



ROCKY MOUNTAIN DISTRICT 2008 - PLAYER DEVELOPMENT/EVALUATION CAMP

The 2008 Rocky Mountain Development Player/Evaluation Camp will be held from April 30-May 4 at the Olympic Oval in Salt Lake City, Utah.

History: The 2008 Camp marks the District's 26th year of involvement in player development. It began several years ago as a method of evaluating where our district's top players were relative to each other. It also provided an opportunity to see, in one location, which states were developing skilled players. Initially, the small staff was made up of predominantly volunteer coaches from the Coaching Education Program. The camp was held over a 2-day weekend for 16 and 17 year old boys. One or two would be selected to attend a National Development Camp in Lake Placid, NY. We later felt it was important to bring more credibility to this camp and enjoy broader affiliate participation. In 1991 the USA Hockey Youth Council decided that they wanted the district camps expanded with an increased emphasis on skill development. We took on the job of District Director of Player Development because we truly believed in the concept. Skill development continues to be the main objective in this camp and in our Coaching Education Program. The player pool has also been expanded to include girls 14 thru 18 as well as 14 and 15 year old boys.

Strict accounting practices now allow the camp to be self-supporting with net income used to help fund Affiliate Workshops. Skill Development grants are offered to each affiliate on an annual basis. Some funds have also been used in support of District Coaching Development. All allocated funds must be pre-approved by the District Player Development Committee and the District Council of Affiliate Presidents/Directors.

Since the seven Rocky Mountain States are not in traditional "hotbeds of hockey", we expanded the coaching staff to include career coaches from colleges, juniors, prep schools and Tier 1 programs. Though we try to have each Affiliate represented, we have selectively invited evaluators and coaches that will work together for four arduous days. On-ice teaching of skills has been supplemented with off-ice strength and conditioning sessions and classroom seminars on topics of interest. Five years ago a parent awareness program was added. Player exposure has been greatly broadened by inviting scouting personnel from outside the district. We provide the staff and scouts with biographical and statistical information on attending players. National interest in our players continues to increase every year.

Successes: An impressive number of District Camp alumni are currently playing at the Junior A level or higher. Since 1995 more than 100 boys have advanced to Junior A, National and or Division 1 College programs. Players have made their first contact with many colleges, prep schools and Tier I programs at this camp. To date, six Rocky Mountain District players have been selected to attend the USA Hockey National Team Players Development Program. The girls that advanced to National Development programs have performed well and several have moved on to college and prep school hockey. One such success story is Julianne Vasichek a 1983 defenseman from Great Falls; MT. Julianne attended the District Camps in 2001 and 2002. From there she advanced to the National Women's Camp in Lake Placid. Later she obtained a scholarship to Minnesota Duluth. In 2004 she was named USA Women's National Team. The performance of our District Girls Team at the Chicago Showcase verifies our girl's ability to participate on the national stage.

Administration: The USA Hockey Youth Council along with the National Player Development Committee administers the entire National Player Development Program. They set the guidelines and expectations for the District Development Programs and appoint the administrators and directors. Our Youth Council representative and District Player Development Administrator is currently TC Lewis. In 2003 the Rocky Mountain District formed a District Player Development Committee. This committee, chaired by T C Lewis, now administers this camp and directs all district player development activities.

Why should District players attend?: With several select camp opportunities available to our players, we cannot tell you that participation in the District Camp is the only way a player can be recognized, evaluated and promoted - but it is a **very good and proven way**.

It provides an opportunity to:

- Have fun
- Make friends
- Skate with and against the most skilled players in your birth year
- Be challenged
- Learn and develop individual and team skills
- Be taught and evaluated by career coaches
- Attend off ice informational seminars
- Learn conditioning techniques
- Demonstrate your talent to scouts from outside our District
- Be selected to represent our district at the National Boy's Select Camps, the National Women's Camps and the District High Performance Camp

Prior to the camp, we will contact the Affiliate Presidents to notify them of their state's player allocation - determined by total 14, 15, 16 and 17 year old registrations during the current season. Each state is given the responsibility to select their best representatives by gender, birth year and position. To be eligible a player must be a U.S. citizen and his/her family must be a permanent residence in one of the nine Rocky Mountain District states. A player may be registered and participate on an out of district team, but his/her parents or guardian must be Rocky Mountain District residents. Selections will be made and forwarded to District Camp personnel for team assignments. There is always concern regarding the allocation and selection process. I urge you to participate in your affiliate process. Each year there are surprises. If you participate in the affiliate camps and you can compete at the district tier 1 level we will find you. A schedule of Affiliate Selection Camps and the respective contacts will be posted on the district and affiliate web sites.

One of the questions often asked is about turnover. All boys 14 are new to the District Camp. For boys 15-17, since 2001, there has been an average turnover of 50%. In other words half the boys 15-17 selected to move on to national camps were not selected in the previous year. This analysis shows that the same boys and girls do not automatically advance from year to year.

I hope the above will answer your questions about the Rocky Mountain District Camp. If not, please feel free to contact T C Lewis or me.

Hope to see you in Salt Lake City.

Tom Lampl
Camp Director
Associate Coach in Chief
Rocky Mountain District

T C Lewis
Rocky Mountain District Director
Chair Player Development Committee