space Coast Superstars, Rockledge, FL
Detroit Motor City Stars, Detroit, MI  Spectrum Knights, Las Vegas, NV
East Coast Jumbos, Boston, MA  Spectrum Wolves, Las Vegas, NV
Elmira Enforcers, Elmira, NY  St. Albans Leafs, St. Albans, VT
Flyers Youth Special Hockey, Philadelphia, PA  Steel City Icebergs, Pittsburgh, PA
Gonz Holiday Bulldogs, Spokane, WA  Syracuse Crunch, Syracuse, NY
Grand Rapids Pilots, Grand Rapids, MI  Utah Grizzlies, Provo, UT
Great Blizzards of Massachusetts, Falmouth, MA  Valencia SNAP Flyers, Valencia, CA
Happy Valley Beavers, Happy Valley, PA  Washington Ices Dogs, Laurel, MD
Hershey Heroes Special Hockey, Hershey, PA  Winston-Salem Hawks, Winston-Salem, NC
Ice House Hawks, Johnson City, NY  Wisconsin Timber Wolves, Madison, Wisconsin
Indy Twisters Hockey, Indianapolis  Woodbridge Warriors, Woodbridge, NJ
Lehigh Valley Polar Bears, Lehigh Valley, PA  York Polar Bears, York, PA

Special Thanks To Our Newsletter Coordinator
Susan O’Hare

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