

SHARKS ICE AT SAN JOSE ANNOUNCES THE CREATION OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA HIGH SCHOOL HOCKEY LEAGUE PRESENTED BY HP

Sharks Ice at San Jose is proud to announce the creation of the Northern California High School Hockey League presented by HP (NCHSHL). This league will run in conjunction with the current HP High School Hockey League.

The NCHSHL will consist of four school-sponsored teams: Archbishop Mitty, Bellarmine, Cardinal Newman (Santa Rosa) and Valley Christian. Previously, the four schools participated in the HP High School Hockey League, Varsity Division. The move in separating these teams into their own league is to encourage other greater Bay Area high schools to sponsor their own squads.

"In the short term, the beginning of a school-sponsored league is exciting for the schools involved," said Ken Shamanski, a faculty member at Valley Christian and moderator of the ice hockey club. "In the long term, it will mean greater growth of high school hockey in the Bay Area."

The ultimate goal is make ice hockey an official California Interscholastic Federation (CIF)-sanctioned sport in the near future. "High school hockey is coming of age in California," Cardinal Newman Principal Graham Rutherford said. "We (Cardinal Newman) are fortunate to be part of this exciting experience."

The NCHSHL teams, whose season will consist of 10 regular season games, will play a couple of exhibition matches against teams in the HP High School Hockey League.

When the HP High School Hockey League debuted in 2000, just four teams comprised the entire league. In 2010, the league fielded 25 teams with players from as far north as Santa Rosa, Salinas to the south, Stockton to the east and Santa Cruz to the west. Of the 25 teams, 15 competed in the Junior Varsity Division while the other 10 skated in the Varsity Division.

Unlike traditional high school sports where junior varsity and varsity are predominantly decided by age, the divisions are decided exclusively by skill level. The Junior Varsity Division is made up of predominantly of recreational, house and travel players, while the Varsity Division is comprised of travel A and tier players.

A few NCHSHL games of note:

- April 3, 5 p.m., Redwood Empire Ice Arena in Santa Rosa – The Valley Christian Warriors travel north to play against the Cardinal Newman Cardinals. The game will be the first true home game for the Cardinals as in the past, they've played their home games at Oakland Ice Center operated by Sharks Ice
- April 13, 7:15 p.m., Sharks Ice at San Jose – The Bellarmine Bells face off against their cross town rivals, the Valley Christian Warriors
- April 15, 7 p.m., Sharks Ice at San Jose – The Archbishop Mitty Monarchs play hosts to the Cardinal Newman Cardinals in the last Friday night game of the regular season
- April 23, 5 p.m., Redwood Empire Ice Arena in Santa Rosa – The Bellarmine Bells go north to skate against the Cardinal Newman Cardinals on their home ice
- May 8, 4:30 p.m., Sharks Ice at San Jose – The NCHSHL Championship Game

For more information about the Northern California High School Hockey League presented by HP and the HP High School Hockey League, please visit www.sharksiceatsanjose.com