

MINNESOTA HOCKEY – DISTRICT 16
 Spring 2026 MEETING AGENDA
 Location – VFW Club (side room) - 312 Demers Ave
 East Grand Forks, MN
 Monday, May 11, 2026 - 4:00 pm.

I. Call to Order – 4:01 pm

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
 All associations are present.

III. Agenda Additions – Akua Tiekue from Minnesota Hockey is present, was a MN Hockey President's Award Winner this year. She is the Membership Development Director for Minnesota Hockey.
Dragich – Don Krause from Baudette was the Ted Brill Award Winner at the MN Hockey State Banquet, Warroad and Baudette still have players participating in Stanley Cup playoffs, Warroad Boys HS State Champs, and Gold Medal for Brock Nelson.

Elliott – Anything else, bring it up at anytime

IV. Approve Winter minutes – Walker motions, Bagley seconds. Motion carries

V. Team Assignments: Elliott - go through the division listing and you can give me a preliminary count of where you think you'll have teams in your association.

<u>Bantam AA</u> Bemidji East Grand Forks	<u>Pewee AA</u> Bemidji East Grand Forks	<u>Jr. Gold / Girls 15UB</u> Bemidji (Jr. Gold) Thief River Falls (15UB)	<u>Girls 10UA</u> Bemidji Warroad
<u>Bantam A</u> Roseau Thief River Falls Warroad	<u>Pewee A</u> East Grand Forks Hallock Red Lake Falls Roseau Thief River Falls Warroad	<u>Squirt A</u> Bemidji Crookston East Grand Forks Lake of the Woods Red Lake Falls Roseau Thief River Falls Warroad	<u>Girls 10UB</u> Bemidji Crookston? East Grand Forks? Roseau Thief River Falls
<u>Bantam B1/B</u> Bagley Bemidji Blue Bemidji White Crookston East Grand Forks Hallock Lake of the Woods Red Lake Falls Roseau Thief River Falls Warroad	<u>Pewee B1/B</u> Bagley Bemidji Crookston East Grand Forks Hallock Lake of the Woods Roseau Thief River Falls Warroad	<u>Squirt B1/B</u> Bagley Bemidji East Grand Forks Hallock Lake of the Woods Red Lake Falls Roseau Thief River Falls Warroad	<u>Girls 12UA</u> Bemidji East Grand Forks Roseau Warroad
<u>Bantam B2/C</u> Bemidji – C team? East Grand Forks? Walker	<u>Pewee B2/C</u> Bemidji – C team Crookston? East Grand Forks Green East Grand Forks White Walker	<u>Squirt B2/C</u> Bemidji Red Bemidji White Crookston East Grand Forks Walker	<u>Girls 12UB</u> Bemidji East Grand Forks? Lake of the Woods Roseau Thief River Falls Warroad

Akua - They want each district to have their own sled team. Looking for associations to host a 1- or 2-year pilot program. Also, looking for a host for a sled hockey specific try hockey for free. There is funding to help purchase sleds, possibly hosting practices next year. So, kids in more localized regions have more community-based options to play. Wouldn't build up for a little bit but would start with those try hockey for free events during the season.

VI. Spring MN Hockey – Dragich – at the spring state meeting, District directors had a request for scheduling state tournament games, so state consolation games are earlier in the day so they can get out of town before any possible poor weather. State semifinals will be later in the day. Talk at the Bantam AA, Pewee AA, 15UA of going to a Jr. Gold model, statewide league, develop playdowns from the statewide league, but that discussion is very early, not sure how many years Jr. Gold has been doing it for, but they use playdowns instead of region tournaments.

Elliott – some people in the metro area that don't like the current way we do playoffs. They think state tournaments should have the best 8 teams in the state. For a state tournament, we get regional entries into it, we've done it forever, the HS league does it this way, that's how you get participation from the entire state.

Dragich – this year a lot of the conversation started from the Bantam AA state tournament, people felt that the top 4 teams were on one half of the bracket and the other 4 teams were on the other half of the bracket. Yet, for the Bantam AA state tournament, the 3 winners on Sunday were from the lower half of the bracket, the "weaker" side of the bracket. That discussion is very early in the game, but from an outstate perspective, it doesn't make sense to us. As far as coaching clinics, there were 27 instructors in MN that put on coaching clinics, 100% that are going to be online now and not any in-person clinics. Stressing for coaches to get clinics done in a timely fashion. Registrars are going to focus more on players, not on chasing around coaches, but if it is not done, you are not on the bench, it will be the responsibility of the association to make sure it gets done. Hockey Ops had 2 test weekends with squirts, and one of the takeaways I thought was interesting was fewer hip injuries from goalies using smaller nets versus a bigger net. A year from now, they are talking about proposing intermediate nets for squirts and below.

Elliott – come June, they are voting on using intermediate nets for Squirts starting September 1st, 2027. I will be voting no. The biggest reason is it doesn't address how it is going to get policed. I'm not going to force everyone to buy more nets when they get used twice a week. What good is a rule if you don't have a penalty and you don't have a way to enforce it?

Dragich – that rule must pass district directors to be implemented, correct?

Elliott – no, that's up to the board.

Roseau – is that net size optional right now?

Elliott – yes, it is recommended.

Hallock – is that up to the home team?

Elliott – it is up to the association if they agree to it and want to use it.

Dragich – Minnesota hockey has created a tournament page on the website for tournaments that are going on during the year, it is up to associations to send the information to Minnesota Hockey. Girls 15UB are likely going to go to 3 regions instead of 4. I believe there were only 29 or 30 15UB teams. They currently wanted 32 in the playoffs. They are looking at that change. There also will be discussion on ranking state tournament teams, keeping regions the way they are, then ranking state tournaments only for seeding the remaining 8. That is in its infancy, it will not happen this year, maybe down the road. Our opinion is the current system works. JP from Anoka spoke at the meeting and spoke about great success they have had with learn to skate programs during the spring and have increased their player numbers for the following seasons. Officials, just short of 3500 officials registered through MN Hockey last year. I think officials are comfortable with where numbers are for the most part but always looking for more involvement with officials.

Elliott – because of the size of MN Hockey, they are required to do an annual audit. This year apparently, the audit firm that we hired sold out to a larger firm that had staffing problems.

Akua – we are still waiting to hear back on other things; we don't know if they have started.

Elliott – We will suffer a \$20,000 fine with the IRS if we have not submitted the annual audit. Rule changes – goalkeepers need to wear their mouthguard attached to their helmet. Must make sure player numbers are visible. Player rosters must be approved prior to any games being played, exhibition or otherwise, unless it is clear for the selection of determining a team. Teams that are not eligible for state tournaments may add players to their roster after December 31st but may not move players from teams if they were already on another team. National Development League (tier 1) U18 and U14, no discussion, mentioned at the Winter meeting, MN Hockey still against the way it has been presented.

Upcoming June meeting – zoom

Elections: VP Maroon - Nate Wold of Monticello; **Secretary** - Carmen Johnson reelected

VP Hockey Ops - Joe Stremcha; **Treasurer** - Mark Blaisdell of D9

2 USAH Representatives: Steve Oleheiser & Jeremy Reed

VII. Upgrade push to AA/A – Elliott – we want every team to play as high as possible, we went through the lineups. But it seems like every September we have a meeting, we always have complaints that Bemidji should play AA/A/B1, RLF should play A, etc. It's a difficult conversation because things change every year. My desire is to have as many teams play up at AA and A as possible. If the players are playing at a higher level, they are going to develop their skills or come to the realization that they aren't going to play in the USHL. To get good, you must play tough teams.

Warroad – Does your whole association have to be AA, or can you have say, a Bantam AA team and a Pee wee A team?

Elliott – Yes, you could have teams at different levels. What I'm looking to do is make you think about it, and I hope I did.

VIII. District - Region - State Hosts – Dragich – Latest dates possible because everything falls according to Labor Day, and that's as late as it can be this year.

Districts – Feb. 19-21, AA possibly the next weekend.

BAA: Moorhead	BA: Warroad	BB1 & BB2: Walker	12UA: EGF	12UB: LOTW
PWAA: Bemidji	PWA: Crookston	PWB1: Bagley	PWB2: Roseau	

Districts (continued) – Feb 26-28

Squirt A: Red Lake Falls	Squirt B: Warroad	Squirt B: Crookston	Girls 10UA & B: Roseau
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Regions – Mar. 5-7

Bantam AA: Roseau	Bantam A: Walker	Bantam B1: Bemidji
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State – Mar 13-15, None

Akua – Membership development manager for MN Hockey. Anything involving growth, recruiting, and retention. Grants are open currently. Gear up grant opened April 1st, through June 1st, gear grant through Dick's Sporting Goods. Pass the puck grant, for creative recruitment and retention levels, mostly at Mite and 8U levels, up to \$2500 cash, open year-round, associations can apply once per fiscal year. Learn to Skate grant, covers learn to skate or try hockey for free ice time, \$500, can apply once per year. New family mentor program, 5 families that are established in your association that are interested in mentoring new hockey families, new hockey information on the website. We will give a \$500 pass the puck grant for it. Recruitment and Retention survey, trying to figure out ways to best reach associations. Please fill that out so we know what you know about the grants, know if you're growing or shrinking, know if you want to have assistance, nice to have a point of contact at each association.

Severson – We do see an increase in grant applications, we do not submit a lot of grants for D16. As we get more applications, are associations taking membership development seriously or are they just trying to get cash? Strongly recommend having a dedicated position for recruitment and retention. ALEC leadership conference, it's a great opportunity for associations to meet other associations and learn what other associations are doing, great networking opportunity. 1 from D16 this year. We have been poorly represented; we may have some money to help support travel if you need. 1% overall growth for the state this year, huge milestone with 100,000 girls across the U.S. this year (that have played hockey). Aim is still for 3% growth each year, a lot of good sports across MN that are great alternatives, so you need to see what is pulling away students, what is more attractive than what we're offering?

Dragich – with membership around the country, there has become a major issue with rinks becoming privatized, which is severely hampering membership growth throughout youth hockey, as they are for profit rinks, rather than community based. Becoming increasingly expensive and pricing people out of the game.

Walker – has the mentorship program seen success?

Akua – Mora seems to have good success, families find it helpful, new families can ask an anonymous question, and everyone can answer it.

Elliott – I would like every association to send me an email in the next two weeks and four days, something that you do in recruiting players.

Severson – or get the survey done. We use the survey to set directions throughout the year. 1,740 registered and rostered players in District 16 this season.

IX. Committee Reports

1. Stats - John or Dragich – no update.
2. District Web Page – John or Dragich, if anyone wants anything on the website, let Dragich know.
3. Coach-in-Chief (CEP) – Jay Hardwick – not present.
- 4.a ACE Coordinator – Jude Boulianne – not present. **Elliott** - Jude is getting tired. He needs help. If you have any good hockey people in your community, let me know. Mike Klema from Roseau volunteered to help.

Warroad – what is ACE?

Elliott – High-Performance stuff. They change the name every few years.

- 4.b Goalie Coordinator – **NEED**
5. Referees – Ron Laturi – not present. **Elliott** – we need them. A lot of districts that are in the Twin Cities have the districts run the referees, but if you are interested, that's what we want. **Roseau** – if there are refs that want to do an in-person clinic let us know.
6. Advanced HP Boys 15's & 14's – Jude Boulianne – not present.

Walker – Question on Tier 1 & 2 (prospects). Are HP numbers down statewide?

Elliott – there are so many options for the kids. The new hockey operations director has now started and hopefully they are going to develop a way to provide a more competitive program for it. With all the AAA programs, there are many options.

Dragich – Jude has done a good job over the years at getting things implemented for outstate kids. Goaltender portion of it in Duluth the same weekend as other parts of the festival, for outstate people, it wasn't realistic for outstate players to get to Duluth. Jude does make a very good effort in trying to relay the effort and have opportunities for players up here.

Severson – MN Hockey was very open that it is a money grab for HPs.

7. Advanced HP Girls – no update.

8. Awards – Dragich will continue ordering.
9. Tournaments – **Dragich** – all good, sanctioning, hopefully by June 1st we'll have the 26-27 sanctioning link open on the MN Hockey website, otherwise everything is similar.
10. Risk Manager – **Elliott** – if you have a serious injury, send me and Dragich an email. Parents are responsible for the first \$1000 out of pocket, then there is a form that you can fill out and get reimbursed.
11. Girls – **Elliott** (Need) – I'd like to have someone in charge of that, it's not very much work.
12. Retention-Recruitment – **Severson/Akua** – already addressed.

X. Old business

1. Mark Elliott 2030 Harding Ct SW, Bemidji, MN 56601 (Cell) 218-766-4433 (Work) 218-759-9411, new office address.
2. Locker Room Monitors – **Elliott** – one of the biggest ways a lawsuit could come from. The big reason is lawsuits, and that outweighs everything else.
3. Waivers – **Elliott** – must have a waiver completed, can't go from Lake of the Woods to anywhere without a waiver. You can't have them on the bench or on the ice without waiver form.
4. GameSheet – **Elliott** – I think we're good, thanks everyone for sending me their last half. I have enough money to cover the first half for sure.

Dragich – I think MN Hockey is close to signing a 3-year agreement extending GameSheet, a year ago, they were talking about switching companies. Now they're at the point that they're going to extend, we're all on it and used to it. With tournament applications, one thing that will change, you will be charged upfront for the GameSheet application cost, rather than on the backside of Elliott sending the bill out that would include tournaments. Dragich will ask to see if associations can get reimbursed. All this is new, so we'll see what happens.

Roseau – did they land at \$8/game? Dragich, no, they are still negotiating with GameSheet.

XI. New Business

1. New office address for Mark - 258 Anne St. NW, Bemidji, MN 56601
2. Potential Fines for games not played, incorrect GameSheet entries, coaches and fan ejections, etc.
Dragich – common in other districts across the state. Proposed fines, I just went through other district websites seeing what they did and threw some things out there. From last year with GameSheet, one of my frustrations was the number of games that were entered incorrectly, probably 60 games that were entered incorrectly that I had to go and reenter because they were wrong. It shouldn't happen, as the people in this room should be educating people on how it should be done.

Elliott – everyone you have as an off ice official needs to be trained prior to being in the box, how to run the clock, how to run GameSheet. They do not question a referee's call. They are part of the officiating team. You are not allowed to yell or complain about officials in the box. The proposed fines, still district director's discretion, if you have feedback, let Dragich and I know, so that we can discuss it. There has only been one fine that has been issued in 26 years.

Warroad – what is the plan for enforcement?

Dragich – the list of fines is something I went through to look at districts and some of the things they are doing, in the metro area, you walk into the rink for a game and the practice before you and you tell on them. Fines are helping keep people in line. There is not ever an excuse for a coach to get kicked out of a game. A coach ejection for 12 penalties would not be a fineable thing, as to me, a coach getting kicked out is abusing an official.

Elliott – ones I am most concerned with, play all your district games, if you cannot, you provide me with why you cannot and I provide you with a waiver. \$500 per game that you do not play and kicked out of districts. I will not allow kids not to play because a scheduler made a mistake.

Bemidji – instead of subjecting each team to play each team twice, could we set a minimum of you need to play this many district games to qualify for the district tournament.

Elliott – we had to enforce playing home and home because we some associations felt they were too good to play everybody.

Bemidji – I just think you have such a wide range of teams. Per our development mode we want to be around 40 games max. You're limiting the number of competitive games that teams are playing during the season.

Elliott – send me an email prior to you leaving. I don't want Warroad not playing Bagley because they're better than everyone else. That's why I give everyone the option to waive out of a game. Participating before waivers are complete, as you could get disqualified if they are not completed. Coaches on ice prior to completing requirements. Coaches not wearing helmets. And these meetings are important. We need representation from each district association as we only do it three times a year. It's what we do, it's what we've always done for 40 years now for me. Be here. If you can't be here, have the next person be here. If you can, bring along your top coach, as that's where a lot of problems start, with coaches that don't know the rules. They might know hockey, but they don't know that we have rules.

ADD NEW ITEMS AT BEGINNING OF MEETING:

2. **Fall meeting** to be held in _____ Walker _____ on September ____ 14th _____ 4:00pm.

IX. Adjournment – 6:06 pm. Walker motions, Hallock seconds. Motion carries.