



14U GIRLS

PLAYER & FAMILY HANDBOOK

2026–27 SEASON

OUR PROMISE

We are here to develop hockey players, athletes, teammates and people.

We will work hard. We will compete. We will make mistakes. We will experience adversity. We will win some games and lose some games. But our measure of success will be much bigger than the scoreboard.

We will judge ourselves by how much we improve, how we respond when things do not go our way, how we treat one another, how we handle success and failure, and whether we leave the rink better than we found it.

We want our players to love hockey—not simply play hockey.

DEVELOP • COMPETE • GROW • CONNECT • HAVE FUN • LOVE THE GAME

Head Coach: Michael Saad
Assistant Coach: Meredith Saad
Goalie Coach: Charlie Hibbard
Team Manager: Chris O'Connor

Document Status & Governing Policies

This handbook establishes the team-level expectations, standards and procedures for the NC Golden Bears 14U Girls team for the 2026–27 season. It is intended to complement—not replace—USA Hockey

rules and SafeSport policies, the policies of the governing association/affiliate, rink and facility rules, and applicable law.

Contents

- [1. Welcome to the Golden Bears](#)
- [2. Our Team Philosophy](#)
- [3. The Golden Bear Standard](#)
- [4. Season Objectives & What Success Looks Like](#)
- [5. Player Code of Conduct](#)
- [6. Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct](#)
- [7. Coach Commitment](#)
- [8. The 60/15 Standard, Attendance & Punctuality](#)
- [9. Locker Room Policy](#)
- [10. Locker Room Mom Policy & Procedure](#)
- [11. Cell Phone & Electronic Device Policy](#)
- [12. Locker Room Music Policy](#)
- [13. Practice Expectations](#)
- [14. Game-Day Expectations](#)
- [15. Communication Charter](#)
- [16. Team Manager Role & Responsibilities](#)
- [17. Social Media & Digital Citizenship](#)
- [18. Travel & Tournament Expectations](#)
- [19. The 24-Hour Rule & Conflict Resolution](#)
- [20. Accountability & Discipline](#)
- [21. Player Profile: Meet the Player](#)
- [22. Player Season Goals & Reflection](#)
- [23. Midseason Check-In](#)
- [24. End-of-Season Reflection](#)
- [25. Family Partnership](#)
- [26. Golden Bear Family Agreement](#)
- [27. Meet Your Coach](#)
- [28. Locker Room Mom Quick Guide](#)
- [29. Team Manager Quick Guide](#)
- [30. One-Page Golden Bear Standard](#)

1. Welcome to the Golden Bears

At 14U, players are entering an important stage of development. USA Hockey identifies 14U as part of the Train to Train stage, emphasizing continued development of sport-specific skills, speed, strength, stamina, flexibility and good training habits, alongside greater competition.

Our goal is not simply to produce better hockey players. We want to help young women become more confident, resilient, accountable and supportive teammates, while discovering what hockey can teach them about themselves.

This season will ask players to work. It will also ask coaches and families to create an environment where that work can happen. Everyone has a role.

2. Our Team Philosophy

WE DEVELOP PEOPLE THROUGH HOCKEY

We will teach skills, systems, strategy, positions, hockey IQ and competitive habits. We will also teach preparation, accountability, resilience, communication, humility, confidence and respect.

Our culture is built on five pillars:

DEVELOP — Get better at the game. Build skills, hockey IQ, systems knowledge, positional understanding, athletic ability and good training habits.

COMPETE — Compete hard, push through adversity and give your best effort regardless of the score.

GROW — Become more confident, resilient, coachable and accountable.

CONNECT — Build friendships, support teammates, welcome others and make memories.

LOVE THE GAME — Have fun, respect the game and leave the season wanting to keep playing.

3. The Golden Bear Standard

BE EARLY. We are prepared before it is time to begin.

BE COACHABLE. We listen. We learn. We improve.

BE ACCOUNTABLE. We own our mistakes and our responsibilities.

BE TOUGH. We do not quit when things get hard.

BE A TEAMMATE. We make everyone around us better.

BE RESPECTFUL. To ourselves, teammates, coaches, parents, officials and opponents.

BE COMPETITIVE. We give our best effort every time.

BE HUMBLE. Success doesn't change who we are.

BE RESILIENT. Bad shifts, bad games and bad bounces happen. We reset and go again.

BE YOU. You do not have to be somebody else to be a great hockey player.

HAVE FUN. Enjoy the experience.

LOVE THE GAME. Respect the opportunity to play.

OWN YOUR RESPONSE

You do not control the referee's call, the ice, the opponent, the scoreboard, the coach's decision, a bad

bounce or a teammate's mistake. You do control your effort, preparation, attitude, body language, response to mistakes and how you treat people.

4. Season Objectives & What Success Looks Like

Our objectives are intentionally focused on development and character rather than trophies.

DEVELOP

- Develop individual hockey skills: skating, puck control, passing, shooting, defending and compete skills.
- Develop hockey IQ, situational awareness and decision-making.
- Learn positions, positional responsibilities, team systems and strategies.
- Understand how individual decisions affect the entire team.
- Build appropriate athletic qualities and good training habits.
- Prepare yourself for the next season and the next level of hockey.

COMPETE

- Compete hard every time we step on the ice.
- Push yourself beyond what you think you are capable of.
- Learn to compete when tired, frustrated or facing adversity.
- Never quit because the score is not going our way.
- Learn to win with humility and lose with dignity.

GROW

- Become more confident and resilient.
- Learn to accept coaching and constructive feedback.
- Take responsibility for mistakes.
- Learn to respond rather than react.
- Develop discipline, accountability and self-awareness.

CONNECT

- Build friendships with teammates.
- Support teammates through good and difficult moments.
- Welcome new players and make others feel included.
- Build positive relationships with players from other teams.

LOVE THE GAME

- Have fun.
- Appreciate the opportunity to play.
- Respect the game and the people who make it possible.
- Develop a deeper love and appreciation for hockey.

WHAT IS NOT ON THE OBJECTIVES LIST?

WINS. LOSSES. TROPHIES. STATISTICS.

Those things may happen as a result of our work. They are not the reason we are here.

How Will We Know We Had a Great Season?

- Are we better hockey players?
- Do we understand the game better?
- Are we better teammates?
- Are we more confident?
- Are we more resilient?
- Did we learn to deal with adversity?
- Did we learn how to accept coaching?

- Did we learn how to handle success and disappointment?
- Did we make new friends?
- Did we have fun?

- Did we develop a greater love for hockey?
- Are we better prepared for next season?
- Did we make the people around us better?

5. Player Code of Conduct

As a Golden Bear, I understand that wearing the jersey comes with responsibilities.

Respect Yourself

- I will take care of my body, equipment and responsibilities.
- I will make choices that allow me to be the best athlete and teammate I can be.

Respect Your Teammates

- I will treat every teammate with respect.
- I will encourage rather than discourage.
- I will not bully, embarrass, exclude, intimidate or humiliate another player.
- I will celebrate teammates' successes and support them through difficult moments.

Respect Your Coaches

- I will listen when coaches are speaking.
- I will accept coaching and ask questions when I do not understand.
- I understand that coaching is intended to help me improve.

Respect Officials

- I will not argue with, insult, mock or disrespect referees.

- I understand officials will make mistakes, just as players and coaches do.

Respect Opponents

- I will compete hard without losing respect for the other team.
- I will demonstrate good sportsmanship.
- I will not make another player feel small because we won.

Respect Your Parents & Family

- I will recognize the time, money and effort my family gives me to play.
- I will communicate respectfully, even when I am frustrated.

Respect the Game

- I will play hard and fairly.
- I will be accountable.
- I will never intentionally try to injure another player.
- I will represent the Golden Bears with pride.

6. Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct

Parents and guardians are essential partners in youth hockey. Your role is to support the player and help create an environment in which coaches can coach and players can develop.

The Parent's Job

1. Love your daughter.
2. Support her.
3. Help her prepare.
4. Get her to the rink on time.
5. Encourage her.
6. Let her experience the game.
7. Help her learn from adversity.
8. Let the coaches coach.
9. Leave it the rink

Parents Will

- Model respect toward players, coaches, officials and opponents.
- Encourage effort, teamwork and development rather than focusing solely on outcomes.
- Communicate concerns privately and constructively.
- Allow players to advocate for themselves whenever appropriate.

- Respect team privacy and do not share another player's personal information or performance publicly.

Parents Will Not

- Coach from the stands.
- Yell instructions to players.
- Criticize teammates.
- Discuss another player's ice time, role or performance.
- Compare players.
- Criticize referees, opposing players or opposing coaches.
- Approach a coach immediately after an emotional game to debate decisions.
- Use social media to air grievances about the team.
- Create or participate in team drama.
- Tie skates or help players get dressed.

QUESTIONS ARE WELCOME. CONCERNS ARE WELCOME. DISAGREEMENT IS ALLOWED. DISRESPECT IS NOT.

Families are encouraged to communicate. We simply expect communication to occur through the process described in this handbook.

7. Coach Commitment

The coaching staff commits to:

- Provide a safe, respectful and challenging environment.
- Teach hockey skills, systems, strategy, hockey IQ and competitive habits appropriate for 14U development.
- Treat players with dignity and respect.
- Give players clear expectations and actionable coaching.
- Teach players how to respond to mistakes and adversity.
- Model sportsmanship and respect for officials and opponents.
- Communicate appropriately with players and families.
- Follow USA Hockey, SafeSport, affiliate, association and facility requirements.
- Continue to learn and improve as coaches.

8. The 60/10 Standard, Attendance & Punctuality

THE 60/10 STANDARD

Arrive at the rink 60 minutes before the scheduled start of every practice and game. Be completely dressed, equipped and ready to take the ice 10 minutes before the scheduled start.

At T-60

- Enter the facility, get to the locker room.
- We do not dress in the lobby.
- On gamedays, warm-up off-ice from T-55 to T-40.
- Get dressed and organize equipment.
- Handle tape/equipment needs.
- Prepare mentally.
- Be available for team communication.

At T-10

- Fully dressed 10 minutes before game time.
- Equipment secured and ready.
- Sticks/water ready.
- No last-minute shopping, wandering or scrambling.
- Ready to listen to coaches and take the ice on time.

Players who are delayed should communicate with the Team Manager or coach as soon as reasonably possible. Repeated lateness may be addressed as an accountability issue.

9. Locker Room Policy

The locker room is a private, safe, respectful team environment where players prepare physically and mentally for hockey.

Adult Access

14U PARENT ACCESS

Parents are not permitted in the locker room except in the event of an injury/medical need involving their child, when specifically invited by a coach, or when specifically authorized by the coaching staff/designated team personnel for an appropriate reason.

The only adults ordinarily permitted in the locker room are coaches and designated Locker Room Moms/approved team personnel who meet applicable USA Hockey/SafeSport screening and training requirements.

Supervision

Locker-room supervision will follow the current USA Hockey SafeSport requirements. At least one responsible, appropriately screened and trained adult must be present/monitoring as required; two monitors are preferred under USA Hockey guidance.

Locker Room Conduct

- Treat the room as a private team space.
- No bullying, hazing, harassment, threats, intimidation or degrading behavior.
- No photographing, video recording or audio recording.
- No changing-room pranks intended to embarrass another player.
- Respect privacy and personal space.
- Clean up after yourself.
- Players are responsible for their own equipment and belongings.

Practices vs. Games

Locker Room Moms are required for games. Locker Room Moms are not assigned for practices. Coaches will establish the appropriate supervision arrangement for practice environments consistent with USA Hockey/SafeSport requirements and facility rules.

Locker rooms are required for every game. If a venue presents an unusual locker-room arrangement, the coaching staff will establish a safe, private alternative consistent with governing requirements.

10. Locker Room Mom Policy & Procedure

The Locker Room Mom is a trusted adult volunteer whose purpose is to help maintain a healthy, safe and positive environment for the young women to prepare for games.

The Locker Room Mom IS

- A trusted adult presence.
- A safety monitor.
- A resource for players who need appropriate assistance.
- A positive adult role model.
- A person who can identify concerns and bring them to the coaching staff.

The Locker Room Mom IS NOT

- The coach or an assistant coach.
- The locker-room police or the warden of the prison.
- A substitute for the coaching staff.
- The person responsible for hockey decisions.
- Someone expected to resolve significant player conflicts independently.

Game-Day Procedure

- Arrive early enough to prepare for the team's arrival.
- Confirm the room is appropriate and reasonably safe before players use it.
- Maintain the required adult monitoring/supervision arrangement.
- Help create a calm, positive environment.
- Do not interfere with coaching instructions or hockey decisions.
- Bring safety, misconduct or significant behavioral concerns to a coach.
- During the game, follow the coach/team plan for locker-room access and supervision.
- After the game, help players transition out of the room while maintaining privacy and a positive environment.

Locker Room Moms must meet all association/USA Hockey screening and SafeSport training requirements applicable to their role. No volunteer may assume the role until the Team Manager confirms compliance.

11. Cell Phone & Electronic Device Policy

NO PHONE USE IN THE LOCKER ROOM

Cell phones and personal electronic devices must remain in a player's hockey bag or backpack. They may not be used in the locker room except for an emergency or when specifically authorized by a coach.

- Phones must be silenced and out of sight.
- No texting, Snapchatting, FaceTime, social media or calls in the locker room.
- No photography, video or audio recording.
- Do not use another player's device to bypass the policy.
- If a player needs to contact a parent for a legitimate reason, she should notify a coach or Locker Room Mom and step outside the locker room when appropriate.

This policy is intentionally stricter than a simple 'no recording' rule because the goal is to protect privacy, reduce distraction and preserve the locker room as a team space.

12. Locker Room Music Policy

Music is a privilege, not an entitlement. Music may be permitted before or after practices and games only when the coaching staff authorizes it.

- Music must be PG-13 or better. No explicit lyrics of any kind.
- No racial, sexual, homophobic, transphobic or other hateful slurs.
- No degrading or humiliating content directed at another person.
- No song chosen to deliberately offend or embarrass teammates.

THE GOLDEN BEAR MUSIC TEST

Would you be comfortable if your grandparents heard it? Would you be comfortable if your eight-year-old sister repeated the lyrics out loud? If either answer is no, do not play the song.

If the team violates this policy after being instructed to follow it, team music privileges will be suspended for the remainder of the season. The purpose is collective accountability for a team privilege.

13. Communication Charter

Good teams communicate clearly, early and respectfully.

COMMUNICATION	STANDARD
Coaches → Players	Direct, respectful, clear and development-focused.
Coaches → Families	Through designated team channels and appropriate private conversations.
Players → Coaches	Players are encouraged to advocate for themselves respectfully.
Parents → Coaches	Private, respectful and through the process in this handbook.
Team Manager → Families	Schedules, logistics, travel, meetings and administrative coordination.
Families → Team Manager	Administrative questions and logistics should go to the Team Manager when appropriate.

Players should not be asked to carry adult conflict. When a concern is about hockey development, role, playing time or feedback, the player should be encouraged to speak with the coach first when appropriate.

14. Team Manager Role & Responsibilities

THE SIMPLE RULE

The Team Manager manages the team. The coaches coach the team.

Responsibilities

- Maintain the primary team communication channel.
- Distribute schedule updates and team notices.
- Maintain the team calendar.
- Coordinate tournament and travel information.
- Coordinate team meetings and administrative logistics.
- Maintain the Locker Room Mom roster and game coverage.
- Confirm required volunteer screening/training status before volunteers serve.
- Coordinate with the association when needed.
- Help distribute forms and required information.
- Keep coaches out of avoidable administrative work so they can focus on players.

The Team Manager Does Not

- Set lines or pairings.
- Determine playing time.
- Make hockey-system decisions.
- Direct players during games or practices.
- Override coaching decisions.
- Resolve discipline matters independently.
- Mediate hockey disagreements between parents and coaches.

15. Social Media & Digital Citizenship

- Do not post photos, videos or information from the locker room.
- Do not record another player without appropriate permission.
- Do not use social media to criticize, embarrass or target teammates, coaches, officials or opponents.
- Do not post private team communications publicly.
- Think before posting: once something is online, it may be difficult to remove.
- Represent yourself and the Golden Bears respectfully.

The team will follow current USA Hockey/SafeSport electronic communications and social media requirements. Team-specific digital communication will occur through approved channels.

16. Travel & Tournament Expectations

- Families are responsible for following tournament and travel instructions communicated by the Team Manager.
- Players remain subject to the Player Code of Conduct while traveling.
- Respect hotel staff, other guests, tournament personnel, officials and opponents.
- Players must follow curfews and rooming arrangements established by the team/association.
- No player may leave the team hotel or tournament area without the required adult/parent authorization.
- Follow all USA Hockey/SafeSport transportation and lodging requirements.
- Keep shared spaces clean and respect other families.

Specific tournament, lodging and transportation procedures will be distributed by the Team Manager as needed and will comply with governing policies.

17. The 24-Hour Rule & Conflict Resolution

PAUSE. RESET. THEN TALK.

Parents are encouraged to communicate concerns, but emotionally charged conversations immediately after games rarely produce good outcomes.

The 24-Hour Rule

Unless a safety, medical, misconduct or time-sensitive issue requires immediate attention, parents should wait 24 hours before initiating a conversation about playing time, line combinations, coaching decisions, systems or an individual game decision.

Preferred Resolution Path

10. When appropriate, the player speaks with the coach first.
11. If the concern remains, the parent requests a private conversation with the coach.
12. If the issue cannot be resolved, the appropriate association/team leadership process may be used.
13. Safety, abuse, misconduct and SafeSport concerns should not wait 24 hours and must be reported through the appropriate channel.

18. Accountability & Discipline

Accountability is intended to teach, protect the team and restore expectations—not to humiliate players.

- Reminder or re-teaching of the expectation.
- Private conversation with the player.
- Parent/guardian involvement when appropriate.
- Temporary loss of a team privilege.
- Behavioral improvement plan.
- Association-level consequences when required.
- Referral to USA Hockey/SafeSport or other governing authorities for matters within their jurisdiction.

SERIOUS MISCONDUCT

Bullying, harassment, hazing, threats, abuse, discrimination, retaliation and other conduct covered by USA Hockey/SafeSport will be handled under the applicable governing policies and reporting procedures.

19. Player Profile: Meet the Player

Complete this form at the first practice and return it to the Head Coach before the first game.

First & Last Name: _____

Preferred Name or Nickname: _____

Jersey Number: _____ Position: _____

Birthday: _____ Hometown: _____

Years Playing Hockey: _____ Other Sports / Activities: _____

How did you get started playing hockey?

Why do you play hockey? What do you love most about it?

What is your favorite hockey memory?

Which hockey player do you emulate on the ice, and why?

Favorite PWHL Team: _____

Favorite PWHL or Olympic Player: _____

Favorite NHL Player/Team, if applicable: _____

What are your greatest strengths as a hockey player?

What is one skill you most want to improve?

What part of your game are you most proud of?

Where do you hope hockey takes you?

20. Player Season Goals & Reflection

Complete this at the first practice and return it before the second practice.

What do you want to accomplish this season?

What is one hockey goal you have for yourself?

What is one mental/emotional goal you have for yourself?

What is one team goal you have?

What is something you want to be better at by the end of the season?

What does having a great season mean to you?

If you could become the kind of teammate that everyone wants to play with, what would that teammate look like?

When I make a mistake, I want to remember to...

When I am frustrated, I can...

When my teammate makes a mistake, I should...

When we are losing, I want to be the teammate who...

When we are winning, I want to be the teammate who...

When my coach gives me criticism, I will...

When I do not get the result I wanted, I will...

21. Midseason Check-In

This reflection is designed to help the player and coach measure development, not to assign blame.

What are you most proud of so far?

What skill or part of your game has improved the most?

What are you still working on?

How have you handled adversity?

How have you contributed to your teammates?

What is one thing you want more coaching on?

What is one thing you can do differently during the second half?

Are you having fun? Why or why not?

Do you still love playing hockey? Tell me about that.

22. End-of-Season Reflection

How are you a better hockey player than you were at the beginning of the season?

How are you a better teammate?

How are you different as a person?

What was the hardest thing you experienced this season?

How did you respond to it?

What is your favorite memory?

What did you learn from a loss or difficult moment?

What did you learn from a success?

Who on the team helped you grow?

How did you help someone else grow?

What do you want to carry into next season?

What do you want your next coach to know about you?

Do you love hockey more, less or about the same? Why?

23. Family Partnership

Youth hockey works best when players, families and coaches understand their roles.

Families can help by

- Getting players to the rink on time.
- Helping players develop independence with equipment.
- Encouraging sleep, nutrition, hydration and recovery appropriate for the athlete.
- Supporting effort and learning rather than demanding outcomes.
- Allowing players to experience both success and disappointment.
- Encouraging players to communicate directly with coaches when appropriate.
- Respecting the privacy of other players and families.
- Supporting the team culture in public and online.

A SIMPLE POST-GAME QUESTION

Instead of starting with 'Did you win?' try: 'What did you learn?' 'What was fun?' 'What are you proud of?' or 'How did you respond when things got hard?'

24. Golden Bear Family Agreement

We understand that being part of the Golden Bears means being part of a team culture built on development, respect, accountability, resilience and fun.

Player Commitment

I agree to work hard, be coachable, respect others, support my teammates, own my responsibilities and represent the Golden Bears with pride.

Parent/Guardian Commitment

I agree to support my player, respect the coaching staff, officials and opponents, follow team communication procedures, respect locker-room privacy, and address concerns constructively.

Coach Commitment

I commit to providing a safe, respectful, challenging and enjoyable environment in which every player has the opportunity to develop as a hockey player, athlete, teammate and person.

Player Name

Parent/Guardian Name

Parent/Guardian Name (optional)

Head Coach

Date

Michael Saad

25. Meet Your Coach

I grew up in Detroit and played travel hockey for 15 years. I have been coaching girls hockey in the Raleigh area since 2011, and I have had the privilege of coaching teams through just about every kind of season, from winless to near-perfect. Those experiences have taught me that some of the most valuable lessons in hockey come from the difficult moments.

My goal as a coach is to develop the whole player, not just the player on the ice. Beyond the X's and O's, I want our girls to become confident, accountable young women who advocate for themselves, take ownership of their experience and understand that improvement happens both at the rink and on their own time.

I believe in teaching the game, not simply teaching positions. I want our players to understand how to think, compete, communicate and make decisions as hockey players.

Our goal is simple: *DEVELOP • COMPETE • GROW • CONNECT • HAVE FUN • LOVE THE GAME.*

We will celebrate effort, growth, leadership, sportsmanship, respect, maturity and accountability. I will communicate openly and honestly, provide direct feedback and work hard to create an environment where every player feels safe, supported and comfortable being herself.

And parents, I'll leave you with something I learned as a hockey dad: after the game, sometimes the best thing you can say is simply, "Wow, I love watching you play!" Years from now, I hope that is what our girls remember most.

26. Locker Room Mom Quick Guide

YOUR JOB IN ONE SENTENCE

Help maintain a safe, private, positive and healthy team environment; bring concerns to the coaches; do not attempt to become the coach.

Before Players Arrive

- Confirm the locker room is appropriate.
- Know which adults are authorized.
- Know how to contact a coach.
- Confirm you are current on required screening/training.

While Players Prepare

- Be a calm adult presence.
- Respect player privacy.
- Monitor according to SafeSport requirements.
- Do not coach.
- Do not police every conversation.
- Address serious concerns with a coach.

Phones & Music

- Phones stay in bags/backpacks unless an authorized exception applies.
- Music is only allowed when coaches authorize it.
- If music violates the policy, notify the coach rather than arguing with players.

Escalate Immediately

- Injury/medical concern.
- Threat, bullying, harassment or hazing.
- Abuse or suspected abuse.
- A serious privacy or safety concern.
- Any situation you do not feel equipped to handle.

Do not investigate allegations yourself. Notify the appropriate coach/association/SafeSport authority according to the applicable policy.

27. Team Manager Quick Guide

YOUR JOB IN ONE SENTENCE

Handle the administrative and logistical details so coaches can focus on coaching and players can focus on development.

- Maintain the team calendar.
- Send schedules and changes.
- Coordinate tournament information.
- Coordinate travel logistics.
- Coordinate team meetings.
- Maintain the Locker Room Mom schedule.
- Maintain backup coverage.
- Track administrative requirements delegated to the manager.
- Route hockey-development questions to coaches.
- Route association-policy questions to the appropriate association contact.

Communication Rhythm

- Send season information before the first practice.
- Send game/tournament reminders far enough in advance for families to plan.
- Communicate schedule changes promptly.
- Use one primary communication channel whenever possible.
- Keep messages concise and action-oriented.