

SUPERIOR INTERNATIONAL JUNIOR HOCKEY LEAGUE

JUNIOR HOCKEY TRUTH

LEAGUE GUIDE



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HOW TO PLAY IN THIS LEAGUE

Players in the SIJHL come from a variety of backgrounds. Local Canadian players have come from high school hockey and midget programs, and they certainly won't be missed by SIJHL teams if they are worth watching. Additionally, players from Thunder Bay usually play AAA or Junior B hockey within the city before graduating to the city's SIJHL team, the Thunder Bay North Stars.

Outside of the home territory, Canadian teams do scout into Manitoba AAA and are open to players from around the country. A growing number of players in this league are coming from outside of province, particularly Western Canada. Getting a reference from one's AAA coach to an SIJHL coach can be helpful.

The league's two American teams scout locally in high schools on the southern side of the border, along with tier III junior leagues nearby.

A growing avenue for recruitment is showcase tournaments. Since the SI is starting to draw from further away than ever before, a coach may find a potential by attending one of these scouting events.

Of course, it never hurts for a player to contact a coach. The SIJHL doesn't have as many players to draw from locally as other leagues do, so if a player puts himself in front of a coach that could go a long way in getting him recruiting.

AVERAGE AGE TO BREAK INTO THE LEAGUE

Like most Junior A leagues, the SIJHL starts the majority of its players at 18 after they have completed midget (or high school hockey). In the past, this league has skewed toward older players—it takes full advantage of 20 year-old rules and allows each team a maximum of nine. Some teams use all nine, some don't.

Elite players have started out as 17 year olds, but only if they are local. Hockey Canada rules prohibit players from playing Junior A outside of their home province or country until they are 18.

Ultimately, if a coach feels a young player can contribute to his team, he'll give him a look regardless of the player's age. This is as true in the SIJHL as in other leagues.



IMPORT PLAYERS

The SIJHL faces a conundrum other leagues don't—playing under two different governing bodies. This dichotomy has led to a separation in how the league takes imports on each side of the border.

Traditionally, American teams have kept a core of regional players, particularly those from Minnesota and Wisconsin. These teams are allowed to import only two Canadian players under USA Hockey's rules.

On the other hand, Canadian teams fall under Hockey Canada's nationwide rule of allowing up to six American players at any one time on their rosters. This number includes veterans and rookies. Teams on the Canadian side can and will import more players from America than the American teams will from Canada.

Restrictions notwithstanding, this league is definitely open to players from around North America. Most Canadian out-of-province players come from west of Ontario, and less come from Southern/Eastern Ontario or Eastern Canada.

American players outside of the Great Lakes region span the nation from California to Vermont. The most popular states for recruiting are Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois and California, but many others are represented. This wide-range of recruits will only continue—the league has discussed adding more teams on its American side.

Most out-of-province players are noticed in scouting showcases, major tournaments or by contacting teams for tryouts.

(If you would like to contact an SIJHL team for a tryout, check out [Junior Hockey Truth's Training Camp Invite Formula](#) to learn how.)

NHL DRAFT PROSPECTS

While the SIJHL does play in the CJHL (Canadian tier II), and while other CJHL players do get drafted, players in this league traditionally have not been chosen in the NHL draft.

Players who have the skill to be drafted will either jump to the OHL or head to the NAHL or USHL.

On the other hand, players have received pro tryouts by playing in this league.



TRAVEL

Compared to neighbouring junior leagues, the SI has decent travel. Some teams will have a couple of long road trips, but for the most part it's nothing more than a few hours to a game in this league.

Most SIJHL towns are tight-knit and the majority of teams are community owned. This leads to some great rivalries and great atmospheres to play in. The weather in Northwestern Ontario can get frigid at times, but it is no worse than anywhere else in Canada.

SCHOLARSHIP POTENTIAL

Does the SIJHL get scholarships? The answer is both yes and no.

While the league effectively gets no division I scholarships, it does get a fair amount of division III scholarships for its size. Given its close proximity to a myriad of div III schools, the league plays in front of these schools' scouts often. As the league continues to improve, expect to see more scholarships going its way.

Per capita, the SIJHL does get a fair amount of low-level American college opportunities for its players, and it also sends players to CIS schools every year.

ENTRY DRAFT:

Due to complications between Hockey Canada and USA Hockey import restrictions, the SIJHL no longer holds a draft.

PROTECTED LIST

At one time this league did maintain a protected list but not any more.

Teams can affiliate up to 19 players and many of these affiliates come from the Thunder Bay Junior B League. Midget AAA players outside of Thunder Bay do get affiliated but not every SI team has a midget AAA team nearby.

Another avenue for affiliates is high school hockey. Teams can AP a player until the end of his first high school semester in December each year. At that time, the player will either join the SI team full-time or remain with his school, not being able to AP for the rest of the year.

PAY TO PLAY

Traditionally, the SI is not a pay-to-play league. However, some teams require parents to chip in on billeting costs. This fee is small with billets usually running in the total range of \$300 - \$400 on any junior team.



The league also has sponsorships for equipment and sticks, even though sometimes players will need to supply their own. Teams do have their own dressing rooms, practice every day and take buses on road trips. Despite its weak financial reputation in past years, the league is taking steps to ensure a player experience competitive with other leagues in Canada. As the league continues to grow and stabilize under new leadership, the standard expected of teams will move in step.

SIJHL DETAILS

Nicknames you'll hear: "The S.I.", Superior League

Provinces/States covered: Ontario, Minnesota, Wisconsin

Established: 2001

Teams: 6

Games Played: 56

Trophy Name: Bill Salonen Cup

Reigning League Champion: Fort Frances Lakers

Royal Bank Cup National Region: Central

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

According to the SIJHL website, there were 8 players with college commitments during the 2013-14 season. Of these scholarships, all 8 were to division III schools and other American tier III colleges.

In past years, the league typically received two to three times this many scholarships, mostly to division III schools.

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