

**DC Diamonds Girls Hockey
Middleton Youth Hockey Association
Verona Youth Hockey Association
West Madison Polar Caps Youth Hockey**

The Future of Tier II Girls Hockey in Dane County

Verona, WI June 4, 2018 -- Greater Madison-area Tier II girls hockey stakeholders are pleased to announce several changes to improve the recruitment and development of girls in territories represented by DC Diamonds, Verona, Middleton and Polar Caps.

WAHA recently announced the Ice Spirit girls territory returned to youth organizations with similar districts. Middleton and West Madison agreed to not host girls teams until such time that multiple teams can be offered at every level. In the interim, Verona will host girls teams under a separately branded name on the west side of Madison.

The DC Diamonds and Verona, with the full support of Middleton and West Madison, agreed to share resources to grow the number of girls playing hockey and offer more compelling development opportunities at the older ages.

12U and Under Opportunities

- Verona / DC Diamonds to host 8U, 10U and 12U teams
- Both organizations will co-host Girls Try Hockey Free days on east and west side
- Uniform commitment to growing the number of girls at the grassroots level

“Verona Youth Hockey has been a leader in re-branding and growing new organizations over the years. We are very pleased to partner with area organizations to provide a first-class experience for girls and their families”, said Jamie Stebbeds, President of Verona Youth Hockey.

“Middleton is excited to help grow and recruit more girls to play this terrific sport. Utilizing the collective resources of all organizations will provide a more sustainable solution going forward”, said Alan Schecher, President of Middleton Youth Hockey.

14U and Over Opportunities

Meetings were held throughout the state over the last year to discuss the issue of like-skill options for girls at 14U. The problem is girls do not have the same opportunity as boys to play like-skill hockey at 14U (Bantam for boys) in a safe environment with no-checking. Most larger co-ed organizations offer multiple teams at Bantam, allowing boys to be paired with like-skill players, whereas girls do not have this option.

“When we spoke about the 14U issue with the association President’s in Region 4 and WAHA Directors, the overwhelming message was to create a solution through, and with the full support of, girls associations in our area”, said Matt Goetzke, President of West Madison Polar Caps.

Verona is the sole organization offering A, B and C 14U girls teams for the 2018-19 hockey season. Practices will start at the conclusion of WEHL (more below) in mid-October. Placements will occur during two weeks of practices in late October with teams formed by November 1st. Practices will be held at Verona, Sun Prairie and Waunakee ice rinks.

“One of the major challenges girls hockey organizations face is creating teams of like-skill players at every level...this agreement and unprecedented cooperation between girls hockey stakeholders is a fantastic development for the girls and solves a critical issue at 14U”, said Shawn Nelson, President of the DC Diamonds.

Wisconsin Elite Hockey League (WEHL)

14U hockey is for 2004 and 2005 birth year girls. For those in high school, the hockey season starts in November and many miss the practice and development opportunities area club’s offer with an earlier season start. The recently announced return of Wisconsin Elite Hockey League (“WEHL”) for girls 14U and 16U will solve this development gap.

- WEHL teams run from mid-August to mid-October
- 1 practice per week and 1 tournament and 2 festival game weekends
- Ability to play other fall sports while furthering hockey development
- High quality coaching to focus on development
- To Register, please visit <https://wi-ehl.net>

Registration will open in early August. Please visit Verona Youth Hockey and DC Diamonds for more information.

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