



# RAIDERS HOCKEY

WINTER 2025 NEWSLETTER

#WEARERAIDERNATION

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy Holidays Raiders Family!

It's hard to believe December is already here. The seeding round has wrapped up, the regular season is in full stride, and our teams have been hard at work both on the ice and in the community. Many of you have already had the chance to compete in tournaments, build new friendships, and settle into the rhythm of another exciting hockey season.

As always, this time of year brings plenty to look forward to, and the coming weeks promise some truly exciting events across our club:

- **U7 Future Stars Tournament (December 12-14)** - A Raiders legacy tournament celebrating our grassroots players and showcasing the enthusiasm and energy of our newest 'Timbits' hockey stars.
- **Esso Minor Hockey Week (January 10-18)** - A highlight of the season put on by Hockey Calgary and a celebration of community hockey at its best. One of the largest hockey tournaments in the world!
- **Intro to Hockey (January 18-March 8)** - Raiders are proud to continue to offer this long-standing program, welcoming our youngest Raiders as they take their first strides.
- **U15 Stick it to Cancer Tournament (March 19-22)** - A meaningful legacy tournament where competition meets compassion and community support.
- **Raiders Spring Hockey** - Our annual Spring hockey program continues to grow, offering an opportunity for extra development and competition for players who aren't ready for the hockey season to end!

I would also like to take the opportunity to extend a warm welcome to Dallas Hines, who joins Raiders Nation as our new Hockey Development Operations Lead. We are thrilled to have him join our organization! His experience and passion for player and coach development will be invaluable as we continue to strengthen our programs. Over the next several weeks, we'll be sharing more information about the early stages of our long-term development plan - an initiative designed to support our athletes and coaches for many years to come.

As we head into the holidays, thank you to everyone who contributes to making the Raiders Hockey Club such a strong, supportive and spirited community. Your dedication - whether cheering from the stands, volunteering behind the scenes, or working with our players - truly makes a difference.

Wishing you all a safe, restful, and joyful holiday season.

Troy Cleghorn  
President  
Raiders Hockey Club  
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# RAIDER NATION EVENTS

## U7 JR. & SR. FUTURE STARS TOURNAMENT

Get ready for the Raiders Future Stars U7 Jr. & Sr. Tournament from **December 12th-14th**. This legacy tournament, a cherished tradition for over a decade, showcases the talent and enthusiasm of our youngest players in a fun, competitive environment.

As we gear up for this exciting event, we will need volunteers to help make it a success. Please keep an eye out for Association Volunteer Hour opportunities. This is a great way to earn volunteer hours while being part of a long-standing tradition. Let's come together to support our Future Stars!

Tournament Contact: [futurestars@raidershc.ca](mailto:futurestars@raidershc.ca)



## U15 STICK IT TO KIDS CANCER TOURNAMENT

The Raiders are proud to host the 11th Annual Stick It To Kids Cancer Tournament from **March 19th-22nd, 2026**. All proceeds support the Kids Cancer Care Foundation of Alberta. This incredible organization provides vital support to families battling childhood cancer across the province.

Over the past 10 years, the Raiders 'Stick It To Cancer' Tournament has raised over \$685,000 for the Kids Cancer Care Foundation of Alberta. This tournament challenges players and teams to raise money and give back to help children fighting cancer. The mission of this legacy tournament is to promote awareness of childhood cancer, as this event is in honor of our own players, who passed away in 2016, 2021 and 2023, after battling cancer.

Tournament Contact: [stickittocancer@raidershc.ca](mailto:stickittocancer@raidershc.ca)



# RAIDER NATION EVENTS

## ESSO MINOR HOCKEY WEEK: JANUARY 9-17, 2026

Raiders Hockey Club is proud to participate in the 46<sup>th</sup> annual Esso Minor Hockey Week, which kicks off on January 9<sup>th</sup>! This tradition brings together players, families and fans and showcases teamwork, sportsmanship and the love of the game.

Some quick stats about Esso Minor Hockey Week:

- It is the largest minor hockey tournament in the world.
- It includes over 13,000 kids, 654 teams, 3,400 coaches and over 6,000 volunteers!
- The tournament began 55 years ago, with Esso sponsoring the tournament for the last 46 years (including 2026).
- It is played on 59 ice surfaces at 38 venues
- There are 59 Championship games

Be sure to check out the Esso Minor Hockey Week website for your hockey schedule, which was released on December 5. Click [HERE](#) for their website.

Interested in the Esso Minor Hockey Week Rules? Check them out by clicking [HERE](#).



# RAIDER NATION EVENTS

## RAIDERS INTRODUCTION TO HOCKEY PROGRAM

Raiders Hockey Club is proud to partner with Hockey Calgary and the Flames Foundation to run our Introduction to Hockey Program. The 8-week hockey program will be open to players who are trying hockey for the first time or have minimal skating and hockey experience.

Each ice time balances skating skills with activity-based games to help players build the skills needed to enjoy hockey as a lifelong sport! The program is designed for players born between 2016-2021 who wish to develop basic hockey skills, have some fun, and experience success in a full-time hockey program.

The Raiders Introduction to Hockey Program will feature Raiders Hockey and other certified hockey coaches.

### PROGRAM COST:

- \$200 (includes 8 ice sessions)
- Open to those families living in the Raiders designated communities



### PROGRAM DETAILS:

- The program will run from January 17 to March 8. This includes the Family Day weekend.
- All ice times will be held at VIVO, 11960 Country Village Link NE
- Players must have full equipment in order to participate on the ice

### REGISTRATION LINK - [Click here](#)

You will be prompted to choose one of the following groups:

- Group 1 - 2020 & 2021 players
  - January 18 to March 8, sessions #1 to #7 are from 1:45-2:45pm
  - Final session on March 15 is from 4:30-5:30pm
- Group 2 - 2018 & 2019 players
  - January 18 to March 8, sessions #1 to #7 are from 3:15-4:15pm
  - Final session on March 15 is from 5:45-6:45pm
- Group 3 - 2016 & 2017 players
  - January 18 to March 8, sessions #1 to #7 are from 4:30pm-5:30pm
  - Final session on March 15 is from 6:45-7:45pm



# RAIDER NATION EVENTS

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM RAIDERS PHOTO DAY



# RAIDER NATION EVENTS

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM RAIDERS TEAM EVENTS

RAIDERS U13-2 PURPLE! TEAM BUILDING AT TACTICAL LASER TAG!



U9 3B HAD A TEAM BUILDING EVENT 🍷



RAIDERS U9-3 WHITE HALLOWEEN SKATE-A-THON



# RAIDER NATION EVENTS

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM RAIDERS TEAM EVENTS CONT.



RAIDERS U11-5 Family Bowling - Winter Party



RAIDERS U13-2 PURPLE!  
DRYLAND TRAINING AT  
DYNAMITE BOXING 🦵



A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE  
WITH COACH SANTA ON NOV  
26, 2025 WITH THE U9  
RAIDERS 3 WHITE, AND U7  
RAIDERS SR WHITE



raidershcyyc U15 Raiders BC1 had a blast at their  
Christmas Party at Classified YYC. 🎁🎄



# RAIDER NATION NEWS

## BUILDING THE FUTURE:

### Introducing our New Development Coordinator: Dallas Hines

The Raiders Hockey Club is thrilled to announce the addition of Dallas Hines as our new Development Coordinator. Dallas will work directly with individual teams to strengthen player development and provide support to coaches across all levels. Our goal is to build a program that stands among the best in the city, empowering coaches and players with every opportunity to develop their skills, from grassroots all the way to U21.



#### About Dallas:

- Coaching Experience: Head Coach of U13AA and Assistant Coach with U18AAA at CNHA, Assistant Coach with the Calgary Dinos, plus over 5 years coaching U13–U18 teams
- Skill Development Expertise: Certified Power Edge Pro Instructor and skills coach for athletes ranging from U13 to NHL players
- Playing Career: 4 years in the WHL and 2 seasons with the University of Calgary
- Additional Roles: Video analysis and on-ice development through Snap Analytics

Dallas brings passion, leadership, and a proven track record of developing athletes at every level. His experience and vision will help shape the future of Raiders Hockey.

## SOCIAL MEDIA: Help us celebrate your team!

- ✓ Send us your content! Game highlights, team pics, community events — Tag or DM [@raidershccyc](https://www.instagram.com/raidershccyc) or email [socialmedia.coordinator@raidershc.ca](mailto:socialmedia.coordinator@raidershc.ca)
- ✓ Always make sure to include your team name (ex: U13 3W)
- ✓ We do our best to highlight all teams + age groups — but we need your help! Consider becoming or designating a parent rep to send in content

**Our goal: To celebrate Raider Nation as a whole — showcasing the spirit, teamwork, and pride across our club.**



## COACH'S CORNER

### Feature of the month: Jeff Lyness, U11 Raiders 5 - Head Coach

In a continued effort to get to know our Raiders coaches a little bit better, please enjoy our second edition of 'Coach's Corner'. This month features Jeff Lyness, Head Coach for the U11 Raiders 5.

**1. How many years have you been coaching hockey?**

7 years, as long as my boys have been playing hockey.

**2. What are three words your players would use to describe you?**

Fun, animated and demanding.

**3. When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?**

An architect - I did actually go through with becoming one.

**4. Where do you like to vacation when you aren't working or on the ice?**

That's tough! As an architect, I love traveling to Europe or South America to experience other cultures, but I'll never say no to a beach vacation!

**5. Who is your favorite NHL team?**

The Flames, and I would also like to add that I hate the Oilers!

**6. What is your favorite drill to run and why?**

3-pass shot, as it allows the players to work on their skating, stick control, and passing, and then have fun trying to score. It is up tempo and you can run the drill at all levels.

**7. When did you first start coaching and why?**

When my kids started. I grew up in a toxic hockey culture and I wanted to ensure that I was part of giving the players a positive experience each time they came to play.

**8. What do you like best about being a Raider?**

For those who know me, that's a tough one! :) But I would say the community of parents that are engaged in a positive way to see things run smoothly for the players.

**9. What was your proudest coaching moment?**

Teaching kids how to skate for the first time. To see their eyes light up like 'look at what I just did!' and being a part of that moment is so special. Now it's about learning to be a goalie coach as my youngest has decided he will be a goalie. It took 5 years but I finally relented!

**10. Any words of advice to others who are thinking of coaching?**

Do it for the right reasons, always. It's about the players and their development - not about driving them to do something that you think is important. I believe in 3 things for hockey:

1. FUN 2. COMPETE 3. PURPOSE. All you want is for each player to give their best, whatever that is. The coach is there to guide and support along the way.



# RAIDER NATION NEWS

## A CALL TO ACTION:

### Annual Raiders Christmas Community Challenge

As we look forward to the holiday season, the Raiders Hockey Club is excited to once again challenge all of our teams to participate in the Raiders Christmas Community Challenge. The holidays are a time for reflection, gratitude, and giving back, and we want to spread that spirit throughout our community. This season, we encourage each team to engage in a community initiative that makes a positive impact on those around us. While the holidays are a time of joy and celebration for many, we are also mindful that not everyone is as fortunate, including some of our very own Raiders families. There is no better time than now, with the spirit of giving all around us, to make a difference in the lives of others. We challenge each team to plan and execute an activity or initiative that reflects our values of kindness, compassion, and community spirit. Whether it's fundraising, donating time to a worthy cause, or simply spreading joy, every effort can help make the season brighter for those in need.



We will be highlighting the efforts of our teams on our social media sites and Raiders website to showcase the collective impact we are making together. We look forward to seeing how each team contributes to making a meaningful difference this holiday season. Together, we can spread holiday cheer and show the true spirit of the Raiders community. Thank you for your participation, and for helping us make this holiday season one to remember!



# RAIDER NATION NEWS

## BEYOND THE ICE:

### A letter showcasing how the Raiders Community steps up for those in need

*Dear Raiders Community,*

*There is something special about the community of hockey that I have been a part of since my two girls started as Timbit players. As a hockey mom, I have so much pride watching my girls play for the love of the game. I know that on ice development is as important as cultivating the thrill of competition. However, above the on and off-ice development, I believe the most important aspect of hockey is building community. My own husband, a coach himself, would attest to that. That is why my family and I have developed lifelong friends throughout our time in community hockey.*

*Today, I have once again been so fortunate to witness the power of the Raiders community. I work as a high school teacher at a small school called St. Gemma Outreach. It is a non-traditional, trauma informed school for students requiring more supports and personalized planning than a traditional school could offer. This has been a major shift from teaching at big high schools and large classrooms, as I am fortunate enough to work one-on-one with these students. While working in this environment, I have learned the personal stories of each student I teach. Some are heartbreaking involving poverty, mental struggles or trouble with the law, but so many display the resilience of continuing on the path of success despite barriers that often seem daunting. This leaves me in complete awe of what young adults are truly capable of.*

*My colleagues and I have learned that these intricate and unsought barriers are what keeps them from achieving academic success. Hence, when we opened our school three years ago, we unconsciously recognized that part of our role, is to help alleviate those barriers the best we can. Our staff are constantly navigating outside community resources for housing and emergency food aid, while some write letters for donations. Then there's me, who asks my daughters' hockey teams for help by donating to Christmas hampers. For the past three years each family who has contributed has made such a tremendous impact and has left me speechless. This year did not disappoint. U11 Team 2 Purple filled my van to the brim with Elmo blankets, shampoo, laundry detergents, and even that special gift-wrapped Barbie for a sibling, plus toques and mittens to keep them warm over the winter season. Moreover, my coat pockets are overflowing with gift cards to grocery stores and even Roblox, another treat for a younger sibling. This is just the first round of donations, as more are coming next week.*

*Late last week, I also sent out another email, appealing to the community about a student, who's mom only has days left after courageously battling cancer, and having to care for her special needs sibling. I was met with even more donations so promptly after the email was sent, I was touched. This year, my daughter's manager and coaches also sent out the spreadsheet to other U11 and U9 teams, extending the reach of generosity even more.*



# RAIDER NATION NEWS

## BEYOND THE ICE:

A letter showcasing how the Raiders Community steps up for those in need  
cont.

*This type of giving isn't just putting your name on a sign-up sheet and fulfilling a duty. The giving exhibited has been intentional and from the heart. I constantly receive messages of "What else do you need," "I want to help more," and "Are you sure this is enough?" Those aren't families only fulfilling a duty. Those are families who care. Even the players are involved. They write Christmas cards, with sparkles and stickers, wishing the merriest of holidays. Unbeknownst to the players is that those cards, written by their little 9 or 10 year old hands, mean so much to 18 and 19 year old students, as it shows a gentle and innocent kindness.*

*I am writing this because I don't know how else to show my utmost gratitude to the families that have so humbly and selfishly given to strangers they haven't even met. Many of my students have had so many people abandon them over the years, and yet, Raider families, even just for moment in time, have done their best to help them out. My own women's hockey team has exhibited the same courtesy (Cougars of SAWHA). This just goes to show the power of sport and the community it creates. Hockey isn't just what happens on the ice, it's the extension of ourselves that we give with heartfelt thought and compassion.*

*I am so grateful for what Raiders Hockey Club has done for my students, as I have seen personally the impact it has made. To all the past and present U9, U11, and U13 teams that have helped my school community, you have no idea the immediate and lasting impact you have made. From St. Gemma Outreach HS staff and students, we thank you a thousand times over.*

-Anna Ponce



**ST. GEMMA**  
OUTREACH HIGH SCHOOL

**Raiders  
volunteers**



[www.raidershc.ca](http://www.raidershc.ca)



[Raiders Contacts](#)



# RAIDER NATION SAFETY

## MONTHLY SAFETY TIP:

### Neck Guard Safety

Neck guards play a critical role in player safety in hockey, offering essential protection against one of the sport's most dangerous risks: skate-blade lacerations. Although the likelihood of a neck injury is relatively low compared to other types of hockey injuries, the potential severity is extremely high. A single accidental collision, fall, or scramble for the puck can result in a skate blade coming dangerously close to a player's throat area. Modern cut-resistant neck guards significantly reduce the chance of life-threatening injuries, making them a simple yet crucial piece of equipment for athletes at every level of the game.

A very concerning trend is that U18 players frequently attempt to choose not to wear their neck guards during practices, even when they are required during games (enforced by referees). At this age, players often view themselves as experienced enough to "take the risk," or state they find the equipment uncomfortable and believe that practice environments are safer. This mindset is dangerous. Practices involve high-tempo drills, battles, and chaotic scrimmages that carry just as much risk for accidental contact with skates as games do. When older youth players opt out of wearing neck protection, it sends the wrong message to younger players and undermines the culture of safety that hockey aims to build.



Coaches play a pivotal role in addressing this problem. Setting and consistently enforcing clear expectations is essential—neck guards must be worn at all practices, no exceptions. By reinforcing safe habits, coaches help normalize protective equipment use and ensure that player safety remains the top priority.



# RAIDER NATION SAFETY

## HOCKEY HELP

Are you new to hockey? Have you found yourself wondering what those referee signals mean? Here is an easy sheet to reference when watching the game:

### *Referee's Signals*



#### **BOARDING**

Striking the clenched fist of one hand into the open palm of the opposite hand in front of the chest.



#### **CROSS-CHECKING**

A forward and backward motion of the arms with both fists clenched, extending from the chest for a distance of about one foot.



#### **BODYCHECKING**

Open palm of the non-whistle hand, with fingers together, comes across body on to the opposite shoulder.



#### **DELAYED OFF-SIDE**

Non-whistle arm fully extended above the head. To nullify a delayed off-side the Linesman shall drop the arm to the side.



#### **BUTT-ENDING**

A cross motion of the fore-arms, one moving under the other arm.



#### **DELAYED CALLING PENALTY**

Extending the non-whistle arm fully above the head.



#### **CHARGING**

Rotating clenched fists around one another in front of the chest.



#### **ELBOWING**

Tapping either elbow with the opposite hand.



#### **CHECKING FROM BEHIND**

A forward motion of both arms, with the palms of the hands open and facing away from the body, fully extended from the chest at shoulder level.



#### **GOAL SCORED**

A single point directed at the goal in which the puck legally entered.



# RAIDER NATION FUN ZONE

## HOCKEY CROSSWORD



# HOCKEY TEAMS

## Word Search



AVALANCHE  
BLACKHAWKS  
BRUINS  
CANADIENS  
CANUCKS  
CAPITALS

COYOTES  
DEVILS  
FLAMES  
FLYERS  
HURRICANES  
ISLANDERS

KINGS  
KRAKEN  
MAPLE LEAFS  
OILERS  
PENGUINS  
PREDATORS

RANGERS  
RED WINGS  
SABRES  
SENATORS  
SHARKS  
STARS



# RAIDER NATION RECIPES

## NUTRITION FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

Regardless of the age of your hockey player, most athletes come off the ice hungry and ready to eat. Or as my child likes to ask, 'What's for second dinner?' As a parent, we want to feed them something healthy. But it's already 9pm on a school night, with no time for a big meal. What to do? When time is not on your side, here are some great options for a pre-bedtime snack that is not only filling but helps support recovery ([Carpe Diem Nutrition](#)):

- Cheese sticks and apple slices
- Whole fruit (bananas, apples, clementines) or cut fruit (watermelon, orange slices)
- Greek yogurt and fruit
- Homemade trail mix
- Veggies and hummus
- Chips and salsa/guacamole
- Home-popped popcorn with milk or chocolate milk
- Cheese and crackers with fruit
- Fruit and veggie pouches/applesauce
- Homemade muffins or energy balls
- Fruit smoothie
- Rice Krispie Treat
- Rice pudding with mangoes
- English muffin, almond butter and raspberries



Keep in mind that an ideal time to have a recovery meal or snack is 30-60 minutes after an activity. Aim to pair a protein food with a carbohydrate source to help replace energy stores and repair muscles.

Bedtime snacks also help sleep and provide early morning energy, something that parents could use a bit of too!

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## NEWSLETTER FEEDBACK

Do you have a great idea for the newsletter? Know the perfect coach that should be featured in our next newsletter? Have a great dinner or snack recipe that other hockey parents would love? Or just want to share some fundraising or tournament news? If so, be sure to reach out to the Raiders Newsletter Coordinator, Leanne Murphy, at [leannemurphy1919@gmail.com](mailto:leannemurphy1919@gmail.com).

**Thanks for reading!**

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