

Minnesota Hockey – District 8

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: May 28, 2025

Meeting Time: 7:00

Meeting Location: Moose Lodge, Inver Grove Heights



I. MEETING CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

D8 Board Members:

Present: Rak, Dave, Paul, Kate, Mickey, Elliot, Chris, Andy, Kent

Absent: Bill, Jeff, Zac, Julie

Association Representation:

Present: Apple Valley/ Burnsville, Cottage Grove, Eagan, Eastview, Farmington, Hastings, IGH, Lakeville, Red Wing, Rosemount, SSP, WSP

Absent: Woodbury

III. D8 BOARD REPORTS:

A. Director (Rak):

i. Upcoming Minnesota Hockey State Meeting – June 21 to 23.

- Committee meetings are scheduled to start Friday, June 21 at 7:00pm and Saturday, June 22 at 8:00am. Board meeting starts at 8:00am on Sunday, June 23.
- Meetings are open to the public for anyone interested in attending

ii. Minnesota has asked USAH to review offside and tag-up rules for 15s and above. (This includes Bantams and 15s) As of now, no decision has been made.

iii. Joe Delich is no longer the Executive Director of MH. The interim director is Kevin Suaju from District 2.

B. Financial Update (Dave): n/a

C. President (Dave): n/a

D. Officials (Moen):

i. As a reminder, Moen is responsible for scheduling invitational tournaments, Zac sanctions them after Moen approves.

ii. **Get tournament requests in as soon as possible – please communicate with your associations that there have not been a lot of requests sent in.**

iii. Reminder, The World Showdown Tournament will be in Minnesota Dec 26, 2025, to Jan 4, 2026 (mirrors World Juniors)

- Cottage Grove will be hosting 56 games
- Woodbury will be hosting 55 games
- Lakeville has been awarded 112 games
- Most likely no invitational tournaments will be awarded that weekend

iv. Referee registrations are open for the upcoming season.

v. Referee seminars will not be selected by the districts, they will be set by USAH.

- vi. If a seminar is closed (registrations cap out at 50), look for others as some locations will have very few registrations.
- vii. Information has already been sent out to all returning officials
- viii. New rulebook from USAH is out

E. Girls Program (Jeff): n/a

F. Coach in Chief (Bill) –

- i. Minnesota Hockey is looking to schedule early bird clinics and will do so as soon as given the go-ahead from USAH.
- ii. Levels 3, 4, and 5 will be offered early in the summer so watch for those registrations
- iii. New this year, a 6U/8U level certificate option will be available for those coaches looking to coach only mini mites, mites, 6u, and 8u>
 - This will be a shortened seminar, lasting about 2 hours
 - Coaches who are certified at this level can stay at this level as long as they'd like. Once they move up to Level 1, regular rules would apply
 - Watch for more information to come
- iv. Continuing to work on getting more information out about continuing ed courses for those certified as levels 4 or 5 after 2021. They are looking to have more credits available. Stay tuned.

G. Tournaments (Zac): n/a

H. Director of Coaching (Elliot):

- i. The leadership and hockey director conferences in Minneapolis were held the 1st weekend in May.
 - There is a new Hockey Director for MH who is driving a more accessible approach for the associations
 - Minnesota Hockey wants to be more accessible to the associations and are looking for open conversations to find out where help is needed.
 - Tryouts?
 - Development?
 - Coaching?
 - MH will be hosting quarterly meetings that are open to anyone interested in hoping on the call.
 - MH offers a lot of clinics such as bodychecking. They will come to your association. Reach out to Elliot if you are interested in hosting one and he can facilitate the conversation.
- ii. Fall Tier 1 program registration is open and will be kicking off soon
 - Open tryouts, do not need an invite
 - 2010-2012 boys (15U, 14U, and 13U)
 - 2011 – 2023 girls (14U)
 - Registration is on the Minnesota Hockey website
 - Registration is filling up fast – more info available on the D8 website

iii. Please send Elliot your estimated mites start date – there is a plan to do a mite summit with District 2.

- Coaches can attend and get Mite certification, but will also be open to families to attend and get general information

I. Bantams (Mickey): n/a

J. Peeeweeks (Chris):

- i. Reminder that while bodychecking is illegal at the PW level, coaching/ training bodychecking is not. Please ensure that your PW coaches are working with 2nd year PWs in the back half of the season on drills
- ii. Invitational tournaments are filling up quickly and many opened early this year

K. Squirts (Julie): n/a

L. Goalie Director (Andy):

- i. Last season, two 1-hour Train the Goalie Coach sessions were held. One was in Burnsville, and one was held in Red Wing. Most attendees were from Red Wing and Farmington.
- ii. The goal is to host these trainings again this year. If an association is willing to host a training and donate an hour of ice, let Andy know.**
- iii. These trainings can be done specifically for an association, if interested, reach out to Andy to schedule
- iv. These trainings are meant for anyone within your organization looking to support/ develop goalies. This is not limited to Goalie Coaches only, anyone in a coaching position is encouraged to attend
- v. The goal of the Goalie Committee is to be a resource for associations looking for additional support/ training, etc.
- vi. The Goalie Committee is not available to help find goalies for associations.
- vii. A question was asked about a potential database of trainings – there is not one set up at this time. The suggestion is to look online as there are many different ideas and drills that are easily found.

M. Junior Gold (Kent):

- i. As you start to plan out your JG teams and are in between hosting an additional team or cutting players, Kent asks you to ride it out. He will help find teams players and players teams. The goal is to not cut anyone in the JG program
- ii. If you are in doubt of a team, register for the tournament as there are not a lot of options. Most tournaments have language regarding pulling out of a tournament.
- iii. There are more B tournaments lately and 16s are eligible to play in B tournaments

IV. Additional Conversation

A. Team Classifications –

- i. D8 will be keeping the rule the same, however there will be more discussion regarding questionable team placing
 - If an association has 5 teams at a level, and one level is skipped, D8 will be inquiring more about the reasons behind that decision.
 - The bigger associations (Cottage Grove, Eagan, Lakeville, Rosemount, and Woodbury) will need to explain why they would not be fielding a AA team at a level.
 - Valid reasons are understandable and can be discussed. The goal is to eliminate trophy-chasers while also pushing players to step-up and improve as hockey players and as people.

- Associations need to be making decisions based on the whole good of the association and not just the top 10 or so players.
 - If an association hosts an AA team and only places 10 skaters on this team and then has two B1 teams that kick everyone's butt, that would be unacceptable.
 - Associations need to ensure they are running the process and not let parents/ coaches dictate what teams should be. Parents tend to only look at what they think is best for their child. Coaches cannot opt out of a player because they don't want to coach a kid they deem as less skilled than the others.
 - Each level increases by a ½ step to 1 step faster and the only way to improve is to play harder teams.
 - As a whole district, if the team levels are bottom heavy, no one wins.
 - A lot of the complaints deal with general unhappiness with teams that are deemed misplaced in both the Youth and Girls programs.
 - The answer isn't as easy as looking at a team's record.
 - Ex. If you have a team that went 0-16 on the season, but goal differentials are 1-2 goals apart, the team is competitive but just hasn't won a lot.
 - Ex. 2. If you have a team that went 0-16, but lost by 10 goals or so per game, that team is not competitive and vice versa.
 - Associations need to have integrity and do early assessments on their players.
 - Open communication between the different associations within the district is important. If there are a larger group of teams at a specific level, it opens the other district teams to more competition, therefore raising the level of play for all. District 8 teams tend to struggle outside of the D8 competition.
 - Questions that were raised/ discussed –
 - What will the district do when given questionable reasons?
 - What can the district push back with?
 - Should D8 govern more?
 - Can the district communicate a specific standard/ expectation for team levels?
 - Teams can be moved early in the season if necessary. Play early scrimmages to get better understanding of skill level, once league play has started it is more complicated to move levels.
 - Overall, District 8 is relying on the associations to know their teams. D8 is responsible for keeping all levels of teams in mind.
 - There is not a perfect solution
 - Many variables to consider including kids that are doing off-season training.
 - Ultimately, the District Director will have final say over team levels per the MH handbook.
- B. District 8 will not be making any changes to the grievance/ appeals process. All appeals processes should be 3 levels. 1st appeal goes to association, 2nd goes to district, and 3rd goes to MH. If you have any questions regarding the appeals/ grievance process, reach out to Scott Gray.
- C. GameSheet update will be made after June meeting

V. New Business

- A. Owatonna has requested their 12U-A team play in District 8. Vote was held and the motion passed.
 - i. Discussion topics included –
 - Game time/ travel during the week – Times will be looked at during scheduling
 - Does D9 get a bid to regionals? Or do they need to compete with D8 teams to get a spot? D8 does not find out what regional spots until later in the season. It is worth noting that D8 does not always agree with how it plays out. Rak is now on the tournament committee so will be looking to drive the conversation towards spots be given out based on number of teams in a league.
 - District 8 rules for all games? All league games played by District 8 teams, including those approved to play in the District 8 league must follow the District 8 game formats. For questions related to game format, please refer to the D8 handbook available on the D8 website. Additional notification will be provided to the district director when approval notice is given.
 - Using the excuse “not enough refs” for the correct number on the ice is not an acceptable answer.
- B. USA Hockey updated their rulebook. Rak passed out 1 copy to each association. If you did not receive one, reach out to Rak.

- VI. District 8 Board Member Positions up for Re-Election - All 3 positions were voted in for the next 3 years.
- A. Kate Fossum – Secretary
 - B. Chris Rasinen – Vice President of Peewees
 - C. Kent Andrusko – Junior Gold Liaison
 - D. Open – Treasurer

VII. Close.

Next D8 Board Meeting: June 25th at 7:00pm @ TBD