

Esko Youth Hockey Association Handbook

Approved March 11, 2026

ESKO YOUTH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

The Esko Youth Hockey Association is a non-profit organization, governed by the rules set for by District 11 of Minnesota Hockey and USA Hockey.

PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to communicate the goals, expectations and responsibilities of everyone involved in the Esko Youth Hockey Association. Esko Hockey believes that effective communication can reduce or eliminate many issues. The Esko Youth Hockey Association Board will revise this handbook as needed to meet current program needs.

PHILOSOPHY OF ESKO YOUTH HOCKEY

The philosophy of the Esko Youth Hockey Association is, first and foremost, for the players to have fun and enjoy skating and the game of hockey. Mini-mites, Mite 1s and Mite 2s is about participation and creating positive attitudes towards the game of hockey.

ESKO YOUTH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION MISSION

The mission of Esko Youth Hockey Association will continually strive to provide a community based, volunteer-driven program to promote participation and development of youth hockey. Esko Hockey will actively work to promote a fun, fair and safe environment for all without regard to experience or ability. We are committed to instilling honesty, teamwork, sportsmanship and self-confidence into each participant. The mission will be achieved through organizing our dedicated volunteers, coaches, parents and business associates who actively uphold these values. The primary objective will be to have all the players feel increasingly better about their ability as the season progresses. This should occur not only in the areas of skill, knowledge, and fitness but should also include qualities of character such as persistence, self-control, tolerance, respect for authority, encouragement of teammates, concentration on the tasks and teamwork.

ESKO YOUTH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION BOARD OBJECTIVE

The Esko Youth Hockey Association Board's objective is to lead and manage our Association by planning, organizing, implementing and maintaining policies/guidelines that support Esko Youth Hockey Association's mission.

ESKO YOUTH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT

I am an Esko Hockey player. I promise to adhere to the following rules:

- I will play the game as intended
- I will wear my protective equipment

- I will use the rink and locker rooms responsibly
- I will be respectful
- I will treat my teammates, coaches, opponents, officials and hockey family with a respectful attitude
- I will not call anyone names or treat them unkindly by words or actions
- I will listen to coaches, teammates, officials and my “hockey family”
- I will show good sportsmanship
- I will not swear or use abusive language
- I will be a hard working coachable player
- I will give 100%, I understand hockey is a privilege
- I will respectfully accept feedback from coaches and officials and try my best to apply it
- I will work hard to be a team player and friend
- I will have a positive attitude
- I know things can happen, I will not place blame
- I will learn from mistakes so it can be better next time
- I know playing hockey is a commitment
- I will attend practice and games as much as possible
- I will inform someone when I will not be able to attend practice/game/event

ESKO YOUTH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Esko Youth Hockey Association expects all parents and/or guardians to abide the following rules established by USA Hockey, Minnesota Hockey and our association.

- Children are involved in organized sports for their enjoyment. I will support their desires to play and make it fun.
- I will encourage my child to play by the rules. I know that children learn by example. I will display good sportsmanship by applauding good plays of both teams, respective players, coaches, fans, volunteers and officials.
- I will not embarrass my child by yelling at players, coaches, volunteers or officials.
- I will learn and know all I can about the game to enjoy it thoroughly.
- I will emphasize skill development and practice and how they benefit young athletes.
- I will recognize the importance of volunteer coaches. They are important to the development of your child and sport. I will let coaches do the coaching.
- I will not use profanity or any form of harassment towards others in the arena, at the rink in the locker rooms or team functions.
- I will respect the rights, beliefs and property of others and will treat others with courtesy and respect.
- I will be fully responsible for my actions and consequences of those actions.
- I will applaud good effort in victory and defeat. I will show a positive attitude towards the game and enforce the positive points.
- I will make every effort to get my child to practices and games on time.
- I will refrain from making negative comments about teammates, coaches, volunteers, and board members, especially in front of my child. I will express my concerns through proper channels.

Complaint procedure: Do not speak directly to your child's coach. Any complaint in regards to a coach or team should be directed to a board member. Board members will handle the complaint if possible; it may be discussed amongst the Board to reach a viable solution. In some cases, the Board may decide to carry the complaint to the coach and set up a conference with parents, coach(es), and others involved. Any concerned association member not satisfied with board members or coach's decisions can appeal in writing after conference.

Consequence Guidelines for any parent or player that fails to adhere to the parent or player code of conduct:

- First Violation: Warning of improper conduct and procedure. Will be considered on probation for the remainder of the current hockey season. A conference will be held if necessary.
- Second Violation: Member is on probation, member will be suspended from the hockey program for two weeks.
- Third Violation: Member will be in violation will be removed from the program for the remainder of the hockey season.

ESKO YOUTH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

(Adopted from USA Hockey Official Rules of Ice Hockey 2025-2029)

USA Hockey is committed to creating a safe and fair environment for all participants. Respect for the game, the opponents, coaches and officials is a critical part of the environment that is created. This Zero Tolerance Policy summarizes required actions to be taken when violations occur.

All players, coaches, officials, team officials and administrators and parents/spectators are required to maintain a sportsmanlike and educational atmosphere before, during and after all USA Hockey sanctioned games. Thus, the following points of emphasis must be implemented by all USA Hockey participants and spectators.

Players

A minor penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct (zero tolerance) shall be assessed whenever a player:

- 1) Openly disputes or argues any decision by an official.
- 2) Taunts or incites an opponent.
- 3) Visually creates a disturbance during the game.

Any time that a player persists in any of these actions, they shall be assessed a misconduct penalty. A game misconduct shall result if the player continues such action.

Coaches

A minor penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct (zero tolerance) shall be assessed whenever a coach:

- 1) Openly disputes or argues any decision by an official.
- 2) Uses obscene, profane or abusive language to anyone at any time.
- 3) Visually displays any sign of dissatisfaction with an official's decision including standing on the boards or standing in the bench doorway with the intent of inciting the officials, players or spectators.

Any time that a coach persists in any of these actions, they shall be assessed a game misconduct penalty.

In addition, any player/coach who uses language that is hateful or discriminatory in nature anywhere in the rink before, during or after the game shall be penalized under Rule 601(e.3) resulting in a match penalty. Such behavior is reprehensible and has absolutely no place in our game. The offender shall be immediately suspended until a hearing is conducted by the governing USA Hockey Affiliate or Junior League.

Officials

Officials are required to conduct themselves in a businesslike, sportsmanlike, impartial and constructive manner at all times. The actions of an official must be above reproach. Actions such as "baiting" or inciting players or coaches are strictly prohibited.

Officials are strongly encouraged to introduce themselves to the coaches prior to the game to establish a basis of mutual respect and to facilitate/define in-game communication.

Officials are ambassadors of the game and must always conduct themselves with this responsibility in mind.

Parents/Spectators

Parents are expected to be a positive role model by treating all players, coaches, officials and fellow spectators with respect and support.

The game will be stopped by game officials when parents/ spectators displaying inappropriate and disruptive behavior interfere with other spectators or the game. The game officials will identify violators to the coaches for the purpose of removing parents/ spectators from the spectator's viewing and game area. Once removed, play will resume. Lost time will not be replaced and violators may be subject to further disciplinary action by the local governing body. This inappropriate and disruptive behavior shall include:

- 1) Use of obscene, profane or abusive language to anyone at any time.
- 2) Taunting of players, coaches, officials or other spectators by means of baiting, ridiculing, threat of physical violence or physical violence.
- 3) Throwing of any object in the spectators viewing area, players bench, penalty box or on ice surface, directed in any manner as to create a safety hazard.

USA Hockey strongly recommends that each local youth hockey registered team designate a volunteer to serve as a parent/spectator monitor during all team games. This monitor will, ideally, address inappropriate spectator behavior prior to the situation escalating to the point it has an impact on the game. This designated monitor shall have the full support of the youth hockey association and the arena management to remove any spectator in violation of the Zero Tolerance Policy.

Administrators

Administrators are the key to building a positive, growing and safe USA Hockey community. Create a culture that is:

- 1) Welcoming
- 2) Protected
- 3) Respected
- 4) Connected
- 5) Valued

Administrators are responsible for enforcing the rules and policies established and approved by USA Hockey, their Affiliate, and their Association or Club. This includes taking disciplinary action, as deemed appropriate, towards any parent/spectator removed from a game as a result of a violation of the Zero Tolerance Policy.

GENERAL INFORMATION

REGISTRATION. Registration for Esko Youth Hockey will take place online through our website (<https://www.eskohockey.com/>) starting mid-summer. "New players" need to submit a certified copy of their birth certificate (not a hospital copy). Please make an effort to register on time. Registration fees will be set annually and posted before registration opens.

VOLUNTEERING/FUNDRAISING. As an association, Esko Youth Hockey, functions solely on the help and participation of families. As such each year the Esko Youth Hockey Board will analyze the upcoming season needs and set forth requirements for volunteering for each member family.

2025-2026 Volunteer Requirements

1. Concession Stand Hours

- a. The Esko Hockey Rink must have an adult in the building working the concession stand in order for the rink to be open. This is a service we provide not only to our players, but the community as a whole.
- b. Each concession stand shift shall be 3 to 4 hours in length.
- c. Each registered skater shall volunteer for 2 concession stand shifts, with a family max of 5 shifts.
- d. **Failure to fulfill the concession stand and Minnesota Wilderness 50/50 volunteer requirement will result in the forfeiture of your \$250.00 deposit. You will be notified prior to the cashing of your check.**

2. Flooding

- a. Esko Hockey relies on our flood crews in order to keep our home rink open.
- b. Flooding is done Sunday-Thursday each week, and on assigned weekends, throughout the season when it is cold enough to make ice.
- c. Schedule is based on volunteer numbers compiled by the Rink Director and Flood Captains. Typically parents are assigned to one weeknight and a rotating weekend schedule.
- d. Scheduling changes/absences/trades will be communicated through the Flood Captains.
- e. Parents signed up for flooding must attend **8** flood nights at a minimum.
- f. **Failure to fill the flooding obligation will result in the forfeiture of your \$250.00 deposit. You will be notified prior to the cashing of your check.**

3. Minnesota Wilderness 50/50

- a. Esko Youth Hockey has an agreement with the Minnesota Wilderness to run the 50/50 drawing at each of their home games in Cloquet.
- b. Esko Youth Hockey retains 50% of tickets sold for our association.
- c. Families participating will gain free admittance to the game.
- d. Typically two families volunteer for each game.
- e. It is a lot of FUN!

4. Voyageur League Games

- a. League games require rink preparation, time keeping, and other related tasks.
- b. Tasks will be assigned once we have a schedule and numbers.

5. Opt Out Process for the 2025-2026 season

- a. Esko Youth Hockey relies on volunteers to help maintain our facilities and meet our financial obligations through fundraising efforts.
- b. We recognize that there are individuals that are unable to volunteer due to various reasons.
- c. To ensure fairness to all families we require that members that are unable to fulfill their volunteer requirements buy out of their requirements.
- d. Each family is required to submit two checks in the amount of \$250.00 each. One indicating "flooding" in the memo line and the other indicating "concessions" in the memo line.
- e. If you fail to meet your obligation, we will notify you of this prior to cashing your check.
- f. If you decide at the beginning of the season that you will not be able to fulfill your obligation please let a board member of this decision and we will cash your check immediately and not require the volunteer hours.
- g. All checks must be turned in prior to your child being allowed to participate in Esko Hockey practices and/or games.

USA HOCKEY ROSTERS. Players must be on an official USA Hockey Roster to play in a game or scrimmage. All rostered players must play on their own team.

PLAYER MOVE UP POLICY

MINI MITE TO MITE 1/MITE 1 TO MITE 2. Esko Youth Hockey enforces a policy of placing all participating skaters in the level of play associated with their age/birth date. However, a skater may request the Esko Youth Hockey Board approval to "move up" to a level of play that is a level higher than the level dictated by their birth date. Permission to move up is granted solely at

the discretion of the Board of Directors and may be granted in cases where such movement allows the skater to play with their “peer” grade in school.

1. Purpose: To provide clear process for allowing a player to move up a level of hockey when it is in the best interest of their development and both teams involved.
2. Eligibility Criteria: A player may be considered to move up if:
 - a. They demonstrate advanced skills, maturity and readiness for higher-level play.
 - b. The move is supported by the coach, parent(s) and approved by the Board of Directors.
3. Approval Process:
 - a. Parent/Coach Request: A parent/coach submits a written request to the association email.
 - b. Coach Evaluation: A coach assesses the player’s skill, readiness and impact on both teams. Coach submits a recommendation to the board.
 - c. Board Review: The board reviews the request and coach input. Optional meeting with parent, coach and board if needed.
 - d. Final decision: A final decision will be made by the board and communicated to the individual that made the initial request.

MITE 2 TO SQUIRT. Esko Youth Hockey is an hockey organization that provides hockey to players 8u and younger (mini mite, mite 1 and mite 2). Once a skater “graduates out” of our program, they typically register with Cloquet Youth Hockey as a squirt, peewee and bantam. Therefore it is essential to align Esko Youth Hockey’s player move up policy with that of Cloquet Youth Hockey’s to provide consistency amongst the two associations. To align our associations, Esko Youth Hockey will adopt the skater move up policy of Cloquet Youth Hockey as it pertains to any skater that will be moving from Mite 2 to Squirt.