



## United States Hockey League

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## USHL ENTERS INTO AFFILIATION AGREEMENT WITH TIER 1 ELITE LEAGUE

**Chicago, IL** – The United States Hockey League and the Tier 1 Elite League today announced that they will enter into a national agreement that will make the Tier 1 Elite League the official youth hockey affiliate of the USHL.

The Tier 1 Elite League, the top elite youth hockey league in the United States, is comprised of top-tier youth hockey organizations throughout the U.S. competing in multiple age groups – from Squirt all the way up to Midget Major levels. From its base of 19 existing teams, the league recently granted membership to the D.C. Capitals, Milwaukee Junior Admirals, Oakland (Michigan) Junior Grizzlies, and the Thunder program based in Atlanta, Georgia.

Two youth programs affiliated with USHL Member Club ownership will also now join the expanding league, bringing the number of teams preparing for 2011-12 Tier 1 play to 25. The Rocky Mountain RoughRiders program, based in Westminster, Colorado, is operated by Tony Sdao, owner of the Cedar Rapids RoughRiders. They commence play in 2011-12 season along with the Las Vegas Storm, operated by Kirk Brooks, who is also the owner of the USHL's Tri-City Storm.

In the initial phase of the agreement, the USHL will bring its marketing, public relations, player development and organizational assets to the Tier 1 Elite League, and will work with the league's nationwide web of youth programs to develop enhanced standards of coaching, training, academic progress, cost controls, and stability – reflecting the standards observed by USHL Member Clubs. The USHL will have a consistent presence at the Tier 1 Elite League's schedule of national showcases, and the two organizations will enter into a planning phase for more and enhanced events.

"This represents the culmination of a lot of hard work with some of the most important development partners in youth hockey in the United States," said USHL Commissioner **Skip Prince**. "As with any partnership of this potential magnitude, we want to walk before we run, and see where we can be most effective with each other – but as you can see, this represents not only a commitment by the USHL to elite youth hockey at the league level, but the direct participation of our owners in Tier 1 League competition. This is the most effective way we know to implement USA Hockey's education-based development model at the elite level. We're excited about what this can mean for the growth of hockey in the U.S."

The strength of the Tier 1 Elite League programs was reflected in Monday's USHL Entry Draft, when a total of 56 players were selected from the league's programs, representing 26% of the 216 players drafted.

"The Tier 1 Elite Hockey League could not be more excited, as this affiliation has been in the planning stage for almost a year, said **Larry Johnson**, Commissioner of the Tier 1 Elite League. "Our goal is to move our players to the very best junior program in the United States, and this will improve our player's chances to make that next step. A great number of our players move on to the USHL now but this should open a great opportunity for the parents and the players to learn what to expect and what is expected of them to move to this level."

Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, the USHL celebrates its ninth season as the nation's only Tier I junior hockey league in 2010-11. With over 250 players from this season already committed to NCAA Division I schools and 18 NHL Entry Draft picks that were on League rosters this season, the USHL is the nation's foremost producer of junior hockey talent. For more information, visit us on the web at [www.USHL.com](http://www.USHL.com).

***It's not just hockey. It's the USHL.***