



MEET OUR TRAVEL COACHES FOR 2020-2021

Evan Nielsen: Mite 1 & Squirt 4

The 2020-21 season will be Nielsen's first as hockey director for the Winnetka Hockey Club. He will help oversee WHC player development curriculum, support the continued development of WHC coaches, coach two WHC teams, and work closely in the development of WHC skills program.

Nielsen is a native of Evanston, IL. He grew up playing hockey for community-based hockey in the area and for the Chicago Young Americans. He attended The Taft School in Watertown, CT for 11th and 12th grade. From there, he was recruited to play hockey at the University of Notre Dame. Nielsen captained the Fighting Irish hockey team for two years and was drafted by the Atlanta Thrashers. He graduated with a B.A. in Political Science in 2003. After college Nielsen went on to play professional hockey for the Chicago Wolves, Gwinnett Gladiators, and Trenton Titans. He has spent the last ten years working as a teacher, coach, and administrator at Berkshire School (Sheffield, MA) and Northwood School (Lake Placid, NY).

Ryan Davlantes: Mite 2

Ryan enters his 4th season as a Head Coach for the Warriors all at the Mite level. He also coached one season of High School hockey. He grew up playing for both Northbrook and the Falcons before moving on to play Junior hockey for the Wisconsin Rampage. He then moved on to play NCAA D3 hockey at Aurora University before starting his coaching career.

In addition to coaching, Ryan is a head skills instructor for both Winnetka and the Warhawks girls program. He views his position with the WHC to improve the skills of all the players he coaches. "I want Winnetka players to be the best skating players in Illinois. My job is all about development. If I develop them, I have done my job successfully."

Daniel Chang: Mite 3

Daniel started his hockey career as a Warrior in our Minor Mite House League. He quickly moved into the travel program and won back to back State Championships playing for Coach Gullen at Squirts. He then moved on to play AAA hockey, first with the Young Americans for three years then with the Chicago Mission for three years.

Daniel is now in his 3rd season as a coach, having served as an Assistant Coach at the Mite, Pee Wee, and Bantam levels. He has a unique ability to relate to players of all ages and ability levels, combining his love and passion for the game with his knowledge of how to play the game. He is excited to move into the role of Head Coach this season.

Daniel Viettinghoff: Mite 4

Daniel played youth hockey for the Northbrook Bluehawks, CYA, and for Glenbrook North High School from 2008-2010. He has coached for the Winnetka Hockey Club for 5 years and was with the Northwest Chargers prior to coming to Winnetka. He is a Level 4 certified USA Hockey Coach who has coached Mites, Squirts, Pee Wees, and Bantams. Daniel is both competitive and passionate about hockey but his ability to relate to the youngest of hockey players is his strongest asset. His goal is not only to develop young hockey players, but to have fun while doing it. In his eyes, success is not just about winning; it is being able to develop each player for every position. There are no set positions on his Mite team! He is a graduate of DePaul University and works for Magellan Corporation.

Bobby Acri: Squirt 1 & Pee Wee 1

Bobby is a native of Winnetka, IL. Bobby is the WHC Director of Player Development. He grew up playing hockey for Winnetka before playing four seasons for the Chicago Young Americans. He attended New Trier High School where he played three years for New Trier Green, winning 1 state championship as well as being named all state for his Junior and Senior years. From there, he attended the University of Iowa where he played 4 years of club hockey. He graduated with a Sports Management degree. After college, Bobby has spent his time coaching hockey at the WHC and at New Trier, adding another state championship to his resume. He is also Co-director of a summer program called Impact Hockey.

Ricky Lee: Squirt 2

Ricky grew up playing for the Warriors, winning state titles as a Squirt and Peewee. He then went on to play for New Trier where he led the '99 New Trier Blue team to the state semi-finals (where they were one game away from facing Green in the finals), and was a member of the state championship New Trier Green team of 2000. From there he went on to play four years of varsity club hockey for the University of Colorado, winning the 2003 ACHA division II National Championship, while leading the team in scoring. Ricky has coached for Winnetka since 2004 at both the Mite and Squirt levels. His highlights as a head coach include winning the 2008 Mite A state championship and leading the 2017 Squirt Central States team to a 3rd place finish in state.

Outside of the rink he lives in the old town neighborhood of Chicago with his wife Katie, two young children Jack and Harper, and dog Barkley. He was a member of the Chicago board of trade from 2007-2018 and now spends his days working on the trade desk for TD Ameritrade.

Squirt 3: TBA

John Jablonski: Squirt 5

John grew up playing for the Niles Sharks and later Maine East High School. John has been coaching for 17 years. He originally started coach when his son, Joe, was a Mite and never looked back. He coached in Glenview several years before coming over to Winnetka 10 years ago. He is a Level 5 certified USA Hockey Coach and brings a hard work dedicated mentality to the Winnetka program. His goal is to help the development of these young athletes to become better Hockey players and represent the Warriors with respect and dignity.

Joe and his wife Elizabeth have been married 34 years and have two grown children: Jayne and Joe.

Charlie Widmar: Pee Wee 2

Charlie grew up in Eagan, Minnesota where he began playing hockey before moving to Northbrook, playing for the Bluehawks program. He attended and played at Loyola Academy. After graduating from Loyola, Charlie played junior hockey in the Eastern and Atlantic Junior Leagues. He played in Boston, Philadelphia and Portland, Maine.

Charlie ended his playing career with the Oles of St. Olaf College where he played four years of NCAA collegiate hockey, graduating in the spring of 2018. After his playing career, Charlie began coaching with the Wilmette Braves and New Trier Hockey organizations where he was the past two years. He is also a Head Instruct at Impact Hockey. Charlie is excited to join the Winnetka Warriors program this coming season, where he looks to help develop these young athletes into the best hockey players they can be and continue to grow and promote the sport he loves.

Michael Vail: Pee Wee 3

Michael grew up in Winnetka and has been playing hockey since the age of 7. He played across every NIHL level from bronze to elite, wearing Winnetka's green & gold. Michael played on the New Trier Blue team his freshman year of high school and as a sophomore earned a spot on the New Trier Green team. Michael was captain of NT Green for both his junior and senior years, leading the team to 103 victories, including an IL State Championship and the first-ever National High School Hockey Championship. During this time, Michael was a two-time All-State player and New Trier Hockey Club's recipient of the Heart of the Team Award in 2010.

Since graduating from DePaul University, Michael has worked as an assistant coach under Tom Gullen for the past 5 years. This will be Michael's first year as a head coach, and he is very eager for the opportunity and challenge. Michael is committed to fostering the development of young hockey players, placing key emphasis on structure, individual skills, and positive team dynamics.

Mark Price: Bantam 2

Mark grew up playing at the Falcons Mites-Bantams, working his way from House League to AA. After Bantam, Mark went on to play Varsity at Libertyville/Vernon Hills high school his freshman and sophomore years. Looking to pursue hockey at higher levels and at the collegiate level, he transitioned back to travel with the Northern Express Midget Major, taking 2nd and 3rd in State his final 2 years. Following high school Mark attended the University of Illinois where he played all 4 years winning a DI ACHA championship his freshman year and going 38-0.

After his Competitive playing days, Mark immediately started coaching. He spent 3 years coaching Bantam AA at the Ice Dogs before moving to Winnetka. Over the last 5 years he's coached Pee Wees and Bantams focusing on skill development, discipline, and teamwork to help advance his players to the high school level.

Jimmy Davis: Bantam 1

Jimmy grew up playing locally for the Glenview Stars and Chicago Blues. During college at DePaul University, he served as the Assistant Hockey Director for the Niles Rangers for 5 years where he helped run the program and classes for the program. He has been coaching at Winnetka Hockey Club for over 10 seasons between the squirt and peewee age groups, as well as coaching skills sessions.

Jason Hawkins: Bantam Major

Jason grew up in the west suburbs and played his youth hockey at the Huskies and the Flames before moving on to play Club Hockey at Illinois State.

He is in his 18th year coaching and his 16th in the Winnetka program, all at the Bantam level. In addition to coaching our Bantam team, he is the Head Coach and Hockey Director for the Glenbard High School Program. His Glenbard teams have reached the "Final 4" seven times. He was named the AHA High School Coach of the year in 2017 and was also awarded the 2015 IHSHL West Division President's Award for leadership, teaching, and dedication. He has won state championships both at Glenbard and in Winnetka. His unique background helps prepare his players to take the next step into their High School Hockey careers.

Jason lives in Palatine with his wife Darcy and two children Cassidy and Lukas.