

CENTRAL CANADA HOCKEY LEAGUE

JUNIOR HOCKEY TRUTH

LEAGUE GUIDE



The CCHL is one of the youngest Junior A leagues in Canada, and it places a heavy emphasis on forwarding players to higher levels of hockey. Also known as the Central Canada Hockey League, this league's report research comes directly from the league site, commissioner and the players currently playing there.

HOW TO PLAY IN THE CCHL

The CCHL uses some unique means to bring players into their league, including their draft and prospects camp. The league also focuses on keeping young by drafting players early and limiting their 20 year-old spots to five, the least in the country.

Most players in this league come through the leagues draft and protection system. This affiliation starts when players are 14, which is a year younger than other league's in Ontario. This gives CCHL teams a jump on scouting and recruitment. At 14, players should be playing AAA Bantam before going on to AAA Midget.

Players who are serious about playing in this league should be invited (or apply to be invited) to the league's spring prospects camp. This 300-player combine allows CCHL scouts and coaches to gather and watch potential players in a controlled environment on a level playing field. (Fifty per cent of players invited are from out-of-province.)

The application structure maintains the on-ice quality and any ambitious player will want to attend. Applications usually open in January on the CCHL website. This year's event will be held April 25, 26 27, 2014 in Ottawa.

AVERAGE AGE TO BREAK INTO THE CCHL

The CCHL is a young league and likes to keep it that way. Although most players start at 17 or 18, each team can bring in two 16 year-olds as per Hockey Canada rules. This league utilizes that number. Additionally, 16 year-old cards do get traded in this league, meaning a team can acquire up to two 16 year-old cards from another to raise their total to four.

With a lot of talent being local, players are often able to start earlier since they can live at home and have little travel.

OUT-OF-PROVINCE-PLAYERS

Players do end up in the CCHL from out of province, especially from nearby Quebec, which is a stone's throw away. There are also a handful of players from the Maritimes and Manitoba, but for the most part the Canadian talent is regional.

It is worth noting as well that players from Southern Ontario are allowed and do come North to play here.





AMERICANS IN THE CCHL

Plenty of Americans play in the CCHL, with the majority being from New York state. Some teams in this league will max out the six import spots that will be made available in 2014-15. After New York, Michigan leads the way in sending players north. However, there are also players from all over New England and the Great Lakes, and even the odd player from Utah, Missouri and Georgia.

Americans who want to play in this league need to take action. They should apply to play in the prospects tournament and use the Junior Hockey Truth *Training Camp Invite Formula*.

NHL DRAFT PROSPECTS

Although it doesn't happen every year, players have been chosen from the CCHL, often in the later rounds. If a player catches the NHL's attention, there is no reason he couldn't be drafted. However, most players will likely sign a deal out of college or go through the OHL.

TRAVEL: 5/5

There is not a better junior league in Canada for travel. With all teams being in or near Ottawa, players can drive to over half the games in their own cars. There are no long road trips and players can sleep in their own beds at night.

SCHOLARSHIP POTENTIAL: 3.5/5

A major benefit to playing in the CCHL is its proximity to the Northeastern United States where most Division I schools are located. In turn, the league is easy to scout and players are consistently watched. The league churns out a high number of Division I scholarships compared to other leagues its size.

There are also a fair amount of Division III scholarships available. Players also will be seen by local CIS teams.

If a player has the talent for a scholarship, he'll definitely have the opportunity to take one here.

ENTRY DRAFT: YES

The CCHL bantam draft is only for 14 year-old players local to the Ottawa-district. Given that teams are located in close proximity to one another, this draft allows talent to be spread evenly.

Players from outside of Ottawa minor hockey are simply free agent signings.

PAY TO PLAY: YES

In 2013-14, the CCHL introduced a pay-to-play model. Given the league's small geographical region and model, it relies on player fees to keep franchises going. Fees go toward operating costs for teams and promotional costs for the league.

Parents can expect to pay out \$2000 to the league. Fees for each team vary from \$1750 to \$3000.

CCHL DETAILS

Nicknames you'll hear: "Central Junior League"

Provinces/States covered: Ontario

Established: 1961

Teams: 12

Games Played: 62

Trophy Name: Dudley Hewitt Cup (Ontario)

Reigning League Champion: Cornwall Colts, 2013

Royal Bank Cup National Region: Central

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

The CCHL routinely gets around 40 NCAA Division I scholarships. According to commissioner Kevin Abrams, between Division I, Division III, CIS and sending players to the OHL, the CCHL forwards over 100 players each year. This is a high number for a 12-team league.

NOTABLE ALUMNI:

Steve Yzerman, Larry Robinson, Billy Smith, Ray Sheppard, Martin St. Louis, Patrick Sharp, Dan Boyle, Jimmy Howard, Dainius Zubrus, Claude Giroux.

RADIO/TV COVERAGE

CCHL games are streamed live on the league's FASTHockey portal.

LEAGUE CONTACT INFO

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