

25-26

# COLORADO THUNDERBIRDS



**SEASON PROSPECTUS**

# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

As the Director of the Colorado Thunderbirds, I am thrilled to welcome you to a new season of Tier 1 hockey! Whether you're a returning family or new to our organization, we're excited to have the possibility of you joining our Thunderbird Family.

You will find us at "The Hangar," our home at Big Bear Ice Arena. This world-class facility provides our athletes with everything they need to elevate their game, from top-notch ice surfaces to a state-of-the-art 7000 sq foot training center, off-ice shooting, dedicated team locker rooms and a 2500 sq foot family lounge for Thunderbird Players, Families and Coaches.

But the Thunderbirds experience is about so much more than just facilities. Our organization is deeply committed to supporting both players and parents on their hockey journey. Our team is full of former players and professionals that have been where your player wants to go from Junior Hockey, to Div 1 College Hockey all the way to the NHL. We understand the dedication, the passion, and sometimes the challenges that come with this sport, and we're here to provide guidance and create a positive environment every step of the way.

Step into any Thunderbirds locker room and you'll see four words emblazoned on the wall: Integrity - Family - Resilience - Compete. These words are more than just a motto; they are the pillars of our program and the foundation of our culture.

- **Integrity:** We expect honesty, respect, and sportsmanship on and off the ice.
- **Family:** We support each other like a family, celebrating successes and overcoming challenges together across the organization, teams, players, coaches and parents.
- **Resilience:** We aim to cultivate mental toughness, encouraging and teaching our athletes to persevere through adversity and bounce back stronger.
- **Compete:** We instill a competitive spirit, encouraging our players to push their limits and strive for excellence in all they do. We expect them to not only compete with the competition but with themselves each and every day with a You vs You mentality.

These values create a unique and powerful bond within and across our organization. At the Thunderbirds, you will see this saying when you go to leave each locker room "When One Goes, We All Go." We believe we rise together, we learn together, we struggle together and ultimately we will succeed together.

Get ready for an incredible season of growth, camaraderie, and unforgettable hockey moments.  
GO TBIRDS!

Jorden Pietrus | Colorado Thunderbirds | Hockey Director

# COLORADO THUNDERBIRDS

The Colorado Thunderbirds are more than just a hockey association; we are a community founded on unwavering core values that shape our actions, interactions, and aspirations. Guided by the spirit of sportsmanship, we approach every challenge with humility in victory, graciousness in defeat, and a camaraderie that extends to both teammates and opponents. Respect is our foundation, treating everyone as we wish to be treated, fostering an environment of dignity and understanding.

- The Thunderbird mission is to promote competitiveness, character, sportsmanship, team work, discipline in an environment that maximizes player development and player advancement in the youth hockey community. We are guided by the values of good sportsmanship, honesty, respect for all individuals and personal integrity. The Thunderbirds are committed to the long-term growth and development of all levels of developing ice hockey players. Our success will be measured by more children who enjoy playing and participating in hockey in the future at an elite level.



# FACILITIES



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## THE HANGAR at BIG BEAR ICE ARENA

8580 E Lowry Blvd, Denver, CO 80230

The Hangar is the proud Home of the Colorado Thunderbirds. Equipped with a full gym and five brand-new, custom locker rooms for each of our Tier I teams this facility is designed to most closely replicate the performance environment our players can expect to see at the junior, collegiate and professional levels.

## THE PERFORMANCE DEN

The Hangar includes access to The Performance Den, a state-of-the-art indoor training facility equipped with squat racks, platforms, free weights, assault and cardio bikes, recovery room, TRX bands and more. The Performance Den is home to the Thunderbirds off-ice training program and comes equipped with a 40-yard turf run, connected televisions and provides active views of our North Rink.

## THE INLINE SHEET

Aside The Hangar's north wall is a full-size, enclosed inline hockey rink. This rink doubles as an outdoor shooting gallery for the Thunderbird organization and sees dozens of players use it to sharpen their shots before practices and games, weather permitting.

# 18U, 16U & 150 AAA LOCKER ROOMS

## 18U ROOM HIGHLIGHTS

Built to replicate a premier junior room, the 18s walk directly out to our north rink. Custom stalls with luxury logo seats cover player bench storage. Players face a widened corridor room with a 65" TV, lineup whiteboard, dry stalls, refrigerator and stick rack. The room is equipped with brand-new showers and restrooms, private to the 18U roster.

## 16U ROOM HIGHLIGHTS

The 16U room closely mirrors the 18's layout, with a wider floorspace that makes room for a solo support beam in the center. Individual stalls, bench storage and seating focus on the player infotainment center with a connected TV, enlarged whiteboard and hanging shoe stalls. New private showers and bathrooms are attached.

## 150 ROOM HIGHLIGHTS

In the footprint of our original 18U room in the late 2000s, the 15s room features a vaulted ceiling and walks out to south rink. Our widest midget floorplan provides ample space, as is equipped with all entertainment & snack amenities the 18 and 16s have.



# 14U & 130 AAA LOCKER ROOMS

## 14U ROOM HIGHLIGHTS

Individual player cage stalls allow for gear to breathe and dry, custom printed chairs add a level of comfort, and a 75in TV pairs with an oversized whiteboard... and for style, the room is equipped with color-changing LED's for a unique walk-out experience on game day.

## 130 ROOM HIGHLIGHTS

Our 130 room is the first look our youngest players get at what it feels like to have your own team room. This room is equipped with everything our 14's have, with the minor change being that the LED's exist inside player cages and our goalie stalls sit on a separate wall.



# PERFORMANCE DEN and #TBIRDFAMILY LOUNGE

## THE PERFORMANCE DEN

The Hangar includes access to The Performance Den, a state-of-the-art indoor training facility equipped with squat racks, platforms, free weights, assault & cardio bikes, recovery room, TRX bands & more. Home to the TBird off-ice training program, it comes equipped with a 40-yard turf run, connected TVs & North Rink views.

## #TBIRDFAMILY LOUNGE

The TBird Family Lounge is a private room that sits above both of our rinks at The Hangar. The room boasts a dedicated study area with desks for players and family members alike, foosball and ping pong tables, couches to watch TV or Livebarn, coffee and refreshments as well as storage for things schoolbags, baby-bags, or anything else you carry with you to and from the rink!





# TIER 1

AAA



# BOYS TIER I

## OPENING WEEKEND

To open up the season, all the Tier I teams will participate in a unique high-performance weekend to kick off the season. Opening Weekend is an opportunity for parents to meet the coaching staffs along other Thunderbird families, receive all the team gear/apparel for the season and participate in high tempo and fun skill development practices to start the season off. High Level guest coaches typically come in to help run the on ice sessions to kick the season off with a bang! During opening weekend the Thunderbirds host their Association Parent meetings, and coaches will have their season kick off meetings with their parents.

## THE SMOKER

The *SMOKER* is a training camp style experience where all teams (130-18U) come together to challenge their physical strength and endurance. The *SMOKER* is a half day event where teams are pushed to their limit physically, participate in their first mental performance session and then all come together to compete in the Thunderbird Olympics, where players form groups from members across all teams to compete in fun and competitive team building competitions together.

## STRENGTH & CONDITIONING

Players participate in 1-2 strength and conditioning sessions each week at the Performance Den. The focus of these sessions is athleticism, building strength and injury prevention.

## WEEKDAY PRACTICES

Each week teams participate in high tempo, competitive 60-75 minute team practices. Team practices will always incorporate some element of skill development focusing on relevant Habits, Concepts or Details. Teams all work to build on the foundation of *THE THUNDERBIRD WAY* which entails 8 core concepts that every Thunderbird player or Team needs to know and execute to be successful at the next level.

## GOALIE DEVELOPMENT

Each week our goalies get two on ice touches with our Goalie Coach Sergey Liulchuk. In addition, Thunderbird Goalies participate in weekly goalie only video sessions as well as monthly 1 on 1 goalie development meetings with Coach Sergey.

## VIDEO & ANALYTICS

Each player will have access to the hockey analytics platform TPE (The Prospect Exchange) featuring products that allow players to evaluate, network, and advance their game. Head coaches will also utilize the platform for individual and team video sessions.



# TIER I ELITE HOCKEY LEAGUE



The Colorado Thunderbirds Hockey Club is a proud Tier 1 Elite Hockey League (T1EHL) member. The league is the nation's premier amateur hockey league, featuring more than 22 organizations stretching from coast to coast. With significant visibility, top-level talent, and elite coaching often coming from the upper levels of professional hockey, the T1EHL boasts the ability to move young, talented players to organizations such as Major Junior, Tier I Junior Hockey, NCAA Hockey, NHL, and other professional leagues.

Additionally, Thunderbirds will host at least one Youth T1EHL Showcase Event in Denver, CO each year.

# TIER I TEAM DETAILS

	<b>18U</b>	<b>16U</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>14U</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>PRACTICE HOURS</b>	<b>98-112</b>	<b>98-112</b>	<b>98-112</b>	<b>98-112</b>	<b>65-80</b>
<b>GAMES</b>	<b>55-65</b>	<b>55-65</b>	<b>55-65</b>	<b>55-65</b>	<b>45-50</b>
<b>ESTIMATED ON-ICE &amp; OFF-ICE TRAININGS</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>GOALIE COACH SESSIONS</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY COACH SESSIONS</b>	<b>6-8</b>	<b>6-8</b>	<b>6-8</b>	<b>6-8</b>	<b>6-8</b>
<b>PLAYER EQUIPMENT &amp; APPAREL</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>DEDICATED LOCKER ROOM</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>COMMUNITY SERVICE MAN HOURS</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>80-100</b>	<b>76-92</b>	<b>54-72</b>	<b>54-72</b>
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	<b>TBA</b>	<b>TBA</b>	<b>TBA</b>	<b>TBA</b>	<b>TBA</b>

\*Games, hours and sessions are 2025-2026 season estimates and are subject to change

# HISTORY



# CHAMPIONSHIPS



# NOTEABLE TBIRD ALUMNI

**124**

**NCAA DI  
ALUMNI**

**27**

**NHL ALUMNI**



**297**

**TIER 1 & 2  
JUNIOR  
ALUMNI**

## **JACCOB SLAVIN '94**

CAROLINA HURRICANES - NHL  
COLORADO COLLEGE - NCAA DI

## **SETH JONES '94**

CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS - NHL  
PORTLAND WINTERHAWKS - WHL

## **BRANDON CARLO '96**

BOSTON BRUINS - NHL  
TRI CITY STORM - WHL

## **MIKEY EYSSIMONT '96**

TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING - NHL  
ST CLOUD STATE - NCAA DI

## **FREDRIK OLOFSSON '96**

COLORADO AVALANCHE - NHL  
NEBRASKA OMAHA - NCAA DI



# NOTEABLE TBIRD ALUMNI

FIND ALL THUNDERBIRD ALUMNI PLAYERS AT [TBIRDHOCKEY.ORG](http://TBIRDHOCKEY.ORG)



**NICK SHORE '92**  
LOS ANGELES KINGS - NHL  
DENVER - NCAA DI

**DYLAN GAMBRELL '96**  
SAN JOSE SHARKS - NHL  
DENVER - NCAA DI

**TROY TERRY '97**  
ANAHEIM DUCKS - NHL  
DENVER - NCAA DI



**NOLAN FOOTE '00**  
NEW JERSEY DEVILS - NHL  
KELOWNA ROCKETTS - WHL

**DYLAN PETERSON '02**  
ST LOUIS BLUES 3RD RD - NHL  
BOSTON TERRIERS - NCAA DI

**MAREK HEJDUK '04**  
USNTDP  
HARVARD - NCAA DI

**HARRISON BOETTIGER '07**  
USNTDP  
DENVER - NCAA DI

**BRANDON BLANDINA '89**  
NHL REFEREE  
ROBERT MORRIS - NCAA DI





# PARENT TESTIMONIALS

## ON CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The biggest difference I have observed in his experience on the Thunderbirds is in my players reaction to the personal communication and feedback he has been given by the coaches and staff. He feeds off this and is more confident and motivated to improve than I have ever seen him. Giving players positive reinforcement for doing things right like effort, positivity and consistency helps them develop both as hockey players and mature young adults that are highly productive members of the community.

## ON BUILDING COMPLETE ATHLETES

The TBirds obviously care about their kids. The whole organization feels like a single team, community or family with all coaches (and families) across all levels helping each other and all of the players. The coaching is exceptional and led by guys that not only played at a high level, but who also know how to teach the game to kids while promoting all of the off-ice skills that the sport should bring like accountability, work-ethic, citizenship, leadership, team work, self-esteem and confidence. My kid is a better player and person because of the Thunderbirds.

## ON THE HANGAR UPGRADES

Our son landed exactly where he needed to be with the Thunderbirds! The recent facility upgrades in the Hangar, the overall focus of the organization, and the coaches, players, and parents have exceeded our expectations. He has found a home, and we feel that his time spent with the Tbirds will prepare him for bigger and better things down the road.

## ON OUR #TBIRDFAMILY

We had heard many different opinions about the Tbirds before we became part of the organization. From our own experience we now have our own opinion...it's not just an organization for us but a Family! There is a genuine interest in making the organization better through asking and listening and making changes. The transformation of the culture has been amazing.



***TIER I HOCKEY***

***LEARN MORE AT***

***TBIRODHOCKEY.ORG***