



USA HOCKEY'S NATIONAL TEAM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE NTDP?

The National Team Development Program is the pinnacle of USA Hockey's amateur player development program. The NTDP scouts and selects the top 22 players in two age groups (Under-17 and Under-18) to train and develop in a highly competitive environment. The two teams (Under-17 and Under-18) face a rigorous domestic schedule including competition against older, more-developed players.

The Under-17 Team plays a majority of a 60-game junior schedule in the United States Hockey League against opponents whose age range is 17-20. The Under-18 Team 'shares' the junior schedule, playing about 25 games, while also playing a challenging schedule against top NCAA Division I and III teams (ages 18-24).

Perhaps the most unique attribute to playing with the NTDP: both teams play several age-specific international events a year against national teams from around the world.

In addition to the game component, the players face a daily routine of off-ice development that includes strength training, cross-training and cognitive skill testing. Players must maintain strong academic standards and almost all earn full scholarships to top colleges. Finally, players are taught that from the moment they join the NTDP, they are representing the United States of America, at home, at school and abroad—24 hours a day.

WHAT DOES U17 AND U18 MEAN?

The "U" represents "under" and the numbers represent the age of the players. On the U18 Team, all of the players were born in 1998. On the U17 Team, all of the players were born in 1999. These designations are commonly used in sports such as hockey and soccer around the world.

WHERE DO THE NTDP PLAYERS COME FROM?

The objective of the NTDP is to develop the most promising players from anywhere in the United States. NTDP players come from all across the country with players on the current roster hailing from 16 states. The majority of our players come from Minnesota (8), Michigan (6), New York (5), Missouri (4), and Illinois (4). We also have players on the current roster from California, Florida, Idaho and Texas.

The NTDP players are tracked and evaluated for two years prior to coming to the NTDP.

The culmination of the two-year scouting process is an annual, invitation-only NTDP Evaluation Camp that will be held in March here at USA Hockey Arena. The 22 members for the U.S. National Under-17 Team are selected from that process.

THE TWO TEAMS SEEM DIFFERENT. THE U18S PLAYED WELL TWO WEEKS AGO; THE U17S STRUGGLED AT TIMES AND PLAYED WELL AT OTHER TIMES.

The differences in the two teams help emphasize the beauty of what the NTDP is all about: Development!

The young men who join the NTDP work, play and develop in a two-year apprenticeship.

The U18 Team has trained and played together for a full season coming into the 2015-16 campaign. Their success is a byproduct of hard work on and off the ice. But they still face the challenge of older competition in junior hockey, and elevate their competition level by facing more experienced NCAA Division I and III teams.

One of the main tenets of the NTDP is to place our nation's top players in a challenging environment and provide them the resources to flourish. The USHL provides that, especially for the U17s. They play in all situations and all critical times (power play, penalty kill, overtime, etc.) against older, more experienced players.

The crucible of competition against older teams means players have to develop quickly. And we've found—through experience—that they do improve at a rapid pace when playing against older, more experienced players.

The U17 Team is early in this process, but fans will be astonished at the progress they make as they come back to USA Hockey Arena throughout the next two years to cheer on the Red, White and Blue.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE COMBINED STANDINGS OF TWO TEAMS IN THE USHL.

The NTDP is a full-time member of the USHL. We differ from a traditional franchise because we have two teams (U17 & U18) that register in the standings as one (Team USA). The combined records of the U17s and U18s are shown within the USHL standings.

All 17 USHL teams play a total of 60 games. In the NTDP, the U17 Team plays approximately 35, and the U18 Team plays approximately 25 games.

In the event that Team USA qualifies for the playoffs, the U17 Team would represent the NTDP in the chase for the Clark Cup (USHL championship), while the U18 Team is representing the United States at the International Ice Hockey Federation Under-18 World Championship against the best from countries like Canada and Russia. The U18 World Championship is the pinnacle event for the players in the NTDP.



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I DON'T UNDERSTAND OVERALL VS. USHL RECORD. WHICH IS CORRECT? WHY ISN'T IT JUST ONE?

The simple answer is: when you represent your Country, there are no exhibition games.

The NTDP schedule is made up of USHL games, NCAA Division I and III games, international tournaments, as well as a handful of miscellaneous games against squads from the NAHL, for example. The NTDP counts all wins and losses, so the overall record encompasses all of these contests.

The concept is not much different than college football, basketball or hockey. Win-loss records and individual statistics are often tabulated as league and then overall. We do the same.

WHERE CAN I FIND NTDP AND USHL RECORDS ONLINE? THE NTDP WEBSITE IS CONFUSING.

NTDP records can be found at usahockeyntdp.com by clicking on History & Records under the Fan Zone drop down box that runs across the top of the homepage. If you're having trouble or have suggestions, please feel free to send us your thoughts.

ARE TRADES MADE IN THE USHL? DOES THE NTDP MAKE TRADES?

Many trades are made in the USHL throughout the year. The NTDP, however, does not make any trades and does not cut players. Acceptance into the NTDP is a two-year agreement between the player and USA Hockey. No player in the NTDP has to worry about being cut or traded; they are here to develop as student-athletes and as individuals.

IS FIGHTING ALLOWED IN THE USHL? DOES THE NTDP ALLOW FIGHTING?

Fighting is allowed by rule in the USHL, with similar penalties to the OHL. Fighting is not allowed in NCAA Division I and III hockey or international competition. Players who fight in those games are ejected and suspended.

WHERE CAN I FIND THE RULES OF THE UNITED STATES HOCKEY LEAGUE?

USA Hockey governs the USHL, the only Tier 1 junior hockey league in the United States. The USA Hockey Junior Rules can be found at usahockey.com. Also visit USHL.com for information on league rules and history.

HOW DOES THE OFFICIATING DIFFER IN THE USHL FROM THE ONTARIO HOCKEY LEAGUE?

Most rules are similar between the Canadian Hockey League and the USHL. There are minor differences, as there are between college hockey and international rules.

WHY DO THE NTDP GUYS WEAR CAGES AND OTHER TEAMS DO NOT?

NTDP players are all under the age of 18. The NTDP follows international guidelines in this area. Players under the age of 18 must wear full facial protection. NCAA Division I and III hockey requires full facial protection as well. So NTDP players wear full facial protection at all times.

HOW DOES THE NTDP FIT INTO THE U.S. OLYMPIC PROGRAM?

The NTDP is the first step for many players in the process of representing the United States on the world stage. It figures prominently in the development of future Olympians. Since the NTDP was founded in 1996, the number of alumni on the U.S. Olympic Men's Ice Hockey Team has grown significantly and will continue to do so in the future.

In 2006, three NTDP alumni represented the United States in Torino, Italy. That number grew to seven on the silver medal-winning squad in Vancouver, British Columbia, in 2010. Nine NTDP alums wore the colors of their country in 2014 in Sochi, Russia.

Alumni also represent the United States on the world stage at various International Ice Hockey Federation events each year, including the senior-level IIHF World Championship. The 2015 U.S. Men's National Team that captured the bronze medal at the this year's event, included seven NTDP alumni: Jack Campbell (2008-10), Jack Eichel (2012-14), Justin Faulk (2008-10), Seth Jones (2010-12), Dylan Larkin (2012-14), Jeremy Morin (2007-09) and Connor Murphy (2009-11).

The U.S. captured its first-ever gold medal at the IIHF World Junior Championship in 2004, and Team USA has followed the success with gold-medal finishes in 2010 and 2013, while also earning bronze in 2011. Each year, the U.S. World Junior Team is comprised heavily of NTDP alumni. The 2015 squad featured 15 former NTDP skaters, including 2015 No. 2 overall NHL Draft selection, Jack Eichel, and potential 2016 No. 1 overall pick, Auston Matthews.

The U.S. Men's National Under-18 Team that competes at the annual IIHF Under-18 World Championship is comprised primarily of current NTDP players. The U.S. has won this event nine times, including six of the last seven titles.