



Montana Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA)

Treasure State League TSL

STATE TOURNAMENTS GUIDE 2026-2028

Effective October 3, 2026



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APPLICATION/BIDDING PROCESS

MAHA Tournament Application Forms must be completed and submitted to the MAHA Tournament Director prior to April 20th.

QUALIFICATION & FACILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. The number of teams by Age Division that qualify for the State Tournament are outlined in the Tournament Breakdown section of this guide.
2. Single-sheet facilities can host a: maximum 6 team tournament.
3. No state tournament games shall be scheduled on Thursdays, unless approved in advance by the TSL Commissioner and Tournament Director.

4. No team shall play more than 2 games in a single day at the state tournament.

SITE SELECTION PROCESS

1. The MAHA Tournament Director will review all applications. Only completed applications will be considered using these criteria:
 - a. Is the Association in good standing with MAHA (e.g. all fees paid)
 - b. Did the Association host a MAHA tournament last season
 - c. Did the Association host this age division tournament last season
 - d. Available ice time and information included on application form.
 - e. Hotel availability and community services.
2. The MAHA Tournament Director will present a summary report of all bids received and a recommendation on tournaments locations.
3. The MAHA Board of Directors will approve the final selection of tournament locations.
4. Selections will be communicated as soon as approved.
5. Tournament locations shall be based on the best fit for the tournament and applying Associations are not required to be awarded a tournament.

HOST RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Providing ice times and services as noted on original application form. In addition, the host association is responsible for meeting all deadlines and following all policies outlined in this guide.
2. Naming a Local Tournament Coordinator that will work with the Age Group Commissioner and MAHA Tournament Director.
3. Communicating with participating teams and answering any questions in a timely manner.
 - a. This includes but is not limited to sending each participating team tournament information, schedules and the tournament registration form.
4. Proposing the schedule with game times to MAHA Tournament Director and Age Division Commissioner at least ninety days in advance of the tournament using Tournament Game Format at the end of this guide.
 - a. The tournament schedule must be approved by the MAHA Tournament Director before posting and/or sharing with teams.
 - b. Share the tournament schedule with teams no less than 14 days prior to the tournament.
5. Updating the schedule with team names as soon as the TSL Commissioner approves final standings/seedings.
6. Submitting tournament design logo to MAHA Tournament Director for approval no less than 30 days prior to the start of the tournament.
 - a. Design must include: Montana (or MT) State Tournament, year, age division (e.g. 10U, 14U Girls, MT High School)
 - b. It is recommended that the tournament location be included in the design
7. Coordinating all officiating needs with local & state Referee-in-Chief.
 - a. The association is responsible for following and paying officiating fees listed in this guide.
 - b. If bringing in outside referees, must provide them with adequate lodging.

- c. If an official is traveling more than two hours, consideration will be given to time of departure from their home to arrive in sufficient time to be ready for the first game they are scheduled for. If home departure will be prior to 8:00 am, lodging shall be provided for the night before.
- 8. Establishing the tournaments Rules/Disciplinary Committee, which will include 3 members and the Age Group Commissioner. This list is required to be turned into the MAHA Tournament Director one week prior to the start of the tournament.
- 9. Providing FREE printed tournament programs that include schedule, team names and rosters, tournament/MAHA logo and tournament rules.
- 10. Read and enforce the Sanctioned Tournament Safe Sport Program Protocol:
<https://www.usahockey.com/resourcesanddownloads>
- 11. Sending the bond reimbursement form, to the MAHA Treasurer within 1 week of tournament completion (can be submitted prior to the tournament after teams are set)
 - a. Failure to submit the bond reimbursement form timely will result a forfeiture of the reimbursement.
 - b. Failure to complete responsibilities may deem the host ineligible for MAHA reimbursement.
- 12. It is recommended that host association provides or coordinates:
 - a. At least one trained first-aid or medical personnel (EMT, athletic trainer, or equivalent) on-site during all tournament games.
 - b. A designated security contact or on-site security presence for all tournament sessions.
 - c. Emergency action plan posted visibly at the rink and communicated to all on-site staff and officials.
 - d. Hosting a Coach/Team Manager/Age Division Commissioner/TSL Tournament Director call at least one week in advance of the tournament information, general rules, safe sport expectations, tie-breaker procedures and answer any questions.
- 13. Send a completed tournament bracket and tournament budget to the MAHA Tournament Director within 1 week of completion of the tournament.
 - a. This budget is ONLY for income and expenses related directly to the tournament, team entry fees, MAHA reimbursements, expenses for ice time, referees, awards, etc.
 - b. These brackets and budgets may be used for future season calculations of tournament fees.

TEAM FEES

- 1. Team fees for the State tournament are set by MAHA and communicated by the Tournament Director.
- 2. Hosts are responsible for collecting a designated portion of the team fee directly from participating teams. See below for exact amounts.
- 3. The balance of the team fee is eligible for reimbursement from MAHA.

GAME SCHEDULING

- 1. Every team will be scheduled for a minimum of three games except if the tournament only includes three teams.

2. Game schedules must accommodate the MAHA rest rules for the division.
 - a. 10U, 12U & 14U Girls: 2/12-hour rule (2 hours rest required from end of one game to start of next on same day, 12 hours when games subsequent game is on next day).
 - b. All other age divisions follow the 4/12-hour rule.
 - c. Teams must not be scheduled to play more than 2 games in a single day.

TOURNAMENT SITE COORDINATOR

The MAHA Age Division Commissioner will act as Tournament Site Coordinator & MAHA Representative. If needed they can designate an individual approved by the TSL Commissioner to act as Tournament Site Coordinator in their absence.

All MAHA State Tournament Site Coordinators are required to confirm any applicable player have approved waivers.

EXCESSIVE HOST TEAM DISPLAYS

Host associations shall make every effort to ensure that all teams participating have equal opportunity to promotions, displays, and activities involving the introduction of teams, players, and other pre-game displays.

Excessive behavior and promotional activity by a host association that by design creates the perception of an unequal playing field or otherwise intimidates an opposing team, shall not be allowed.

SPECTATOR FEES

Host associations may charge a spectator fee for games played during a state tournament.

Hosts may only charge the fee listed on the bid accepted by the MAHA Board.

AWARDS

1. MAHA will provide 1st and 2nd place trophies plus a Championship banner.
2. Other awards, such as 3rd place, MVP and participation are at the discretion of the host association and must be approved by the Age Division Commissioner at least 14 days prior to the tournament.
3. Hosts must provide what they included on their original bid form.
4. 6U/8U is a recreational division for which MAHA will not provide awards and banners.

TOURNAMENT APPAREL

1. Host associations may sell t-shirts, sweatshirts, and other items.
 - a. Apparel items are required to have the MAHA logo on them.
 - b. The MAHA logo can either be incorporated in the Tournament logo, or printed elsewhere on the item.

- c. MAHA logo must be high quality and cannot be modified.
 - d. All rights to this design are otherwise reserved.
2. A design proof must be sent to the MAHA Tournament Director for approval, at a minimum of 3 weeks prior to the start of the tournament.
 3. No unapproved or independent merchandise may be sold at state events.

REFEREES & LINESPERSONS

1. Refer to the Officials Guide in the MAHA Annual Guide for referees per game requirements.
2. Game fees
 - 10U & 12U: Local officiating rates
 - 14U & 14U Girls: \$75 per referee, \$60 per linesman
 - 19U Girls: \$75 per referee, \$60 per linesman
 - HS: \$95 per referee, \$70 per linesman
3. Dependent on tournament size and location and with the direction of the State Referee-in-Chief, associations are responsible for budgeting for (i.e. lodging room per referee) and scheduling officials. Needs for travelling officials may change and below is are guidelines to expect:
 - a. 3 travelling officials for High School.
 - b. 2 travelling officials for 19U Girls and 14U Youth/Girls.
 - c. Additional referees may be brought in at the discretion of the State Referee-in-Chief.
 - d. Local linespersons are strongly encouraged.
4. Officials are required to hold USA Hockey Certification
5. The host associations are responsible for paying all expenses for referees.
 - a. Mileage will be reimbursed per mile, round trip city to city on Google, at 50% the current IRS allowable rate.
 - b. All reimbursement submissions are to be paid upon review within 30 days.
6. Meal reimbursement will be issued based on arrival/departure times as breakfast \$15, lunch \$15, and dinner \$20.
7. USA hockey officials are eligible to officiate in a state tournament based on demonstrated and documented ability and dedication. Montana hockey registered officials will given preference for state tournament selection.
 - a. Officials interested and willing to work a state tournament should receive endorsement from the local RIC and express interest to the MAHA RIC.
 - b. Location of tournaments will not have a bearing on referee selection.
 - c. All efforts will be made to ensure no more than one official chosen to serve as referee will be selected from any one of the cities participating in the tournament.
 - d. It is recommended that officials do not referee games in which their hometown team is participating, or they have a child on a team.
 - e. Semi-final and championship games will be scheduled based on performance during the tournament.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY AND WAIVERS

1. Players are required to play in a minimum number of TSL Division regular season games to be eligible to play in the State Tournament. Games must be played in the qualifying division (i.e. cross roster player games in another division do not count).
 - a. 10U, 12U, 14U eligible if played $\geq 75\%$ of games
 - b. 14U Girls, 19U Girls, MTHS, BSHS eligible if played $\geq 50\%$ of games
 2. Any player who fails to play in the minimum number of league games may complete and submit to the Age Division Commissioner a MAHA Treasure State League Player Waiver form: Montana Amateur Hockey Association | Documents
 3. The Age Division Commissioner will review and make approval/denial recommendation to the TSL Commissioner within 5 business days of receipt.
 4. The TSL Commissioner's decision is final and will be communicated in writing.
- NOTE: Waivers may be approved for injury, illness, emergency, or started hockey late in the season and will not be approved for on too many teams, didn't want to travel, or vacations.

PLAYING RULES

1. Tournaments will be played under USA Hockey supplemented by the MAHA Official Guide 2026-2028 in the MAHA Annual Guide 2026-2028: Montana Amateur Hockey Association | Guidebooks and Bylaws
2. Pool play will not include overtime
3. Elimination, placement (i.e. 3rd) and championship games across all divisions:
 - a. One 5-minute stop-time 5-on-5 sudden death overtime, teams do not change ends.
 - b. If still tied after OT, a 3-player shootout, teams do not change ends.
 - i Home team chooses who shoots first.
 - ii All eligible shooters must shoot before any shooter repeats.
 - c. If tied after the initial 3-player shootout, the shootout continues as sudden death, teams shooting in the same order, do not change ends.

STANDINGS FOLLOWING POOL PLAY

1. Most points (2 for win, 1 for OT loss, 0 for loss)
2. Head-to-head record between tied teams
3. Goals against (fewest goals allowed)
4. Penalty minutes (lower cumulative PIM = higher standing)
5. Coin flip, conducted by the Age Division Commissioner

PROTESTS

1. The tournament rules committee will handle all protests.
 - a. Protests of USA Hockey Playing rules are not allowed.
 - b. Protests of On-Ice Officials calls of minor penalties are not allowed

- c. Protests may be made on things such as ineligible player/coach, game or period length, rest period, standings/seedings
- d. Protests must be in writing and submitted to the Tournament Director within 15 minutes of completion of game.
- e. A \$50 fee must accompany all protests.
- f. If protest is upheld, fee will be returned.

FORFEITURE, SUSPENSION & ELIGIBLE PLAYERS

A team forfeiting a state tournament game is subject to: \$500 fine payable to MAHA within 30 days; possible suspension from future state tournament hosting; and the non-forfeiting team advances in the bracket and is credited with a win. All players participating in state tournament games must be on the official rostered team and must meet eligibility requirements. An ineligible player results in a forfeit of any game in which they participated.

SPORTSMANSHIP

Fighting, abusive behavior, or unsportsmanlike conduct by players, team officials or spectators will not be tolerated, either on or off the ice, and will be grounds for removal from the tournament.

1. USA Hockey Zero Tolerance policy is in effect.
2. The Referees shall have the option of ending any game should they feel that the player or game official's safety is at risk.
3. In such a case, the Tournament Director and tournament Rules Committee will determine the outcome of the game.
4. Any fans using profanity while watching games will be asked to leave.

AGE DIVISION TOURNAMENT BREAKDOWN

1. 10U (½ ice) and 12U A, B, and C divisions
2. 14U A and B divisions
3. 14U Girls, 19U Girls, BSHS and MTHS – one division

The number of teams by Age Division who qualify for the State Tournament is defined below, being based on the maximum number of teams that will play in the tournament.

Teams in Age Division	Teams in Tournament
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	6
8	8
≥9	8

Teams in Age Division	Tournament Divisions B/C (Upper/Lower) ¹
≤8	1 / 0
9	5 / 4
10	6 / 4
11	6 / 5
12	6 / 6
13	8 / 5
14	8 / 6
15	8 / 6
16	8 / 8

¹ Recommended splits to be adjusted/confirmed by MAHA Tournament Director based on standings.

TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE FORMATS

Games must be played in this order unless approved by MAHA Tournament Director

The lower seed is the home team.

3 Team Tournament	
Game 1	1 vs 2
Game 2	3 vs winner Game 1
Game 3	Loser of Game 1 vs Loser Game 2
Championship	Winner Game 2 vs Winner Game 3
If Championship loser is their 1st loss, a 2 nd Championship game is played, the winner is Champion.	

4 Team Tournament	
Game 1	1 vs 4
Game 2	2 vs 3
Game 3	1 vs 3
Game 4	2 vs 4
Game 5	1 vs 2
Game 6	3 vs 4
3rd Place	3 rd place vs 4 th place
Championship	1 st place vs 2 nd place

5 Team Tournament	
Game 1	1 vs 5
Game 2	2 vs 3
Game 3	4 vs 5
Game 4	1 vs 3
Game 5	2 vs 5
Game 6	1 vs 4
Game 7	3 vs 5
Game 8	2 vs 4
Game 9	3 vs 4
Game 10	1 vs 2
3rd Place	3 rd place vs 4 th place
Championship	1 st place vs 2 nd place

6 Team Tournament Red Pool Seeds: 1, 4 & 6 Blue Pool Seeds: 2, 3, & 5	
Game 1	1 vs 6
Game 2	2 vs 5
Game 3	4 vs 6
Game 4	3 vs 5
Game 5	1 vs 4
Game 6	2 vs 3
3rd Place	3 rd Place Red vs 3 rd Place Blue
Crossover 1	1 st Place Red vs 2 nd Place Blue
Crossover 2	2 nd Place Red vs 1 st Place Blue
Championship	Winner Crossover 1 vs Winner Crossover 2

8 Team Tournament Red Pool Seeds: 1, 4, 5 & 8 Blue Pool Seeds: 2, 3, 6 & 7	
Game 1	1 vs 8
Game 2	2 vs 7
Game 3	4 vs 5
Game 4	3 vs 6
Game 5	1 vs 5
Game 6	2 vs 6
Game 7	4 vs 8
Game 8	3 vs 7
Game 9	1 vs 4
Game 10	2 vs 3
Game 11	5 vs 8
Game 12	6 vs 7
Crossover 1	1 st Place Red vs 2 nd Place Blue
Crossover 2	2 nd Place Red vs 1 st Place Blue
3rd Place	Loser Crossover 1 vs Loser Crossover 2
Championship	Winner Crossover 1 vs Winner Crossover 2