



TOMPKINS GIRLS HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Player and Parent Handbook
2026-2028



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Welcome to Tompkins Girls Hockey Association

Tompkins Girls Hockey Association (TGHA) is the oldest girls hockey organization in New York State. We are a member of USA Hockey and the Central Section of the New York State Amateur Hockey Association (NYSAHA), and our mission is to give every girl in the greater Tompkins County area the opportunity to experience the joy of ice hockey.

Also known as the Ithaca Shooting Stars, TGHA has been developing the player and the person since 1972. We are proud of our history and all the extraordinary girls and young women who have been part our program, and we look forward to empowering the next generation of Shooting Stars—in hockey and in life.

Our Philosophy

TGHA is dedicated to fostering the personal, athletic, and social growth of girls through the game of ice hockey. We help every player develop the skills, teamwork, and discipline needed to achieve success on the ice. We also promote the values of sportsmanship, integrity, and mutual respect that help produce young women of character.

At TGHA, we recognize that athletic ability and commitment to hockey will vary among our players. Our goal is to meet every player where she is and to help her become the best player and person she can be. Whether a player is looking for a more rigorous environment or a more recreational experience, TGHA has a place for every girl who wants to play hockey.

Hockey is a competitive sport, and trying to win is inherent in its play, but above all, hockey should be fun. As an organization, we will have succeeded if all of our players have fun, improve their skills, contribute to the team, make lasting friendships, and develop a lifelong love for the game.

Hockey is for everyone. TGHA values diversity among our players, and we encourage families of all backgrounds to participate in the great game of hockey.





Teams

TGHA follows USA Hockey age classifications for girls teams: eight and under (8U), ten and under (10U), twelve and under (12U), fourteen and under (14U), sixteen and under (16U), and nineteen and under (19U). 8U plays cross-ice; 10U and older teams play full-ice. To ensure a healthy number of players on each roster, teams may include more than one age level (e.g. 12U/14U). TGHA and USA Hockey have rules governing players moving up to an older team. For more information, see our move up policy (p. 10).

Beginning at 12U, teams may declare eligibility for the New York State Championships (“States”). Teams that are eligible for the state tournament are known as tournament-bound (TB) teams. Teams that do not declare for the state tournament are known as non-tournament-bound (NTB) teams. Tournament-bound teams play other tournament-bound teams in Central Section in order to qualify for States.

At 12U and above, team formation typically begins with tryouts in the spring. Those who do not attend tryouts in the spring are still eligible to play in the fall. Whether you’re on a TB or NTB team, you can expect a fun, robust, and memorable season of hockey.

Season Schedule

For most of our teams, the season begins in late September or early October and ends in early March, but some teams may start sooner and/or end later. TGHA typically reserves two nights a week for practices at the Rink, also known as the [Community Recreation Center](#) (1767 East Shore Drive, Ithaca). For those at 10U and above, there is usually an additional weekly or biweekly night of skating and skills development with [SpeedSkills](#). The frequency of practices and SpeedSkills sessions varies by team/age level.

Saturdays are typically reserved for home games and Sundays for away games. Most teams also participate in our home tournament, the Kevin R. Talty Shooting Stars Tournament, which usually takes place the first weekend of December. Teams will also travel for jams, showcases, and other tournaments throughout the season. For a detailed schedule of the current season, visit our website at www.ithacagirlshockey.org.

Commitment and Expectations

Hockey requires a substantial investment of time, energy, and resources. This may include significant travel within New York State and beyond, especially at older levels. Please make sure your family understands the commitment required to play hockey before you register.

Players are expected to attend all practices and games. Families are expected to RSVP in a timely way using the [Crossbar mobile app](#) so that coaches can plan ahead. The coaching staff of each team will establish rules and expectations at the beginning of each season. Please be sure to follow them. The more committed your player is, the more success and fun she'll have!

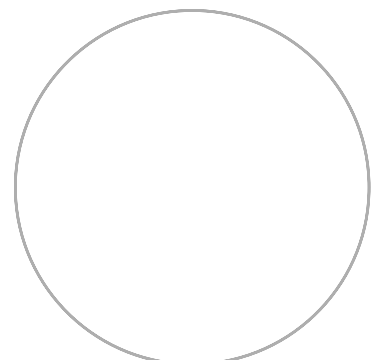
Registration

Season registration opens in the summer. The price of registration includes all practices and regular games, SpeedSkills sessions for players at 10U and above, and the entry fee for two tournaments, including our home tournament if applicable.

Visit our website at www.ithacagirlshockey.org and open an account in Crossbar if you haven't already, then follow instructions for registration. During registration, families will be prompted to sign up with USA Hockey, upload documents, sign waivers, and make additional purchases as needed. Families can choose between a payment plan or payment in full and between payment by electronic check or credit card. Any balance from the previous year must be paid in full before a player can register for a new season.

#3 Daryl Pace Scholarship Award

During registration, families may apply for the [#3 Daryl Pace Scholarship Award](#), named in honor of former TGHA and Ithaca Sirens player Daryl Pace, who passed away from ocular melanoma in 2019. Scholarships are limited and awarded on a per case basis by the TGHA Executive Leadership Team and may be granted in full or in part.





Dual Rostering

Players who play for another association may dual-roster with TGHA if the presidents of both associations sign a Multiple Association Participation Agreement. In addition to meeting all their commitments to their primary association, dual-rostered players must meet all commitments established by their team at TGHA. Players may also dual-roster (i.e. play for more than one team) within TGHA.

Equipment

The following hockey equipment is required of all skaters:

- helmet (certified)
- facemask/shield
- mouthguard
- neck guard
- shoulder pads
- elbow pads
- gloves
- pants
- pelvic protector
- shin pads
- stick
- skates

Goalies are expected to have the same or the equivalent, plus additional goalie gear, which is not provided except at 8U. **For all players at 12U and above, including dual-rostered players, helmets, pants, and gloves *must* be black or dark blue!** (The exceptions are goalie masks and gear.) Black or dark blue is also recommended for younger players.

Uniforms and Practice Jerseys

All players at 12U and above, including those who are dual-rostered, are required to purchase personalized home and away jerseys and home and away socks. 8U and 10U players and those with financial need may use loaner jerseys and socks. Additional gear such as shells may be required, especially by tournament-bound teams.

Players are also required to use TGHA practice jerseys. Instructions for ordering uniforms and practice jerseys appear on our website. Players may only choose numbers that are available in our [jersey number registry](#) and officially assigned by the association.

Player Safety

At TGHA, the health, safety, and well-being of our players is paramount. Hockey is a fast-moving and potentially dangerous sport. Players should always be in control, both physically and emotionally, before, during, and after practices and games. This will help ensure a safe environment for everyone.

TGHA adheres to USA Hockey’s protocols for [concussion management](#). Any player with a suspected concussion will be immediately removed from play. Those with a suspected or actual concussion must receive medical clearance and complete USA Hockey’s Concussion Management Return to Play Form before they can resume normal play.

Locker Room Policy

Our concern for the health, safety, and well-being of our players extends off the ice as well. TGHA also adheres to USA Hockey’s [SafeSport Program](#) to help protect our players from all forms of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. All board members, team managers, coaches, and locker room monitors must be SafeSport-certified and undergo background checks.

To maintain personal privacy and reduce the risk of misconduct or abuse, TGHA has adopted the following locker room policy based on guidance from USA Hockey:

- TGHA has predictable and limited use of locker rooms and changing areas, generally 30-60 minutes before and after practices and games, both home and away.
- At these designated times, locker rooms and changing areas must be supervised by a rostered and SafeSport-certified locker room monitor.
- With the exception of 8U, parents who are not monitors are prohibited from entering the locker room when other players are present unless it is a health emergency.
- Locker room monitors must give the “all clear” before coaches can enter the locker room before and after games.
- Cell phones and other recording devices are not permitted in the locker room.





Player Code of Conduct

TGHA expects all of our players to:

1. Commit themselves to the team and the sport of hockey.
2. Work hard to improve their skills.
3. Be punctual for all practices, games, and team events.
4. Be a good team player by supporting teammates at all times.
5. Listen to and respect coaches and communicate concerns appropriately.
6. Respect opposing players and refrain from using abusive language on or off the ice.
7. Respect officials and their decisions and show good sportsmanship at all times.
8. Refrain from using profanities.
9. Refrain from fighting.
10. Say no to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, especially at hockey-related events.
11. Respect our arena and those we visit.
12. Refrain from bringing cell phones and other recording devices into the locker room.
13. Be a good ambassador for TGHA both on and off the ice.

Parent/Guardian Conduct

TGHA expects parents and guardians to model the kind of behavior we expect of our children. This includes being positive with your child and supportive of her teammates, respecting coaches and their decisions and communicating concerns appropriately, respecting officials and their decisions and showing good sportsmanship at all times, and being a good ambassador for TGHA both on and off the ice. Inappropriate behavior may lead to action by the board of directors. For more, please see USA Hockey's Zero Tolerance Policy (p. 9).

Parents are expected to make sure their child is always ready and able to play hockey. This includes everything from providing safe and comfortable equipment to getting your child to the rink on time. Hockey parents are a special breed, and we appreciate all that you do!

Communicating with Coaches

At TGHA, we believe in open communication between players/parents and coaches. We also believe coaches deserve to be treated with respect. If you have questions or concerns about your player and/or her team, please approach the coaching staff in constructive ways. Whenever possible, empower your child to advocate for herself. If parents prefer to reach out directly, **please observe the “24-hour rule”**: wait at least twenty-four hours after a game before approaching the head coach or the coaching staff about a game-related concern to ensure you are in the best frame of mind.

Zero Tolerance Policy

TGHA enforces USA Hockey’s [Zero Tolerance Policy](#) for players, coaches, officials, parents/spectators, and administrators. For example, parents/spectators who display “inappropriate and disruptive behavior” will be removed from the premises and may face further disciplinary action by the association. For players and parents/spectators alike, further action may include, but is not limited to, suspension from all TGHA activities, including practices and games, for a specified period of time. The board will endeavor to hear all parties but reserves the right to impose discipline at its sole discretion. SafeSport violations will not be tolerated. Even a first offense will result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from the association.

Reporting

If you witness behavior that violates USA Hockey’s Zero Tolerance Policy, please contact the [board of directors](#), who will investigate in accordance with association and district guidelines and take action as necessary. If you witness or suspect SafeSport violations in the form of sexual, physical, and/or emotional abuse, including bullying, threats, harassment, or hazing, please contact USA hockey at usahockeysafesport@usahockey.org or 1-800-888-4656 or [file a report online](#). Also contact the board of directors, who will cooperate in full.





Move Up Policy

The following move up policy is taken from the bylaws of Tompkins Girls Athletic Association. This policy applies to players who wish to play full-time at a higher age level or dual-roster on an older tournament-bound team when an age-appropriate team already exists. It does not apply to those who are assigned to a team with mixed age levels or those invited to dual-roster internally and play occasionally with an older team in non-tournament-bound games. Note that USA Hockey does not allow 8U players to play full-ice at 10U or above and does not allow players at 12U and below to play on a tournament-bound team at 14U or above.

“ARTICLE 15 - PLAYER MOVEMENT

The TGHA philosophy of player development is that it is usually best for all players to play within their respective age groups. However, in special circumstances it may be appropriate for a player to move up to a higher age group. All requests to play ‘up’ must adhere to the following protocol:

- All requests must be made in writing to the TGHA Board of Directors.
- Head coaches from the team for which the player is age-appropriate and the team the player is requesting to be moved up to must be involved in the decision.
- The player’s skills on the ice should be such that she would be played on the first or second line of the team she would be moving up to.
- The player must attend the team formation sessions for the team for which the player is age-appropriate and the team the player is requesting to be moved up to.
- A player who was approved by the TGHA Board of Directors to play up in any given season... will not be required to adhere to the above protocol for any subsequent season played at the same level. That player will be allowed to remain at the level from the previous season and would only have to petition the Board if she wanted to request to play at a higher level.

The TGHA Board of Directors will have the final say on whether or not a player can move up and will make its decision after giving all parties involved a chance to be heard.”

Volunteering for TGHA

Tompkins Girls Hockey Association is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization. TGHA would not exist, much less thrive, without the dedication and generosity of parents, caregivers, and other volunteers. Every TGHA family is expected to give of their time so that all our players have the best experience possible. Volunteer opportunities abound, from pitching in on game day to helping organize our annual tournament. Here are some ways you can help!

Board of Directors

The board of directors oversees all aspects of the organization and the hockey season, from ice contracts to registration to fundraising. The board, which can include up to eleven members, usually meets once a month throughout the year. Each board term is two years, renewable for up to eight years. Board positions include president, vice president, registrar, treasurer, secretary, and at-large members. The president, vice president, and one other member compose the Executive Leadership Team. Board members serve as stewards of the organization. Current board members are listed on our website. If you are interested in joining the board, please complete this [volunteer application form](#).

Non-board Positions

Please use the form above to volunteer for these and other non-board positions:

- Tournament Director (for the Kevin R. Talty Shooting Stars Tournament)
- Association Coaching and Education (ACE) Coordinator
- American Development Model (ADM) Coordinator
- Master Scheduler
- Player Safety Coordinator
- SafeSport Coordinator
- Cub Club Coordinator
- Referee Coordinator
- Social Media Coordinator





Coach

TGHA is proud of our experienced, knowledgeable, and dedicated coaches. Every coach must be approved by the board of directors, and only approved coaches who are in compliance with USA Hockey coaching requirements are allowed on the ice and in the locker room.

Our coaches strive to create a fun, supportive, and inclusive environment for every player. Their goal is to help every individual grow as both a player and a person. Coaches must be enthusiastic, communicative, well-organized, and willing to continually improve their knowledge of hockey and to serve as ambassadors for TGHA. If you haven't coached for TGHA before and would like to volunteer, please contact us at tghahockey@gmail.com.

Team Manager

The team manager is an essential parent volunteer role. The manager maintains close communication with coaches, parents, the board, and other teams and keeps the "team book" for tournament-bound teams. The team manager must be approved by the head coach.

Team managers also stay in close contact with game schedulers or serve in that capacity themselves. Moreover, team managers help coordinate game day volunteers at the Rink, such as scorekeepers, time clock operators, and penalty box attendants (see p. 13).

Game Scheduler

Game schedulers are responsible for scheduling all games and tournaments for their respective teams. As aforementioned, team managers may also serve as game schedulers. Game schedulers work with other TGHA teams and the Master Scheduler to ensure that all home ice is used and shared equitably among teams. If you are interested in serving as a team manager or game scheduler, please speak to the head coach of your child's team.

Locker Room Monitor/Mom

Locker room monitors are required before and after every game, both home and away. Because we are a girls hockey organization, locker room monitors are always “moms.” Locker room moms keep girls on task, supervise behavior, and enforce our locker room policy (see p. 7). All locker room moms must be SafeSport-certified. If you are interested in serving as a locker room monitor, please complete the [volunteer application form](#).

Game Day Volunteers

Every home game requires a scorekeeper, time clock operator, and penalty box attendant. These important roles are staffed by families, and every family is expected to take a turn. Training with scoresheets and the time clock at the Rink will be provided as needed, but the best way to learn is on the job. Be on the lookout for calls from your team manager for game day volunteers.

Tournament Volunteers

Every year in early December, TGHA hosts the Kevin R. Talty Shooting Stars Tournament, named in memory of a longtime TGHA parent, coach, and tournament director. Our tournament hosts teams from across New York State and beyond. It is not only a great weekend of hockey but also an important fundraiser.

Hosting a hockey tournament is a significant undertaking that requires the help of many. The tournament director leads a number of coordinators in areas such as scheduling, corporate sponsorship, tournament swag, raffle baskets, rink decorations, and game day volunteers. Every family is expected to contribute in some way to the tournament. You can expect to hear from the tournament director and/or area coordinators about opportunities to volunteer!





Fundraising

In addition to our home tournament, TGHA usually organizes an annual fundraiser, and families are expected to participate. Our annual fundraiser helps to lower the cost of registration, provide scholarships for players, and ensure our financial future. It may also help offset in-season expenses, such as additional ice time. Individual teams may also organize their own fundraisers with approval from the board of directors.

Cub Club

Founded in 1995 by former TGHA and Cornell women's ice hockey player Megan Shull ('91), Cub Club is a mentoring program that pairs TGHA and other local players who are twelve and under with "big sisters" from the Cornell Women's Ice Hockey Team.

Through a pairing ceremony, a skills session, and other fun events during the season, young players get to spend time with and learn from those who know what it takes to play hockey at a high level. There are also unique opportunities to be part of Cornell women's ice hockey games as "stick girls" and the Cub Club Bear. Best of all, the program is free!

For more information, visit the [Cub Club page](#) on our website.

Join TGHA

Whether you are a past, present, or prospective TGHA family, we hope you will join us for the upcoming season—it's going to be a great one! For more information, visit our website or contact us at tghahockey@gmail.com.

(PHOTO CREDITS: Jenai Rossow, Eric Badeau, and others.)