

Next Level Field Hockey Informational Parent Meeting

4/15/21
Meeting Notes

- Coach Shellenberger opened the meeting by explaining her reasoning for starting a club. i.e. Her desire to create a competitive playing experience for her daughter who is 8 years old.
- The original goal was to create only U10 and U12 teams but outside people pushed for U14.
 - The minimum goal will be to field ONE U10 team and at a maximum *SIX teams (*Two at each age group U10, U12, U14).
- Coach Shellenberger impressed the importance of quality coaching and play. The purpose of the try-out will be to select athletes who are **ready for competitive play**. She is not interested in taking on extra players just to fill rosters.
 - If there are not enough players registered to form teams for a particular age group, that age group try-out will be cancelled and registration fees will be returned.
 - Athletes **not selected** through the try-out process for their age level teams **will not** be reimbursed. *The try-out cost is for both the turf rental and evaluators fees.
 - The try-out registration will close on August 1, 2021. It's at that time Coach Shellenberger will make decisions then about numbers and potential teams we can field.
- Our club teams will practice and compete 'year-round'. Fall, Winter, Spring. *We will most likely run some summer drop-in practices (Summer of 2022), potentially conditioning sessions and pick-up play. (These opportunities may be open to players outside the club). During the school year, practices will occur on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Fall practices are already scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays at Weaver Field from 4:30-6:00 pm.
 - Fall practice dates are September 2 to November 23.
 - In the case of inclement weather, we will move training inside to Red Rose.
 - In the fall, all age groups will train from 4:30-6:00 pm.
- Some asked about the need to potentially switch clubs (players who are currently affiliated with another club). USFHA's "open enrollment" for club athletes takes place from August 1 to October 1. We will offer roster spots on August 15 which will give parents & athletes time to make those changes if necessary.

- If you are not currently affiliated with another club, then you do not need to worry about this. If you join our club, you will simply create a USFHA membership and select Next Level-PA as your club.
- There were a lot of questions about fall training and junior high school sports seasons. Again, Coach Shellenberger reiterated that the initial goal of the club was to field U10 players and possibly U12 players, so needing to “work around” junior high sports schedules was not something she considered because her target population are elementary students.
 - As a former high school coach, she understands the commitment of school sports and wants athletes to first and foremost play for their school. In her opinion, club play should support and at times be secondary to school team play. Athletes who are of the age of to play JH sports will be given grace with attendance. Fall practices will cater to the younger members of the club. Options for “pay per session” training and/or “pro-rated” training rates can be developed for those with this conflict.
 - Coach Shellenberger made the point that fall junior high FH ends around the second week in October, so JH athletes could attend practices from that point through November.
 - In some of these same conversations, Coach Shellenberger made it very clear that her goal is player development, creating positive team culture/environment and dedication to club. So, keeping costs low and pressure low on athletes will be important. But, at the same time, it is still very important that we train at a high level and are prepared to compete.
- Due to not knowing what everyone’s level of commitment will be both with time, money and travelling, the opportunity to play in weekend competitions and large-scale events (i.e. Festival in Florida) may come with separate “try-outs” for athletes interested in these events. *These opportunities will also incur additional costs.* For example, to travel to Festival, it might cost each player \$500. This would potentially include the cost of a flight, hotel room, registration fees and coaching costs. So, your possible fall payment goes from \$250 to \$750, along with your USFHA membership fee and uniform cost.
 - With these larger events, it was also discussed that we could potentially invite ‘guest players’ or players from other clubs to join our athletes to be able to field enough players to attend so those within the club that do want to attend do not miss that opportunity.
 - There has been an expressed concern about the cost of these events. That again is a family decision. You might feel it’s not necessary to send your 10-year-old to a faraway trip at that cost, conversely, if your daughter is 13 and interested in playing college field hockey, it might be an investment in that future. The club can support your athlete with making payment plans if needed.

- The fundraising question was asked. The club does not have plans to hold fundraisers but would be open to allowing a parent/guardian to manage that if there is a group that would be interested.
- There were a lot of questions about schedules and dates. Many of those answers are hard to provide since we do not yet know our population (U10/U12/U14). There are many more opportunities for 'older' athletes. We will do our best to provide as many competition opportunities as we can, but it is hard to provide exact amounts of competitions and their specific dates at this point in time.
 - Coach Shellenberger did discuss her desire to take athletes to USFHA's 'big events' such as Festival, NITs and JPOL.
- Coach Shellenberger is currently working on a location for indoor training (winter play on a hard surface). The Winter and Spring training will each incur another cost to cover facilities and coaching. These numbers are based on some information we do not yet have. Again, we will look to train weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Time frame would be 5:00-8:00 pm. Depending on our population, we would split the time and have our younger athletes attend from 5:00-6:30 pm and our older athletes from 6:30-8:00 pm. Winter weekend indoor tournaments would be attended. They may or may not be included in the winter price. For example, all teams/athletes will attend at least 3 tournaments but those interested in NITs might pay an additional fee for the qualifier and the NIT itself.
 - Coach Shellenberger also expressed an interest in adding a "outdoor skills session" in the winter. This is where we would train at Red Rose for outdoor during the winter.
- Other costs: each member of the club will need to secure a USFHA membership and purchase the basic uniform items. This is roughly \$150. Coach Shellenberger wants the girls to look good but doesn't think we need to spend crazy money on uniforms!
- Another question, what will happen next year with older U14s? (U14s who will be U16s next year). We will handle that next year when we get that point. For try-outs next year, we can then open the try-out to U16s to field that age group to support our returning older players.
- Question was asked about Next Level Field Hockey's current programs and will those offerings cease next year?
 - First off, the Lancaster Youth Field Hockey League IS NOT run by NLFH. It is a Manheim Township Parks & Rec program. Coach Shellenberger is independently contracted by them to run that program. Thus, that will still occur this fall. In regards to this program, Coach Shellenberger will encourage K-6 athletes affiliated with the club to participate in that league.

- As for small group training, private lessons and the Winter/Spring clinic, those will mostly likely end. The time and energy spent on coaching those activities will be dedicated to coaching the members of the club.
 - It is possible that we will open Spring/Summer training opportunities up to non-club members. Athletes who attend these events DO NOT need to be affiliated with the club to participate. There will be a different rate to attend for non-club members.
- We will continue to run our Youth FH Camp at Weaver Field in the summer.
- We will continue to run the consulting side of our business (scouting, player evaluation and recruiting videos).
- We will most likely stop running junior high and high school “build your own” team camps.
- Someone asked about training opportunities leading up to the try-out. That is ON YOUR OWN. Coach Shellenberger does not want to have any influence over those interested in trying out or any accusations of favoritism. Please come ready on August 7th and/or 8th to play your best.
- One addition to last night’s discussions. We really want athletes to be committed. We are not interested in athletes who will train with us for only a season and then with another club for another season. Having other commitments (such as other sports) that conflict with our training/competition schedule is understandable but we really don’t want our athletes ‘coming and going’ between us and other clubs. We’re hoping to building something that they can be proud of and that they commit to through their senior year of high school. We want to be more than a team. We want to be a family.

*If you have questions, please reach to Coach Shellenberger at nextlevelfh17@gmail.com.