

Wadena Hockey Club, Inc.



Member Handbook

The information contained in this handbook is for players, parents, coaches, and team managers of the Wadena Hockey Club (WHC).

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Mission Statement

Wadena Hockey Club (WHC) is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for youth hockey players to learn and enjoy the sport of hockey.

Arena

The WHC strives to provide a quality facility at a reasonable cost. Repair costs for damages to the facility will result in higher fees. Anyone caught intentionally damaging the facility may face penalties up to and including prosecution, removal from WHC, and be held liable for damages.

Safety of our children is the primary goal. To help keep the facility safe for the children, parents must be aware of their children's activities. For the enjoyment and safety of all patrons, no one may play with sticks and pucks outside of designated areas. Children should not run in the building or up and down the bleachers or stairs.

The WHC and its members hold sole responsibility for the operation and functionality of the arena. WHC employs a small rink staff to do repairs, maintenance, etc. and will attempt to coordinate any repairs, cleaning, or maintenance with our members, unless a skilled professional is deemed necessary to complete the task. **Volunteering not only makes our arena look and function great, but can save the association money, your help is greatly appreciated.**

WHC Membership and Organization

Membership

Membership in WHC is on a per family basis, regardless of the number of players in a family (player fees are subject to WHC fee schedule). A registered WHC member is a person who has registered their child with the WHC for the current season. The current season is approximately a one-year time period beginning from the date of the child's registration until the next season's registration. A registered WHC member in good standing is a person who has paid in full their financial obligations owed to WHC for the current season and be current in their fundraising and volunteer obligations.

Organization

The Board of Directors consists of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Member-at-Large and elected team officers. Refer to By-laws of WHC for responsibilities of officers.

The Executive Board consists of the President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary.

Team Officers consist of an elected member from 8u (Hockey Tots, Mighty Mites, Mites), Squirts, Peewee, Bantam and High School level.

Member-at-Large consists of an eligible member of the WHC.

The Board of Directors consists of the Executive Board members, the Member-at-Large and the elected Team Officers.

Refer to the WHC By-laws for the responsibilities of the Executive Board.

Board Meetings

The Board of Directors will meet for regular board meetings the second Monday of each month. Please verify date, time, and location on the website prior to meeting for any changes. Please provide 1-week notice to the Secretary for agenda items. Special meetings of the board may be called at various times and will be posted on the website. **All members are welcome to come to the board meetings.**

Communication

The official communication platform for WHC is our website www.wadena-hockey.com and its features such as email messaging. Information can include such items as: fund-raising information, schedules, clinics, tryouts, team news, elections, and other related items of interest to WHC players and parents. The WHC will utilize email to disperse organizational information, however it is the parent(s) responsibility to ensure that WHC has a working primary contact email address. Team Managers/Parent Directors may also choose other forms of communication such as Sports Engine to inform parents of changes, upcoming events, tournaments, etc.

Refer to the WHC Electronic Communication Policy for guidelines in establishing safe and productive communication guidelines within our organization. These guidelines are designed to protect all parties from harassment, bullying, stalking, inappropriate contact, or behavior.

Refer to WHC Social Media Policy and Guidelines

Financial Information

Revenues

The goal of WHC is to provide the best program at the most reasonable cost to participants. WHC is a nonprofit organization. All monies come from the members through registration, team fee i.e. tournament fee, and fundraisers. We also receive revenue through sponsorships and donations.

Concession hours

Work hours for concessions and game/tournament responsibilities will be determined after registration. Profits from our concession stand and home tournaments return directly to fund our hockey program. It is mandatory to work concession hours in addition to team assigned duties including but not limited to home tournaments and game hours. **You will be charged an hourly fee for not completing your work hours. The fee is determined by the board annually.**

Every family, except for rostered and board approved coaches, are required to work these volunteer hours, regardless of any other commitments they have made to the association such as team manager, tournament director, board member, etc.

Registration

The WHC evaluates and determines registration fees annually. Fees are due at the time of registration. There is a discount offered for registering at the planned early bird registration times. Any goalie at a Pee Wee or Bantam level that is willing to play 50% of games as goalie will receive ½ off their registration fee.

Multiple players discounts for families in WHC-Pay for the 3 highest level players and 4 or more are free.

Payment plans can be arranged at the time of registration.

Equipment Credit for Goalies

Goalies at youth levels at Pee Wee and above, may request to receive a \$500 reimbursement to help defray the cost of goalie specific equipment every other season. This reimbursement will come with the commitment from the goalie and their family to participate as goalie in a minimum of 50% of the team's games. Families who seek reimbursement please consider donating used equipment back to the hockey club when finished with play.

Equipment Rental

Mighty Mites/Mites: Free use of equipment with signed rental agreement and \$50 deposit check or cash guaranteeing the return of the equipment. All equipment must be turned in at the conclusion of the season and failure to return equipment by the designated turn in dates or make arrangements will forfeit the deposit monies. You will then become liable for replacement cost of the equipment if not returned.

Please take care of your equipment during the season and keep it clean.

Squirts: A \$50.00 rental fee for full set (based on availability) or per piece rental fee with signed rental agreement guaranteeing the return of the equipment.

Equipment Available for rent through WCH

- Helmet
- Breezers
- Skates
- Shin Guards
- Shoulder Pads
- Elbow Pads
- Gloves
- Practice Socks
- Goalie Equipment
- Practice Jersey

Equipment Individual Players Must Provide

- Hockey Stick (Mite/Mighty Mite Goalie stick will be provided)
- Mouth Guard
- Cup Protector/Pelvic Protector
- Garment Bag
- Neck guard

Game Jersey – Provided with signed Jersey Return Agreement. Game jerseys **MUST** always be transported in a garment bag.

Financial Support

In a limited number of cases each year, the WHC attempts to assist with partial financial support. **Those members that believe they may qualify for some level of assistance should contact the President of the Club and submit a Financial Assistance Request Form.** The Executive Members of the board will review this confidential form and, if approved, will grant up to 50% of the cost of hockey fees for the season. This financial assistance must be applied for prior to the start of the season.

Refunds

Refunds for registration may be granted within 14 days of first organized practice for players who choose not to play hockey for WHC. Refunds will not be given for USA Hockey registration fees.

Failure to Pay Fees

The board makes every effort to make payment arrangements for its members; however, failure to work with the board to make payments will result in removal of the player from the team roster. All previous year's fees must be paid in full before a player will be allowed to participate in the current year's program.

Fundraising

WHC solicits and is grateful for sponsor contributions received from local businesses. In addition to sponsor contributions, fundraisers are also run each year. All monies collected from fundraising go directly into the WHC program for equipment, coaches training, ice time, long-term projects, and programs to enhance WHC. Fundraisers help to keep fees down. **ALL FAMILIES MUST MEET FUNDRAISING OBLIGATIONS INCLUDING WORKING ALL CONCESSION HOURS.** Raffle ticket sales **MUST** be turned in by the **FINAL DATE GIVEN**. If not, your child **WILL NOT** be allowed on the ice until they are turned in. Fundraising options and amounts will be determined annually.

CODES OF CONDUCT

As representatives of the Wadena Hockey Club players, coaches, and parents must conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful of others and reflects positively on the Club and community.

General Code of Conduct

1. SPORTSMANSHIP: Foremost of all values is to learn a sense of fair play. Become humble in victory and gracious in defeat. We will foster friendships with teammates and opponents alike.
2. RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUAL: Treat all others as you expect to be treated.
3. PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE: Each member of the organization, whether player, volunteer, or parent should seek to perform each aspect of the game at the highest level of his or her ability.
4. ENJOYMENT: It is important for the hockey experience to be fun, satisfying, and rewarding for the participant.
5. LOYALTY: We aspire to teach loyalty to the ideals and fellow members of the sport of hockey.
6. TEAMWORK: We value the strength of learning to work together. The use of teamwork is reinforced and rewarded by success in the hockey experience.

****Refer to Player Code of Conduct on WHC website**

****Refer to Parent Code of Conduct on WHC website**

Safe Sport

WHC fully supports and has implemented the USA Hockey Safe Sport program. Current Vice President and Registrar are the Safesport Coordinators. For more information on Safe Sport, please visit www.usahockey.com.

All volunteers including the board members, coaches, parent directors, and locker room monitors will take the Safe Sport training annually.

LOCKER ROOM POLICY

Wadena Hockey Club Locker Room Policy

In addition to the development of our hockey players and enjoyment of the sport of hockey, the safety and protection of our participants is central to Wadena Hockey Club goals. Wadena Hockey Club adheres to USA Hockey's SafeSport Program as a means to help protect its participants from physical abuse, sexual abuse and other types of misconduct, including emotional abuse, bullying, threats, harassment and hazing. To help prevent abuse or misconduct from occurring in our locker rooms, Wadena Hockey Club has adopted the following locker room policy. This policy is designed to maintain personal privacy as well as to reduce the risk of misconduct in locker rooms.

At Wadena Hockey Arena there are 8 locker rooms available for our program's use. Some teams in our program may also occasionally or regularly travel to play games at other arenas, and those locker rooms, rest rooms and shower facilities will vary from location to location. Wadena Hockey Club team organizers will attempt to provide information on the locker room facilities in advance of games away from our home arena. At arenas for which you are unfamiliar, parents should plan to have extra time and some flexibility in making arrangements for their child to dress, undress and shower if desired.

Locker Room Monitoring

Wadena Hockey Club has predictable and limited use of locker rooms and changing areas (e.g., generally 30-45 minutes before and following practices and games). This allows for direct and regular monitoring of locker room areas. While constant monitoring inside of locker rooms and changing areas might be the most effective way to prevent problems, we understand that this would likely make some players uncomfortable and may even place our staff at risk for unwarranted suspicion.

We conduct a sweep of the locker rooms and changing areas before players arrive, and if the coaches are not inside the locker rooms, either a coach or voluntary locker room monitors (each of which has had a background check and safe sport certified) will be posted directly inside of the locker rooms and changing areas during periods of use, and leave the doors open only when adequate privacy is still possible, so that only participants (coaches and players), approved team personnel and family members are permitted in the locker room. Team personnel will also secure the locker room appropriately during times when the team is on the ice.

Please note that with Co-ed programs, it is important that the person(s) monitoring the locker room is of the same gender as the players being monitored. Also, if there is only one player remaining in the locker room, it is a requirement to have two locker room monitors.

In the event that a player is asked to leave the ice during practice or a game, the player will only be allowed to enter the locker room if accompanied by his/her parents or guardian. If no parent or guardian is available, the player will be requested to wait outside of the locker room until two locker room monitors are available.

How to Become a Locker Room Monitor. Complete the 3 steps below.

1. USA Hockey Link to Obtain Volunteer Registration Number.
 - a. [USA Hockey Member Registration](#)
 - b. Once you have received your USA Hockey number, you must email a copy of it to our Registrar.
2. USA Hockey Background Check for Locker Room Monitoring.
 - a. A link to submit for screening will be included in your membership registration confirmation email and posted in the drop-down menu under the OFFICIALS tab at USAHockey.com.

- b. There is a fee associated with the background check and it can be reimbursed by the Wadena Hockey Club upon request by the member to the board of executors.

3. SafeSport Training Link

- c. [SafeSport Program Training \(usahockey.com\)](https://www.usahockey.com/safesport)

Parents in Locker Rooms

Naturally, with our youngest age groups it is necessary for parents to assist the players in getting dressed. We encourage parents to teach their players as young as possible how to get dressed so that players will learn as early as possible how to get dressed independently. Parents will be permitted in the locker room before and after practice/games to help players dress and undress. Coaches are permitted to ask that parents leave for a short time before a practice/game and for a short time after a practice/game (time will be determined yearly by coaches' rules) so that the coaches may address the players. As players progress to Peewee and Bantam levels, the coach may at his or her discretion prohibit parents from a locker room.

Mixed Gender Teams

Some of our teams consist of both male and female players. It is important that the privacy rights of all of our players are given consideration and appropriate arrangements made. Where possible, Wadena Hockey Club will have the male and female players dress/undress in separate locker rooms and then convene in a single locker room before the game or team meeting. Once the game or practice is finished, the players may come to one locker room for a team meeting and then the male and female players proceed to their separate locker rooms to undress and shower, if available. If separate locker rooms are not available, then the players will take turns using the locker room to change. We understand that these arrangements may require that players arrive earlier or leave later to dress but believe that this is the most reasonable way to accommodate and respect all of our players.

8U Base Layer

All players 8U and under (Mites, Mighty Mites and Hockey Tots) are required to arrive at the rink wearing their hockey base layers or shorts and t-shirts (in good condition - no holes or tears in clothing) under their street clothes. All members of the teams must have this minimum attire before entering a co-ed locker room so that no player of one gender has the opportunity to see players of the opposite gender in a state of dress/undress.

Cell Phones and Other Mobile Recording Devices

Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras, are not permitted to be used in the locker rooms. If phones or other mobile devices must be used, they must be taken outside of the locker room. [it may be permissible to have team manager collect phones]

Prohibited Conduct and Reporting

Wadena Hockey Club prohibits all types of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, threats, harassment and hazing, all as described in the USA Hockey SafeSport Handbook. Participants, employees or volunteers in Wadena Hockey Club may be subject to disciplinary action for violation of these locker room policies or for engaging in any misconduct or abuse or that violates the USA Hockey SafeSport Policies. Reports of any actual or suspected violations, you may email USA Hockey at SafeSport@usahockey.org or may call 1-800-888-4656.

Visiting Team Locker Room Key Guidelines.

A key will be given to a responsible adult of the opposing team to open the visiting team's locker room after they document their name on the sign out sheet. In the event the concession stand is not open, it will be up to the home team's head coach or team manager to provide the locker room key to the opposing team's responsible adult.

The Wadena Hockey Club is not responsible for monitoring the visiting team's locker room.

Concussion Policy

WHC has adopted the USA Hockey Concussion Management Program and associated educational materials as its concussion management program. We ask all parents and guardians to visit

<https://www.usahockey.com/playersafety>.

Anti-Harassment & Bullying Policy

No player shall engage in violent behavior toward another player because of his/her race, religion, sex, or ethnic origin, or engage in physical or verbal conduct related to another player's race, religion, sex, or ethnic origin when the conduct:

- Creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive team environment.
- Substantially or reasonably interferes with a player's team participation; or
- Adversely affects a player's team opportunities.

Any player found to have engaged in such prohibited conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and/or formal apology to the offended player(s).

Discipline Policy

Players: Player conduct, attendance for missing practices or games, swearing, attitude, and other minor items are handled through teams' rules. **Team rules will be established prior to the season.**

If any player should receive a game misconduct penalty, that player will be suspended from the next game in accordance with District consequences. If any player receives 2 game misconducts in any 1 year, that player will be suspended from the next 3 games, in addition to District consequences. If any player receives 3 game misconducts in any 1 year, that player will be suspended from the next 5 games or until the next WHC board meeting. This will be in addition to District consequences.

Grievance Policy

WHC provides an orderly procedure for the hearing and resolution of all problems, concerns, and formal grievances. The goal is to resolve issues at the most immediate level and in the fairest manner possible to all. The prime criteria in the resolution of any issue are what is best for the respective player, his or her team, and what is in the best overall interest of WHC. Problems or concerns that have to do with the coaching of a team, such as playing time, positions, practices, etc., should be taken to the team Parent Director with a **one day cooling off period** observed.

Proper channels of Grievance within WHC. 1) Parent Director, 2) Coaches, 3) Level Board Representative, 4) Hockey Director, and lastly, the issue should then be presented in writing by the grievance to the Executive Board of Directors.

All grievances must be submitted within 14 days of becoming aware of the problem. A Grievance Committee will be formed of the Officers of the Board of Directors substituting for an Officer if there is a clear conflict of interest as determined by the board. The Grievance Committee shall review the issue and interview the individual parties concerned for a period not to exceed 14 days. Recommendations will be

presented to the full Board of Directors at the next board meeting for review and action, if any. In extreme cases a special board meeting may be called by the Board of Directors. If the involved parties are not satisfied with the Board's ruling, they may appeal the decision in writing to the Director of the Minnesota Hockey District 15.

If the grievances involve accusations outside the normal scope of the Hockey Club or are of a criminal nature, the proper authorities should be contacted before any grievance process begins. The Minnesota Hockey District Grievance Committee handles grievances that are a result of infractions assessed by a referee or official at a game, tournament, or scrimmage.

Any grievances related to High School level of play need to be addressed with appropriate Athletic Directors.

Zero Tolerance Vandalism/Theft Policy

Players found to have been responsible for, or a party to, property damage or vandalism at WHC facilities, or at any team activity under the sponsorship (direct or indirect) of the Association (including out-of-town tournament and games), will be subject to suspension and/or reimbursement for damages and may result in law enforcement involvement.

Zero Tolerance Drug Policy

Continued participation in WHC team activities is contingent upon the strict avoidance of mood-altering chemicals. Any player who is found to have consumed/used, possessed, sold, or furnished alcohol, tobacco, or controlled substances including THC and nicotine products shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including permanent suspension from all club player activities. A player's parent or legal guardian may be required to consent to the release of all relevant findings and reports held by school and or law enforcement agencies as a part of any hearing into alleged violations. Failure to release such information will be considered in the Board's decision of the matter. WHC will follow Minnesota Hockey's guidelines for penalties.

Rules and Regulations

Equipment

All WHC players must wear the following equipment during ice times:

- League approved helmet with face mask, chin, and mask straps
- Colored internal mouth guard
- Shoulder pads and chest protector
- Elbow pads
- Shin guards
- Gloves
- Breezers
- Skates
- Athletic supporters (cup)/pelvic protector (depending on gender)
- Neck guard

All Goalies are required to wear the following equipment during ice times:

- League approved helmet with face mask, chin and mask straps OR goalie helmet
- Attached colored internal mouth guard

- Chest protector
- Catch glove
- Blocker glove
- Goalie stick
- Leg pads
- Athletic supporter (cup)/pelvic protector (depending upon gender)
- Neck guard

All coaches/assistants are required to have the following or they will not be allowed on the ice:

- Completed background check and updated Safe Sport training.
- Wear league approved helmet
- Appropriate league coaches training

Participation Levels

WHC participation levels follow Minnesota Hockey guidelines (except as outlined in the player movement policy [Documents \(wadena-hockey.com\)](http://Documents(wadena-hockey.com))). Players, to be eligible must have been born on or before June 1st of the birth year indicated by Minnesota Hockey.

8U Program (Mighty Mite/Mite/Hockey Tots)

All skaters under the age of eight will participate in WHC Mighty Mite or Mite program. The skills-based instruction curriculum utilized in these programs was designed by USA Hockey and emphasizes fun and learning while downplaying competition. **Final make-up of the Mighty Mites and Mite teams will be determined by coaches and 8U Director.**

The Mighty Mite team will concentrate primarily on learning to skate and controlling the puck and may skate with the Mite team at times during practices. **Any first-year player will be placed on the Hockey Tot team for further coach evaluation.**

The 8U practice will teach players basic hockey skills, as well as team practices where positioning and team play are taught. The 8U program will play against other teams from the surrounding communities in either head-to-head games or jamborees.

All players will receive equal amounts of ice times during games, regardless of ability.

Placement of Players/Tryouts

Placement of players on the “A”, “B”, or “C” teams at the Squirt, Pee Wee, and Bantam levels will be determined by tryouts and an evaluation procedure determined by the Hockey Committee. The Hockey Committee, selected by the Hockey Director includes the Hockey Director, HS Coach (if interested), President, and 2-3 others with hockey experience will be responsible for determining placement of players.

Guidelines for tryouts include:

- Tryouts should be completed at the earliest possible time.

- Within 48 hours after the selection of the teams, the roster will be posted to the WHC website on Sportsengine.
- The Player Development Committee will address extenuating circumstances (i.e.: injuries, sickness) on an individual case-by-case basis.

Player Movement from One Division to Another (Squirt level and higher)

Minnesota Hockey Guided Age Groups are followed by WHC.

The WHC Board of Directors believes that players should play on teams by age group as defined by Minnesota Hockey. Exceptions may be made based on hockey ability, physical size, maturity, social readiness and/or team roster needs.

All requests for player movement from one division to another must be filed with the Player Development Director on a player movement form. Please ask the Hockey Director for the form.

The Player Development Director (Hockey Director) will then meet with both coaches from each affected team to review the criteria for player movement (listed below). Upon an agreement between Player Development and both coaches, the player movement request will be forwarded to the WHC Board for final approval.

Following criteria can be used for consideration of any player movement.

- How many years has the youth been involved in organized hockey?
- How many years has the youth been at the current level?
- What level of individual and team skills does the player possess?
- Number of players on teams.
- Effect on teams leaving and team receiving (#'s in the player's position also).
- "Developed" skill at his/her position.
- Birth date
- Previous Coaches recommendation
- Does the player want to move up?
- Parental Consent
- Outside Sources Recommendations
- Maturity Level
- Off season "hockey related" activities
- Physical Ability

Final Approval

All player movement requests must be brought before the WHC Board of Directors for approval. The WHC Board of Directors requests the support of all WHC members with these decisions. All efforts are made to make decisions that accommodate the best interests of the player, team, and hockey club.

***Any requests may start September 1st and be in by September 15th.**

***Player Movement Form can be found on WHC website.**

Coaches Selection: Rules and Regulations

Criteria

The Hockey Committee will consider applicants on the following criteria:

- General coaching philosophy and willingness to perform within WHC guidelines.
- Willingness to put in long hours during the season.
- Other considerations:
 1. Coach of the team for the previous year
 2. Experience as an assistant coach in WHC
 3. Experience as coach in other youth hockey programs
- **The head coach is responsible for making the team rules.** Team rules must be submitted and approved by the board prior to the first game.
- All coaches, head and assistant, will apply and interview to be considered for coaching positions.
- All coaches, including the assistants, must be approved by the board of Directors prior to first practices.

WHC recognizes that there are very qualified parent coaches and assistant coaches and greatly appreciates all their volunteer efforts. However, WHC does not reimburse a parent head or assistant coach for expenses that they incur.

Ice Time

It is WHC 's goal to secure ice time for all teams such that each team will be allotted enough ice time to provide a quality hockey experience for all players. Scheduling of ice time will be done by the Scheduler and reviewed for accuracy by the Board of Directors.

Guidelines

Because older players are available for later ice hours than younger players, and older players have more stamina than the younger players, the older groups will inherently receive more ice hours.

To maximize the use of available ice and help to reduce ice costs, every team will share part of their practice ice hours with another team if necessary. It will be a goal of the Scheduler to have compatible teams share the ice.

This handbook is designed to help answer many of the questions that arise throughout the season and may be amended as the Board of Directors deem necessary. Please contact the Board of Directors with any input you may have regarding the WHC handbook.

The Board of Directors recognizes that there may be revisions to the Handbook in the future. All changes will be communicated to WHC members via our website at www.wadena-hockey.com

**We hope that you and your family enjoy being a part of
our hockey program!**

What to Expect as a New Hockey Parent

No one in youth hockey has more influence on a child's experience than his or her parents. Hockey will provide you with numerous opportunities to provide your son or daughter with important life lessons and memories that will last forever so be ready to take advantage of them.

Here are a few challenges you are bound to run into along the way and some tips on how to deal with them:

Be Involved & Supportive

It is important for you to be involved without being overbearing. Whether that means volunteering to coach or cheering from the stands, it can be a fine line for parents to walk. Remember the main focus should be on letting the kids have fun while taking on a supportive role. Do not forget to savor the memories you are making along the way.

Tame the Rollercoaster

Over the course of your child's time in sports, one of the best lessons they will learn is how to deal with adversity. Keep in mind these are opportunities to learn when something occurs, and your protective instincts take over and urge you to step in.

Find a Balance

Just like everything in life, it is important to maintain a nice balance between hockey and other activities. Encourage your child to become a well-rounded individual by pursuing other activities and interests outside of hockey.

Volunteer!

Our community-based youth hockey associations in Minnesota depend heavily on parents to volunteer their time in order to keep hockey available locally and at an affordable price. Once you join youth hockey, the association will ask you to volunteer for minor tasks such as penalty box attendant, scorekeeper or to work the concession stand throughout the season.

Fire Up the Fundraiser

Like volunteering, fundraisers play a critical role in keeping registration fees low. Each association has their own fundraisers that they rely on ranging from charitable gambling to silent auction dinners or calendar sales and everything in between. Regardless of the type of event or sale, the more you can fundraise, the less expensive hockey will be for you and the rest of the families in your community.

Educate Yourself

Throughout your child's time in hockey, it is almost a certainty that you will be pressured on how you approach the game of hockey. From off season development opportunities to the type of equipment your player uses, other parents and program representatives are going to offer you free advice on what your player should do to improve. Not all of them will truly have you or your kid's best interests in mind. The key to deciphering them is education. Use the resources provided by Minnesota Hockey and USA Hockey to build a solid knowledge base and add to it by talking with a variety of people in your association and other local hockey associations

The Equipment

Before we get started, it is important to keep in mind that safety and comfort are critical to ensuring players have fun and gain confidence while on the ice. That is why equipment must fit properly to assure maximum performance and protection. Age and experience will also be factors in determining the appropriate level of equipment. Here is a preview of the most common pieces of equipment and their main purpose:

Moisture wicking undergarments – Provides warmth and protection from the gear itself while wicking away perspiration during play.

Supporter/Cup – Essential protective gear. Typically, these include a one piece short with built-in cup and Velcro tabs at thighs to hold up ice hockey socks.

Shin Guards (right) - Should cover the knee and shin completely to protect from collisions, sticks and pucks.

Hockey socks – Part of the team uniform and should match the team colors; held in place with garter or Velcro tabs on jock short; pulled over and covers the shin guards.

Breezers/Hockey pants – Protection for lower spine/tailbone, hips and thighs. The length should come to the top of the shin pads.

Skates – Skates are an essential piece of equipment to play ice hockey. Players and parents should place an emphasis on proper fit as skates that are too large (too much room for growth) will hamper skating abilities and comfort. Periodic quality sharpening's are essential for the skater's success.

Shoulder pads – These are designed to protect the chest, shoulders and top of arms. Players should try these on to determine best comfort and size for mobility and protection.

Elbow pads (left) – Today's elbow pads are designed to protect the elbow from hard falls or collisions as well as protecting the forearms from sticks and pucks. To be effective, these should fit well enough that they do not move when worn.

Hockey jersey – Part of the uniform and may be provided by the team or purchased separately. Jerseys should be tried on with shoulder pads to determine appropriate fit. Generally, sleeves will come just below wrists to top of hand and length will cover to thighs.

Helmet with face mask – The head is the most important part of the body, and the helmet is designed to reduce chance of skull fractures. No helmet prevents concussions, but they can reduce the risk depending on padding and design. Construction and design must be approved by HECC which assures they have been tested and meet certain standards. The face mask minimizes facial injury from sticks or flying pucks.

Mouth guard – Essential for teeth protection.

Gloves - Protects hands, fingers and wrists. It is important to have good finger and hand mobility when worn.

Stick – A straight wood stick is a good starter stick for first time players. As players become more experienced, they can begin to make decisions on curve, lie and the use of composite sticks. Length of the stick should generally extend from the ice/floor to the player's chin with skates on – an inch or two more of length is okay to allow for growth. Equipment experts can provide recommendations for each player and will cut the stick to the proper size.

Neck guard-a piece of protective equipment worn by players to prevent neck injuries during games and practices. . It fits securely around the neck and provides cushioning to absorb impact from pucks, sticks and collisions with other players.



The Game

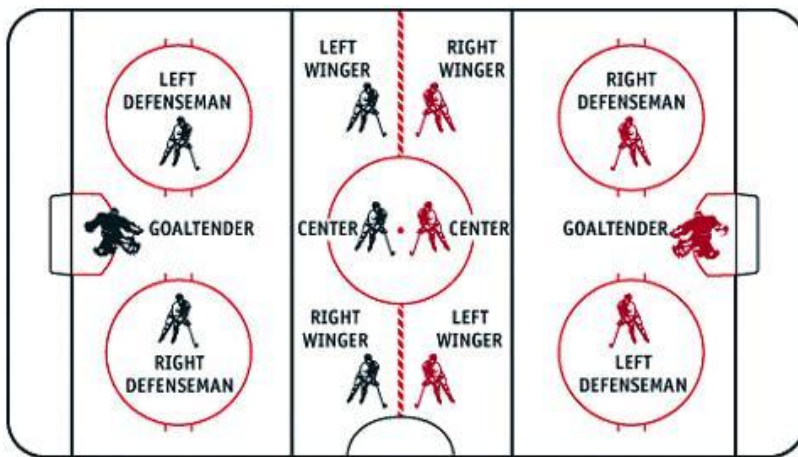
In simple terms, hockey is a high-speed game played on ice with the object being to shoot a small rubber puck into the opposing team's net, scoring a **goal** for your team. Yet, it has a tendency of growing into more of a lifelong passion than a game.

Hockey has been ingrained in the culture of Minnesota for many years. Known also for its numerous lakes and cold winters, it makes sense that the roots of hockey in Minnesota are tied to early games on frozen ponds and lakes long before indoor ice was available.

Since those early years, hockey has grown tremendously. Aptly nicknamed the State of Hockey, Minnesota is home to more youth hockey players than any other state in the country. The annual State High School Hockey Tournament, a legend in its own right, draws more than 100,000 fans in one weekend. Minnesota is also home to the NHL's Minnesota Wild, who sold out each of its first nine plus seasons, five NCAA Division I college hockey teams, as well as several Division III programs and junior teams.

Players and Positions

Full ice hockey games are played with six players from each team on the ice, which is considered **full strength**. *(For players age 6U & 8U, games are played cross-ice, which provides them with a more engaging and age-appropriate game experience.)* Each team has one goaltender, two defensemen and three forwards. The players are allowed to change with their teammates on the bench during play or stoppages of play following a whistle.



The **center** is the player that takes the face offs. Centers are a key position as they often have more defensive responsibilities than the wings but are also expected to produce offensively by scoring goals or setting up their teammates.

The **left wing** and **right wing** flank the center on face offs. While they have defensive assignments in their own zone, these two forwards often have a slightly more offensive mindset than centers. Despite their titles, the wingers are not always confined to one side of the ice.

Defensemen usually are set up behind the forwards. The defensemen's main objective is preventing the opposition from scoring and assisting the forwards in getting the puck out of the defensive zone. They can also contribute on the offensive side but usually don't play as deep in the offensive zone.

The last line of defense is the **goaltender**. The goaltender's only job is preventing the opponent from scoring. The goalie wears different equipment than the forwards and defensemen, specifically designed to provide more protection and assist them in stopping the puck.

Three Zones of Play

The **defensive zone** is the area between the goal which your team is defending and the first blue line. This is the zone that your team tries to prevent the opponent from scoring in.

The **neutral zone** is the area between the two blue lines.

The **offensive zone** is the area between the second blue line and the opposing team's net. This is the zone in which your team is trying to score.

During the second period, teams will switch the sides of the ice that they are defending. Therefore, the zone that was initially their defensive zone becomes their offensive zone and vice versa. The teams return to their initial nets and zones for the third period.

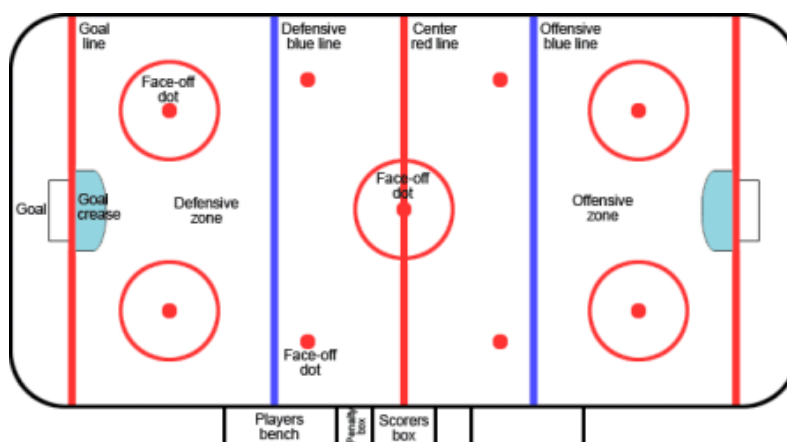
The Rules

Ice Hockey has a complete set of rules that make it a very different game than any other sport. The rules are designed to provide a safe and positive playing environment while promoting skill development and a passion for the game of hockey.

This page is designed to provide an overview on the most common rules and infractions seen in hockey. For a more in depth look, check out USA Hockey's Mobile Rulebook.

Face-Offs: This is the method by which the puck is put into play. During a face-off, one player from each team lines up to face each other at one of the rink's nine face-off spots. The referee or linesman drops the puck between the players, who then battle for possession.

Offsides: This occurs when a player enters the offensive zone before the puck. It results in a stoppage of play and neutral zone faceoff.



Icing: When a defending player sends the puck, untouched, from behind the center red line across the opposing team's goal line in the offensive zone. This results in a stoppage of play and a faceoff in the offending team's defensive zone.

Hand Pass: Players in hockey are not allowed to play the puck with their hand outside of their defensive zone. When a player moves the puck to a teammate with his hand, the official blows the whistle, and there is a faceoff at the position where the puck was passed from. At no time can players close their hands on the puck.

High Stick: When the puck is played out of mid-air by a player whose stick is above shoulder height and a teammate is the next to touch the puck, a high stick infraction is called, resulting in a face off in that team's defensive zone.

Minor Penalties: Players can be assessed penalties for improper conduct on the ice. The most common penalties are minor penalties, in which players must sit in the penalty box for two minutes, or until the other team scores, while their team plays shorthanded. Here are the most common minor penalties:

- *Tripping:* Player uses stick, arm, or leg to take an opponent's feet out from under them.
- *High-Sticking:* Striking an opponent with the stick above shoulder level.
- *Slashing:* The act of swinging a player's stick at an opponent, whether contact is made or not.
- *Holding:* Player holds an opponent by using his hands, arms, or legs.
- *Interference:* Player interferes with or impedes the progress of an opponent who is not in possession of the puck.
- *Elbowing:* Involves the use of an extended elbow to perform an illegal body check.
- *Cross-Checking:* A check made with the stick while both hands are on the stick and arms extending to deliver the hit.
- *Hooking:* Using the stick in a manner that enables a player to restrain an opponent, typically through a pulling motion.
- *Boarding:* Checking an opponent in such a manner that causes the opponent to be thrown violently into the boards.
- *Roughing:* Involves the use of unnecessary roughness during play or between whistles.

Major Penalties: Major penalties are assessed for many of the same infractions that apply to minor penalties except they involve a greater degree of deliberate violence that can result in injury. The player who is serving the five-minute major must stay in the penalty box for the full five-minute penalty time, regardless if a goal is scored on the "shorthanded" team.

Terms & Lingo

ADM: The American Development Model is the primary model for youth hockey in the US. The ADM is designed to successfully develop hockey players by implementing long-term athlete development principles.

Assist: An assist is credited to a player who helps set up a goal. Assists are awarded to the last two offensive players to handle the puck prior to a goal, including those who shoot the puck on net.

Breakaway: A clear scoring opportunity where no defensive player is between the puck carrier and the goaltender.

Crease: Blue semi-circle in front of the goal. Goaltenders receive special privileges and protection while in this area.

Deke: A fake by a player in possession of the puck in order to get around an opponent or to make a goalie move out of position.

Diving: When a player exaggerates being hooked or tripped in an attempt to draw a penalty.

Empty Netter: A goal scored against an opponent that has pulled the goalie for an extra attacker in an attempt to tie the game. This typically happens late in the third period with under two minutes to play in the game.

Forecheck: The way a team's forwards put pressure on the opposing team while in the offensive zone in an effort to keep the puck or take it away from the opposition.

Freezing the Puck: A goalie freezes the puck (when the opposition is threatening to score) by either holding the puck in the glove or trapping it on the ice.

Full Strength: When a team has five skaters on the ice plus their goaltender.

Hat Trick: A player who scores three goals in one game achieves a "hat trick."

Intermission: A break in between each of the three periods.

One-timer: Shooting the puck immediately upon receiving it without stopping it first.

Penalty Kill: When a team is shorthanded (only four players on the ice) due to a penalty and attempts to prevent the opposition from scoring.

Penalty Shot: A free shot, unopposed except for the goalie, most commonly awarded to players that have full possession with no opposing player between them and the goalie but are taken down by the opposition. The team which commits the offense is not penalized beyond the penalty shot, whether it succeeds or not.

Power Play: Happens when a team has a one- or two-man advantage over the opposition due to penalties.

Rink: The ice on which the game of hockey is played. Rinks are typically 200-feet long by 85-feet wide. This is also referred to as an NHL-size rink. Olympic rinks are 200-feet long by 100-feet wide.

Save: When a goalie prevents a shot from going into the net.

Screen: Occurs when one or more players are between the shooter and the goalie, shielding the goalie's view of the play and incoming shot.

Shot on Goal: An attempt by the attacking team to score a goal by shooting the puck toward the net. This results in either a save or a goal.

Shorthanded: Happens to your team when the opposing team has a one- or two-man advantage due to penalties.

Slap Shot: A slap shot occurs when the player swings the stick back and then quickly forward, slapping the puck ahead with a forehand shot.

Snap Shot: An abbreviated slap shot that occurs without the stick leaving the ice. The purpose of the snapshot is to combine the main advantages of the wrist shot (shot accuracy and quick delivery) and the slap shot (puck speed).

Stick-handling: A term for carrying the puck along the ice with the stick.

Turnover: Losing control of the puck to the opposing team.

Wrist Shot: Players roll their wrists quickly and powerfully to generate a shot. Typically, the most common and accurate type of shot.

Nutrition for Young Athletes

Dedication, commitment, preparation: these are all words young athletes hear when it comes to participating in their respective sports. And your child should show the very same commitment when it comes time for them to eat.

An active child is a hungry one. So, don't undermine their efforts by turning into the drive-thru after their game for two bacon double cheeseburgers, chili-cheese fries, and an extra-large soda.

1. Keep healthy foods in plain sight

When hungry athletes barrel through the front door after practice, the first place they head is to the kitchen. Upon opening the pantry or fridge, healthy foods should be staring them in the face. Make healthy foods available to your children. Keep foods such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, nut butters, and trail mix on hand. Walk your hungry athlete through the kitchen each week to show them where they can find those healthy foods.

2. Aim for balance, not perfection

Whether we like it or not, we might find ourselves needing to pick up food on the run. Most fast-food restaurants offer some healthy selections. Aim for balance, not perfection. If the child really wants French fries, balance out the meal with a grilled chicken sandwich and low-fat milk instead of a bacon cheeseburger and soda.

3. Be the role model

While it might appear that friends or the media have the greatest influence on a child's food choices, children watch what their parents eat more than anyone else. If you want to improve your child's diet, start by improving yours.

4. Don't be the food police

Strict food rules or harsh labels such as "junk" or "bad" foods might heighten curiosity and desire to try a so-called "off limits" item. Have a healthy perspective about allowing all foods to fit. Also, avoid using food as a reward or punishment. Children can develop an unhealthy relationship with "treats" or "junk" food when it is only offered after achievement or removal as a consequence.

5. Keep their bellies half full

Keep healthy snacks on hand (e.g., trail mix, fruit, and sandwiches) so the child does not go hours without eating. Having healthy foods to offer them on the way to practice or halfway through a game can keep their energy levels high and support performance. As an additional benefit, if another parent brings chips and cookies to practice, at least your child's half-full belly will keep them from overdoing it.

More and more are demanded of young athletes these days, especially if they are involved in multiple sports and activities. Adhering to these tips will allow your child to reach their full potential in more ways than one.