



Player Handbook
2026-2027

Welcome to the Mighty Penguins Sled Hockey Organization

History:

In May 1998, volunteers from Shriners Hospital in Erie formed The Mighty Penguins sled hockey team. Initially, the goal was to provide children and young adults with physical disabilities the opportunity to participate in a competitive sport.

We continue to build on this foundation by offering sled hockey to children, teens, and adults with a broad range of physical disabilities. Our mission is to make sled hockey accessible and available to all who wish to experience the fun of playing a team sport.

Sled hockey provides players an invaluable set of life lessons, a tremendous physical workout, and the chance to be a part of a competitive team with limitless upward mobility. Many of our players have been with us since they were young children and now have the honor of playing for national level teams.

The goal of this handbook is to clearly outline the expectations the organization has of its members by establishing policies and rules that must be followed in order for the teams to work together within the organization. Additionally, players who wish to progress through the different levels may use this handbook as a reference for expectations and goals. The Mighty Penguins have four teams—Novice, Junior, Intermediate & Senior. Finally, each and every player can identify exactly what to expect from their teammates, volunteers, and coaches.

Why Four Divisions?

The Mighty Penguins Organization aims to provide an inclusive, fun, and safe environment for those with physical disability who wish to play sled hockey. In order to ensure the safest and most productive experience for all, players are grouped into one of five teams: Junior Gold — Novice, Adult Gold — Novice, Junior Black, Adult Black, and Senior (elite-level team)

The divisions reflect players' skills, time playing, and desire to participate in activities (i.e. weekly practices, tournaments, scrimmages). Each team has different requirements, expectations, and goals. Progression through the team levels is a group effort. Both the player and the coaches must work together to ensure a smooth transition at the right time in the player's sled hockey career.

At all levels of play, players are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is controlled and in keeping with the rules outlined in the Code of Conduct section. Good sportsmanship and self-control are critical to the game of hockey and this organization. Players are expected to follow the rules at all times and must always obey the instructions and directions from coaches.

Novice Division — currently Youth Gold and Adult Gold Teams

1. The Novice Teams are open to anyone and everyone living with a physical disability. The teams are broken apart by age according to USA Hockey rules. Junior Gold: ages 5 — 17 and Adult Gold: ages 18 and up. The goal of the Novice Teams as a whole is to make sled hockey accessible to all who wish to play. The Novice coaches and volunteers strive to provide the benefits of participating in a team sport to players of all ages and abilities.

2. Players on the Novice Teams may choose to focus on different aspects of the sport. For some, the Novice Team may be the first step in a player's progression to the Junior or Intermediate Team. For others, the Novice Team may be the team on which they wish to stay indefinitely. As a result, Novice players have no skill requirements but may choose to set and achieve their own personal goals. Overall, the Novice Team aims to:

- ◆ Provide a physical workout and develop upper-body strength
- ◆ Provide the benefits of participating in a team sport
- ◆ Set seasonal team goals
- ◆ Encourage perseverance and commitment
- ◆ Teach players about good sportsmanship
- ◆ Foster growth as a hockey player, such that players may move on to the Junior or Intermediate Team when appropriate

At the Novice level, players may make use of a push-bar if they need either short-term or long-term assistance with moving themselves. Each week, extraordinarily generous and kind volunteers donate their time to help players at the Novice level. The goal of all players, coaches, and volunteers on the ice during Novice practices is to provide support and assistance to every player in whatever manner is most helpful and encouraging to him or her.

3. Traveling and participation in tournaments are completely optional, though encouraged. Many scrimmages and games throughout the year are geared towards new and less experienced players.

Junior Division — currently Junior Black Team

1. The Junior Division is designed to be the stepping-stone for players who wish to attempt to advance in the sport and eventually play competitively with either the Adult Black or Senior Team. The Junior Team is open to players up to 17 years of age in accordance with USA Hockey rules. Optimal players are those who have surpassed the level of play at the Novice level but do not have the full skill set or are old enough to play safely with the Adult Black or Senior Teams.

2. Players in the Junior Division should focus on learning the strategy and theories behind the actual game of hockey, while honing their skating, shooting, and puck handling skills. Junior players must grasp the concept of team work, basic plays, and the rules of sled hockey.

These skills, along with others, will be best learned during weekly practices, scrimmages, and tournaments. One of the best ways to develop hockey skills is by physically playing the game. Coaches, teammates, and opponents all provide critical examples and learning experiences to players who wish to advance their abilities and continue to develop and progress as sled hockey players.

3. While membership to the Junior Division is based on a roughly defined skill set, the decision to move a player from Novice Youth to the Junior Black Team is ultimately up to the discretion of the coaches of both teams.

The following is an example of the skill set necessary to be considered for the Junior Black Team:

- ◆ Gets up consistently after falling without help
- ◆ Shoots with both hands
- ◆ Maintains control of the puck in most circumstances
- ◆ Turns and maneuvers the sled skillfully
- ◆ Understands the concepts of offense and defense, off-sides, and the various player positions
- ◆ Controls the sled and body while skating quickly (i.e. not constantly tipping over or wobbling)
- ◆ Generally keeps up (speed-wise) with the other Junior level players
- ◆ Gets on and off the ice self-sufficiently
- ◆ Demonstrates good sportsmanship and self-control
- ◆ Follows the rules and listens to the coaches

While on the Junior Black Team, players should strive to achieve the following goals:

- ◆ Lift the puck
- ◆ Get up quickly after falling
- ◆ Constant control of the sled
- ◆ Understand plays and strategy
- ◆ Increase in speed and stamina
- ◆ Commitment to the sport
- ◆ Follow all rules, both during practice and during games
- ◆ Become self-sufficient in locker room dressing for practice/game and getting on/off ice
- ◆ Maintain control of the sled, body, and puck during intensely physical game scenarios
- ◆ Work as a cohesive team

4. While traveling is not required, participation in tournaments and scrimmages is expected in this Division. Throughout the year, Junior Black players have the opportunity to attend a variety of different games, typically within driving distance. These are the best way for players to advance their skills and to experience the fun of playing on a team. Tournament selection is based on advanced commitment from players/families. Once tournaments are booked, player commitment is expected in order to compete at the highest level possible.

Game experience in a range of settings and levels will be a contributing factor in the decision to permit players onto the Intermediate Adult Black and Senior teams.

Intermediate Division — currently Adult Black Team

The Adult Black team functions similarly to the level as the Junior Black team players but is primarily comprised of adults age 18 and over. The Adult Black team can be more physically demanding than the Junior team. Players under 18 can be waived by USA Hockey to participate if their skill level surpasses the Junior Black level but not quite up to the Senior level.

Senior Team

The Senior Team is comprised of players who demonstrate an extremely high level of understanding and ability in the sport of sled hockey. Players must be able to withstand the demanding level of physicality during games and scrimmages. Membership to the Senior Team is very selective and tremendously demanding. There is a strong time and travel commitment to being part of this team.

Player Progression

Some players may progress from the Novice Division to the Junior or Intermediate Teams and finally to the Senior Team. Players will slowly make the transition from one level to the next when the coaches of both teams feel that the player has mastered the skills required by the lower level and is ready to face the challenge of a higher level of play, larger opponents, and more demanding practices. In addition to skill level of play being considered for transitions to the next appropriate division, independence in the locker room getting dressed and ready for practice and games as well as getting on and off the ice without assistance is also a very important part in player progression.

When making this decision to advance players to the next division/team, coaches must consider the safety of not only the player in question, but also all of the other players on the ice. For this reason, players who have most of the skills but exhibit difficulty following directions or understanding plays may not be ready to progress right away. Players and parents must be patient as progression does not occur overnight.

Again, any movement between levels is up to the coaches. However, players who feel that they are ready to move on should address their desires with the coaches. In that way, coaches can pay extra attention to players' skills and abilities during practices in order to make the safest and most beneficial decision.

Player Expectations

In addition to the Code of Conduct listed in the Player Handbook, players must be mindful of the following:

- ◆ T-Boning of any sort will not be tolerated. While the coaches and volunteers recognize that accidents happen, an excessive amount of “accidental” t-boning in one practice will be treated as intentional.
- ◆ No using sticks as weapons in any way, even if not maliciously. The picks can cause serious injuries. Furthermore, sticks are expensive and break easily when not used properly.
- ◆ Do not abuse equipment borrowed from the equipment room. All items should be put back where they were found and in the same condition.
- ◆ Absolutely no fighting on the ice or in locker rooms. No excuses, no tolerance.
- ◆ Arrive for games one hour ahead of time unless otherwise instructed.
- ◆ Attendance at team meetings (prior to tournaments) is mandatory unless the absence has been approved by the coach.
- ◆ No players at the Junior or Novice level are allowed on the ice before a coach or designated volunteer is present.

Players are responsible for more than just themselves at practice. Participation in the Mighty Penguins Organization comes with responsibilities both to the organization and to players’ teams. The following are the expectations of every player in the organization:

- ◆ At the start of each season, coaches will communicate a practice attendance policy to players (and families) on their teams. Ice time at tournaments and scrimmages, along with progression within the teams, will be heavily determined by players’ adherence to their coaches’ policy.
- ◆ Players will be responsible for their own jerseys. At the start of each season, players will receive their assigned jersey. Players are then responsible for having their jersey at every organized function.
- ◆ Players who lose or alter their jerseys in any way will be responsible for reimbursing the club. All jerseys are to be returned exactly as they were at the start of the season.
- ◆ Club sleds and sticks are never to be removed from the rink, unless specific permission has been granted. Players are responsible for any broken equipment. All equipment in the Equipment Room is the property of the organization and must be treated accordingly.

Parental Expectations

Due to the wide range of ages, sizes, and disabilities of Mighty Penguins players, parents are expected to support those who are not yet ready to be independent. The Mighty Penguins Organization is comprised of much more than just players and coaches. It is important that parents, families, and friends take an active role in each player's sled hockey experience. For many of the players, parents are largely responsible for all aspects of their involvement with the sport. Examples of parental involvement include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Helping players on to and off of the ice until players can do so on their own
- ◆ Ensuring players are wearing the proper equipment
- ◆ Ensuring players are strapped into sleds correctly until players can do so on their own
- ◆ Explaining procedures and rules when necessary
- ◆ Checking and replying to team emails as necessary
- ◆ Making sure players are on time
- ◆ Helping players learn about good sportsmanship, teamwork, and self-control

Despite the desire for a high level of communication and teamwork between everyone involved, parents are forbidden from the ice, doorways, and benches unless granted permission by the coaches. If a parent has a concern or question, he or she may talk to coaches only before or after practices or via email, unless the issue is an immediate problem (i.e. a piece of broken equipment or sick player).

Any parents who have more serious grievances will be expected to talk to the coaches and managers of their player's team first. In most cases, any concerns or issues can be resolved between the parent and the coach, without involving other members of the organization.

According to *Official Rules of Ice Hockey*, USA Hockey outlines the following "Parents' Code of Conduct:"

- ◆ Do not force your children to participate in sports, but support their desires to play their chosen sports. Children are involved in organized sports for their enjoyment. Make it fun.
- ◆ Encourage your child to play by the rules. Remember, children learn best by example, so applaud the good plays of both teams.
- ◆ Do not embarrass your child by yelling at players, coaches or officials. By showing a positive attitude toward the game and all of its participants, your child will benefit.
- ◆ Emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit your young athlete. De-emphasize games and competition in the lower age groups.
- ◆ Know and study the rules of the game and support the officials on and off the ice. This approach will help in the development and support of the game. Any criticism of the officials only hurts the game.
- ◆ Applaud a good effort in both victory and defeat, and enforce the positive points of the game. Never yell or physically abuse your child after a game or practice – it is destructive. Work toward removing the physical and verbal abuse in youth sports.
- ◆ Recognize the importance of volunteer coaches. They are important to the development of your child and the sport.
- ◆ Communicate with them and support them.
- ◆ If you enjoy the game, learn all you can about hockey – and volunteer!



PITTSBURGH MIGHTY PENGUINS SLED HOCKEY

2026-2027 PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT

<p>Failure to comply with these standards may result in disciplinary actions including, but not limited, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *A verbal warning regarding the infraction *A written warning regarding the infraction *Suspension or ejection from a game, practice, or team function *Suspension from multiple games, practices, or team functions *Season suspension/expulsion <p>The discipline action shall be at the discretion of the Pittsburgh Mighty Penguins Board of Directors or its Designee, and the Board reserves the right to bypass any or all of the aforementioned discipline steps.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Pittsburgh Mighty Penguins Sled Hockey (PMP) strives to instill:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* Good Sportsmanship * Hard Work * Integrity * Respect for Others * Professionalism * Respect for the Game *</p> <p>ACCOUNTABILITY</p> <p>As a player representing Pittsburgh Mighty Penguins Sled Hockey, you are an integral part of ensuring the success of the PMP. As such, I agree to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I will respect the game and follow all rules and regulations of USA Hockey https://www.usahockey.com/rulesandresources and PMP https://teamsite.penguinssledhockey.org/page/show/2856515-player-handbook. 2. I will display control, respect, and professionalism to all involved with the sport. I will not engage in unsportsmanlike conduct internally within the PMP teams/leadership and with any opponents, coaches, officials, administrators, parents, players, spectators, the media, or other attendees. This includes verbal or physical threats, fights, profane language or abuse aimed at any of the above listed attendees. 3. I will refrain from the use of all illegal drugs and the use of alcohol while attending a PMP game, practice and/or function. I understand that if I am under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs that I may be asked to leave a PMP game and/or function. 4. I will wait the prescribed 24-hours before approaching a coach with a game situation concern or any other issue or concern related to ice time or game strategy. 5. If I am a player coach, or manager, I agree to comply with ACT 153 of 2014, which requires State Police Criminal Record Check, PA Child Abuse History Clearance, and FBI Fingerprint Based Record Check. 6. If I loan or give a player or player's family money or goods, I'm fully responsible for any repayment. The PMP will not hold responsibility. <p>SOCIAL MEDIA</p> <p>As a PMP player, I agree that I will not represent my views or opinions as those of PMP sled hockey in any forum, including social media. Social media includes, but is not limited, to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, SnapChat, LinkedIn, chat rooms, message boards, iMessaging, group texts, etc. As such, I agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To protect confidential and proprietary PMP information. 2. To be respectful in postings; this includes exercising good judgment before posting materials or statements about PMP or its opponents which: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are or could be considered defamatory, vulgar, obscene, racially-culturally-ethnically offensive, harmful, harassing, inflammatory, intimidating, threatening, hateful, objectionable, discriminatory, or abusive; b. May violate any laws, rules, or regulations; or c. Could incite violence or hostility. This is especially important on public message boards or chat rooms where even a positive comment about PMP players, coaches, or the organization could be seen as inflammatory. 3. To not use any PMP logos, trademarks, or images in a negative manner on personal social media sites. 4. To not represent my personal views as those of PMP or its related organizations. 5. To not engage in cyber-bullying or other forms of harassment. <p>PMP LOGO AND TRADEMARK</p> <p>I agree to not use any PMP logos or trademarks for the creation of any apparel/items without the verbal or written consent of the Operations Manager — re: Pittsburgh Penguins trademark provided to us on 3/5/26</p> <p>USE OF IMAGE AND LIKENESS</p> <p>Adult Players</p> <p>I authorize PMP to record, edit, publish, and use my image, likeness, or voice in photographs, recordings, or other media (including social media) now known or hereafter devised to promote PMP ("Content"). I understand that PMP will own all Content, and I will not have the right to review or approve of the Content or receive any fee, royalty, or other compensation. I release and will hold PMP (including its employees, directors, officers, agents, sponsors or other representatives) from any claim, loss, or damage arising out of the use of the Content.</p>
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PITTSBURGH MIGHTY PENGUINS SLED HOCKEY 2026-2027 PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT

Minor Players

I authorize PMP to record, edit, publish, and use the image, likeness, or voice of me or my child/ward in photographs, recordings, or other media (including social media) now known or hereafter devised to promote PMP ("Content"). I understand that PMP will own all Content, and neither I nor my child/ward will have the right to review or approve of the Content or receive any fee, royalty, or other compensation. I release and will hold PMP (including its employees, directors, officers, agents, sponsors or other representatives) from any claim, loss, or damage arising out of the use of the Content.

By signing below, I represent that I have reviewed the foregoing Code of Conduct. I understand that my failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action.

PLAYER SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

PLAYER PRINTED NAME _____

***** For players under 18 years of age OR are their adult child's legal representative . *****

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN PRINTED NAME _____



PITTSBURGH MIGHTY PENGUINS SLED HOCKEY

2026-2027 PARENT/GUARDIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

<p>Failure to comply with these standards may result in disciplinary actions including, but not limited, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *A verbal warning regarding the infraction *A written warning regarding the infraction *Suspension or ejection from a game, practice, or team function *Suspension from multiple games, practices, or team functions *Season suspension/expulsion <p>The discipline action shall be at the discretion of the Pittsburgh Mighty Penguins Board of Directors or its Designee, and the Board reserves the right to bypass any or all of the aforementioned discipline steps.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Pittsburgh Mighty Penguins Sled Hockey (PMP) strives to instill:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* Good Sportsmanship * Hard Work * Integrity * Respect for Others * Professionalism * Respect for the Game *</p> <p>ACCOUNTABILITY</p> <p>As a parent/guardian of a player representing Pittsburgh Mighty Penguins Sled Hockey, you are an integral part of ensuring the success of the PMP. As such, I agree to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I will respect the game and follow all rules and regulations of USA Hockey and PMP. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> USA Hockey — https://www.usahockey.com/rulesandresources Pittsburgh Mighty Penguins — found in this season’s Player Handbook and Code of Conduct Policy 2. I will display control, respect, and professionalism to all involved with the sport. I will not engage in unsportsmanlike conduct internally within the PMP teams/leadership and with any opponents, coaches, officials, administrators, parents, players, spectators, the media, or other attendees. This includes verbal or physical threats, fights, profane language or abuse aimed at any of the above listed attendees. 3. I will refrain from the use of all illegal drugs and the use of alcohol while attending a PMP game, practice and/or function. I understand that if I am under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs that I may be asked to leave a PMP game and/or function. <li style="background-color: yellow;">4. I will wait the prescribed 24-hours before approaching a coach with a game situation concern or any other issue or concern related to ice time or game strategy. 5. If I am a team manager, I agree to comply with ACT 153 of 2014, which requires State Police Criminal Record Check, PA Child Abuse History Clearance, and FBI Fingerprint Based Record Check. 6. I will adhere to the locker room guidelines of the PMP — at no time am I permitted in any locker room alone with a player other than my own; if any additional players are present there must be at least 2 parents present and they must have all necessary clearances and approved by the PMP Staff. <p>SOCIAL MEDIA</p> <p>As a PMP parent/guardian, I agree that I will not represent my views or opinions as those of PMP sled hockey in any forum, including social media. Social media includes, but is not limited, to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, SnapChat, LinkedIn, chat rooms, message boards, iMessaging, group texts, etc.</p> <p>As such, I agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To protect confidential and proprietary PMP information. 2. To be respectful in postings; this includes exercising good judgment before posting materials or statements about PMP or its opponents which: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are or could be considered defamatory, vulgar, obscene, racially-culturally-ethnically offensive, harmful, harassing, inflammatory, intimidating, threatening, hateful, objectionable, discriminatory, or abusive; b. May violate any laws, rules, or regulations; or c. Could incite violence or hostility. This is especially important on public message boards or chat rooms where even a positive comment about PMP players, coaches, or the organization could be seen as inflammatory. 3. To not use any PMP logos, trademarks, or images in a negative manner on personal social media sites. 4. To not represent my personal views as those of PMP or its related organizations. 5. To not engage in cyber-bullying or other forms of harassment. <p>PMP LOGO AND TRADEMARK</p> <p>I agree to not use any PMP logos or trademarks for the creation of any apparel/items without the verbal or written consent of the Operations Manager — re: Pittsburgh Penguins trademark provided to us on 3/5/26</p> <p>USE OF IMAGE AND LIKENESS</p> <p>I understand that my image or likeness and/or the image or likeness of my child may appear in photographs, pictures, or other depictions related to Pittsburgh Mighty Penguins Sled Hockey, and that these materials may be used to promote the organization. I agree to permit PMP, or its agent, to use my image or likeness and the image or likeness of my child in connection with PMP marketing and promotional efforts. I agree no to challenge such use or seek any form of compensation therefore.</p> <p><i>I have read all of the above and agree to follow the rules as outlined or face the consequences as detailed in the side column. By signing the Code of Conduct you also acknowledge reviewing the Player Handbook.</i></p> <p>SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____</p> <p>PRINTED NAME _____</p>
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Mighty Penguins Sled Hockey Website
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