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IHA's 2012 Player and Coaching Development Program got underway with 42 x 18 – 16 year old midget aged players and 9 x instructors coming together for 7-days of intense skills development instruction at the Hunter Ice Skating Stadium and Myuna Bay Sport & Rec, New South Wales.

The camp, the first of three consecutive January week long development camps (midget, bantam, pee wee), is also utilised to evaluate, test and select prospective players for IHA's 2012 National U18 Team who will be competing at the IIHF's 2012 World Under 18 Division II Championship in Novi Sad, Serbia from the 02 – 08 April 2012.

The NSW and interstate players & instructors were met Sunday noon at the Sydney Domestic Airport for the 2-hour bus journey to the Hunter Ice Skating Stadium in Newcastle. On arrival, playing equipment was unloaded and players allocated to their team and respective dressing rooms.

The participants then travelled to Myuna Bay Sport & Rec for the Camp Welcome BBQ, followed by introductions to the camp, allocations of rooms, jerseys, socks & camp merchandise in preparation for the week's first ice-session Monday morning and the journey for the Camp's Inter-squad Game on Saturday evening.

After the first ice session, the Christmas Holidays were quickly forgotten with the players and instructors quickly regaining their pre-season hockey mindset. The intense daily schedule of 2 x 1.5 hour ice sessions, including post ice session debriefs, off-ice strength & conditioning sessions quickly acclimatized both the players and instructors for the upcoming 2012 season. The recent purchase of additional strength and conditioning equipment has raised the bar for fitness training and testing.

IHA's 2012 Winter Youth Olympic Games athletes, Sharnita Crompton (NSW) and Sam Hodic (VIC) are also participating in the camp for their ongoing preparation for the Games which will be taking place next week in Innsbruck, Austria. Crompton and Hodic will be participating in the Skills Challenge event and have high expectations to be a finals contender.

Following the Midget Camp, players will be transported to Sydney's Domestic Airport for their journey home after which the Bantams (15 & under) arrive for their camp. The 2012 Bantam Camp will attract unusual interest as 22 x players and 4 x instructors from New Zealand will also be in attendance.

New Zealand's participation is the first inaugural stage of the recently adopted IHA-NZIIHF Bantam Player Development Exchange Program whereby New Zealand's players annually attend IHA's January Bantam Player Development Camp followed by Australia's Bantam Selects Team players reciprocating via their the visit to New Zealand during the October School Holidays. The sole objective of the program is to assist in the development Australia's and Zealand's bantam aged players for their preparation and selection to Australia's and New Zealand's future national youth and junior teams.