

MINNESOTA HOCKEY – DISTRICT 16
Winter 2026 MEETING AGENDA
Location – Sparky’s Bar & Grill
Red Lake Falls, MN
Monday, February 9, 2026 - 4:00 pm.

I. Call to Order – 3:55pm

II. Roll Call: (voice & sign-in)

Bagley - x Bemidji - x Crookston - x East Grand Forks - x Hallock - x Lake of the Woods - x
Red Lake Falls – x Roseau - x Thief River Falls - x Walker - x Warroad – x

Elliott takes a moment to recognize John Carter, who served youth hockey his whole life and recently passed away. He was involved at both the District and State level when Elliott started. John was a character, full of life, an intelligent, smart man who gave a lot to Roseau Youth Hockey, the District and the State.

III. Agenda Additions: None. Thief River Falls motions to approve the agenda, Walker seconds. **Agenda approved.**

IV. Approve Fall minutes: Lake of the Woods motions, Thief River Falls seconds. Minutes approved.

V. Team Assignments, Upgrade Push to AA and A: Elliott, there is a push across the state to move teams up to the A and AA levels. District 4 pushed everyone to play A hockey last year, a lot of complaints early on, but associations were thankful as it pushed the players to play at a higher level. If players don’t play tough competition at the youth level, they’re just going to be B level hockey their whole life and that’s not fair to the kids because everyone has good players. So that is something that is coming, so everyone is aware. Red Lake Falls asks if it will be implemented for the upcoming season, Elliott says yes, for it will be implemented for 26-27.

VI. Winter MN Hockey Recap: Elliott, it bothered me that the MN Hockey financial reports were a mess and the people that are in charge now complain about the people before. This was the worst report I’ve seen in 30 years. Asked some questions, the answer was “we’re working on that” or “we didn’t see that.” Elections are upcoming in April, most of these positions are metro-centric, but anybody can run for these positions. Elections for VP of the Gold, Pete Hill is currently it and will run again. VP of Maroon, Nate Wold out of Monticello is going to run, but if you want that job, I will gladly nominate you. Secretary, I don’t know if the current one will run again. One of the toughest jobs, responsible for committee minutes and for getting information out. If you have an interest or know someone that does, Elliott would be happy to speak on your behalf. VP of Hockey Operations is a tough job, currently held by Jeremy Reed, who has moved on to a different position within MN Hockey. The position requires you to be in Minneapolis a lot, but if you want to bring your ideas about hockey forward, Mark E. will nominate you. Treasurer is another tough position as it oversees financials, and Elliott would like to see someone from up north have the job. USAH Congress, the hardest part of that job is committee meetings, most of them are on Zoom, so not a lot of travel, but there are two trips, to Colorado in the summer and Florida in the winter, so if you are interested or know someone interested, let Mark E. know. Dragich, the meetings are very interesting, one of the takeaways from it was the importance of District 1, which is the inner city/rec league. Because of what’s going on in MSP that league is shut down, so it hit home that the world is a mess, hockey is what they love, and they took it away from them. There is a lot that goes on throughout the state, everyone has their own little niche, different problems and things that go on. Meetings are always welcome for people to attend and see what goes on, the next one is April 10-12 in Minneapolis. USA Hockey is forming a National Development Tier 1 league that is going to have an impact on MN Youth Hockey and MN High School Hockey, MN Hockey is very concerned about it and wants to be the controlling organization for the team(s) that will be in Minnesota to alleviate kids leaving youth programs and high school programs. Trying to start it for 27-28, but essentially what USAH is doing is giving franchises to different organizations that can draft kids in a certain area to be on their Tier 1 team. Minnesota hockey is concerned if they take the best player out of each community that will dilute the high school teams and then what do we have left as a high school program? We believe that we have the best way to develop players and make hockey available for everybody, and if this erodes that, that is a shame. What you need to do, is at some point, you might have to write to the U.S. Congress. USA Hockey has the right from Congress to develop players for the US Olympic teams. But again, over the years, where have most of the Olympic hockey players come from? It’s all over Minnesota. If you erode that, it’s not going to make things better if you are taking away from that. But make sure everyone in your association knows this is happening. We will need a groundswell to fight it if this is going to be implemented. MN Hockey may hire an attorney if needed to fight USAH if it goes awry. More to come. Keith S., we need more representation down in Minneapolis. I have learned a lot in the last few years, MN Hockey is a \$7 million dollar organization and having our finances screwed up is embarrassing. MN Hockey is very metro centric, and we need more out-state representation, so if you have an interest, really encourage running for a

position. We need a lot more power down there. Elliott, the upcoming meeting in April, I will likely not make it to the Cities, so Dragich will attend and MN Hockey will pay for two attendees, so if anyone is interested at all, let Elliott know if you want to attend.

VII. District Tournament Seedings:

- a. **Dragich:** Make comments now regarding the district tournaments if you have any. If coaches are upset, don't call tomorrow, as things are being decided here and we're not going to change things tomorrow if you don't say anything. Speak up.
- b. **Bantam AA:** Head-to-head series, East Grand Forks advances to regional tournament. Note for the AAs next year, all 4 north districts will send teams to a pre-region playoff to play for however many spots in regions we are given. We have it in writing that the tournament will be held next year. The biggest area of concern right now is 15UA, there are only 28 or 29 teams in the state currently, and there are currently 3 regionals, so 24 teams advance. The metro is always trying to send teams up here because they have more teams down there, so that's part of the concern at that level.
- c. **Bantam A:** Based off the standings, the seeds will be #1 Thief River Falls, #2 Warroad, and #3 Roseau. There was a game not played between Roseau and Warroad. The game was cancelled and not rescheduled according to Warroad. The district rule is you play everyone home and home, and you must get permission if the game is not played. Dragich, this is an issue that is going to be talked about a lot, and this cannot happen. They asked one of the other district directors what they do if they don't play, and he said it's not an option to not play or forfeit. We as a district have a problem with games not being played and it must be fixed. Permission granted for Warroad and Roseau to play in the district tournament despite not playing all games. All three teams advance to regions.
- d. **Bantam B1:** Games not played, Bemidji is the biggest culprit, Bemidji Blue missed 4 games. Bemidji – at the beginning of the year, there's teams that don't want to schedule our Blue team. Hallock called Friday and cancelled because we don't have a goalie and we have 4-6 sick kids out of 10 skaters. Dragich, did anybody at the district level know about that? All you need to do is send Elliott an email in advance if it is a legitimate reason. We will let the Bantam B1s slide this time. Dragich, how do we seed the top 4 teams? Crookston, Warroad, Hallock, and Thief River Falls have already been seeded #5-#8 based on the standings. Red Lake Falls wants the top 4 teams seeded according to current points. Bemidji disagrees as they have not lost a game. Hallock would like to move to Bantam B2 due to recent events, but no Bantam B2 teams wanted to move up to Bantam B1 level. Therefore, Hallock will stay at the Bantam B1 level for the District Tournament but will not play EGF at any time in the tournament. Heated discussion regarding seeds #1 - #4. A question was asked about why Bemidji's teams did not have to play each other this season. The rule was established in 1998, however you want to split the points between 2 teams, so not to create animosity between teams that are in school together, is acceptable in the district's eyes. After a long discussion, the seeds are set as: Bemidji Blue #1, Red Lake Falls #2, East Grand Forks #3, Bemidji White #4, Crookston #5, Warroad #6, Hallock #7, Thief River Falls #8.
- e. **Bantam B2:** Elliott, backing up, did I give approval for these games not to be played? Bemidji, the Roseau one just happened, like Hallock, they had a bunch of kids sick and to be honest, I don't know if our Bemidji Red team would be upset if they got booted out. Elliott, Dragich and I have been discussing implementing fines for next year if you don't play someone. Hallock asks about cancellations happening late in the season, Elliott says not to schedule games last minute. District Associations will get to vote on the fine proposal, even though Elliott has the power to implement fines as he sees fit. Bantam B2 Seeds: Walker #1, East Grand Forks #2, Roseau #3, Bagley #4, Bemidji Red #5
- f. **Peewee AA:** East Grand Forks and Bemidji have one game left to play to determine who goes to regions. Elliott, send an email with who is the winner so we can move stuff along down the line.
- g. **Peewee A:** Everyone played 7 games, due to LOTW dropping down. Based on the standings, seeds are Thief River Falls #1, Warroad #2, Roseau #3, East Grand Forks #4.
- h. **Peewee B1:** People in the room need to decide where to place Lake of the Woods, where they fit is the question. Lake of the Woods in the 9 games they played at the Peewee B1 level was 6-3. Roseau would like to discuss moving to the PWB2 bracket, looking at the GameSheet standings, we are an outlier. After some discussion, Roseau is allowed move to the Peewee B2 District Tournament but cannot advance to the Northern MN Championships. Elliott believes this will force teams to think harder about where they fit in September and place them correctly. After much discussion, the final seedings are: Hallock #1, Red Lake Falls #2, Bemidji Blue #3, Crookston #4, Bagley #5, Lake of the Woods #6, Warroad #7, East Grand Forks #8, Thief River Falls #9.
- i. **Peewee B2:** Based on the standings and head-to-head results in the case of Roseau dropping down, seeds are Walker #1, Bemidji #2, Roseau #3, Lake of the Woods #4, East Grand Forks #5
- j. **Girls 12UA:** Based on the standings, Warroad #1, EGF #2, Bemidji #3, Roseau #4

- k. **Girls 12UB:** There was one game not played, Thief River Falls vs Bemidji. Bemidji's coach requested to forfeit, so Thief River Falls is awarded all 3 points. With that, Thief River Falls moves into a three-way tie with Warroad and Lake of the Woods for the #1 seed in the standings. All three teams earned all their Fair Play Points this season, which is the first tiebreaker, so then we move to head-to-head competition amongst tied teams. In the 4 games against the tied teams, Thief River Falls was 3-1, Warroad was 2-2, and Lake of the Woods was 1-3. Therefore, the seeds are Thief River Falls #1, Warroad #2, Lake of the Woods #3, Crookston #4, East Grand Forks #5, Bemidji #6
- l. **Squirt A:** Dragich, reminder squirt teams are not required to play twice. Some discussion regarding the top three teams, as East Grand Forks swept Roseau, but Roseau beat Bemidji and Bemidji beat East Grand Forks. Seeds are Roseau #1, Bemidji #2, East Grand Forks #3, Warroad #4, Crookston #5, Hallock #6, Lake of the Woods #7, Thief River Falls #8
- m. **Squirt B1:** Seeds are assigned based on the previous email votes of the associations, Warroad #1, East Grand Forks #2, Bemidji Blue #3, Bagley #4, Walker #5, Red Lake Falls #6, Thief River Falls Blue #7, Thief River Falls Gold #8.
- n. **Squirt B2:** Some discussion on the Squirt B2 seeds. Elliott, what is the purpose of Squirt Hockey? Fun and development. This is why we've had this meeting for the last 35 years to let them go off and have fun and see where they're at, as there's no requirement to play everyone. As of right now, we have no squirt league, so you can schedule whatever you want. These tournaments are about fun; there is no requirement to attend the district tournament in squirts. We want those kids to have fun and continue to play hockey, so their kids play hockey and their grandkids play hockey. If we're going to worry about who's the #1 seed and if we're worrying about the competition, then you're killing the goal. Winning is not important at squirts, MN Hockey and USA Hockey says it's about being fun. Dragich, we're going to draw them out of a hat at the end of the year and let them play. The lowest Squirt B1 teams will play one of the Squirt B2 teams randomly and just run with it.
- o. **Girls 10UA:** As scheduled, with other Northern Districts.
- p. **Girls 10UB:** Thief River Falls #1, Roseau #2, Warroad #3, Bemidji #4

VIII. District - Region - State Hosts

Feb 13-15

BAA: NA BA: Roseau BB1 & BB2 Bemidji
 PWAA: NA PWA: East Grand Forks PWB1: Red Lake Falls
 PWB2: East Grand Forks Girls 12U A & B: Thief River Falls

Feb 27-Mar 1

SA: Lake of the Woods SB site 1: Thief River Falls (B1) SB site 2: Hallock (B2)
 Girls 10U A & B: Bemidji

Regions – Feb 27-Mar 1

Peewee AA – East Grand Forks **Peewee A** – Thief River Falls **Peewee B** – Roseau

State – Mar 13-15

Girls 15UA – Lake of the Woods **Girls 12U A** – Roseau

Dragich, further on district tournaments, one rule to touch on, minor penalties in all games are 2 minutes in length, regardless on period length. Elliott, leave them all at two minutes, that's the way the game is played, don't take penalties. Dragich, gate/entry fees are on the website, \$400 for squirt/10U, \$500 for peewee/12U, \$600 for Bantam/14U. Region tournament gate fee is \$750/team across the board for region tournament gate fees, according to the email Dragich got today. Elliott, each host of a district tournament, needs to notify Elliott and Dragich of the teams advancing on and their placement. If your team qualifies, send out the roster to the regional host so they can get their book ready right away. Dragich, all tournament games will be in GameSheet, first day of the tournament games will have teams in them, the only thing you should have to do at the Arena is to put a team into that spot if they are not there. You do not need to create games. 57 games this season that were entered incorrectly, that Dragich had to find to make our standings look decent. It wasn't good. During district tournaments, if you must stand there and hold someone's hand, do it, so the scores are entered correctly. Elliott, you should have someone at the beginning of the year that is good at GameSheet and at being an off-ice official and let people know how to do it properly. Remember that when you are in the penalty box, you are an official, not a fan. I don't think we're bad at it as a district, but I like to emphasize it at least once, so we stay good at it. Dragich will update all brackets online, please look at them and let Dragich know if there is a mistake so he can get a mistake corrected sooner than later.

IX. Committee Reports

- 1. Stats - Mark D: No update.
- 2. District Web Page – Mark D.: No update.
- 3. Coach-in-Chief (CEP) – Jay Hardwick: No update.
- 4. a. ACE Coordinator – Jude: No update.

4. b. Goalie Coordinator – need: still need a volunteer. All they do is meet online with the committee with information to bring back to the district. Let Elliott know if you have someone in mind.
5. Referees – Ron Laturi: No update. Keith S. requests that he comes to the next District meeting in May, Elliott says to send him an email.
6. Advanced HP Boys/Girls 15's & 14's – Jude Boulianne: For Girls and Boys HPs, make sure HS Coaches know they can nominate people to play at that level. Make sure to send names into Jude so players get the opportunity to progress, especially at the Bantam level, first chance to be seen by college coaches.
8. Awards – Dragich ordered, please pick them up at the meeting.
9. Tournaments – Mark Dragich: No Update.
10. Risk Manager – Mark Elliott: No update.
11. Girls – Mark Elliott: No update.
12. Retention-Recruitment – Keith S: No update.

X. Old business

1. Mark Elliott 2030 Harding Ct SW, Bemidji, MN 56601 (Cell) 218-766-4433 (Work) 218-759-9411
2. Locker Room Monitors – no update.
3. Waivers: No update.

XI. New Business

1. GameSheet – no update.
2. Push up for AA and A see above – no update here.
3. USAH Tier 1 N see above – no update here.
4. **Spring meeting** to be held in _____ East Grand Forks _____ on May 11th, 4:00pm.

**IX. Adjournment – Thief River Falls motions to adjourn, seconded by Hallock. Motion passes.
Adjournment: 5:24pm**