

HISTORY OF PREP HOCKEY IN ALASKA

Anchorage High School hockey coached by Art Allen played its first game in January 1958. Anchorage High School competed against an Alumni team with 3 games played the first year. The following season (1958-59) high school hockey was recognized as a varsity sport. Competition consisted of men teams from Fort Richardson, Army National Guard and a City team (Hohn Plumbers). All games were played on outside rinks. Teams shoveled their own rinks, with numerous cases of frostbite recorded. In the 1959-60 season, the Prep team played the same competition except at the end of the season when Anchorage High School defeated Fairbanks High School twice providing the State with its first high school competition. In 1961 Anchorage High School was split forming West and East High School. The Intermediate League now was composed of two high schools and two local men teams.

On February 13, 1965 Anchorage watched its first indoor hockey game at the Anchorage Sports Arena with East defeating West 3-2. In 1965 the league was renamed the Cook Inlet Hockey League. 1966 saw the addition of Dimond High School to the conference coached by Tom Pflingst. The 1967 season witnessed Chugiak High School entering the league under the direction of Steve Moen. This marked the first season that the league consisted of all prep teams.

The 1969-70 season introduced the first year of playoffs with West defeating Conference Champion Dimond. The 1970 season brought more league changes with Chugiak dropping out and the addition of a team of college students. In 1971 Service High School coached by Dick Thompson entered the league. Chugiak re-entered the league in 1972 again making the conference an all high school affair. In 1973 the Bartlett Golden Bears began league play. 1977 the Conference name changed to the Anchorage High School Hockey Association.

In 1983, the first sanctioned ASAA state tournament was held as there were now three regions with hockey teams. Region 3 was the most recent addition with teams at Kenai, Soldotna, Palmer, and Wasilla High Schools. Region 4 (Anchorage) had teams at West, East, Chugiak, Dimond, Service, and Bartlett. Region 6 (Fairbanks) had teams at Lathrop, West Vallley, and North Pole. In 1990, Skyview was added to Region 3 and Colony was added in 1992 to make a total of fifteen 4A schools with hockey programs.

In 1996, ASAA voted to classify the hockey state championships to allow an increasing number of smaller high schools an opportunity to be featured at the state tournament. The Greatland Hockey Tournament at this time had eight members and the two with the best season records were invited to compete for a one game state championship, to be played in conjunction with the existing state hockey tournament. That first year, Delta Junction was the champion of a four team tourney that was attached to the large schools tournament.

Beginning with 2000, a full separate tournament for all small schools was held in a separate location. Two new Anchorage schools---South Anchorage and Eagle River---were added to the Cook Inlet Conference in the fall of 2004 and 2005.

In 2005, both state tournaments were held at the same site---the Big Dipper Sports Arena in Fairbanks and it was renamed the "Frozen Pond" State Tournament.