

RULES & REGULATIONS



INTRODUCTION

All USA Hockey participants are governed by the USA Hockey Rules and Regulations. There may be other applicable rules. Rules shall take precedence in this order:

1. USA Hockey
2. District*
3. Affiliate
4. League if applicable
5. USA Hockey Member Program

* A District may not impose Rules and Regulations that infringe upon the Affiliate's jurisdiction as granted in the Affiliate agreement with USA Hockey.

I. PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION

Youth, Girls, High School, College, Adult, Disabled Disciplines

Junior registration for players, coaches, teams, leagues and referees shall be as provided in Section XI: Junior Hockey.

A player may be registered in only one (1) national ice hockey federation. All USA Hockey Participants (players and coaches) must complete the USA Hockey registration process. USA Hockey provides the opportunity for Participants to register using the USA Hockey website at usahockey.com. If online registration is not available, please contact your District or Associate Registrar for information.

Each Participant (player and coach) will pay the USA Hockey individual membership fee and any applicable Affiliate individual membership fee at the time of online registration. A Participant registered as a Player shall not be required to pay an additional fee as a Coach and a Participant registered as a Coach shall not be required to pay an additional fee as a Player.

Participant registration is complete when the individual member registration information and all appropriate fees are received, and the Participant is processed by a USA Hockey Member Program. A USA Hockey Member Program is a local association approved by a USA Hockey Affiliate. Please refer to the Affiliate listing in the Directory section of the Annual Guide for Affiliate contact information. Once the registration process is complete, the Participant will receive an email confirmation of membership and a subscription to *USA Hockey Magazine*. For all Participants (players and coaches), USA Hockey registration shall be completed prior to participation in a USA Hockey sanctioned event. Please refer to usahockey.com for information on insurance coverages when participating in a USA Hockey sanctioned event.

II. CLASSIFICATIONS

The following are the official ice hockey player and team classifications of USA Hockey. The classifications of a player shall be determined by his/her age at midnight on December 31 prior to or during the current playing season.

Player and team classifications for Junior hockey are as provided in Section XI: Junior Hockey.

A. Adults

International/Canadian transfer forms or resident documentation is not required for these classifications.

(1) Adult U.S.

Open to all U.S. citizens; non-U.S. residents are eligible on a limited basis. Excludes players that have participated during the current season at any elite professional level (NHL, AHL, and European) or on an NCAA Division I and/or III team. Players that have participated in the following leagues before November 30 of the current season are eligible on a limited basis: (ECHL, CHL, IHL, UHL, SPHL, AAHA, and any Major Junior (other leagues may apply). Players that participated during the current season at any level of the ACHA (American Collegiate Hockey Association) are eligible for this classification. All players must be 18 years of age or older by December 31 of the current season. However, only 25% of an Adult U.S. registered team may be under the age of 20 unless approved by the Vice President, Adult Council chair.

(2) Adult Non-Checking

Unrestricted as to citizenship, and unlimited so as to include amateurs and/or reinstated professionals. National championship rosters are limited as to: Exclude any player who plays that current season as a professional player or on an NCAA (Div. I, II, or III) or junior college, or college club team. Players shall be 18 years of age or older.

(3) Adult College**(4) Adult Women's College****B. Youth, Girls, High School****(1) Age/Team Classifications****YOUTH**

Seventeen (17) and Eighteen (18) (18U)

Fifteen (15), Sixteen (16) and Seventeen (17) (17U DL) - Development League teams only

Fifteen (15) and Sixteen (16) (16U)

Fifteen (15) (Tier I National Bound Teams only) (15O)

Fourteen (14) and Fifteen (15) (15U DL) – Development League teams only

Thirteen (13) and Fourteen (14) (14U)

Thirteen (13) (Tier I National Bound Teams only) (13O)

Eleven (11) and Twelve (12) (12U)

Nine (9) and Ten (10) (10U)

Seven (7) & Eight (8) (8U)

Six (6) & Under (6U)

Classifications for players and teams participating in the USA Hockey Development League (DL) shall be as provided in Rules & Regulations Section III.J.

GIRLS

Seventeen (17) through Nineteen (19) (19U)

Fifteen (15) and Sixteen (16) (16U)

Thirteen (13) and Fourteen (14) (14U)

Eleven (11) and Twelve (12) (12U)

Nine (9) and Ten (10) (10U)
 Seven (7) & Eight (8) (8U)
 Six (6) & Under (6U)

Any USA Hockey Affiliate, league or local program may provide for or allow a non-checking category in any of the above age classifications. A youth or girls player may play on a team in an older classification only if the applicable Affiliate's rules or decisions, and the applicable local program's rules or decisions, permit that player to do so. A youth or girls player residing in one Affiliate may not play on a team in an older classification in a different Affiliate unless both the Affiliate where the player resides and the Affiliate where the player desires to play have granted permission to play in an older classification. In the event a youth or girls player has been denied the permission to play in an older classification in an Affiliate other than the Affiliate where the player resides, the player may appeal such denial to the USA Hockey Player Development Committee (except that appeals of eligibility to play on a National Championship bound team shall be to the National Championship Appeal Committee).

NOTE 1: *The 13-year and 15-year-old age categories shall be for the Youth Tier I level only and shall be limited to players in the specific birth years defined as 13 Only or 15 Only in the age classification chart above for the current season. Players that are not in the specified eligible birth years in the current season shall not be permitted to be rostered or play on a 13 Only or 15 Only team under any circumstances.*

NOTE 2: *The youth hockey age classifications are unrestricted as to gender.*

HIGH SCHOOL

Pure (Division 1), Combined (Division 2), Prep and Girls Teams

Restricted to amateurs who are enrolled as full-time students (grades 9-12), and under 20 years of age on or before December 31 of the Playing Season. Eligibility shall not exceed eight (8) consecutive semesters starting with the player's freshman year (9th grade). Fifth year and Postgraduate (PG) players are not eligible to participate on USA Hockey High School national championship bound registered teams.

For home-schooled students, the term "attend" shall mean that the student is enrolled at a high school and is designated as carrying sufficient credits to be considered a full time-student for which credit toward high school graduation will be granted by the high school upon the student completing and passing the courses. The school which enrolls the student shall be exclusively responsible to verify the student's compliance with all of the eligibility requirements.

Clarification: Those High School students graduating mid-year shall no longer be considered full-time students

and, therefore, are no longer eligible to play High School hockey, effective on their last day of attending classes full-time as defined by the school.

High School teams shall register in their appropriate division which shall be governed by eligibility requirements of the respective Affiliates. The following definitions apply to High School team registration classifications:

Division I (Pure): High school teams that consist of players attending the same high school or participating in the same educational program as full-time students who are eligible to play in sanctioned varsity sports at that school.

Division II (Combined): Community or non-community based academic high schools where teams consist of players representing more than one high school who are full-time students eligible to play sanctioned varsity sports at any one of the combined schools.

Prep School Division: Boarding schools or Academies that house players in a school dormitory or with billet families, and non-community based high schools consisting of full-time students attending the same school and non-community based online schools. All teams, players and coaches must register with USA Hockey prior to application for participation.

Girls Division: Pure, Combined, or prep school teams consisting of full-time, female students attending the same high school or prep school, attending more than one high school/prep school, or full-time students that are eligible to play sanctioned varsity sports at that school.

(2) Citizenship Eligibility

- (a) Only U.S. citizens are eligible to participate in the National Player Development Program. A Development League team may roster and play up to two (2) non-US citizens on that Development League team (excluding goalies, who must be US citizens) provided that the non-citizen player(s) must have previously been registered with USA Hockey and have played on a USA Hockey team during a previous season.
- (b) The classifications in Section B.(1) above are restricted to U.S. citizens, subject to the following exceptions:
 1. Players who are citizens of another country and residing in the U.S. with a parent shall be considered eligible if the parent(s) holds one of the following legal documents: Alien Registration Receipt Card or Permanent Resident Card. The player shall also be considered eligible if the parent(s) hold one of the following non-immigrant temporary visas: A. Government Official; E. Treaty Trader or Investor; G. Representative to

- International Organization; H. Temporary Worker; I. Foreign Information Media Representative; J. Exchange Alien; L. Intra-Company Transferee; M. Non-Academic Student; O. Aliens of Extraordinary Ability; P. Athletes and Entertainers; Q. Cultural Exchange; R. Religious Workers; and TN. Professional.
2. For players who are citizens of another country and are residing in the U.S. without a parent, the player must hold an Alien Registration Receipt Card or Permanent Resident Card or an F. Academic Student classification visa or J. Exchange Alien visa.
 3. However, (a) all girls national championship-bound teams are restricted to only two (2) players, and (b) all youth national championship-bound teams shall be restricted to only four players, in either case who are non-U.S. citizens temporarily residing in the U.S. under any combination of the following immigration visa categories: F. Academic Students; J. Exchange Alien Visa; P. Athletes and Entertainers [excluding their spouses and children under visa category P-4]; Category M. Non-Academic Student and Q. International Cultural Exchange Program participants. This restriction does not apply to non-U.S. citizens temporarily residing in the U.S. under category P-4, referenced above, or other visa categories not referenced above, excluding category B. Temporary Visitor. This restriction does not apply to any High School division.
- (c) Any team with a player on its roster who is a non-U.S. citizen should make immediate contact with its respective district registrar to review credentials and determine the player's eligibility. All players must provide the following documentation:
1. **Release**
A release from the player's home team/association authorizing the player to compete for the USA Hockey member team; and
 2. **IIHF/Canadian Transfer**
A youth written transfer form must be completed for all non-citizen players (male and female) under 18 years of age who register with a USA Hockey member program. An IIHF/Canadian transfer form must be completed for all non-citizen players (male or female) ages 18 and over.
- (d) In addition, a person who is a citizen of another country and resides in the United States under political asylum, or a claim therefore, refusing to return to his/her home country for a bona-fide, non-hockey related reason, shall be eligible for competition in the USA Hockey domestic program after he/she has continuously resided in this country for a period of one (1) year, with one or more of his/her parents, and further, shall have secured the release and IIHF transfer required above. Copies of all forms necessary to complete this transfer shall be provided by the national office to the team, league and council involved.

Notwithstanding the above, for the 2025-26 USA Hockey membership season, USA Hockey will permit players who (i) are a citizen of Ukraine, Russia, or Belarus, (ii) reside in the United States and are refusing to return to his/her country for a bona fide, non-hockey related reason, and (iii) have submitted documentation to the United States government for political asylum, to participate in USA Hockey programs subject to the following requirements:

1. The player shall be eligible to compete only in the Youth 18U and below, Girls 19U and below, High School and Junior hockey age classifications;
2. Only one player under this exception shall be allowed on any Tier 1 or Tier 2 team participating in the USA Hockey Nationals or Affiliate or District tournaments leading to USA Hockey Nationals; and
3. The player shall have secured the release and IIHF transfer required under paragraph (c) above.

Copies of all forms necessary to complete this transfer shall be provided by the national office to the team, league and council involved.

USA Hockey will evaluate this rule for the 2026-27 season between June and September, 2026.

C. **Disabled**

(1) **Classifications**

- Adult Sled (18 and over as of December 31st)*
- Youth Sled (Under 18 as of December 31st)**
- Special (all ages)
- Amputee/Standing (all ages)
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing (all ages)
- Blind/Visually Impaired (all ages)
- Warrior Hockey (military veterans with a disability playing upright)

* Sled players may be eligible to submit a waiver to play in a different age classification. For further information, please refer to Rule & Regulation Section XIV.

D. **Additional Requirements**

For additional requirements for National Championship bound teams, see Section IX: District Playoffs and National Championships.

III. **TEAM MEMBERSHIP AND REGISTRATION**

A. **Membership**

Except for Juniors, and teams participating in the USA Hockey Development League (DL), all teams of USA Hockey member programs must register with USA Hockey in a manner prescribed by the appropriate district registrar. All youth, girls, high school, Development League, and disabled teams shall be required to use the official USA Hockey roster registration form (1-T). Affiliates and leagues may also require the USA Hockey roster registration form (1-T) for other specified teams. All applicants for team membership must be members in good standing of an Affiliate.

Junior registration for players, coaches, teams, leagues and referees shall be as provided in Section XI: Junior Hockey.

Registration of players and teams participating in the USA Hockey Development League (DL) shall be as provided for in Rules & Regulations Section III.J.

All players seventeen (17) years of age or older on or before December 31 of that playing season, and that play on a team in a classification that allows minor age players, shall be required to complete U.S. Center for SafeSport online training before being added to such team and prior to participation (on-ice or off-ice). This requirement shall apply to all teams in the Youth, Girls, High School, Junior Hockey, Flex Hockey and Disabled Hockey program classifications that allow both minor age and adult age players. Players required to complete the training shall complete the Core Center for SafeSport Training prior to being added to a team and shall complete the Refresher Course on an annual basis in accordance with SafeSport Program Policies in each subsequent season in which they are on a team in the above classifications.

B. Tryouts/Player Selection

(1) Tryouts for all Tier I 130-18U Youth and 14U-19U Girls Teams

This Tier I Player Rostering Policy (this "Policy") applies throughout USA Hockey to all Youth and Girls Tier I players/teams only. All teams classified within their Affiliate as "Tier I" must comply with this Policy or risk loss of their Tier I designation and other potential sanctions. As this is a national policy adopted by USA Hockey, all Affiliates are directed to remove any Tier I rules that are contrary to or in conflict with this Policy.

Under this Policy, the following definitions shall apply:

"Affiliate Presidents Review Subcommittee" shall refer to a subcommittee of the USA Hockey Affiliate President's Committee and in each case shall involve three (3) Affiliate Presidents who are not involved in the matter being reviewed and have no other conflicts of interest related to the parties in the dispute.

"Off-Season" shall mean the period beginning with the end of the prior Playing Season until September 1 (or earlier if player is signed with a team and plays in a game before September 1).

"Parents" or "parents" shall mean and refer to the player's parents or legal guardians, if applicable.

"Player Agreements" shall mean and refer to those agreements entered into between a player/parent and a team/program for the purpose of binding the player to a particular team for a particular Playing Season, and according to the requirements in Subsection (a) below.

"Playing Season" shall mean the period beginning September 1 of each year (or the first game of the team's regular season, if earlier) through forty-eight (48) hours after the conclusion of the Tier I National Championships.

"Signing Team" shall mean the Tier I team that has signed a player to a Player Agreement binding the Player to the Signing Team for a Playing Season.

“Team Fact Sheet” shall be as described in Subsection (a)(4) below.

“Tryout” means any process on or off-ice that evaluates a player or group of players for the purpose of choosing players for a program or team. A Tryout also includes any team practices, on ice or off ice training sessions, open skates, skills sessions, or identification skates which include a player that is not on a regular season USA Hockey Roster with that association’s teams or program for that current Playing Season. USA Hockey programs, coaches and administrators are not permitted to operate a program outside of USA Hockey as a means of avoiding the prohibitions on tryouts or recruiting. While USA Hockey does not restrict a coach’s private business, if a coach runs a private camp, meeting, event, skate or skills clinic outside of USA Hockey for one or more players during the Playing Season, then the coach and/or player(s) should be investigated for possible violations of this Policy and face disciplinary action as set forth in Subsection (e) below.

**(a) Agreements between Player/Parent and the Team/Program;
Rosters**

USA Hockey and its Affiliates and Member Programs will recognize Player Agreements at the Tier I level according to and as set forth herein.

1. Upon execution by the Signing Team, player and parents, a Player Agreement will commit and bind the player to the Signing Team for the entirety of the applicable Playing Season, and the player will not be permitted to be rostered or to participate in any way with another USA Hockey Tier I team during the Playing Season except as set forth herein.
2. The Player Agreement will also bind the Signing Team to that player and secures a roster spot for that player on the Signing Team for the entire applicable Playing Season. The Signing Team cannot cut, release or dismiss a player from the team except as set forth herein.
3. Notwithstanding the restrictions set forth herein, it shall not be a violation of this subsection (a) if a player and program allow the player to participate on another Tier I team within that program pursuant to and in compliance with the Vertical Roster Integration Program set forth in the USA Hockey Rules & Regulations Section III.C.

The Player Agreement will indicate that the player may not participate in any Tryout for another Tier I team/program during the term of the Player Agreement; a violation of this provision will subject the player to not less than a five-game suspension. In the event a player who has signed a Player Agreement has been found to have participated in any Tryout for another Tier I team/program, then the player will be ineligible to sign a Player Agreement or participate with that program for a period of 18 months from the last date of the Tryout. The Player Agreement will not restrict a player from moving to or participating with another team in the following circumstances:

- a. the Player Agreement would not restrict a player from leaving a Signing Team and playing on or participating with a USA Hockey Tier II (youth or girls), High School, Junior hockey or college hockey team;
 - b. the Player Agreement would not restrict a player from playing with any other team, including a Tier I team, if the Signing Team and player mutually agree for the player to be released by the Signing Team. A player may not re-sign with the same team in the same season;
 - c. If the player were released by the Signing Team for violation of the Player Agreement requirements or other violation by the player of the Signing Team's or its program's written Code of Conduct, and is released following any required hearing and appeal process required under USA Hockey or Affiliate bylaws or rules, then the Player Agreement would not restrict the player from joining another team that season;
 - d. the Player Agreement would not restrict a player from playing with another team, including a Tier I team, if the player files a grievance with any applicable Affiliate (the Signing Team's Affiliate and, if different, the Affiliate where the player would like to sign) and a hearing is held or overseen by the Affiliate Presidents Review Subcommittee (and not the Signing Team or Local Program) where it is determined that the Signing Team, its coach(es) or other participants have violated USA Hockey Safe Sport Policies or other USA Hockey, Affiliate or Signing Team policies and which violation(s) justify the player's release from the Player Agreement and eligibility to sign with another Tier I team (but still subject to any other rostering rules and timelines). The Affiliate Presidents Review Subcommittee shall endeavor to hold hearings on such grievances on an expedited basis when appropriate. The Affiliate Presidents Review Subcommittee's determination shall be final and is not subject to appeal, except that any Discipline imposed by the Affiliate Presidents Review Subcommittee shall be appealable to the National Appeal Committee.
4. Prior to offering a Player Agreement to a player, or signing the Player Agreement, an authorized program or team representative from the Signing Team must present and review a Team Fact Sheet with the player and their parent, which must include all the information, provisions and requirements the player and family will be committing to by signing the Player Agreement and becoming a member of the Signing Team. The Team Fact Sheet must be referenced in the signed Player Agreement, must be signed by the team and parents, and must be provided to the player's parents. The required elements of the Team Fact Sheet must include at least the following information:

- a. The specific team upon which player will be rostered;
 - b. The Signing Team's anticipated fees for the season, which includes team fees to participate on the Signing Team for the season, uniform or equipment fees, and anticipated travel fees (to the extent known or planned) for the player and any required travel for parents, and any other anticipated fees that are required to be paid as a condition of participation on the team;
 - c. The required payment schedule or payment options for the fees in b. above;
 - d. The anticipated or planned number and average per week of practices, games, off-ice sessions, etc.
 - e. Any player code of conduct and/or parent code of conduct required for participation on the Signing Team; and
 - f. Players and families and the Signing Team acknowledge and agree to be bound by the terms of the Team Fact Sheet and Player Agreement.
5. Player Agreements must be executed for all Tier 1 players before they can be rostered on a Tier 1 team. Teams are only allowed to offer and sign the number of players to Player Agreements equal to the maximum number of roster spots permitted on a USA Hockey Roster at any one time for the Signing Team's rostered age level. For example, a team that is permitted to have 20 players on a USA Hockey Roster may not sign more than 20 players to Player Agreements and then move players on and off the roster. A team may only sign additional players to Player Agreements if another player on the roster has been released from their Player Agreement pursuant to subsection (a) 3. above.
6. The Player Agreement will be immediately binding on the Signing Team upon the signature of the team, player and parents. The player will also be immediately bound to the Player Agreement upon signature by the Signing Team, player and parents.
7. During any time a Player Agreement is in effect as set forth above, any Player Agreement signed with a different team shall not be enforceable.
8. The binding nature of the Player Agreement addresses only the player's commitment to the Signing Team, the Signing Team's commitment to the player, and the enforceability of the rules and requirements set forth in this Policy. USA Hockey and the applicable Affiliate(s) are not responsible for enforcing the contractual terms of the Team Fact Sheet.

(b) Signing Players

Subject to the provisions below, teams may sign players to a Player Agreement either (a) during the Off-Season, or (b) during the current

Playing Season prior to February 15. Player Agreements signed during the Off-Season are valid for the following Playing Season only. Player Agreements signed during the current Playing Season are valid for that Playing Season only. No Tier I team/program may sign a player to a Player Agreement if that player has already been bound to a Signing Team through a signed Player Agreement. No Tier I team may have more signed Player Agreements than permitted roster spots on its team.

1. **Off-Season Player Agreements:** A Tier I team cannot offer or sign players to Player Agreements until the beginning of the Off-Season, which begins 48 hours after the conclusion of the National Tournament. Beginning with the Off-Season, a Tier I team may sign players that are not already bound to a different Tier I team (by a Player Agreement signed with such team) to fill up to the maximum allowed roster spots.
2. **Player Agreements During Playing Season:** A Tier I team may offer or sign players that are not already signed to a Player Agreement with another Tier I team at any time prior to February 15 of that Playing Season, provided that at no time may the Tier I team have more signed Player Agreements than roster spots on its team.

Notwithstanding any of the above, a player that signs a Player Agreement that is already rostered on a USA Hockey Tier II, High School, Junior or College hockey team must first secure a release from the player's current rostered team before being added to the Signing Team's roster.

(c) Recruiting, Tampering and Tryouts

Coaches (or "persons affiliated with the team" as defined below) are prohibited from making contact with a player (or the player's agent, advisor or parents/family members) who is bound to another Signing Team through a Player Agreement, for the purpose of inviting, enticing, or convincing them to play for a specific team/program other than the Signing Team during the current Playing Season. Such contact shall be considered Tampering and shall subject the responsible Part(ies) to sanctions according to this Policy and applicable USA Hockey or Affiliate rules or bylaws. For the purposes of this Policy, "persons affiliated with the team" shall include any member of the team or program and includes without limitation general managers, player development personnel, coaches, current or past team players, or their parents.

Coaches and persons affiliated with a team are permitted to make contact with a player (or the player's agent, advisor or parents/family members) who is bound to another Signing Team through a Player Agreement only for the purpose of inviting, enticing, or convincing them to play for a specific team/program other than the Signing Team for the following Playing Season. However, under no circumstances is a player allowed to participate in a Tryout or any type of evaluation, practices, on ice or off ice training sessions, open skates, skills sessions, or identification skates during the Playing Season with any team or program other than the player's Signing

Team. Participation in any such activity will be considered Tampering and the responsible Part(ies) shall be subject to sanctions according to this Policy.

(d) Coach Awareness

Coaches/programs will be made aware by their Affiliates that attempting to recruit a player in any way during the Playing Season for that current Playing Season will be a violation of this Policy. Reported violations will be referred by the Affiliates involved to the Affiliate Presidents Review Subcommittee, which shall investigate and resolve any such allegations, including the issuance of sanctions if it is determined a violation occurred.

(e) Enforcement

- 1. Enforcement against Players.** Players violating this Policy shall be subject to disciplinary action by their Signing Team or applicable Affiliate according to the provisions of subsection (a) 3. above. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Signing Team, if a player leaves their Signing Team and attempts to play for another Tier I team during that Playing Season (other than as permitted above), the player will not be permitted to be rostered on the new team for the remainder of current Playing Season and the following Playing Season. Affiliate registrars will be instructed by the Affiliate to not roster the player on the new team's roster for the remainder for such period.
- 2. Enforcement against Coaches.** Incidents in which coaches or persons affiliated with a team are alleged to have engaged in Tampering, as defined above, will be referred to the Affiliate Presidents Review Subcommittee for disciplinary action. Any coach or person affiliated with a team determined by the Affiliate Presidents Review Subcommittee or USA Hockey to have engaged in Tampering will face a minimum suspension of one year and minimum probationary period of two years for the first offense.
- 3. Enforcement against Programs.** A Tier I program that is alleged to have engaged in Tampering, as defined in this Policy, will be referred to the Affiliate Presidents Review Subcommittee for investigation and disciplinary action. Tampering, as it relates to Tier I programs, includes any allegations of Tampering or other violations of this Policy by anyone associated with the program. A program determined by the Affiliate Presidents Review Subcommittee to have engaged in Tampering is subject to sanctions that could include, monetary fines, exclusion from participating in Affiliate, District or National Tournament play and/or loss of ability to field USA Hockey sanctioned teams at a/all playing level(s). Any sanction shall be enforced by the USA Hockey Affiliate in whose jurisdiction the program resides and shall be recognized by all Affiliates of USA Hockey.
- 4. Appeals of Discipline.** Any Discipline imposed by the Affiliate Presidents Review Subcommittee shall be appealable to the National Appeals Committee.

(f) Roster Change Date

Each Tier I team must submit its roster to the applicable Registrar for approval on or before October 15 of each season. Adds or drops from the roster, if permitted by this Rule III.B., may be made up to the February 15 deadline for changing rosters. If an affiliate, state or district tournament is held prior to February 15, player changes to the official team roster will not be accepted after the affiliate, state or district tournament begins.

(2) Tryouts for all Tier II 14U-18U Youth and 14U-19U Girls Teams

No youth or girls Tier II team may recruit or solicit players or offer hockey contracts to players for the following season, or hold development camps, tryouts, player selections or any activity that could be construed as a tryout/solicitation or recruitment for the following season, until 48 hours after the last game of Youth National Championships (both Tier I and Tier II Nationals must be completed). For example, if the National Tournament ends at 4 pm on Monday, tryouts can begin after 4 pm on Wednesday. Any violation of this prohibition may subject the coach, team, program and/or responsible administrators to appropriate discipline, or ineligibility of the team or coach, as determined by the Affiliate.

(3) Tryouts for Non-Tier I or II Teams

Except for spring or summer season hockey, Affiliates are strongly encouraged to have rules for house, recreational and other youth and girls hockey teams that are not registered as Tier I or Tier II teams, prohibiting tryouts or player selection until after a certain date that is appropriate for such Affiliate.

C. Registration

The team roster registration form (1-T) shall be completed and forwarded to the official district registration office by the appropriate date as set forth in the USA Hockey Annual Guide of the current playing season for teams eligible for district playoffs and national championships.

The team roster registration form (1-T) shall not be effective until the date it is approved by the official District or Associate Registrar through the USA Hockey portal.

One Team – One Roster - Players rostered on a Tier 1 declared team may not be rostered on any other regular season, Invitational Tournament or Pre/Post roster unless properly released from their Tier 1 team per section III.B.(1)(b), or as permitted under Rule & Regulation III.G.

A limit of twenty (20) players at any one time may be registered per team except for (1) high school, girls high school, college and women's college which may roster 30 players and may dress 20 players, (2) adult and women's teams which may roster 25 players and may dress 20 players, and (3) Tier I teams at the 18U, 16U and 15O youth classifications and 19U girls classification which may roster and dress 22 players, of which not more than 20 shall be skaters (see Section XI: Junior Hockey for junior roster limits). Affiliates may allow their post-season (spring/summer) teams, formed to play between the end of the last USA Hockey Youth/Girls National Championship and August 31, to have a limit of twenty-five (25) players on a roster and may dress twenty

(20) players per game. A player may be registered in only one (1) national ice hockey federation.

The regular season shall be September 1 through August 31. New members or those members who register on or after April 1 of any calendar year are eligible for participation from the date of their registration through August 31 of the following calendar year.

D. Tier I Vertical Roster Integration

Vertical roster movement shall be permitted at the Tier I Youth 15O, 16U, 18U, and 16U and 19U Girls levels within the same Organization through February 15th. Only those players otherwise eligible for a different age category within their Organization and currently appearing on a Tier I roster in the Organization shall be eligible to play on a different Tier I team from that Organization without being added to the official roster, subject to the following conditions:

- Each Player is limited to a total of 8 games played outside of their official roster between September 1 and February 15.
- Players may only compete at one age level per day.
- Tier I teams shall submit the Vertical Movement Tracking Form to the applicable Registrar for each game a player plays on a different roster within their Organization under this Vertical Roster Integration rule.

All other current National Championship rules, including the 18/12 rule and the February 15 roster deadline will stay in effect. Games played shall not count toward the 18/12 rule until added to the official roster.

If a player receives a suspension in any game of a tournament or showcase, the player must serve the suspension at the age group in which they are playing at the time of the suspension. If a player receives a suspension in the last game of a tournament or a showcase, the player will serve the suspension with the official rostered team. Any suspension incurred by a player under this rule outside of a tournament or showcase must be served with the team in which the player is officially rostered. Players under suspension are not eligible for vertical integration movement until the suspension is served with the team in which the player is officially rostered.

Players are not eligible for vertical movement to a team in which they were previously officially added to that team's roster and then dropped.

E. Proper Affiliate for Team/Program Registration

- (1) A sanctioned USA Hockey Member Program, as determined by the applicable Affiliate, must register all of its teams, except for DL Teams, in the USA Hockey Affiliate in which the greatest percentage of the Member Program's players reside (as defined below). In addition, unless approved by the applicable Affiliates, all Teams registered within a Member Program must have the greatest percentage of team members that reside in the Affiliate where the Member Program is registered and shall comply with all applicable Affiliate Rules regarding Team Registration. An Affiliate may require that teams registered within its Affiliate have a minimum percentage of players that reside in the Affiliate (or similarly, an Affiliate may place a limitation on out-of-Affiliate or non-resident players).
- (2) Teams that are not part of a sanctioned Member Program but which are approved by the Affiliate (an "Independent Team"), must register in

the USA Hockey Affiliate in which the greatest percentage of its players reside. Independent Teams must comply with all applicable Affiliate rules regarding Team Registration.

- (3) In the event that a Member Program/Independent Team have equal percentages of players that reside in two or more Affiliates, the Affiliates involved shall promptly convene and decide as to where that Member Program/Independent Team shall register.
- (4) Notwithstanding that application of the above rules would require that a Member Program or Independent Team register in a particular Affiliate, two neighboring Affiliates, with the Member Program's or Independent Team's consent, may agree that a particular Member Program or Independent Team may register through either of those two Affiliates.
- (5) If there is a dispute between one or more Affiliates and a Member Program or Independent Team regarding the proper Affiliate in which a Member Program or Independent Team must register, then the Member Program, Independent Team and any affected Affiliate shall seek resolution of such dispute through an appeal to the appropriate USA Hockey Council, Youth or Girls.
- (6) For the purposes of determining where a player resides under paragraphs 1 and 2 above, the residency status of a minor age player shall be the same as at least one of the minor's parents or legal guardians.
 - Should a player not be residing with a parent or legal guardian but rather residing at a residential boarding school, the player can be considered the resident of either the affiliate where the residential boarding school is located or where the parents live. Residential boarding schools are defined as accredited schools where players attend classes in a supervised, on campus, room & board environment. A player living with a billet family or living in a hotel or other alternative living arrangement will not change the player's residency for the purposes of this residency definition. Any dispute over whether a program or school fits the definition of a residential boarding school shall be determined by a three-member committee comprised of the Youth Council Chair, the Girls Council Chair and the Registrar's Section Chair, or their respective designee(s).
 - The residency status of a player 18 or older shall be where the player lives.

Any dispute under this section regarding where a minor age player resides shall be resolved by the appropriate USA Hockey Registrar(s), in consultation with the Assistant Executive Director of Member Services of USA Hockey. There shall be no appeal following such determination. The residency determination for the purposes of this rule does not affect the player's residency for the purposes of representation at player development camps.

F. Affiliate Residency Rule for Tier II and Recreational Hockey Players

(1) General Rule

All players participating in Tier II and Recreational hockey must register and play for the affiliate that corresponds to their primary place of residence.

The player's residency shall be defined as set forth in Section III.E.(6) above.

(2) Exceptions and Appeals Process

Recognizing that individual circumstances may require flexibility, the following exceptions and processes are available:

A. Proximity to Another Affiliate:

If a player's primary residence is closer to a member program in a neighboring affiliate, the player may request a Residency/Proximity Waiver Request.

B. Special Circumstances:

Players facing unique situations, such as family relocation, access to specific educational opportunities, or other exceptional circumstances, may appeal to play outside their home affiliate or district.

C. Existing Written Affiliate Agreements

Existing or developed written affiliate agreements amongst neighboring affiliates will take precedence over this policy.

(3). Waiver and Appeal Application Process

A. Submission:

Players or guardians must submit a Residency/Proximity Waiver Request Form to their home affiliate. The application must include:

- Justification for the request.
- Supporting documentation (e.g., proof of residence, maps showing proximity, or other relevant materials).

B. Review Process:

Waiver requests will be reviewed by a Residency Review Committee consisting of representatives from the home affiliate, neighboring affiliate, and Affiliate President's Committee, appointed by their respective Presidents.

C. Decision Timeline:

Decisions on waiver requests will be communicated in writing within 14 days of submission.

D. Appeals:

If a waiver request is denied, the applicant may appeal the decision to the Appeal Authority made up of three disinterested individuals assigned by the Affiliate President's Committee and there shall be no further appeals. There are no personal appearances on appeals to the Appeal Authority. The issues set out in the appeal are resolved solely on the written submissions of the parties to the appeal.

(4) Compliance and Enforcement

- Players found violating the residency rule without an approved waiver will be deemed ineligible for the season.

- Teams and associations knowingly rostering ineligible players may face penalties, including but not limited to, forfeiture of games, loss of tournament bound status, fines, sanctions, etc.

- All decisions/determinations will fall under USA Hockey Bylaw 10 procedures and policies.

G. **National Championship-Bound Teams**

A player may not register on more than one team that participates in games leading towards a national championship except for players on High School division teams, who may also play on a Youth or Girls national championship-bound team. Player changes to the official team roster form (1-T) for youth or girls Tier I and Tier II national championship-bound teams will not be accepted after February 15. Refer to Rules and Regulations Section IX: District Playoffs and National Championships, for additional requirements for national championship-bound teams.

Goaltenders:

If during the time period between February 15th of the current season when rosters are frozen and seven (7) days before the start of the team's state/affiliate championships a rostered goaltender is lost due to a season ending injury as determined and attested to by the player's treating physician, the team which lost the rostered goaltender may add a replacement goaltender from the same age classification providing the following criteria is met:

1. A Tier I, Tier II or High School National Tournament Bound team may replace their lost goaltender with a goaltender rostered on a non-National Tournament Bound team, provided the lost goaltender has been identified as a goaltender on the roster and the replacement goaltender has not been rostered on any National Tournament Bound team during the current season. The replacement goaltender is exempt from the USA Hockey game count.

2. The injured goaltender must be dropped from the National Tournament Bound roster.

No player may play in more than one State, Affiliate or District Championship or playoffs leading thereto. However, a player rostered on both a High School division team and a Youth or Girls national championship-bound team may play in teams' State, Affiliate or District Championship or playoffs leading thereto.

In the event a player is registered on more than one team that participates in games leading towards a national championship, the appropriate registrar shall have the final authority to certify the eligibility of any such player solely on the basis of the date on which the effective date of the earliest team roster registration form, as provided above, is received.

Girls may dual roster on a youth and girls team if the Affiliate rules permit dual registration for females. Dual-rostered females playing on youth and girls teams may continue playing on both teams until the end of the regular season. However, the player must declare in writing to her appropriate registrar, or his/her designee, by February 15 on which national championship-bound team she wishes to be eligible to advance to the district, state, regional and national championship. If the player does not indicate on which team she wishes to be eligible for district, state, regional and national tournaments,

the appropriate registrar shall have the final authority to certify the eligibility of any such player solely on the basis of the date of the earliest team roster registration form, as provided above, is received.

Except for players playing in Tier I or Tier II Junior hockey pursuant to the Youth/Junior Affiliated Player Policy, any youth player (male or female) rostered on a Tier I or Tier II youth or girls team and a Junior Program team as of December 31, can only play for one team after December 31. Except for players playing in Tier I or Tier II Junior hockey pursuant to the Youth/Junior Affiliate Player Policy, if the player plays in a Junior game after December 31 he/she loses all eligibility on his/her youth or girls team for the remainder of the season, regardless of how many games are played at the Junior level. Disputes regarding this rule should be resolved by the appropriate registrar.

H. Youth Tier I Standards and Criteria

MORATORIUM ON NEW TIER I PROGRAMS/TEAMS

Effective immediately, no Affiliate shall approve any new Tier I Programs or Teams in any age level unless that Program operated Affiliate-approved Tier I teams during the 2024-25 playing season. If a Program was approved to operate Tier I teams in 2024-25, it shall be permitted to add additional teams in compliance with the applicable Affiliate's approval and rules. This Moratorium shall be in place for any new Programs/Teams during the 2025-26 and 2026-27 playing seasons. Unless this Moratorium is otherwise modified, Affiliates shall be permitted to consider applications for new Tier I Programs/Teams during the 2026-27 season to begin play in the 2027-28 season, which shall be subject to any new USA Hockey or Affiliate rules in place at that time.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, in special circumstances as determined by the applicable Affiliate, the Affiliate may submit a request for approval of a new Tier I Program/Team during this Moratorium, which shall be submitted and reviewed by a Committee composed of the Vice President, Youth Council, Vice President Girls Council, and the Chair of the Registrar's Section. Any decision of this Committee to approve or deny a new Tier I Program/Team shall be final and not subject to appeal.

USA Hockey recognizes Youth Tier I programs/teams only at the 13 Only, 14U, 15 Only, 16U and 18U age levels. The following criteria must be met for any team to be classified as a Tier I team in any Affiliate:

- (1) Tryouts for Tier I teams must be published and advertised. No youth Tier I or II team may hold development camps, tryouts, player selections or any activity that could be construed as a tryout for the following season, until 48 hours after the last game of Youth National Championships (both Tier I and Tier II Nationals must be completed). For example, if the National Tournament ends at 4 pm on Monday, tryouts can begin after 4 pm on Wednesday. Any violation of this prohibition may subject the coach, team, program and/or responsible administrators to appropriate discipline, or ineligibility of the team or coach, as determined by the Affiliate.
- (2) The number of Tier I teams in each Affiliate at the Tier 1 age classifications of 13 through 18U shall be limited. The number of Tier I teams permitted in each age classification shall be calculated every four seasons and shall not exceed seven and one-half percent

(7.5%) of the average number of players registered in the 14U age classification (inclusive of DL Players) in that Affiliate over the four (4) seasons prior (i.e., the average number of players in the 14U age classification in USA Hockey's Final Registration Report over the 2021-22 to 2024-25 seasons would be used to determine the number of teams permitted in the 2026-27 season; this number shall remain the same for four seasons and similar calculations would be made prior to the 2030-31 season based on the average number of players in the 14U classification in USA Hockey's Final Registration Reports over the 2025-26 to 2028-29 seasons). Each Affiliate's player registration numbers for the preceding season shall be provided on or before September 1 each year. For the purposes of this calculation, each team shall be presumed to have twenty (20) players. For example, the average number of players in the 14U age classification shall be multiplied by 7.5%, and the product shall then be divided by 20 players, which shall determine the number of Tier I teams permitted in the Affiliate. If an Affiliate has an average of 540 players in the 14U age classification in the 2021-22 to 2024-25 seasons, then 7.5% of that number would equal 40 players. In order to have teams of 20 players, the Affiliate would be limited to two Tier I teams at each two birth year age classification in the 2026-27 season. Notwithstanding the limitations in this paragraph on the number of Tier I teams permitted in an Affiliate based on the number of players registered, subject to Affiliate approval and satisfaction of all other requirements of this Section H, each Affiliate shall be permitted to have at least one team per age classification.

- (3) Notwithstanding the use of 20 players per team in the calculation of the number of teams that may be registered in an Affiliate at the Tier I level, all teams at 13 Only, 14U, 15 Only, 16U and 18U classifications must have a minimum of 15 players (including goalkeepers).
- (4) In order for any team to be eligible for National Tournament play, the program/association must have been in existence and registered with the applicable Affiliate for a minimum of three (3) prior consecutive years.
- (5) The Association/Program must have at least two (2) National Tournament Bound teams from the 13 Only, 14U, 15 Only, 16U or 18U age categories in either the Tier I or Tier II categories, or in the USA Hockey Development League, each of which must have a minimum of 15 players per team.
- (6) All Teams with rosters categorized as Tier 1 must be National Tournament Bound.
- (7) It is recommended that each player on the team have on-ice and off-ice practices consistent with the ADM recommendations for that age group (which practices may include practices on other teams).
- (8) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this Section H, each Affiliate shall be permitted to "grandfather" any Tier I team(s) that were in existence in the 2025-26 season, and in the Affiliate's discretion may allow such team(s) to continue to be classified as Tier I so long as such programs continue to register the same

number of team(s). If an Affiliate chooses to reduce the number of Tier I teams beyond those permitted in this Section H, then the Affiliate may do so through the Affiliate's rules or decisions.

- (9) Tier 1 Residency – Beginning in the 2027-28 season, an Affiliate will choose the level of residency that applies to all Tier 1 rostered teams in their Affiliate. Affiliates may select a limit from a range of no out of Affiliate players to the number below for each age classifications.

13O: 100% in affiliate residency or up to 4 out of affiliate players

14U: 100% in affiliate residency or up to 4 out of affiliate players

15O: 100% in affiliate residency or up to 6 out of affiliate players

16U: 100% in affiliate residency or up to 6 out of affiliate players

18U: Minimum 51% in affiliate residency

- Affiliates must declare their affiliate residency level to the Youth Council no later than February 15th prior to the following season.
- Notwithstanding the limitations above on out of affiliate Tier I players, Neighboring Affiliates may enter into a written agreement providing that players within an Affiliate (as may be defined in the written agreement) will not be considered out of affiliate player in the Neighboring Affiliate.
- Neighboring Affiliates are defined as affiliates that share a geographical border, are in the same district, or are within a reasonable proximity to each other.
- Any written agreement amongst Neighboring Affiliates that allows for out of affiliate players must be submitted to the Registrar's Section Chair no later than February 15th prior to the following season to be approved by the three-member committee comprised of the Youth Council Chair, the Girls Council Chair and the Registrar's Section Chair, or their respective designee(s).
- Such agreements must be in writing and must define the circumstances under which participation in the Neighboring Affiliate is more practical due to proximity.
- Players in Tier I Programs that have out of affiliate players rostered on a Tier 1 team in the 2026-27 season (2013 and older birth years) will be grandfathered and allowed to continue to play with the same Tier I Program, even if that number exceeds the limits above.
- Teams that exceed the limits above with grandfathered players will not be allowed to roster any additional out of affiliate players.

- (10) Any exceptions to the above limitations on teams may be granted by the Youth Council

I. Girls Tier I Standards and Criteria

MORATORIUM ON NEW TIER I PROGRAMS/TEAMS

Effective immediately, no Affiliate shall approve any new Tier I Programs or Teams in any age level unless that Program operated Affiliate-approved Tier I teams during the 2024-25 playing season. If a Program was approved to operate Tier I teams in 2024-25, it shall be permitted to add additional teams in compliance with the applicable Affiliate's approval and rules. This Moratorium shall be in place for any new Programs/Teams during the 2025-26 and 2026-27 playing seasons. Unless this Moratorium is otherwise modified, Affiliates shall be permitted to consider applications for new Tier I Programs/Teams during the 2026-27 season to begin play in the 2027-28 season, which shall be subject to any new USA Hockey or Affiliate rules in place at that time.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, in special circumstances as determined by the applicable Affiliate, the Affiliate may submit a request for approval of a new Tier I Program/Team during this Moratorium, which shall be submitted and reviewed by a Committee composed of the Vice President, Youth Council, Vice President Girls Council, and the Chair of the Registrar's Section. Any decision of this Committee to approve or deny a new Tier I Program/Team shall be final and not subject to appeal.

USA Hockey recognizes Girls Tier I programs/teams only at the 14U, 16U and 19U age levels. The following criteria must be met for any team to be classified as a Tier I team in any Affiliate:

- (1) Tryouts for Tier I teams must be published and advertised. No girls Tier I or II team may hold development camps, tryouts, player selections or any activity that could be construed as a tryout for the following season, until 48 hours after the last game of Girls National Championships (both Tier I and Tier II Nationals must be completed). For example, if the National Tournament ends at 4 pm on Monday, tryouts can begin after 4 pm on Wednesday. Any violation of this prohibition may subject the coach, team, program and/or responsible administrators to appropriate discipline, or ineligibility of the team or coach, as determined by the Affiliate.
- (2) The number of Tier I teams in each Affiliate in each age classification shall be limited. The number of Tier I teams permitted in each age classification shall be calculated every four seasons and shall not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the average number of players registered in the 14U age classification in that Affiliate over the four (4) seasons prior (i.e., the average number of players in the 14U age classification player registration numbers in USA Hockey's Final Registration Report for over the 2021-2022 through 2024-2025 seasons would be used to determine the number of teams permitted in the 2026-2027 season; this number shall remain for four seasons and similar calculations would be made prior to the 2030-31 season based on the average number of players in the 14U age classification in USA Hockey's Final Registration Reports over the 2025-26 to 2028-29 seasons). Each Affiliate's player registration numbers for the preceding season shall be provided on or before September 1 each year. For the purposes of this calculation, each team shall be presumed to have eighteen (18)

players. For example, the total number of players in the 14U age classification shall be multiplied by 20%, and the product shall then be divided by 18 players, which shall determine the number of Tier I teams permitted in the Affiliate. If an Affiliate has an average of 350 players in the 14U age classification in the 2021-2022 through 2024-2025 seasons, then 20% of that number would equal 70 players divided by 18 players, and the Affiliate would be limited to three (3) Tier I teams at each age classification in the 2026-2027 season. Notwithstanding the limitations in this paragraph on the number of Tier I teams permitted in an Affiliate based on the number of players registered, subject to Affiliate approval and satisfaction of all other requirements of this Section G, each Affiliate shall be permitted to have at least one team per age classification.

- (3) Notwithstanding the use of 18 players per team in the calculation of the number of teams that may be registered in an Affiliate at the Tier I level, all teams at 14U, 16U and 19U classifications must have a minimum of 15 players (including goalkeepers).
- (4) In order for any team to be eligible for National Tournament play, the program/association must have been in existence and have registered Girls team(s) with the applicable Affiliate for a minimum of three (3) prior consecutive years.
- (5) All teams with rosters categorized as Tier 1 must be National Tournament Bound
- (6) It is recommended that each player on the team have on-ice and off-ice practices consistent with the ADM recommendations for that age group (which practices may include practices on other teams).
- (7) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this Section G, each Affiliate shall be permitted to “grandfather” any Tier I team(s) that were in existence in the 2025-26 season, and in the Affiliate’s discretion may allow such team(s) to continue to be classified as Tier I so long as such programs continue to register team(s) in that age classification. If an Affiliate chooses to reduce the number of Tier I teams beyond those permitted in this Section G, then the Affiliate may do so through the Affiliate’s rules or decisions.
- (8) Tier 1 Residency – Beginning in the 2027-28 season, an Affiliate will choose the level of residency that applies to all Tier 1 rostered teams in their Affiliate. Affiliates may select a limit from a range of no out of Affiliate players to the number below for each age classifications.

14U: 100% in affiliate residency or up to 4 out of affiliate players

16U: 100% in affiliate residency or up to 6 out of affiliate players

19U: Minimum 51% in affiliate residency

- Affiliates must declare their affiliate residency level to the Girls Council no later than February 15th prior to the following season.
- Notwithstanding the limitations above on out of affiliate Tier I players, Neighboring Affiliates may enter into a written

agreement providing that players within an Affiliate (as may be defined in the written agreement) will not be considered out of affiliate players in the Neighboring Affiliate.

- Neighboring Affiliates are defined as affiliates that share a geographical border, are in the same district, or are within a reasonable proximity to each other.
- Any written agreement amongst Neighboring Affiliates that allows for out of affiliate players must be submitted no later than February 15th prior to the following season to be approved by the three-member committee comprised of the Youth Council Chair, the Girls Council Chair and the Registrar's Section Chair, or their respective designee(s).
- Such agreements must be in writing and must define the circumstances under which participation in the Neighboring Affiliate is more practical due to proximity.
- Players in Tier I Programs that have out of affiliate players rostered on a Tier 1 team in the 2026-27 season (2013 and older birth years) will be grandfathered and allowed to continue to play with the same Tier I Program, even if that number exceeds the limits above.
- Teams that exceed the limits above with grandfathered players will not be allowed to roster any additional out of affiliate players.

- (9) Any exceptions to the above limitations on teams may be granted by the Girls Council.

J. USA HOCKEY DEVELOPMENT LEAGUE (DL)

Starting with the 2027/28 Season, USA Hockey will initiate play within the USA Hockey Development League (DL). The DL is being established under USA Hockey's authority as a National Governing Body (NGB) as part of a high-performance national player development program to train and develop USA Hockey players from across the country to advance to high level Junior Hockey programs, College Hockey programs and also to increase the pool of players eligible to play for the United States in International competition. Oversight of the Development League will be under a Joint subcommittee of the Player Development Committee and the Youth Council. The DL Joint Subcommittee will consist of nine (9) subcommittee members. The membership of the DL Joint subcommittee will be the Chair of the Player Development Committee, the Chair of the Youth Council, the Chair of the Registrar's Section, a voting member of the Player Development Committee appointed by the Chair of the Player Development Committee, a voting member of the Youth Council appointed by the Chair of the Youth Council, an Affiliate President Representative appointed by the Chair of the Youth Council, and three (3) athlete representatives with two (2) appointed by the Chair of the Player Development Committee and one (1) appointed by the Chair of the Youth Council. The Chair of the Youth Council shall serve as the Chair of the DL Joint subcommittee. A staff liaison will also serve as a non-voting member of the DL joint subcommittee.

The voting members of the DL Joint oversight subcommittee shall approve a USA Hockey Development League Guidebook, which shall be published and

available on the USA Hockey website on or before January 1 prior to the start of DL team formation for the following year. Except as set forth and contrary to any information contained in the USA Hockey Annual Guide, the Development League Guidebook shall be the binding authority for the selection and application process for participation of teams and programs within the DL, the recruitment, tryout, selection and player agreement of any player participating in the DL, operating requirements for teams participating in the DL, game requirements and any end of season league playoffs.

1. Player, Coach and Team Registration

- a) All participants (players and coaches) must complete the USA Hockey registration process and register using the USA Hockey website at usahockey.com. Each participant (players and coaches) will pay the USA Hockey individual membership fee and any applicable Affiliate individual membership fee at the time of the online registration.
- b) All teams registering to participate in the DL must submit their official USA Hockey roster registration form (1-T) to the designated DL Registrar on or before October 15th of the season. A team roster registration form (1-T) shall not be effective until the date it is approved by the DL Registrar through the USA Hockey portal.
- c) All programs with DL teams must also be members of their applicable Affiliate. Programs with DL teams must register those teams in the Affiliate where the DL teams play home games and hold team practices.
- d) All teams registering with the DL must be full season teams with games and practices during the period September-February of the season.
- e) A Development League team may roster and play up to two (2) non-US citizens on that Development League team (excluding goalies, who must be US citizens) provided that the non-citizen player(s) have previously been registered with USA Hockey and played on a USA Hockey team.
- f) The DL will operate as a national league. Teams participating in the DL will be open residency teams with no residency restrictions for players rostered on any DL teams.
- g) Players participating in the DL may not participate with or be rostered or registered on any other hockey team during the same season, with the exception that such players may (i) participate in Tier I and Tier II Junior Hockey games as permitted in the USA Hockey Youth/Junior Affiliated Player Policy and (ii) play in DL organization games under the DL vertical integration policy.
- h) All DL teams are required to have a team manager, and, at minimum one locker room monitor listed on the DL team roster (1-T). Team managers

and locker room monitors listed on the DL team roster must have current background screening and current SafeSport training.

i) No players may be added to a DL team roster (1-T) after February 15th of the season.

2. Roster Size

A limit of twenty-two (22) players (not more than twenty (20) skaters) may be rostered and participate in Development League games. All DL teams must roster two (2) Goaltenders on each DL team.

3. Team Age Classifications

Each approved DL organization must field one (1) 15U DL team and one (1) 17U DL team. DL organizations that also have Tier I teams may not field 15O and 16U Tier I teams.

15U DL Teams

- a) 15U DL – Fourteen (14) and fifteen (15) year-old players. No thirteen (13) year-old players may be rostered or play on a 15U DL team.
- b) No more than four (4) fourteen (14) year-old players may be rostered on a 15U DL team.
- c) No more than one (1) fourteen (14) year-old goaltender may be rostered on a 15U DL team. If a DL organization does roster a 14-year-old goaltender on their 15U DL team, that player counts against the four (4) fourteen year old player roster limitation for 15U DL teams.
- d) A 15U DL team may roster and play up to two (2) non-US citizens on that DL team (excluding goaltenders who must be US citizens), provided that the non-US citizen player(s) must have previously been registered with USA Hockey and played on a USA Hockey team during a previous season.

17U DL Teams

- a) Fifteen (15), sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) year-old players. No fourteen (14) year-old or younger players may be rostered or play on a 17U DL team.
- b) No more than two (2) fifteen (15) year-old players may be rostered on a 17U DL team.
- c) No more than one (1) fifteen (15) year-old goaltender may be rostered on a 17U DL team. If a DL organization does roster a 15-year-old goaltender on their 17U DL team, that player counts against the two (2) fifteen year old player roster limitation for 17U DL teams.
- d) A 17U DL team may roster and play up to two (2) non-US citizens on that DL team (excluding goaltenders who must be US citizens), provided that the non-US citizen players must have previously been registered with USA Hockey and played on a USA Hockey team during a previous season.

4. Vertical Roster Integration for DL Teams

Age-appropriate vertical roster movement between a DL organization's DL teams and that organization's Tier I teams is allowed between September 1 and February 15 of the season, subject to the following restrictions and conditions:

- a) No thirteen (13) year-old players may play in any 15U DL or 17U DL game.
- b) Fourteen (14) year-old players on a DL organization's Tier I 14U team may be vertically integrated during the season on the organization's 15U DL team.
- c) Fifteen (15) year-old players on a 15U DL team may be vertically integrated during the season on the organization's 17U DL team.
- d) Sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) year-old players on a DL organization's Tier I 18U team may be vertically integrated during the season on the organization's 17U DL team.
- e) Any DL organization player participating in a game under the DL vertical integration policy may only play one (1) game per day.
- f) Notwithstanding (a) – (e) above, in games played by any DL team against a Tier I team, the teams must follow the Tier I Vertical Integration Rules as set forth in the USA Hockey Annual Guide.

5. Post Season Play

Development League teams are not eligible to participate in any USA Hockey National Championships. Team and player eligibility to participate in any DL playoff or championship will be governed by the USA Hockey Development League Guidebook rather than Section IX of the USA Hockey Rules and Regulations. The League Commissioner will decide on any question on the eligibility of a player, team or coach to participate in any DL playoff or championship based on the Development League Guidebook. Should a player, team or coach be declared ineligible to compete in any DL Regional playoff or League Championship by a final decision of the League Commissioner, the player, team or coach may appeal its ineligibility to the DL Joint subcommittee. Upon receipt of any such appeal the DL Joint subcommittee shall render a decision as soon as possible. Notwithstanding Bylaw 10.E.(1)(b), the decision of the DL Joint subcommittee shall be final.

6. Player Recruitment, Player Agreements and Tryouts

Development League teams may recruit and sign players to Player Agreements according to the following timeline:

- a) January 15th-January 31st: Early Signing Period for DL teams to sign their organization's returning players.
- b) February 1st – End of February: DL Open Signing Period.
- c) March 1st – End of National Championships: Blackout Period (no tryouts or signing of players).
- d) End of National Championships – 48 hours after National Championships – DL Open Signing Period resumes
 - i. Players participating in the USA Hockey National Championships may be signed to a DL player agreement once that player's team has been eliminated from National Championship medal games.
 - ii. DL teams (as well as Tier I teams) may begin player tryouts and signing of players 48 hours after the last game of the National Championships.
- e) DL teams are required to release any DL team player from a Player Agreement without any financial penalty if the player is signing with the NDTP, USHL, or NAHL team prior to that DL team's first game. If a player seeks to leave a DL team after that team's first game to play with the NDTP, USHL, or NAHL team the player must satisfy any financial obligation to the DL team or the player and DL team may reach a mutual agreement on any financial obligation of the player to the DL team.
- f) Player Agreements must be executed for all DL players before they can be rostered on a DL team. DL teams may offer Player Agreements and sign a maximum of twenty-two (22) players to a DL team.
- g) A DL team/program must notify the DL League Registrar of the name of any players signed to a Player Agreement and the specific team that the player committed to playing on within 24 hours after the signing of a Player Agreement.
- h) Player Agreements offered by DL teams/programs must provide information as required in the Development League Guidebook.
- i) The execution of a Player Agreement by a player and parent binds and commits the player to that DL team for the entirety of the team's playing season. Likewise, the execution of a Player Agreement by a DL team binds and commits that team to the player and secures a roster position for that player on the signing team for the entire applicable season. Any disputes between the player and the DL team on the application of a Player Agreement may be resolved in the sole discretion of the DL Commissioner

as he/she deems proper under the circumstances, with the right to appeal to the National Appeals Committee pursuant to Bylaw 10.E.

7. Selection of Teams/Programs to Participate in the USA Hockey Development League:

The specific criteria for team participation in the Development League, the application and selection process, the annual team assessment due to the league, the number of teams in the League, the team operating requirements, the periodic review of team/program performance, and the withdrawal and continuation of teams within the League will be set out each season in the Development League Guidebook on or before January 1 of each year.

8. Development League Discipline Actions or Administrative Actions/Decisions:

a) For any necessary disciplinary hearings involving a DL team, player, coach or representative, the DL Commissioner shall appoint a three (3) person disciplinary hearing panel to conduct a hearing pursuant to USA Hockey Bylaw 10. C. The discipline hearing panel shall consist of one (1) Affiliate President, one (1) Youth Council member, and one (1) Player Development Committee member.

b) Any appeal of a DL discipline hearing panel must be submitted in writing to the National Appeals Committee within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the decision appealed from, and the appeal shall be decided in accordance with the procedures in USA Hockey Bylaw 10.E. The decision of the National Appeals Committee on the appeal is final.

c) Notwithstanding (a) and (b) above, in discipline arising from games played between a DL team and a Tier I team, the discipline of the DL team or individual shall be addressed as described in (a) and (b), and the discipline of the Tier I team or individual shall be referred to the applicable Affiliate.

d) The DL Commissioner will hear all Administrative Actions other than Administrative Actions taken by an Affiliate, which shall be determined by the Affiliate. Any appeals of administrative decisions made by the DL Commissioner must be submitted to the DL Joint subcommittee within fourteen (14) days of the decision or action by the DL Commissioner.

Except as specifically set forth in this Section III.J of the USA Hockey Rules & Regulations the applicable Affiliate shall retain discipline authority over DL teams and players.

IV. OFFICIALS REGISTRATION

A. Procedure

All on-ice officials must register directly with USA Hockey online at usahockey.com by completing the online registration process and paying the proper fee. Those on-ice officials who are unable to submit their application online may obtain an Official Registration form from their district referee-in-chief.

Previously registered ice hockey officials will receive notification with their specific registration information from the national office prior to the start of

the registration season. When the application has been completed online or submitted to the national office with the proper fee, the official will be provided:

- An email confirmation of receipt of their application with additional USA Hockey officiating membership information and resource materials
- The current *Official Rules and Casebook of Ice Hockey* (if not previously received)
- Information on completing the online playing rules exercise and online education module curriculum

All non-tenured on-ice officials are required to complete an officiating classroom seminar program which will include online components.

All officials that will be 17 years old as of December 31 of that registration year will be required to complete the U.S. Center for SafeSport online training prior to participation and in accordance with Safe Sport Program Policies. All officials that are 18 years old when the current season membership opens must fulfill their USA Hockey background screening requirements once every two seasons.

The MINIMUM requirement for each classroom seminar component for each level is as follows:

- Level 1 – 3.5 hours of virtual classroom time plus designated online education modules
- Level 2 – Minimum of 3 hours of virtual classroom time plus designated online modules
- Level 3 – Minimum of 3 hours of virtual classroom time plus designated online modules
- Level 4 – Minimum of 3 hours of virtual classroom time plus designated online modules

NOTE: Referees-in-chief and local support staff are encouraged to coordinate in-person development events (both classroom and on-ice) for continued education purposes, and all officials are recommended to participate in these events.

NOTE 2: Level 1 classroom seminars may be hosted in-person (in lieu of virtual courses) per approval by the Officiating Education Program.

There are tenured registration classifications for both Level 3 and Level 4 officials. Officials who have been completely registered at either Level 3 or Level 4 for three consecutive seasons will be eligible to attend the USA Hockey Advanced Officiating Symposium to obtain their “tenured” status. Once tenured status is achieved, those officials will complete the following registration requirements each season to maintain their tenured status for as long as they continue to register with USA Hockey as an official:

- Submit USA Hockey online application and appropriate fee
- Complete playing rules exercise
- Complete abbreviated online education modules
- Complete online SafeSport training prior to participation and in accordance with Safe Sport Program Policies, and fulfill USA Hockey background screening requirements every two seasons

Once all appropriate registration requirements have been successfully completed, for the level applied for, and the appropriate information forwarded to the national office, the applicant shall be sent:

- A referee card for the proper level classification based on requirements met
- A sweater crest for the current season
- Additional information regarding insurance coverage and other officiating program resources available to them

When the referee application has been approved and is received with the appropriate fees in the USA Hockey national office, the referee membership record will be created and/or updated upon completion of all registration requirements in the USA Hockey database. The district records are available to the referee-in-chief, or their designee, so that local assigners will know who is eligible to officiate.

Registration cards are not transferable and must be renewed annually through the national office.

B. Classifications

There shall be five classes of ice hockey referees as follows (USA Hockey's officiating program assignment guidelines which outline recommended officiating levels for each category of play can be viewed on usahockey.com):

- Level 4 – annual fee – \$135 (including tenured)
- Level 3 – annual fee – \$135 (including tenured)
- Level 2 – annual fee – \$135
- Level 1 – annual fee – \$75
- Affiliated – Those who do not actively officiate on the ice – annual fee – \$55

Level 2, 3 and 4 officials, including tenured officials, must be completely registered (card and crest issued) on or before December 31 to be eligible to officiate in any state, district or regional playoff or national championship. Only Level 3 or 4 officials may officiate district, regional or national championships, unless approved by the Officiating Program Director, the national referee-in-chief, and the National Tournament chair prior to the district, regional or national championships.

Registration as a USA Hockey on-ice official is not a guarantee of assignment. All USA Hockey officials shall be considered independent contractors.

V. COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM

A. Coach Registration

All ice hockey coaches as well as instructors of USA Hockey programs shall be registered annually as individual Participants of USA Hockey for the current season (before the start of the season) in order to be eligible to coach/instruct in any regular-season activities (practices, clinics, games, tournaments, try-outs, etc.), state, district, regional playoff, national championships or in the USA Hockey Player Development programs. There will be an annual fee to register the coaches (head and assistants) and instructors. Coaches who also play on a USA Hockey registered team are required to pay this registration fee only once per year. Coaches may register as participants online at usahockey.com.

com or through a local association/member program (refer to Section I Participant Registration).

NOTE 1: All USA Hockey Coaching Education Program Instructors and National Player Development Camp coaches will be exempt from the annual participant registration fee, but must complete the participant registration process.

NOTE 2: Those volunteers or employees who assist with helping disabled hockey teams on-ice (i.e. interpreters, pushers, on-ice mentors, etc.) must be properly registered with USA Hockey as volunteers but are not required to attend a CEP clinic and otherwise comply with these rules and regulations. It shall be permissible to allow an interpreter that has registered with USA Hockey as a volunteer and completed applicable background screens and SafeSport training to assist deaf/hard of hearing players or coaches on ice in practices and on the bench during games, without requiring such person complete any CEP requirements.

All ice hockey coaches and instructors of registered USA Hockey Youth 18 & Under and below, high school, girls 19 & under and below, and disabled programs must properly wear an approved ice hockey helmet during all on-ice sessions, including practices, controlled scrimmages and all Coaching Education Program clinics and/or workshops. Failure to comply will result in a 30 day suspension from all activities involving USA Hockey registered programs.

B. Coaching Education Program Requirements

(1) Required Coaching Education Program Levels for Ice Hockey

All coaches must have the required certification level by January 1 of the current season. Districts and/or Affiliates may not impose earlier deadlines for coaches to attend a clinic prior to December 31.

- (a) All coaches must enter USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program at the 6U/8U Level if coaching Learn to Skate (LTS), Learn to Play (LTP), 6U/8U classification or a Level 1 if they are coaching 10U classification and above.

Coaches at the 6U/8U Level do not need to progress any further until one of the following occurs:

1. The coach moves up to another age classification above 8U, or
2. The coach returns to 6U/8U for the fifth consecutive season and the level is now expired.

Coaches at the 6U/8U must take the 6U/8U refresher education every five years if they are continuing to coach at 6U/8U classification or LTS/LTP.

Coaches in 6U/8U should not take Level 1 until they start coaching at the 10U classification and above level.

As of the 2025-26 season, Level 1 coaches must continue their education with a coaching clinic each year until, at a minimum, they achieve Level 4. Coaches of disabled hockey, may remain at Level 1 or other certification level, even if expired, until such time as they are coaching any older age level of play or something other than disabled hockey.

A coach may attend only one (1) certification clinic per year. This does not include continuing education clinics or modules. The 6U/8U clinic can be taken by coaches that are Level 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 for continuing education credit.

Once Level 4 is achieved, subject to the Grandfather Clause set forth in paragraph (d) below, coaches will need to have completed 5 credit hours of continuing education prior to the expiration of their level, and if renewed within each subsequent three-year period or in the alternative complete their Level 5 classification.

Once Level 5 is achieved, coaches will need to have completed 5 credit hours of continuing education prior to the expiration of their level and within each subsequent four-year period thereafter [as outlined in Paragraph (c) below].

also complete online age-specific training modules specific to the level of play they are coaching, if they have not already taken that module. This requirement applies to all coaches at all levels, 6U/8U through 5. Coaches may complete more than one age-specific module in any given season. As of the 2023-24 season, all coaches must complete the Foundations for Player Development and the age-specific modules prior to participating with the team.

- (b) In addition to the training in paragraph (a) above, coaches must also complete online age-specific training modules specific to the level of play they are coaching, if they have not already taken that module. This requirement applies to all coaches at all levels, 6U/8U through 5. Coaches may complete more than one age-specific module in any given season. As of the 2023-24 season, all coaches must complete the Foundations for Player Development and the age-specific modules prior to participating with the team.
- (c) Effective in the 2022-23 season, Level 4 coaching certifications are valid for three (3) seasons, and Level 5 coaching certifications are valid for four (4) seasons, each as indicated by an expiration date.

(d) Grandfather Clause

For those coaches who received Level 4 or Level 5 PRIOR TO January 1, 2021, and who are coaching or begin to coach after this date, any Tier I or Tier II teams will be required to do continuing education as required in (c) above.

Coaches who received a Level 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 prior to January 1, 2025, and who are coaching after this date, may coach at the 6U/8U classification or LTS/LTP with their current level, even if expired.

If a 6U/8U coach takes a higher level of education after January 1, 2025, they are no longer grandfathered in at the 6U/8U level and must remain current in education regardless of what age classification they are coaching.

(e) Previous/Expired Certifications

Coaches with any expired certification will retain their previous certification levels provided the certification can be verified. Coaches may re-enter the certification system at that previous level and be subject to the certification guidelines in (a) through (c) above and/or (f) below.

(f) Continuing Education (CE) Accumulation and Expiration

The USA Hockey clinic listings will indicate all continuing education offerings and the credit value of each. The Coaching Education Program retains the responsibility for defining continuing education credit values, including clinic or online course work.

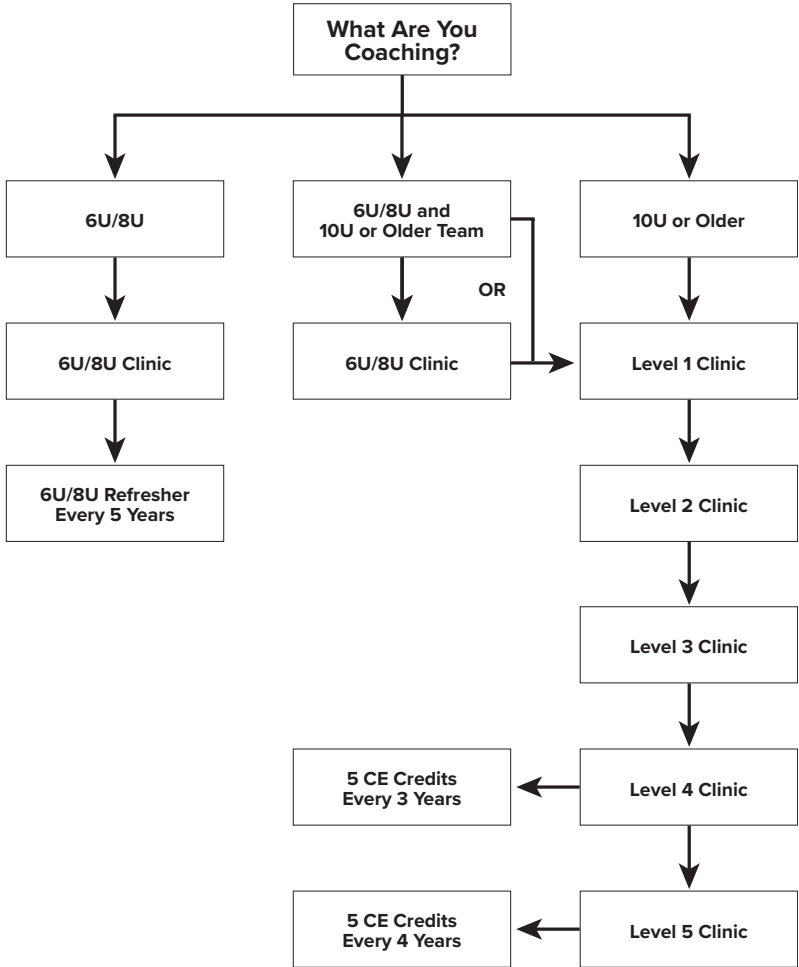
Coaches that are Level 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 may accumulate continuing education credits and will remain available for a maximum of eight years since completed, subject to the Level 4 and Level 5 credit hour expiration rules set forth below.

Coaches at the 6U/8U Level will be able to take continuing education but will not be able to bank credit hours.

Once a Level 4 or 5 coach reaches their expiration date, all credits will be applied from their account and if they have their five credits of continuing education their certification will renew.

Any credits above the five needed to recertify their Level 4 or 5 will be erased from their account.

2025-26 CEP AGE PROGRESSION GUIDELINES



(2) Evidence of Level

It is the responsibility of the local association to identify those coaches who do not meet the certification requirements. All coaches have until December 31 of the current season to attend a USA Hockey coaching clinic.

Prior to the start of each game, the Head coach present is required to sign the designated area of the scoresheet in order to verify the accuracy of the playing roster, as it appears on the scoresheet, for that game.

(3) Penalty and Enforcement

Any coach not in possession of these certification requirements will be ineligible to coach for the remainder of the season. Districts and/or affiliates are required to uphold this penalty. It will be the responsibility of the local association registering the team to enforce the national policy.

C. Under-Age Coaches**(1) Student Coach**

A player age 13 through 17 who is currently properly registered with USA Hockey may serve as a Student Coach.

(2) Qualifications

- Must attend a training session conducted by the local hockey association or audit a Level 6U/8U clinic or a Level 1 clinic depending on what age classification they are going to coach (not required to pay nor will they receive certification credit).
- Must always be under the supervision of a carded, screened adult coach during all practices, clinics, try-outs and in the locker room.
- May help out at practices, clinics, try-outs only. (May not participate as a player in scrimmages or games when acting as a STUDENT COACH).
- May not act as a head coach or an assistant coach during practices or games.
- May be on the bench during games with an adult. The STUDENT COACH will count as one of the maximum of four Team Officials allowed on the bench.
- Must wear a helmet with full face shield, neck laceration protection, gloves and skates while on the ice. Must wear a helmet with a full face shield during games while on the bench.
- May only work with players at least one full playing age level below the STUDENT COACH (e.g., a 14U player may act as a STUDENT COACH at the 12U, 10U or 8U level) except a STUDENT COACH working with players in a disabled hockey program.
- The organization that is using the STUDENT COACH must provide a form indicating on the team on which he/she is participating as a STUDENT COACH, and, if applicable, what team he/she is properly registered/rostered as a player. A model form is available on the usahockey.com website.
- Upon reaching the age of 18, the STUDENT COACH must comply with the USA Hockey Screening Program and meet the USA Hockey Coaching Education Program requirements which will qualify him/her to act as an assistant or head coach.

D. SafeSport and Screening Policy

All USA Hockey coaches and instructors will complete the U.S. Center for SafeSport online training and background check in accordance with USA Hockey Safe Sport Policies. Failure to comply with the SafeSport and Screening Policies will result in the forfeiture of coaching privileges in programs, at sites, or events under USA Hockey's governance.

E. Coaching Ethics Code

All USA Hockey ice hockey coaches (head and assistant) and instructors must abide by the USA Hockey Coaching Ethics Code, and understand that violations may result in full or partial forfeiture of coaching privileges in programs, at sites or events under USA Hockey's governance.

All coaches have an obligation to be familiar with USA Hockey's Coaching Ethics Code. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of an ethical standard is not itself a defense to a charge of unethical conduct. The USA Hockey Coaching Ethics Code can be found online at usahockey.com under Coaches.

VI. TEAM MANAGER/VOLUNTEERS

It is recommended that Youth, Girls and Disabled Disciplines registered ice hockey teams have a team manager. All Youth and Girls national championship bound teams are required to have a team manager. Disabled Disciplines teams that attend national championship or other USA Hockey sponsored events (e.g. Classics) are required to have a team manager. A coach who also serves as team manager would register only as a coach. Managers are covered under USA Hockey insurance policies. A team manager who is not registered as a coach may not participate in on-ice activities or be on the bench during games.

USA Hockey Managers/Volunteers, who have access to youth participants, will complete the U.S. Center for SafeSport online training and background check in accordance with USA Hockey SafeSport Policies. Failure to comply with the SafeSport and Screening Policies will result in the forfeiture of privileges in programs, at sites, or events under USA Hockey's governance.

The team manager, locker room monitors and on-ice volunteers (including sled pushers) are required to be added to the team roster.

The team manager shall be the custodian of all documents necessary for credential review prior to participation in invitational tournaments and district, regional and national championships. See Section IX: District Playoffs and National Championships, Subsection P. for complete listing.

VII. PLAYING RULES

USA Hockey will publish two official playing rules books – one that will pertain to all teams and leagues registered in the Youth, Girls, High School, Adult and Disabled ice hockey classifications and one that will pertain to all teams and leagues registered in the Junior classifications. All constituent members must abide by the appropriate rulebook. Constituent members include all teams registered with USA Hockey as well as the leagues in which these teams are playing. No other playing rules book will be allowed.

Any requested modifications to the playing rules by any Affiliate or local league must be submitted to the district referee-in-chief for their review. (in the case of modifying a Disabled Playing Rule the request shall be submitted to the Disabled Section chairperson and Disabled Hockey referee-in-chief). The District referee-in-chief will then submit their recommendation to the USA Hockey Playing Rules Committee who shall make the final decision.

For the Junior version of the USA Hockey playing rules, any requested modifications to the playing rules shall be submitted to the Junior Council for review and recommendation prior to final review and approval by the USA Hockey Playing Rules Committee.

These requests must be submitted in writing prior to the start of each season and no later than August 15.

Changes to the above policy can be made from time to time by the Board of Directors.

Individual players and coaches have the personal responsibility to wear, and team officials, hockey associations and leagues must enforce all required protective equipment rules (including, but not restricted to helmets, facemasks, mouthpieces and neck laceration protectors) during practice sessions.

VIII. GAMES, EXHIBITION GAMES, INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENTS, SANCTIONED LEAGUES AND SANCTIONED EVENTS

In order to be eligible to be awarded USA Hockey district/affiliate tournaments, national tournaments or coaching/officiating clinics, the host facility must be a United States Ice Rink Association member and register all of its ice hockey programs/leagues with USA Hockey. Exceptions can be granted with the approval of the appropriate council.

- A. Definition of a Game:** An ice hockey game is a contest played against another team which is registered with USA Hockey or a member organization of the IIHF or an event sanctioned by the IPC/WPIH. USA Hockey playing rules or approved modification thereof shall apply.
- (1) The age appropriate standard playing surface at 8 & Under is cross-ice or half-ice.
 - (2) Subject to limited exceptions as are approved by the USA Hockey Player Development Committee, all games and scrimmages at the 8U age level shall be played either cross-ice or half-ice, or on a surface that is equal to or less than the dimensions of cross-ice or half-ice. Each Affiliate shall enact applicable rules and regulations to address the governance, implementation and transition for this rule to become effective within the Affiliate. To the extent an Affiliate desires to seek exceptions for a limited number of full ice games or scrimmages for its teams at the 8U level, the Affiliate shall submit a plan by January 31 each year detailing such request to the USA Hockey Player Development Committee. The Affiliate's plan is subject to the annual approval of the Player Development Committee which will give final determination by March 31 of the same year.

- B.** Registered USA Hockey ice hockey teams shall not participate in games against non-registered teams without prior written approval of the appropriate registrar. The district risk manager and district referee-in-chief shall receive a copy of such written approval. Violation of this rule shall subject the team to suspension by the appropriate Affiliate.
- C. Definition of a Tournament:** Ice hockey competition, other than normally scheduled league or exhibition games, where multiple, legally-registered, teams compete within specified time frame in which a champion may or may not be determined. This shall include gatherings typically consisting of three (3) or more teams, except Association Exchanges which are limited to two (2) Associations. This shall also include events described as Showcases, Exhibitions, 3 on 3, or 4 on 4 Pond style events, league championship tournaments, or any other gathering of teams outside of regular season league games where a registration fee is charged to participate. At the discretion of the District Registrar certain 8U Jamboree style events or Disabled events designed to make it easier for teams to play other teams in the league, where no champion is determined, may be sanctioned as a Special Event rather than an Invitational Tournament.
- D.** All invitational ice hockey tournaments that involve USA Hockey registered teams and/or another amateur hockey federation or association must receive the sanction of the appropriate registrar for the district where the tournament will be held.
- E.** The conditions for sanction of an ice hockey tournament are as follows:
- (1) Written application on the official USA Hockey invitational tournament application form must be submitted to the appropriate registrar for the district where the tournament will be held.
 - (2) The appropriate registrar, with the approval of the applicant's Affiliate association, may issue a sanction where no exceptions to USA Hockey rules and regulations are involved.
 - (3) Applications must be accompanied by a copy of the full rules, regulations, and the complete procedures of the tournament. Where a tournament desires to use exceptions to the rules and regulations of USA Hockey, such exceptions must be approved in advance by the appropriate registrar and the host Affiliate association.
 - (4) Only USA Hockey-registered officials may officiate tournament games, unless specifically approved otherwise.
 - (5) Only USA Hockey playing rules and age divisions may be used in tournament play, unless specifically approved otherwise.
 - (6) The following sanction fees listed for invitational tournaments must be complied with.
 - USA Hockey teams only – \$250
 - USA Hockey and another federation – \$250 (additional requirements for foreign team participation are in Section XIII of these Rules and Regulations)
 - (7) Invitational tournaments shall be prohibited from being held within 100 miles of, and on the same weekend as a USA Hockey national championship and no invitational Disabled hockey tournaments shall

be held within 100 miles of, and on the same weekend as, a Disabled Discipline Classics.

- (8) The Tournament Director, as identified on the Invitational Tournament Application, is required to verify that all participating teams are properly registered with USA Hockey. A USA Hockey player roster form (1-T) approved by the District or Associate Registrar shall be proof of proper registration and individual player age. Invitational Tournaments shall not require player birth certificates for review. Travel permits are required for all non-USA Hockey teams, and any team from an Affiliate requiring travel permits.
- (9) It is recommended that the sanctioned tournament operator arrange for medical personnel to attend all tournament games with at least one (1) medical personnel on-site at every venue (regardless of number of ice sheets or games played) used for tournament play. Medical personnel shall be defined as: a Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC), EMT, Paramedic, or Physician.
- F.** Any ice hockey tournament which is conducted for profit, by an organization whose primary purpose is not to support amateur hockey or an amateur hockey team, shall also, as a condition of sanction, provide a copy of a tournament budget, or accounting of the proceeds of the tournament; and the fact that the tournament is conducted “for profit” shall be prominently displayed on all literature distributed for promotion of said tournament. The USA Hockey sanction fee for such tournaments shall be set by the Board of Directors or Executive Committee.
- G.** Permission for use of a tournament “title” that would imply that there is a “United States,” or “national” championship involved can only be granted by the appropriate USA Hockey council, and “International” or “World” by USA Hockey’s International Council.
- H.** Violation of any of the above rules and procedures will be considered grounds for suspension from USA Hockey of the individuals and/or bodies responsible for such violations.
- I.** USA Hockey ice hockey teams traveling to Canada to play games against Hockey Canada teams must obtain a Canadian/USA Hockey Travel Permit. This permit is available from your appropriate registrar or his/her designee.
- J.** Except as stated in Section VIII: Games, Exhibition Games, Invitational Tournaments and Sanctioned Events., for an event to be sanctioned, all players, coaches, on-ice officials and team(s) must be properly registered with USA Hockey. All practices are sanctioned and all games and scrimmages are sanctioned provided both teams are properly registered. Early season clinics and tryouts leading toward team selection do not require rosters, however, all coaches and players must be individually registered.

Invitational tournament games are considered sanctioned events providing the tournament has received USA Hockey sanctioning. Other on-ice activities may be approved by the District Registrar or his/her designee as sanctioned events. Certain other activities conducted by teams/programs may be considered sanctioned events (for example, bingo games, pancake breakfasts, etc.). Contact your district risk manager or appropriate registrar for details.

K. USA Hockey Sanctioning of International Athletic Competition

USA Hockey Sanctioning of International Athletic Competition. As required by the Amateur Sports Act, §220525, USA Hockey shall review a request by an amateur sports organization or person for USA Hockey to sanction the organization or person holding an international amateur hockey competition in the United States, or to sponsor United States amateur athletes to compete in international amateur hockey competition outside the United States, and unless USA Hockey decides by clear and convincing evidence that holding or sponsoring an international athletic competition would be detrimental to the best interest of the sport, shall grant such sanction only if each of the following requirements are met:

1. The organization or person must pay USA Hockey any required sanctioning fee, if the fee is reasonable (including without limitation consideration of any direct or indirect costs or expenses of USA Hockey in sanctioning such competition) and nondiscriminatory;
2. For a sanction to hold an international amateur hockey competition in the United States, the organization or person must (a) submit to USA Hockey an audited or notarized financial report of similar events, if any, conducted by the organization or person, and (b) demonstrate that the requirements of subsection (4) below have been met;
3. For a sanction to sponsor United States amateur athletes to compete in international amateur hockey competition outside the United States the organization or person must (a) submit to USA Hockey a report of the most recent trip to a foreign country, if any, that the organization or person has sponsored for the purpose of having United States amateur athletes compete in international amateur hockey competition, and (b) submit a letter from the appropriate entity that will host the amateur athletic competition certifying that the requirements of subsection (4) below have been met;
4. The following requirements have been demonstrated or certified to have been met, as required by subsections (2) and (3) above:
 - (a) Appropriate measures have been taken to protect the amateur status of athletes who will take part in the competition and to protect their eligibility to compete in amateur athletic competition;
 - (b) Appropriate provision has been made for validation of any records established during the competition;
 - (c) Due regard has been given to international amateur athletic requirements specifically applicable to the competition;
 - (d) The competition will be conducted by qualified officials;
 - (e) Proper medical supervision will be provided for athletes who will participate in the competition;
 - (f) Proper safety precautions have been taken to protect the personal welfare of the athletes and spectators at the competition; and
 - (g) The amateur sports organization or person requesting sanction from USA Hockey will implement and abide by the policies and procedures to prevent the abuse, including emotional, physical, and child abuse, of amateur athletes participating in amateur athletic activities applicable to USA Hockey (USA Hockey shall also

require that the amateur sport organization or person requesting the sanction comply with the requirements of the U.S. Center for SafeSport).

IX. STATE/AFFILIATE AND/OR DISTRICT PLAYOFFS AND NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Youth Classifications

[13 & 14 (14U), 15-only (15O), 15 & 16 (16U), 17 & 18 (18U)]

Girls Classifications

[13 & 14 (14U), 15 & 16 (16U), 17 to 19 (19U)]

High School

Each season, USA Hockey shall conduct state/affiliate and/or district playoffs and national championship tournaments and/or playoffs leading thereto in the Youth, Girls and High School age classifications. The rules and regulations governing eligibility and qualification for the state/affiliate and/or district and national championships are set forth in this Article IX, except for Warrior, Adult Sled and Youth Sled, which are set forth in Section XIV. The USA Hockey Youth Council shall approve a USA Hockey State/Affiliate and/or District and National Championship Tournament Guidebook, which shall be published and available on the USA Hockey website on or before September 1 prior to the following year's state/affiliate and/or district and national championship tournaments. Except as set forth herein, to the extent of any contrary information in the USA Hockey Annual Guide, the State/Affiliate and/or District and National Championship Tournament Guidebook shall be the binding authority for the requirements, rules, regulations, operation and procedures of all USA Hockey state/affiliate and/or district and national championship tournaments. For regulations applicable to regional, invitational and national championships for the Junior and Adult classifications and all Disabled Disciplines, please contact the appropriate registrar, the junior staff liaison, the Disabled Disciplines staff liaison, or the USA Hockey national office.

NOTE: Each reference to district and national championship tournaments shall refer to state/affiliate and/or district and national championships tournaments and/or playoffs leading thereto.

A. *Player and Team Registration*

All Tier 1 teams must register with USA Hockey on or before October 15th. All other national tournament-bound teams and players must be registered with USA Hockey and must be a member in good standing of an Affiliate association on or before December 31 of the playing season. Teams competing on natural ice have until January 20 to register. Player changes to the official team roster for youth Tier I and Tier II teams and girls national tournament-bound teams will not be accepted after February 15. For games to count in meeting the 18/12 rule, that team's official team roster registration form (1-T) must be certified by the appropriate district registrar or his/her designee prior to that game being played.

B. *Coaching Education Requirements*

All coaches must have current USA Hockey certification and the corresponding online age-specific module to participate in the district and national championships. All coaches are expected and required to follow all USA Hockey rules, including the helmet rule, during all pre-tournament and

tournament events. If a coach is found non-compliant with the helmet rule during any pre-tournament or tournament event(s), it will result in a Discipline Committee hearing with a minimum 30-day suspension from all activities involving USA Hockey registered programs. The Discipline Committee will refer the non-compliance back to the appropriate Affiliate to implement the suspension. Pre-tournament refers to any on-ice sessions, practices, or scrimmages that a coach participates in at any tournament venue or in the tournament city up to 2-days prior to the start of the state/affiliate and/or district and national championships.

C. Team Classifications

YOUTH/GIRLS – Within each Youth and Girls classification, the state/affiliate and/or district and national championships shall be at the Tier I and Tier II levels with eligibility to participate as follows:

Tier I – any youth or girls team that is properly registered with USA Hockey as a Tier I national championship bound team.

Tier II – any youth or girls team that is certified Tier II by an Affiliate organization which has jurisdiction over the team. Tier II certification will be based on criteria set up by the Affiliate and approved by the Youth Council.

If the Affiliate rules permit a certified Tier II team to participate in the Affiliate's Tier I district playoffs and a certified Tier II team elects to participate in that Affiliate's Tier I district playoffs, then that certified Tier II team shall be ineligible to participate in the Tier II national championships.

HIGH SCHOOL – Any high school team that is properly registered with USA Hockey as a High School national championship bound team shall be eligible to participate in the High School National Championship. Representation from each state will be determined by the state Affiliate participating in the tournament.

For districts only, these rules and regulations may be modified for local and state association competition and districts that are composed of a single state, as conditions may require.

Player eligibility regulations may not be less restrictive than those governing national championships.

Teams seeking to participate in the High School National Championship should play a regular season schedule in a high school league as a team, if available within that team's state, or compete against other high school registered teams during their regular season schedule. They should not be an "all-star" team formed for the purpose of attending the High School National Championship.

A High School player residing in one Affiliate may not play on a National Tournament bound Division II (Combined) High School team in a different Affiliate unless both the Affiliate where the player resides and the Affiliate where the player desires to play have granted permission. In the event that a High School player has been denied such permission to play on a Division II (Combined) High School team other than in the Affiliate where the player resides, the player may appeal such denial to the National Championship Appeal Committee.

As set forth in greater detail each season in the USA Hockey District and National Championship Guidebook, to achieve balance and parity at the High School National Championship, teams participating in the High School National Championship (other than Girls teams) shall be placed in three (3) divisions (3A, 2A and 1A) with the 3A division made up of teams from states that have traditionally demonstrated a high level of competitiveness at prior High School National Championships and/or teams that have demonstrated a high level of competitive play during the current season.

D. *Tournament Eligibility and Registration*

- (1) Players and registered team members properly classified shall be eligible to participate in state/affiliate and/or district and national championships. For specifics see:
 - (a) Rules & Regulations; Section II: Classifications; Subsections Youth, Girls, High School Divisions
 - (b) Rules & Regulations; Section III: Team Membership and Registration; Subsection Proper Affiliate for Team/Program Registration.
 - (c) Rules & Regulations; Section VI: Team Manager/Volunteer
- (2) The team shall be certified by its appropriate registrar (form 2-C, team roster registration certification) to have complied with all eligibility requirements.
 - (a) All players and registered team members shall be listed on the official team roster (1-T) and credential verification sheet (form 1-C).
 - (b) All Youth and Girls national championship bound teams are required to have a team manager and, at minimum, one locker room monitor listed on the official team roster (1-T).
 - (c) All national tournament bound teams need to have positions and jersey numbers (home and away) assigned as part of the official team roster (1-T).
- (3) A verification and affirmation that a review of each player's birth certificate has been completed by a district registrar or his/her designee. When no verification and affirmation is provided, a copy of government-issued birth certificate, verification of birth or copy of a passport identification page for each rostered player, is required. Also, for all High School divisions, evidence of current school enrollment eligibility to participate on the team is required.
- (4) The team's certified player roster and credentials must be in the hands of the championship director one week before the start of the championship.
- (5) The team and each rostered member must be eligible to participate in the state/affiliate and/or district championships in order to participate in the national championships.
- (6) Number of Games for Eligibility – state/affiliate and/or districts and nationals

- (a) Each team must have competed as a team unit in at least eighteen (18) games for youth and girls teams, and at least ten (10) games for all High School divisions, and
 - (b) Each youth and girls player must have played in at least twelve (12) games during the season. Each player in all High School divisions must have played in at least five (5) games during the season.
 - (c) For games to count in meeting 18/12, (10/5 all high school divisions) rule, that team's player roster form (1-T) must be certified by the appropriate registrar or his/her designee prior to that game being played. Teams formed and certified prior to the September 1 season start may have games played in August counted toward fulfilling the 18/12, (10/5 all high school divisions) requirement, with approval of the district registrar. Player changes to the official team roster for youth and girls Tier I and Tier II teams will not be accepted after February 15. If an affiliate, state or district tournament is held prior to February 15, player changes to the official team roster will not be accepted after the affiliate, state or district tournament begins. If a player is rostered on a team at the time the team participates in a State/Affiliate and/or District tournament before February 15, the player may not be rostered on a different official team roster after the affiliate, state, or district tournament begins.
 - (d) A game is a contest played against another team which is registered with a member organization of the IIHF of the same competitive level and officiated by registered officials. A game shall consist of at least three (3) periods (or the equivalent, see paragraph Q. Time of Periods below), except where the game is interrupted, (by some unforeseen event) after two (2) periods have been completed. High School division games played against school sanctioned teams and USA Hockey high school teams shall count as games toward the 10/5 rule.
- (7) **Ineligible Coach(s)/Player(s)** – Any coach of a team that knowingly plays an ineligible player(s) shall be suspended from coaching in any games that lead to a state/affiliate and/or district and national championships in the current hockey season.
- (8) **Appeal Procedure** – Should a youth, girls or high school level team, coach or player(s) be declared ineligible by a final decision of the applicable affiliate, district or registrar to compete in state/affiliate, district and/or national championships, or playoffs leading to a state/affiliate and/or district or national championship, the team, coach or player may appeal its ineligibility to the National Championships Appeal Committee, which shall be comprised of the Youth Council chair, Girls Council chair, Registrar Section chair, National Championship chair, or their designees, and sufficient Eligible Athletes to meet the Athlete Representation Requirement. The National Championships Appeal Committee will add the High School Section Representative in the case of all High School divisions.

Upon receipt of the appeal, the National Championships Appeal Committee will render a decision as soon as possible. The decision of this National Championships Appeal Committee shall be final.

E. Number and Qualification of Teams

(1) State/Affiliate and/or Districts

- (a) The qualifying procedure and number of teams, and the entry of a host team, shall be determined by the district. The national championship director shall act as the final authority in all unresolved disputes.
- (b) The host shall be allowed an entry at districts, if permitted by the district or affiliate.
- (c) It is recommended that the national championship host team not participate in state or district playoffs.

(2) Nationals – Youth Tier I, Tier II, Girls, High School Divisions

- (a) The Youth Tier I and Girls Tier I National Championship Tournament shall include up to 24 teams. The Youth Tier II and Girls Tier II National Championship Tournaments shall include up to 48 teams. The High School National Championship shall include up to 48 High School teams and up to 48 Girls High School teams. The High School Section will decide each year the specific number of teams for High School National Championships.
- (b) Where a program already designated to act as host for a national championship tournament elects to participate in its state/affiliate and/or district playoffs and wins the state/affiliate and/or district playoffs, the state/affiliate and/or district playoffs runner-up team will be designated to represent the state/affiliate and/or district in the national championship. The host team must participate in the host position in the game format at all national championship tournaments, unless specifically approved otherwise.
- (c) No team representing a state/affiliate and/or district shall be ineligible from championship competition for reasons other than those found in this Article IX or in the National Championship Tournament Guidebook.
- (d) If, for any reason, there are less than twelve (12) teams qualified, the national championship director may select a team or teams in order to operate the tournament successfully.
- (e) For a tournament to qualify as a national championship, at least three (3) districts and a host must be represented.
- (f) The applicable Youth Council or Girls Council and the national tournament director have the discretion to operate a national tournament with any number of teams as they deem appropriate.

F. Entry Fees

(1) State/Affiliate and/or Districts

Fees should be determined by the cost of running the event. The fee shall be submitted and approved by the national championship chair at least thirty (30) days prior to the state/affiliate and/or district championship. The tournament may charge an entry fee for each team and may not charge a gate.

(2) Nationals

Each team at all national tournaments (Youth, Girls and High School) shall pay a tournament entry fee as determined by Section 2(J)(3)(i) of the National Championship Tournament Guidebook.

G. Notification of Intent to Enter Team(s)

- (1) Affiliate associations shall signify their intentions of entering a team(s) in the district playoffs at least sixty (60) days prior to the tournament.
- (2) A state/affiliate and/or district shall signify their intention of entering a team or teams in the Girls Tier I, Youth Tier I and Youth Tier II national championship, in writing, to USA Hockey with a copy to the appropriate Youth or Girls Council chair by October 15 of the current season. A district shall signify their intention of entering a team or teams in the Girls Tier II national championship, in writing, to USA Hockey with a copy to the appropriate Youth or Girls Council chair by November 15 of the current season. Affiliates shall signify their intention of entering a team(s) in any High School division national championships starting August 15 and ending November 15 of the current season.
- (3) Once declared, the state/affiliate and/or district must compete in the national championships or be subject to a one-year suspension from future championship eligibility by the USA Hockey Board of Directors.

The applicable Youth or Girls Council shall:

- (a) Notify the affected parties of the council's suspension recommendation at least thirty (30) days prior to the USA Hockey Annual Meeting.
 - (b) Give the affected parties an opportunity, in person or writing, to explain the circumstances which caused the non-appearance.
 - (c) Include its decision in the council's report to the Congress and Board of Directors at its Annual Meeting.
 - (d) Participation in USA Hockey state/affiliate and/or district and national championship play shall be at the discretion of USA Hockey Affiliate associations, subject to rules with regard to notice, etc., as set forth herein. No Affiliate shall be forced to participate, nor shall any of its constituent organizations have a vested right to participation, simply because USA Hockey does provide a national championship for which they may be eligible.
- (4) No USA Hockey member team or association may participate in any league that prohibits that team or association from entering and fully participating in its state, district or national championship. All teams participating in that league shall not be eligible to participate in any state, affiliate, district or national championship.

H. Completion Dates

All state/affiliate, and/or district tournaments must be completed not less than fourteen (14) days prior to the first day of the national championships. Dates for national championships will be established by the Youth and Girls Councils at the Annual Meeting prior to the tournaments and announced at that time.

I. Age Classifications

(1) Youth

To be eligible to compete in state/affiliate and/or district and national championships tournaments during the 2026-27 season, except as set forth in (3) below, a player must have been born during the year indicated below:

13 Only	2013 (in Tier I level only)
13 & 14	2012 and 2013
15 Only	2011
15 & 16	2010 and 2011
17 & 18	2008 and 2009

NOTE: The state/affiliate and/or district and national championships for the 13 Only and 15 Only age classification shall be for the Youth Tier I level only and shall be limited to players in the specific birth years defined in the 13 Only or 15 Only age classification chart above for the current season. Players that are not in specified eligible birth year in the current season shall not be permitted to be rostered on a 13 Only or 15 Only team and are not permitted to play in the State/Affiliate, District or National Championships at the 13 Only or 15 Only age classification under any circumstances.

(2) Girls

To be eligible to compete in state/affiliate and/or district and national championship tournaments during the 2026-27 season, except as set forth in (3) below, a player must have been born during the year indicated below:

13 & 14	2012 and 2013
15 & 16	2010 and 2011
17 to 19	2007, 2008 and 2009

(3) Participation in Older Divisions of State/Affiliate and/or District and National Championships

- (a) A player 12 years of age or younger (as defined in the age classification chart for the current season) is not eligible to play on a team intending or declared to compete in the state/affiliate and/or district and national championships or playoffs leading thereto.

NOTE: A player 12 years of age or younger may not be rostered with a team of players that are also rostered on a National-bound roster (i.e. teams cannot create a 14U recreational roster with the under-age player(s) and create a secondary National-bound roster without the underage player(s)). The underage players must play at the 12U level or on a non-national bound team.

- (b) A player 13 years of age or older may play on a youth or girls team in an older classification at a district or national championship tournament only if the applicable Affiliate's rules or decisions, and the applicable local program's rules or decisions, permit that player to do so. A player residing in one Affiliate may not play on a team in an older classification in a different Affiliate unless both the Affiliate where the player resides and the Affiliate where the player desires to play have granted permission to play in an older classification. In the event a youth or girls player has been denied the permission to play in an older classification in the Youth or Girls state/affiliate and/or district and national championships on a team in an Affiliate other than the Affiliate where the player resides, the player may appeal such denial to the National Championship Appeal Committee.

All other requirements, rules, regulations, operation and procedures of all USA Hockey state/affiliate and/or district and national championship tournaments shall be set forth in the State/Affiliate and/or District and National Championship Tournament Guidebook.

X. ALLIED MEMBERS

Dues for Allied Members (other than those Allied Members whose dues are specifically stated in other sections of these regulations) shall be established by the Board of Directors. All Allied Members are non-voting members.

XI. JUNIOR HOCKEY

A. Sanctioned Junior Competition

(1) Competition Against Non-Registered Teams

USA Hockey-registered Junior teams shall not be allowed to participate in games against any team(s) not registered with USA Hockey or a member organization of the IIHF without prior written approval of USA Hockey. The Junior referee-in-chief and the Junior Council chair shall receive a copy of the prior written approval for such competition. Violations of this rule shall subject the team to suspension by the Junior Council, or its designee.

(2) Tournaments

All invitational tournaments involving USA Hockey-registered junior hockey teams, must receive the sanction from the USA Hockey national office. The Junior referee-in-chief and the Junior Council chair shall receive a copy of the sanction approving such competition. Violation of this rule shall subject the team to a suspension by the Junior Council or its designee.

(3) Conditions for Sanction

The condition for the issuance of sanction by USA Hockey shall be as follows:

(a) Application

Written application on the official USA Hockey invitational tournament application form must be submitted to the USA Hockey national office.

(b) Disclosure of Rules/Regulations/Procedures to be Used

Applications must be accompanied by a copy of the full rules, regulations, and the complete procedures of the tournament. Where a tournament desires to use exceptions to the rules and regulations of USA Hockey, such exceptions must be approved in advance by the junior referee-in-chief and the Junior Council chair.

(c) Officials

Only USA Hockey-registered and qualified officials may officiate tournament games, unless prior approval has been secured from the junior referee-in-chief.

(d) Playing Rules

Only USA Hockey junior playing rules and age divisions may be used in tournament play, unless specifically approved by the junior referee-in-chief.

(e) Issuance of Sanction

The national office may issue a sanction where no exceptions to USA Hockey rules and regulations are involved. In the case of exceptions the competition must be approved by the junior referee-in-chief and the chair of the Junior Council. A copy of the sanction shall be forwarded to the junior referee-in-chief and the Junior Council chair.

(f) Fees

The sanction fees shall be as follows:

1. USA Hockey member teams – \$50
2. Tournaments including other IIHF member teams – \$75

(g) Conflicts with USA Hockey Junior National Championships

Invitational tournaments shall be prohibited from being held within 100 miles of, and on the same weekend, as a USA Hockey Junior National Championship.

(4) Tournament Titles

Permission for use of a tournament “title” that would imply that there is a “United States,” or “National Championship” involved can only be granted by the USA Hockey Junior Council, and “International” or “World” by USA Hockey’s International Council.

(5) Violations

Violation of any of the above rules and procedures will be considered grounds for suspension from USA Hockey of the individuals and/or bodies responsible for such violations.

(6) Canadian Competition

USA Hockey junior teams traveling to Canada to play games against Hockey Canada teams must obtain a Canadian/USA Hockey Travel Permit. This permit is available from the national office. USA Hockey junior member teams authorized to participate in junior league competition sanctioned by Hockey Canada shall be able to secure an annual permit for all league sanctioned competition.

(7) International Competition

All junior teams participating in international competition or competition outside the United States shall also comply with all requirements set forth in Rules & Regulations XIII: International.

B. Junior Player Registration

For all Junior players and coaches, USA Hockey online registration shall be completed prior to participation in a USA Hockey sanctioned event (including tryouts). The player will receive an email confirmation of membership and a subscription to *USA Hockey Magazine*. All participants competing in the Junior classification shall register through their Junior teams. Existing Junior teams (those that were registered during the previous season) shall submit a properly completed team application spreadsheet by email to the USA Hockey

national office on or before May 25. Each player/coach will register with USA Hockey online at usahockey.com for the next season. No player shall be covered by USA Hockey insurance or be eligible for on-ice participation in a tryout, practice, scrimmage, and/or game competition until the required player registration information has been received by USA Hockey. Any new Junior teams (those that were not registered during the previous season) shall only be eligible to register players upon approval of the team pursuant to Section H of the Junior Rules & Regulations.

In the event that a player is rostered on more than one team, the USA Hockey national office shall have the final authority to certify the eligibility of any such player solely on the basis of the player's participation in the first regular-season game played after September 15 of the current playing season.

A junior player may be registered in only one (1) national ice hockey federation at a time.

NOTE: *The following are the rules and regulations of USA Hockey. Junior leagues may have other interrelated rules which may supplement and/or differ from those of USA Hockey, provided these differences have been approved in advance by the Junior Council. USA Hockey respects the autonomy of these leagues and their right to establish rules that shall apply to the teams under their jurisdiction.*

D. Junior Calendar

The following policy shall apply to and govern all USA Hockey registered junior teams, including, those based geographically within the United States but competing in non-USA Hockey sanctioned leagues. Unless otherwise agreed as provided in written affiliation agreements between teams of different levels of classifications that are on file at the USA Hockey national office and/or by the Affiliated Player Policy, the following calendar of significant dates shall govern and control movement of players during the calendar year.

(1) Season Start

The USA Hockey Junior Calendar shall commence with the "start of the season." That phrase, "start of the season," shall mean and be defined as "beginning immediately upon the completion of the final game (regular season, play-off, national championship) for the team on whose USA Hockey protected list the player last properly appeared during the immediately preceding season." Any unauthorized contact before the "start of the season," including a tryout camp/invitation shall be considered tampering and subject the offender to disciplinary action as provided herein. No player tuition agreement or Tier III commitment to play form, executed by any player/parent prior to the "start of the season," shall be valid or enforceable by the signing team, its league, or by USA Hockey.

(2) Early Season Team Identification, Evaluation, Selection and/or Development Camps

No early season team identification, evaluation, selection and/or development camps may be held by any USA Hockey member team until after the completion of the national championship for that team's classification or the completion of the Tier I and Tier II Youth National Championships, whichever comes later. Any solicitation/invitation directed to any particular player whose current season has not yet

- (1) Date that required player information will first be accepted by the USA Hockey national office through the Junior Registry**

No junior player may be claimed for the following season until the day after the completion of the youth national championships and the national championship of the classification in which the team is intending to compete in the upcoming season.
- (2) Official date of registration**

The official date of registration for a junior player shall be the date that the player's online registration is received by USA Hockey.
- (3) Maximum number of players registered per team**

In all Junior classifications, a maximum of twenty-five (25) players may be on a team's protected list at any one time. Only players properly registered on a team's protected list may participate in competition on behalf of that team.
- (4) Player Movement**

 - (a) Loans**

The loaning of a registered player is not permitted.
 - (b) Trades**

Trading of rostered players between junior teams by agreement is encouraged. Where the transfer of a rostered player is not agreed to by both teams, strict compliance with the Compensation Policy shall be required before the player shall be eligible to participate in any on-ice activity.
- (5) Players Requiring Releases, Transfers, Immigration Forms, Etc.**

 - (a)** Any player who requires a team release, International Ice Hockey Federation transfer, U.S. immigration forms, etc., shall be ineligible to participate in any USA Hockey-sanctioned game until the required documentation has been submitted to and approved by USA Hockey. All submissions shall be in writing, clearly legible, and shall include the names, phone numbers, fax numbers, addresses, etc., as may be necessary to enable verification (see USA Hockey Guidelines for Processing IIHF and Canadian Player Transfers).
 - (b) International Transfers**

All transfers of junior players to or from foreign federations must be approved by the Hockey Operations Department of USA Hockey. The transfer fee for player transfers to USA Hockey from a federation outside North America shall be established annually and will include the processing fee charged by the foreign federation. The fee must be paid before USA Hockey will commence the transfer process. All IIHF transfers expire June 30 of the current playing season.
 - (c) Canadian Transfers**

All transfers of junior players to or from the Canadian federation must be approved by the Hockey Operations Department of USA Hockey. The transfer fee for player transfers to or from Canada, shall be established annually and will include the processing fee charges by the foreign federation. The fee must be paid before USA Hockey will commence the transfer process. For further

provisions regarding the transfer process, see Rules & Regulations XII: Hockey Canada.

(6) Final Protected List

In order to be eligible for placement on a team's player protected list, the following information must be submitted:

- (a) Player's name;
- (b) Player's date of birth;
- (c) Last team for whom the player played games, including the team placing the player on its protected list;
- (d) Player's position; and
- (e) Player's citizenship information.

Any player that is not properly rostered with the USA Hockey Junior Registry, as required above, shall be deemed ineligible for game competition in a USA Hockey-sanctioned game. No additions/deletions to a team's protected list will be accepted within the USA Hockey Junior Registry after February 10, until the earlier of (i) completion of the national championship (the day after the completion of the tournament) of the classification of the team which the player seeks to play for, or (ii) May 15. Each team desiring protection under the compensation/rostering policies of USA Hockey shall submit the names of all currently rostered veteran players. A veteran player is a player who was properly rostered on February 10, and eligible to participate in the national championship for that team.

(7) Tampering/Compensation Protection

The protection provided by the USA Hockey Junior Tampering and Compensation Policies shall be available to teams properly registered with USA Hockey and then only for properly rostered and eligible players.

(8) Suspension of Players

A player may be suspended by their team, league or association with just cause, and thereby be prohibited from registration with any USA Hockey team, provided notification and the reason for the suspension is filed with the USA Hockey Vice President and chair of the Junior Council. The player has the right of appeal and review of the suspension before the Junior Council of USA Hockey. The decision of the Junior Council shall be final on the player's appeal, subject to appeal as provided in Bylaw 10.E(1)(f). Hockey Canada, in accordance with the agreement between USA Hockey and Hockey Canada, will honor this suspension.

Refusal to re-register with a previous team is not sufficient grounds for suspension.

(9) Players Turning Pro

The last USA Hockey team with which a player is registered before turning professional loses its rights to the player completely. When the player is reinstated to amateur status, he/she is free to register with any amateur team.

C. **Junior Age Players and Citizenship**

Commencing with the 2012-13 playing season and each season thereafter, the Junior age group shall only include participants who are at least 16 years of age and no older than 20 years of age as of December 31 of the current playing season. Junior teams/leagues are to be divided into Tier I, Tier II, Tier III Junior Leagues, and Junior Independent Teams and provisional for any of the above classifications. Notwithstanding the above age limitations, players who are 15-years-old as of the 31st day of December of the current playing season may apply in writing to play in the Tier I junior hockey league designated by USA Hockey at its Annual Meeting. Submission must be made by a set time designated by the Junior Council each year. The review of the player's ability shall be timely and the decision to deny or allow the player the ability to play in the Tier I league shall be done no later than April prior to the season that the player is applying to play junior hockey. Submission of a petition from the player's family will be submitted to the USA Hockey Junior staff liaison with copies to the USA Hockey Junior Council chair, Youth Council chair and the Tier I junior hockey league commissioner. A detailed written application of achievement of the player and the physical attributes of the player shall be submitted to the USA Hockey Junior staff liaison. USA Hockey, working in cooperation with the Tier I league, shall put together a committee to review the applicant's credentials and make a decision as to whether or not the player shall be considered for exceptional status. If the player is considered for exceptional status, the player will be put through an extensive review process.

In this age group only U.S. citizens are eligible to participate in the National Player Development Program. In the Tier III Junior age classifications, each USA Hockey member junior team may include up to four (4) non-citizens on its Protected List, provided that:

- (1) a non-U.S. citizen who has been a youth member of USA Hockey for three (3) consecutive seasons, resided in the U.S. prior to Junior level play, and has not played junior hockey outside of USA Hockey, will not be classified as a non-citizen import,
- (2) in addition, for Tier I only, each team may have up to two Canadian citizen skaters (non-goalies) that are not classified as a non-citizen import.

Through June 30, 2028, in the Tier II age classification, each USA Hockey member junior team may include up to eight (8) non-citizens on its Protected List, provided that:

- (1) Teams can roster up to four (4) import players with no restrictions on nationality; and
- (2) If a team adds a fifth, sixth, seventh or eighth import player, these additional players must be Canadian;
- (3) Notwithstanding the above, if a team rosters an import goaltender, they are limited to a total of seven (7) imports:
 - Four (4) import players with no restrictions on nationality;
 - Three (3) Canadian players.

Adding non-citizens to a USA Hockey-member Junior team's Protected List is subject to adherence to all IIHF/Canada player release and transfer policies. Each and every non-U.S. citizen shall count against the limit imposed herein.

All non-U.S. citizen junior players must provide the following documentation:

(1) Release

A release from the player's home team/association authorizing the player to compete for the USA Hockey member team; and

(2) IIHF/Canadian Transfer

A fully paid IIHF/Canadian required transfer from the player's home federation accepted by USA Hockey as provided by the USA Hockey Guidelines for Processing IIHF and Canadian Player Transfers.

ended and whose upcoming season has not yet started, as defined above, shall be considered tampering and shall subject the offending team to disciplinary action pursuant to the USA Hockey Tampering Policy. Posting on a team/league website of camp information, placing posters in area rinks, or announcement ads in area hockey publications shall not be considered to be directed to a particular player.

(3) Free Agency

That from and after the "start of the season" for an individual player, that player shall be a free agent, eligible for recruitment and direct contact by any team, including the one on whose roster the player currently appears. "Free agency status" shall continue from the start of the season until the earlier of (a) September 15, or (b) the first regular season game played after September 1 in which a player competes for a team on whose protected list he properly appears. During this period, no national tampering charges shall be brought or processed. Leagues may enforce tampering charges within their own league membership, only.

(4) September 1 – Publication

The USA Hockey national office shall publish the September 1 initial protected list for all junior teams, send it to all junior teams and post it on usahockey.com.

Further, on or before September 1 of each season, each league shall have on its website their complete league, exhibition and tournament schedule for the upcoming season. All non-league games must be sanctioned and approved by the USA Hockey national office. Each sanctioned league must submit a list of team members and the date of the first league game for each team to the USA Hockey national office by September 1. Teams should also submit any games that are added to their schedule during the season to the USA Hockey national office and publish the results of those games. Only games that are published and reported to the USA Hockey national office shall count in the calculation of any tuition adjustment.

There shall be no compensation paid or owed for any player who moves to a new and/or different team between the completion of the last game of the team for who he was rostered during the previous season and his appearance in the first regular season game for the team on whose protected list he appears for the succeeding season.

(5) September 1 - February 10 – In-Season Movement

Following the player's participation in the first regular-season league game for a team or September 15, whichever shall first occur, there shall be no movement of any player from that team to another without a properly executed USA Hockey trade form (found on the USA Hockey website) between the two teams, filed with the USA Hockey national office. Any player who is dropped by any team, at any time, shall immediately become a free agent and while he may be subsequently protected by two or more teams, the ownership of his playing rights shall become the property of the team for whom he first competes in a regular-season game, while on that team's protected list. Affiliation agreements between teams, including those between multiple teams at multiple levels of junior classifications, are to be encouraged and movement of players pursuant to those agreements, is not prohibited due to the foregoing rules regarding player movement.

(6) December 31 – Youth Ineligibility Resulting From Junior Play After December 31

Except for youth players participating under the Youth/Junior Affiliated Player Policy, any and all players rostered on a youth classification team bound for a youth national championship shall become ineligible for further youth classification competition for the remainder of the current season if the player competes for a junior team in a junior game after December 31 of that playing season.

(7) February 6 – Movement of Players Between USA Hockey Member Teams

All movement of players by trade between USA Hockey member Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III teams must be completed on or before 11:59 p.m. Mountain time on February 6 of each season.

(8) February 6/8 - Drops of Players by USA Hockey Member Teams

(a) All Tier I drops of players must be completed by 11:59 p.m. Mountain time on February 6 of each season.

(b) All Tier II drops of players must be completed on or before 11:59 p.m. Mountain time on February 8 of each succeeding season.

(9) February 10 – All Protected Lists Frozen for Balance of Season

All protected lists shall be frozen at 11:59 p.m. Mountain time on February 10 of each season. The frozen protected list shall continue until the team on whose protected list the player appears shall have completed its final regular-season, playoff, regional or national championship game.

E. Player Rights, Rules and Responsibilities

Prior to any Junior team and player entering into any agreement binding the player to the team, the team shall provide the player and

player's parents with a copy of this Section E, Player Rights, Rules and Responsibilities.

(1) Player Agreements

(a) Agreement Effective Date

No agreement for the succeeding season with or regarding any player shall be valid until the date on which recruitment for the coming season is authorized by USA Hockey, Inc., per the terms of the current USA Hockey Annual Guide or the decision of the Junior Council of USA Hockey.

(b) Agreements with Minors

No agreement with any player under the age of eighteen (18) is valid without parental endorsement and/or written consent.

(c) Excess Tuition Invalidates the Agreement

No agreement with or regarding any player shall be valid if the tuition provided for therein is in excess of that set forth in the current USA Hockey Annual Guide or the amount approved by the USA Hockey Junior Council for that team's league, and/or the tuition received by that team from the player, or from any source on the player's behalf, is in excess of the approved amount.

(d) Invalidity of Restrictions During Free Agency Period

During the period of "free agency," any attempt by any team to prevent or restrict any player from trying out for any other team outside the team's own league shall be invalid. In addition, such attempted prevention or restriction, whether oral or in writing, shall subject the offending team to disciplinary action upon establishment of the violation.

(e) Tier III Player Contract Addendum

All Tier III player contracts shall include the following language in boldface language on the first page of the contract:

"Attached here to is Addendum USAH, which is an addendum containing terms that must be included on every USA Hockey Tier III Junior player contract. The terms and provisions on Addendum USAH are hereby incorporated into this Contract as if fully stated herein. To the extent any terms of this Contract are in conflict with the terms of Addendum USAH, then the terms of Addendum USAH shall control."

Addendum USAH shall be in a form approved by the USA Hockey Junior Council at each Winter Meeting for use in the following season, but shall include without limitation provisions addressing the team's compliance with the Player Rights, Rules and Responsibilities; the USA Hockey Safe Sport Program; and requirements addressing the promotion of players within Junior Hockey.

(2) Team Individual Player Scholarships Prohibited

No team scholarships/financial discounts shall be allowed to any individual player based upon his skill and ability or game performances, without that individual player performing meaningful, productive work in exchange therefore off the ice and away from team competition.

(See NCAA Division I Manual, Bylaw Article XII – Amateurism, Section 12.1-General Regulations, Sub Section 12.1.1 - Amateur Status (a)).

(3) Academic Deferral of Player Movement

A player, who is a student and is physically attending school in the location of his current team (not online school or online learning), may veto the timing of any trade or movement to another team until it is academically advisable, as determined by the player, his family, and his academic advisor from the school that he is currently attending. A player who is a student and is receiving his education through an on-line academic platform or remotely, may not veto the timing of any trade or movement to another team.

(4) Complete Service of Existing Suspensions Required

A player who is under a disciplinary suspension by his current league or team, unrelated to the player's departure, may not move to another USA Hockey member team and compete for that team, until such time as the suspension has been fully served.

(5) Adjustment of Financial Obligations Upon Departure

(a) Written/Email Notice

The party initiating the separation between the team and the player, whether that be the team by trade, drop, etc. or the player by quit, departure, etc., shall give notice to the other, in writing or by email of their decision. The date of the notice shall be considered to be the date of the action, unless delivery has been unreasonably delayed, (beyond three days), by the conduct of the forwarding party. In the event of such unreasonable delay, the date of receipt, minus three days, shall be considered the effective date of the notice.

(b) Refund of Equipment/Apparel Deposit

Upon prompt (within ten (10) days written/email notice of departure) delivery of all team-owned equipment, uniforms, provided apparel, etc., in serviceable condition, ordinary wear and tear excepted, a previously protected player shall be entitled to a full refund of any deposit paid to the team for such purposes. Failure to promptly return the team-owned equipment, uniforms, provided apparel, etc., shall result in the forfeiture by the player of his deposit paid for that purpose.

(c) Adjustment of Billet Fees

Upon payment by the player to the billet family for any expenses, (e.g., phone bills, internet charges, repairs or maintenance necessitated by the player's use, damage done by the player during occupancy, etc.), over and above room and board, incurred while the player is residing with the family, and a fair apportionment of the final month's billet fee, the player shall be released from any further obligation to the billet family.

(d) Adjustment of Tuition

Any player who fails to satisfy his reasonable financial obligations to their billet family or the team on whose protected list he currently appears, may be suspended until such time as those financial obligations shall have been fully paid and mutual releases

executed. Any player who is being transferred to another USA Hockey member team, dropped by a USA Hockey member team, or leaves a USA Hockey member team, without tampering involved, shall be entitled to a refund applying the following refund schedule of any tuition monies paid in advance for any portion of the season which remains after his departure. The general rule to be applied to determine the reasonable amount of the tuition refund due the player or, in the alternative, the amount of tuition yet due the team shall be as follows:

1. Player Action (without tampering)

a. From Date of Signing to December 31

From the tuition for the full season, an amount up to 25% thereof shall be refunded (deducting for recruitment and related expenses) if the player is released and joins another USA Hockey member team or no longer plays Junior or Youth hockey. If the player joins a non-USA Hockey member team at any time before the end of the season, no refund is owed. Any refund due under this section will be issued between April 15 and April 30.

b. From January 1 to End of Team's League Season

From the tuition for the full season, there shall be no refund due.

A player cannot be traded or dropped if the calculation results in a tuition payment due from the player plus any additional obligations owed to the team and/or his billet family.

2. Player Action (with tampering)

If the departing player violated the USA Hockey Tampering Policy, the player shall forfeit any refund that may be due or pay any amounts due in addition to a penalty in an additional amount equal to the calculated amount of tuition due.

3. Team Action

If the separation between the player and the team is initiated by the team's action (e.g. trades, drops, etc.) then the following shall apply:

- a. If the player does not appear on the team's October 1 protected list, the player must be notified in writing by the team and shall be entitled to a full refund of tuition paid less \$1,500 for training and other associated expenses borne by the team.
- b. If the player is dropped by the team, the player must be notified in writing or by email, and the player is entitled to a pro rata refund of up to 85% of the tuition based on the number of league games the team has played as of the date the player is let go, less any obligation owed to the billet family.
- c. If the player is traded to another USA Hockey member team, the two teams must agree on how much of the player tuition will be paid to each team and notify the

player. In no case may the player be required to pay more tuition than was to be charged by the team the player is being traded from. The Standard Player Agreement with the team should be amended to reflect the change in the financial obligation and a new Standard Player Agreement should be entered into with the new team.

- d. If the team action is based on disciplinary action in regard to organizational team rules, no refund or reduction shall be due under this paragraph.

4. Cutoff Deadline – January 1

Any player movement initiated by the player after January 1 of the playing season shall result in a forfeiture of any refund claim unless the team is able to secure a paying replacement for the player before the February 10 deadline. Any player dropped, cut, traded or moved to inactive status by a team after January 1 shall be entitled to a full refund of a pro-rata portion of the season's tuition as a condition of the team's action.

- 5. Player must have all fiscal responsibility satisfied before he can be added to another USA Hockey program. A team must release said player immediately once the player has satisfied the financial responsibility. Any player using the Player Rights, Rules and Responsibilities to separate from a program shall be required to wait 28 days prior to being added to another team roster. A trade can be worked out with another team, or the player can pay a fee of \$1,500, to permit the player to play sooner.

(e) Mutual Release

Upon the final adjustment of the pro-rated portions due the respective parties, each shall join in a mutual and reciprocal release in which the dispute, if any, is fully and finally resolved and the parties are respectively released from any and all claims, to date.

(6) Disputes/Disciplinary Action

(a) Disputes Regarding Player Rights, Rules and Responsibilities

In the event of a dispute between a player and a team or team official related to the Player Rights, Rules and Responsibilities, the player or the team may request by written notice to the other that the dispute be resolved pursuant to a hearing under Bylaw 10.C. conducted by the league in which the team plays. Any determination made at such hearing shall be subject to appeal to the Junior Council per Bylaw 10.E.(1)(f).

(b) Against the Player

Following a hearing held by the league in which the team plays, which hearing shall be held in accordance with Bylaw 10.C., and shall be subject to appeal to the Junior Council, a player that fails or refuses to comply with the contents of this policy, in any respect, may be disciplined or suspended from further competition/participation in any and all programs under the jurisdiction of USA Hockey.

(c) **Against the Team/League**

Following a hearing held by the league in which the team plays, which hearing shall be held in accordance with Bylaw 10.C., and shall be subject to appeal to the Junior Council, any team/league that fails or refuses to comply with the contents of this policy, in any respect, may be placed upon probation, suspended, and/or penalized financially.

F. Regulations Governing Player Movement at All Junior Levels

(1) Additions/Deletions From a Team's Protected List

Players added/deleted must be completed by each team using its USA Hockey Junior Registry. Players may be moved between teams by filing an official USA Hockey Trade Form with the USA Hockey national office. This trade must be approved by USA Hockey and then player movements will be entered into the Junior Registry. Players traded are immediately eligible to compete. However, no junior player can compete for more than one (1) junior team on any calendar day. Players who have been deleted may be added by more than one (1) other team, depending upon league rules. The deleted player shall be properly rostered on only one team following the date on which he plays in a regular season game for a team on whose protected list he appears. When this occurs, the USA Hockey Junior Registry shall delete the dual rostered player's name from all other team rosters.

(2) Proper Rostering

Subject to the payment of compensation, as hereinafter provided, "proper rostering" occurs when a player is properly registered with the USA Hockey Junior Registry; properly rostered on a team's protected list; and plays in a regular-season game for the team on whose protected list he appears, after September 1.

(3) Procedure for Tier I

The following dates with respect to player movement are established for Tier I:

(a) Tier I End of Season to Proper Rostering

All veteran players (players who played in ten (10) or more league games) who have remaining junior eligibility and were included on the February 10 protected list of the team, shall be included on and comprise the protected list for the next season. There will be unrestricted player movement from the end of the national championships until proper rostering or September 15 of the next playing season, whichever shall first occur. This movement shall, however, be subject to payment of compensation, as hereinafter provided. Publication date is September 1.

(b) From Proper Rostering to February 6

From proper rostering to February 6, only "consensual" movement or trade between registered teams in the certified league(s) will be allowed. "Consensual" player movement is described as movement which is agreed to by both teams involved. Before a non-tendered player who is being moved from one team's protected list to another is eligible to compete for the new team, an official USA Hockey trade form must be completed, signed by both teams, and forwarded to the USA Hockey national office. When this trade has been approved, the teams will receive an email after which

the player movement will be entered into the USA Hockey Junior Registry.

(c) February 10

From February 10 to the end of the Tier I season the rosters will be frozen. No player movement is allowed.

(4) Procedure for Tier II and Tier III

With respect to player movement, the following dates are established for Tier II and Tier III.

(a) Post National Championship Protected list

All veteran players (players who played in ten (10) or more league games during the previous season) who have remaining Junior eligibility and were included on the February 10 protected list of the team, shall be included on this protected list. There will be unrestricted player movement from the end of the national championships until proper rostering or September 15 of the next playing season, whichever shall first occur. This movement shall, however, be subject to payment of compensation, as hereinafter provided. This protected list is just used to determine the team that would sign the player release for any veteran players going to Hockey Canada for next season.

(b) Initial Protected list

Any player who attends a tryout camp for the next season will be required to be registered with USA Hockey online. Any player that signs a commitment-to-play form (Tier III) or signs a team contract, must be added to the team's protected list immediately. Publication date will remain September 1.

(c) From Proper Rostering/September 15 to February 8

From proper rostering, or September 15, whichever shall last occur, to February 8, only "consensual" player movement between registered teams in certified leagues will be allowed. "Consensual" player movement is described as movement which is agreed to by both teams involved. Before a protected list player who is being moved from one team's protected list to another is eligible to compete for the new team, an official USA Hockey trade form must be completed, signed by both teams, and forwarded to the USA Hockey national office. When this trade has been approved the teams will receive an email after which the player movement will be entered into the USA Hockey Junior Registry. Before a non-protected list player is eligible to compete for any team, the team must send in a drop/add using the team's Junior Registry. All player movements must be approved by USA Hockey before a player can play for his new team. A traded player shall be immediately eligible to compete upon the filing of the USA Hockey trade form. A player deleted by a team shall be ineligible to compete for a period of twenty-four (24) hours from and after the official drop is approved within the USA Hockey Junior Registry.

(d) From February 9 to February 10

From February 9 to February 10, no player movement will be allowed of any domestic or junior players to or among any U.S. junior teams in the same classification or below. Teams may still add junior-aged players who were not rostered on any junior team on

February 8 of the same classification or below. (For example, Tier II to Tier II or Tier III to Tier III – prohibited; Tier II to Tier III permitted). A player deleted by a team shall be ineligible for a period of twenty-four (24) hours after the official USA Hockey drop is approved within the USA Hockey Junior Registry.

(e) From February 11 to end of National Championships

The protected list of each junior team shall be frozen throughout the remainder of the season. The final protected list/active protected list of each junior team shall include no more than twenty-five (25) players.

(5) Emergency Goaltender

From and after the commencement of the regular-season league competition, member teams whose goaltender suffers a disabling injury/sickness may apply for an emergency replacement goaltender for use for a period of up to fifteen (15) days from date of discovery of the disabling event. The emergency replacement goaltender may not play in a game unless the remaining goalie is unable to participate due to disability or suspension. After February 10th the period of use may be for the duration of the disability up to the remainder of the season. However, if the disability continues past the fifteen (15) day period, then the replacement shall be eligible for use as a regularly rostered goaltender. The application for permission to use an emergency goaltender shall be first submitted to the team's league commissioner and subject to USA Hockey approval.

G. Tampering Policy

USA Hockey recognizes the following competing principles:

- The right of the amateur player, and his/her family to self-determination regarding the player's competitive future;
- The benefit of balanced competition within a league structure, as determined by that league;
- The need for protection from in-season, inter-league protected list-raiding and the resultant disruption to the player(s)/team(s) involved as well as the entire junior program of USA Hockey.

To assist in the orderly resolution of these competing interests, the following USA Hockey Tampering Policy is adopted.

(1) Non-Recognition/Ineligibility

Neither USA Hockey, nor any USA Hockey sanctioned/registered league(s) or team(s), shall recognize the active participation by any player for or on behalf of any junior team, (including the NTDP) or the results achieved by that team during that player's participation, where the participation of that player is established, following a hearing and a determination under paragraph (5) below, to be the result of tampering, as defined herein.

(2) Tampering Defined

"Tampering," as that term is used herein, shall mean the unauthorized contact (e.g. phone, in person, fax, correspondence, internet chat room, email, etc.), by a team representative (e.g. owner, manager, coach, scout, trainer, clerical person, public relations people, marketing people, and/or any other person compensated by the team on a salary or commission

basis) directly or indirectly, (by themselves, or through another acting on their behalf) with a properly rostered member of another junior team after September 15 or the first league game played by the player for his/her team, whichever shall last occur until the conclusion of the player's team's current season.

(3) Permission

A team may avoid tampering by securing written permission, in advance of any contact with a player, from the team on whose active protected list the player currently appears. Dual-rostered players, may, however, be contacted by any team on whose active protected list the player properly appears.

(4) Complaints

Complaints regarding any alleged violation of this policy shall be forwarded to the USA Hockey Vice President and Junior Council chair within five (5) days following the discovery of the tampering. If not timely filed, the right to file shall be deemed waived. The complaining team shall file its complaint on an official USA Hockey junior complaint form, which shall be provided for that purpose. The completed form shall contain the following information:

- (a) The player's name, current address, and current phone number;
- (b) That player's parents' names, current address, and current phone number;
- (c) A brief resume of the facts to the extent known by the complaining team;
- (d) The name, address and phone number of the team and team representative who allegedly committed the tampering violation.

(5) Investigation and Decision

An investigation shall be conducted into the allegations contained in the complaint. The investigator shall be appointed by the USA Hockey Vice President and Junior Council chair from the membership of the Junior Council. The investigator may make inquiries of the player, the player's parents, the coaches or team representatives of the junior team(s) involved and may also request that certain business records, including telephonic, fax and/or internet records be produced from any witness, including the player, the player's parents, the teams, and/or any team representative. The investigator shall reduce their findings/impressions to a written report and forward the written report to the Vice President of USA Hockey and Junior Council chair within ten (10) days of the date on which the complaint was filed. The Vice President of USA Hockey and Junior Council chair shall, thereafter, within five (5) days from his receipt of the written investigative report, provide notice to the parties involved whether he will convene a hearing under Bylaw 10.C. to determine whether tampering has occurred, and if a hearing will be held, the vice president shall appoint a hearing committee composed of three (3) members of the Junior Council who are not involved in competition at the level(s) involved in the dispute. The procedures under Bylaw 10.C. shall apply to the hearing and decision made by the hearing committee.

(6) Appeal

The hearing committee decision shall be subject to appeal to the full membership of the Junior Council by any party affected by it as provided under Bylaw 10.G. If an appeal is filed, the Junior Council shall consider the appeal within fifteen (15) days after the submission of the Statement of Appeal and any response to the Statement of Appeal. The decision of the Junior Council shall be final.

H. Junior Hockey Certification, Recertification and Expansion

Commencing immediately for leagues or teams intending to operate in the 2012-13 playing season and thereafter, all Tier I, Tier II and Tier III Junior level leagues or teams must meet the following approval and certification requirements.

(1) Existing League Certification

The appropriate status and recertification of any existing leagues certified by USA Hockey in the previous season shall be determined by the Junior Council at each succeeding Annual Meeting. Any league that desires a change in certification between Tier I, Tier II or Tier III to another level shall comply with the requirements for new leagues set forth below.

(2) New League Formation

Any league not currently certified by USA Hockey may become certified by filing all appropriate petitions and required support documentation with USA Hockey on or before April 15 at least one calendar year prior to the playing season in which the league desires to be certified. The applicant league shall be required to attend and make presentation to the USA Hockey Junior Council at the USA Hockey Annual Meeting following the league's submission of the application materials. The USA Hockey Junior Council shall make a final determination of whether to certify the applicant league on or before the USA Hockey Winter Meeting immediately prior to the season in which the league desires to be certified. Materials which must be included in the applicant league's application materials shall include:

- (a) Demographics of the geographical area where the league will operate, including (a) total player populations, (b) total players of Junior age, (c) locations where players are presently playing, (d) data supporting the absence of a Junior programs and the need for Junior programs in that region, (e) number of teams planned for the league;
- (b) Business plan;
- (c) Such other information as is necessary to demonstrate compliance with the applicable Standards of Junior Classifications set forth herein;
- (d) Written acknowledgment of the applicant's agreement to abide by and be subject to the USA Hockey Bylaws, Rules & Regulations, Policies, Procedures and Philosophies;
- (e) Names and contact information of the ownership groups and the cities that where each will be located;

- (f) Confirmation that each USA Hockey Affiliate within the league's footprint has been notified of the proposed teams that would be located within that Affiliate, and written support from any USA Hockey Affiliates that will have teams within their footprint;
- (g) Long term plan and goals for the league;
- (h) Copy of League Constitution, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, etc.; and
- (i) Copy of Player Agreement Form.

(3) Tier III Junior League and Tier III Junior Independent Teams – Notice and Submission Requirements for New Teams, Relocation of Existing Teams and Reactivation of Dormant Teams

Any league that desires to permit expansion of new teams in such league or reactivation of any dormant team, and any independent team that desires to form as a new team, must notify the USA Hockey Junior Council chair, USA Hockey Junior Council staff liaison and the president of the USA Hockey Affiliate with jurisdiction over the geographic area in which the new team(s) would be located and, in the case of the relocation of a team from one Affiliate to another Affiliate, the USA Hockey Affiliate with jurisdiction over the geographic area from which the team is relocating. Such notification shall be in writing and shall be delivered to each such person on or before November 15 prior to the season in which the new team or reactivated team desires to participate in a league or play as an independent team.

With respect to any league that desires to permit relocation of any existing team from one location to another, or any independent team that said team/league desires to relocate from one location to another, must notify the USA Hockey Junior Council chair, USA Hockey Junior Council staff liaison and the president of the USA Hockey Affiliate(s) with jurisdiction over the geographic area in which it will be located and from which it is moving, which notification must be in writing and delivered to such persons on or before April 1 prior to the season in which the relocated team desires to play in the new location. In the event more than one USA Hockey Affiliate is affected due to expansion, reactivation or relocation, the President of each such Affiliate shall be notified.

- (a) For the purposes of this requirement, a “relocation” of an existing team shall not include a move from one location within an Affiliate to a different location within the same Affiliate unless the new home rink is more than 25 miles from the previous home rink.
- (b) A “dormant team” shall include any team formerly certified by USA Hockey and part of a league in a prior year but which is not presently certified by USA Hockey, and which has been granted dormant status by such league pursuant to the league's governing documents.

The notification to the USA Hockey Junior Council chair, USA Hockey Junior Council staff liaison and the president of the applicable USA Hockey Affiliate(s) shall include a feasibility study with the following information:

- (a) Demographics of the geographical area where the team will operate, including (a) total player populations, (b) total players of Junior age, (c) locations where players are presently playing, (d) data supporting the absence of a Junior program and the need for a Junior program in that area, (e) nearest and nearby 18U program(s) (both full and half season), and (f) any Junior teams within a 75 mile radius;
- (b) Team personnel, with profiles and relevant background of the team owner (and principle owners of a team owned by an entity) and coaching staff (to the extent known), including their experience owning and operating a Junior hockey team or equivalent, and an explanation of why the ownership desires to own and operate a Junior hockey team;
- (c) Venue information;
- (d) Business plan;
- (e) Such other information as is necessary to demonstrate compliance with the applicable Standards of Junior Classifications set forth herein; and
- (f) Written acknowledgment of the applicant's agreement to abide by and be subject to the USA Hockey Bylaws, Rules & Regulations, Policies, Procedures and Philosophies.

USA Hockey and the affected Affiliate President(s) shall use their best efforts to protect the confidentiality of the process and information.

- (4)** Following submission of the application materials as are required in (2) or (3) above, the president of each affected USA Hockey Affiliate(s) shall, within thirty (30) days of receiving such materials, provide comment to the USA Hockey Junior staff liaison, with copies to the chairs of the Junior and Youth Councils, including whether the Affiliate(s) will accept or oppose the application and a reasonable description of the basis for any opposition. If no opposition is received, the Affiliate(s) will be deemed to have accepted the application. The Affiliate's opposition shall include such information as it deems should be considered by the Junior Council in reviewing the application. If the proposed team(s) falls into multiple Affiliates, all affected Affiliates may separately comment on the request and make a recommendation of acceptance or opposition of the expansion, relocation or activation of formerly dormant team to the Junior Council. Affected Affiliates shall be invited to the Junior Council meeting for input to the Council on such expansion, relocation, or reactivation of Junior teams or leagues. The Junior Council shall then make a decision to accept or reject the proposed expansion, relocation or dormant team activation. The Junior Council decision shall be communicated immediately in writing to each affected Affiliate President by either the Junior Council chair or the Junior Council staff liaison.

(5) Approval by Junior Council of New Teams, Relocated Teams and Reactivated Dormant Teams

For any new teams or reactivated dormant teams that have been approved by their league and submitted completed application materials

on or before November 15 prior to the season in which the new team desires to participate in a league or play as an independent team, the Junior Council shall take action to either approve or deny the application at the next USA Hockey Winter Meeting. For any relocated teams that have submitted completed application materials by April 1 prior to the season in which they desire to relocate, the Junior Council shall take action to either approve or deny the application at a Junior Council meeting on or before April 30. The Junior Council decisions regarding approval or denial of an expansion, reactivation or relocation shall be held in abeyance pending the earlier to occur of (i) the expiration of the 30 day appeal period described in (6) below without an appeal being filed, and (ii) the decision of the Junior Hockey Expansion Appeal Board.

- (6) A team(s) that desires to transfer from one league to another league shall not be required to comply with the requirements for adding new teams to an existing league. If the league from which the team(s) are transferring and the league to which the team(s) are transferring are in agreement with said transfer, then the said team(s) shall merely provide notice to the USA Hockey Junior Council staff liaison on or before November 15 prior to the next season. If the two leagues do not agree on the transfer, then both leagues shall submit position statements in favor or opposition to such transfer on or before December 15, and the decision of the Junior Council shall be made at the next Junior Council meeting.

(7) Appeals of Junior Council Certification and Expansion Decisions

The Junior Hockey Expansion Appeal Board shall be charged with oversight of the expansion of any current Junior leagues, or their related ice hockey programs. The Junior Hockey Expansion Appeal Board shall be comprised of the Junior Council chair, Youth Council chair, Affiliate President's chair, an Athlete Director appointed by the President, an Executive Committee member appointed by the President (who shall be the chair of the Appeal Board), and the USA Hockey Junior staff liaison (non-voting). Any decisions of the Junior Council relating to the annual certification of existing leagues, new league formation, new team expansion, relocation of existing teams or reactivation of dormant teams may be appealed to the Junior Hockey Expansion Appeal Board by the relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to any affected league, team or Affiliate(s). All materials that the appealing party desires to be considered by the Junior Hockey Expansion Appeal Board shall be submitted to the USA Hockey Junior Council staff liaison within ten (10) days of the Junior Council decision. The Junior Hockey Expansion Appeal Board shall notify the affected parties of the appeal, including the applicable league, team and Affiliate, and may also request additional submissions or information from any of these parties. Within fifteen (15) days of the proper and timely submission of any appeal, the Appeal Board shall make a determination relating to certification of an existing league, new league formation, new team expansion, relocation of existing teams or reactivation of dormant teams, which determination may affirm, reverse or modify the Junior Council decision. The Junior Hockey Expansion Appeal Board shall consider the appeal on the written submissions of the parties to the appeal, or may hold a hearing, at its option. The decision shall be the final and binding determination of USA Hockey and shall not be subject to further appeal. The determination

by the Junior Hockey Expansion Appeal Board shall be based on its review of the Junior Council decision, the requests and advice of the applicable Junior leagues and Affiliates, and shall be subject to and shall apply the then current USA Hockey Bylaws, Policies and Rules & Regulations. The Junior Hockey Expansion Appeal Board shall not be the arbiter of league disputes, or franchise (team) requirements of leagues or league membership. Each league shall maintain its own standards of membership and economic requirements for its membership.

(8) Exigent Circumstances

In the event of exigent circumstances that prohibit compliance with the notice and time periods above, as determined by the Junior Council and subject to appeal to the Junior Hockey Expansion Appeal Board, a request for a relocation of an existing team to a new location may be approved despite such non-compliance. Examples of “exigent” circumstances may include damage or other casualty to a rink making it inoperable for Junior hockey team operations, the closure of a rink, etc.

(9) Background Screening and Safe Sport Training

All teams/leagues shall comply with the USA Hockey Safe Sport Program and enforce the provisions thereof.

All team and league personnel, including billets, who serve in a position of authority over or have regular contact with players shall complete SafeSport Training and a background screen in accordance with USA Hockey’s Safe Sport Program.

(10) Provisional Status

Each newly-formed league shall be granted provisional status for a minimum of two (2) years on the following conditions:

- (a) That the league, and each member team, shall meet and comply with the standards/criteria for the status/classification that it seeks.
- (b) That the league, and each member team, shall abide by the USA Hockey policies and policies adopted by the USA Hockey Board of Directors and USA Hockey junior policies adopted by the Junior Council.
- (c) That the league, and each member team thereof, shall comply with all player registration requirements.
- (d) That the league and each member team shall play junior competition at the level necessary to develop players for college/professional/ USA Hockey camps and demonstrate ability to compete at the level of the status it seeks.
- (e) That the league and each member team shall refrain from any identification inconsistent with that authorized by the Junior Council.

Upon completion of the second provisional season, the applicant league shall then be evaluated regarding compliance with the foregoing and applicable standards by the Junior Council. Classification for the upcoming season would be determined by the Junior Council at the Annual Meeting based upon that evaluation.

(11) Applicable Rules

For all competition involving Junior teams, USA Hockey junior rules shall govern play unless specific authorization for deviation therefrom has been granted by the Junior Council. When junior teams compete against youth teams, then youth rules shall govern play.

No junior team properly registered with USA Hockey shall play any team which is not properly registered with USA Hockey unless, and until, a special event sanction has been issued by the USA Hockey national office.

I. Dues For Junior Teams

Dues for all Junior teams shall be established by the Junior Council and approved by the Board of Directors.

J. Junior Classifications Expansion**(1) Tier I League**

USA Hockey shall designate and certify the United States Hockey League (“USHL”) as the Tier I Junior Hockey League in USA Hockey. The operating standards for the USHL and teams within the USHL shall be as set forth in a league licensing agreement approved by the USA Hockey Executive Committee and entered into between USA Hockey and the USHL.

(2) Tier II League Certification

USA Hockey shall have and certify one or more leagues within USA Hockey as a certified Tier II Junior Hockey League. The operating standards for each Tier II League and teams within the League shall be as set forth in a league licensing agreement approved by the USA Hockey Executive Committee and entered into between USA Hockey and the applicable league.

(3) Minimum Standards for Tier III Certification

In order to be eligible for Tier III Junior certification by the Junior Council of USA Hockey, the applicant league must satisfactorily complete the two (2) year Provisional Status period and the following minimum criteria must be met (unless exceptions are approved in advance by the Junior Council upon written application and hearing), and each league must be recertified by the USA Hockey Junior Council every year in June.

(a) League Governance**1. Eligibility**

Only leagues composed of six (6) certified member teams, or more, are eligible for certification at the Tier III level. Individual teams and/or leagues of lesser membership are ineligible for the Tier III certification.

2. USA Hockey Good Standing Required

The league and each of its members shall at all times be required to be in good standing with USA Hockey and shall follow and abide by the playing rules and regulations of USA Hockey.

3. League Organization

In order to be certified, the league must have the following minimum organizational structure:

- a. Board of Directors – minimum one (1) director per team
- b. Officers
- c. Commissioner or equivalent
- d. Referee-in-Chief, or appropriate designee, to assign referees/linesmen, conduct supervision and educational programs for officials
- e. Statistician
- f. Public Relations Director

4. Financial

a. Stability

The capacity for extended financial stability must be established by the league and by each member team.

b. Operating Budget

The budget for the league and each team shall be reviewed by the Junior Council each June at the certification meeting. The budget will be based on cost of ice rental, travel distances, number of games per team and operating costs. The fees charged to a player will be determined by this budget review.

5. Competitive Balance

Each Tier III league shall be composed of as many competitive teams as are available within a logical traveling area, and all trips over 200 miles total distance must be made by bus, train, plane or by a vehicle operated by an adult, non-playing person. Further, the league should develop drafts, tenders, trades, protected teams, and other methods in an attempt to provide for competitive balance and parity within the league. Each league must demonstrate competitive capability at the Tier III level of competition.

6. Required Filings

Each league and each of its member teams shall timely file all governmental reports as required by law (including, but not limited to: state and federal income tax, FICA, payroll, etc.)

(b) League Competition

1. Publication of Schedule

A league schedule must be developed and published on or before September 1 in advance of the playing season and shall be sufficient if put onto the league's website and submitted to the USA Hockey national office.

2. Regular Season Competition

A minimum of forty (40) league regular-season games must be scheduled and played.

3. Games

Games shall be played in three (3) twenty (20) minute, stop-time periods of competition, with the ice being cleaned between each period, and a minimum of fifteen (15) minute

rest between each period. In addition, a warm-up time of at least fifteen (15) minutes must be allowed.

4. Officials

a. On-Ice Officials

All on-ice officials shall be properly registered with USA Hockey and shall be assigned by the league, or its designee, and all officials shall be paid by the league, or the designee. Only Level 4 referees and Level 3 (minimum) linespersons shall be authorized for use in league competition unless officials at a lesser level are approved in advance by the National Junior Referee-in-Chief.

b. Off-Ice Officials

A minimum of two (2) off-ice officials shall be used for all league competition. All off-ice officials shall be registered with USA Hockey. The positions of the off-ice officials shall be as follows:

- Scorekeeper
- Timekeeper
- Public Address Announcer (may be combined with scorekeeper or timekeeper)

5. Game Scoresheets

a. League Statistical Information

Every member home team shall be required to forward by either facsimile transmission or electronic transmission, a copy of the game scoresheet to the league statistician within two (2) hours after the completion of the game. This transmission must include a referee's report if any major penalties were called in the game. Scoresheets and referee reports of any games with major, game misconduct or match penalties must be sent to the league statistician and the USA Hockey national office and/or other approved personnel.

b. League Statistician

Each league/team shall appoint a league statistician (statistical service) whose duty it shall be to accumulate, calculate and publish updated, current, accurate, statistical data, at least one time per week.

c. Publication

The accurate, current statistical data shall be posted on the member league and team's website.

6. Recording of Games

All member teams, when hosting league competition, shall have the game recorded on DVD and provide copies to the visiting team and, if requested/necessary, the league office.

(c) Personnel**1. Coaches**

A compensated head coach who has achieved USA Hockey Level 4 certification, has its equivalent, or has demonstrated progress toward achieving his Level 4, is required. An additional assistant is required, on either a compensated or volunteer basis, who has USA Hockey Level 4 certification, its equivalent or has demonstrated progress toward achieving Level 4 status. All coaches must register each season with USA Hockey using the online registration process. The coaches confirmation number must be transmitted to USA Hockey using the team's Junior Registry.

2. Medical Care/Personnel

A certified Athletic Trainer, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), paramedic or medical/osteopathic physician shall be in attendance at all games and are strongly recommended to be available at all practices.

(d) Member Teams**1. Compliance With USA Hockey Governance Required**

Each member team shall follow and abide by all USA Hockey playing rules, bylaws, regulations, including, but not limited to a maximum protected list of twenty-five (25) players, protected list deadlines (e.g. September 15, February 10, etc.); limitations on non-citizen players; player movement rules, tampering rules, etc.

All of the teams requesting a transfer will be responsible for all international and Hockey Canada transfer payments directly to USA Hockey.

2. NCAA Eligibility

Each team must adhere to NCAA rules and not jeopardize a player's eligibility in any way. Each team, therefore, shall be apprised of and have knowledge of the NCAA academic and eligibility requirements for its athletes.

3. Fan Capacity of Home Rink

All member teams shall conduct league competition in their home rink which shall have a minimum seating capacity to accommodate fans for each game.

4. Player Registration

All players must have completed an online USA Hockey registration. The confirmation number must be sent to USA Hockey using the Junior Registry within five days of a player attending a tryout, or practice. Any player must have his confirmation number sent to USA Hockey using the team's Junior Registry and must be put on the team's protected list prior to playing in a game.

- 5. Team Tryouts**

No team tryouts shall be held by any Tier III team until completion of the Tier I and Tier II youth national championships and Tier III Junior national championships.
 - 6. Player Equipment**

All member teams shall provide their players with all outer gear (sweaters, shells/pants, socks, gloves and helmets). It is recommended that sticks and goalie equipment be provided.
 - 7. Practice**

A minimum of four and one-half (4 1/2) hours of on-ice practice per week shall be regularly scheduled throughout the playing season and the team shall provide for an off-ice training program and facilities. Each team shall conduct a pre-season training camp.
 - 8. Dressing Rooms**

All member teams shall provide adequate home and visitor dressing room facilities, including good lighting and showers. Security is recommended. A separate secure facility for on-ice officials is required.
 - 9. Team Transportation**

Member teams shall provide adequate, supervised, group transportation for its players for all away games in excess of 200 miles from start to finish (i.e., home to home rink). All trips must be made by bus, train, airplane or by vehicle operated by a 25 years or older adult. Further, the member team shall be responsible for all room, board (minimum two meals daily) and travel expenses for the team while on trips for every away game.
- (e) **Player Support**
- 1. Compensation From Players**

No league or member team shall pay more than reasonable and necessary expenses for travel, meals, and lodging while on team trips. The maximum amount of a player's tuition for each team will be determined by the Junior Council when the league is certified at the June Junior Council meeting. To clarify, this player fee would include any and all expenses of every kind or nature incurred in connection with any competition during exhibition, regular season and playoffs. Upon receipt of any financial complaint, USA Hockey shall conduct an audit of the player's account to verify or dispute the complaint. Violation of the limits set forth herein shall subject the offending team and league to disciplinary action.
 - 2. Billets**

A system of family billets shall be provided by each team. All minors shall be housed with a billet family. The players are to be housed and fed as a member of the billet family at the player's expense, which shall be reasonably related to the value thereof. Additional reasonable charges for room and board shall be the responsibility of the player and are allowed. It is mandatory that all billets must be screened.

3. **Billet Supervisor**

All member teams must have a designated billet supervisor, separate from team management or coaches and not related to the team management. The name, address and phone number of the billet supervisor shall be filed with the Commissioner of the league and forwarded to the Junior Council staff liaison prior to September 1 of each succeeding season. Any changes shall be reported to the league commissioner and Junior Council staff liaison upon appointment.

4. **Educational Support**

Each team shall be required to provide an educational coordinator for the student athletes of the team, including both high school and college curriculum, as necessary. Each team shall annually report the results of their players academic achievement during the season to their league office, who shall compile the results and forward them to the USA Hockey Junior Council staff liaison.

(2) **Minimum Standards for Tier III Junior Independent Teams Certification – Player Tuition Based**

All other Junior teams not certified as members of a Tier I, Tier II or Tier III – Junior league, shall be considered independent teams and classified as Tier III independent teams. Tier III independent teams desiring to participate in tournament competition on or play games against teams outside their local area, shall register their players with the USA Hockey Junior Registry using the same procedure as used by other Tier III teams. The Tier III independent teams shall not be entitled to protected list protection unless and until the team has appeared before the Junior Council at the Annual Meeting and been granted protected list protection by the Council.

XII. HOCKEY CANADA

The USA Hockey/Hockey Canada Transfer Agreement can be found by logging on to USA Hockey’s official website, usahockey.com, and selecting players, junior, junior forms.

A. *Correspondence*

All correspondence relating to any part of the agreement between USA Hockey and Hockey Canada shall be directed to the Executive Director or President. He/She in turn shall forward it to the proper authority. Players or team, league or association officials shall not communicate directly with Hockey Canada officials unless authorized to do so by USA Hockey Executive Director or President.

B. *Canadian/USA Hockey Travel Permit*

USA Hockey teams traveling to Canada to play games against Hockey Canada teams must obtain a Canadian/USA Hockey travel permit. This permit is available from your appropriate registrar or his/her designee.

C. 15 Year Old and Younger, Transfer or Affiliate Player From USA Hockey to Hockey Canada

No player 15 years of age or younger as of the 31st day of December of the current playing season, may be transferred or participate as an Affiliate player from USA Hockey to Hockey Canada to play Junior or Major Junior hockey.

Players who believe they are “exceptional” and should be excluded from this regulation may appeal to transfer or Affiliate under the provisions outlined.

- (1) Players may apply in writing to transfer or Affiliate by submission of a petition from a league submitted to the USA Hockey Junior staff liaison to include the record of achievement of the player and the physical attributes of the player. The application must be approved or denied by a majority vote of a committee comprised of the USA Hockey Junior Council chair (or his/her designee), the USA Hockey Youth Council chair (or his/her designee), and the USA Hockey Junior Council staff liaison, along with the assistance and input of the senior staff of the hockey department at USA Hockey, which decision shall be final and not subject to appeal.

XIII. INTERNATIONAL

All leagues, clubs, teams and persons under the jurisdiction of or under contract and/or license with USA Hockey, where such contracted and/or licensed body or person shall include any person or persons, organizations or leagues authorized by USA Hockey to organize ice hockey games, are as regards all international matters subject to the Statutes, Bylaws, Regulations/Codes, Official Playing Rules and related decisions of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) and undertake not to involve any third party whatsoever in the resolution of any dispute arising therefrom excepting where having exhausted the appeal procedures within the IIHF, in which case, such dispute may be submitted only to the jurisdiction of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne, Switzerland. The Anti-Doping and Integrity Bylaws and Regulations of the IIHF, specifically including but not limited to adherence to the World Anti-Doping Code and the IIHF Competition Manipulation Rules shall apply to USA Hockey.

A. Games

- (1) All international matches are played under the jurisdiction of the International Ice Hockey Federation and the federation of the host country. IIHF playing rules shall be used.
- (2) Only the national federation or the IIHF Executive Committee are authorized to arrange and organize international matches. No teams shall be permitted to deal directly with each other or with the federation of another country.
- (3) Requests by United States-based teams, whether members of USA Hockey or not, must first be submitted to, and receive approval from, the Affiliate association of the district in which they are located, the appropriate registrar, USA Hockey International Council, the President or Executive Director of USA Hockey, and the IIHF, in that order.

(4) For games outside North America:

- (a) Teams that have been members of USA Hockey for at least two years shall remit the application fee of \$150 (\$100 if submitted ninety (90) days or more before the first game).
- (b) Teams that are not members of USA Hockey, or have been members for less than two years, shall remit an application fee of \$250 (\$200 if submitted ninety (90) days or more before the first game) payable to USA Hockey.
- (c) Teams of junior classification and above will be required to post a cash bond, of an amount to be determined by the International Council, at least thirty (30) days prior to their departure from the United States. The bond shall be returned in full following a report from the host federation(s) and a copy of the scoresheets of all games played. Part or all of the bond may be withheld as penalty for conduct detrimental to the reputation of the United States, or USA Hockey, at the discretion of the International Council. There shall be no appeal of the council's decision.
- (d) Applications must be approved by the Affiliate association, appropriate registrar, USA Hockey International Council, the President or Executive Director of USA Hockey and the IIHF, in that order.

(5) For games played in the United States:

- (a) The application and approval fees shall be set by the USA Hockey International Council. An approval fee of \$100 per team is applicable for foreign teams playing games in the United States. No such application shall be processed until approval for the game has been given by the Affiliate association of the district in which the game or games are to be played, appropriate registrar, the Executive Director or the Assistant Executive Director of Hockey Operations of USA Hockey, in that order.
- (b) The USA Hockey referee-in-chief, or his/her designee, shall appoint the referees and/or linesmen.

(6) All international Sled Hockey games shall follow the rules of the IPC/WPIH.**B. Transfer of Players (Except Juniors)**

All transfers of players to or from foreign federations must be approved by the USA Hockey Executive Director or Assistant Executive Director of Hockey Operations.

The transfer card fee is established annually for players transferring from USA Hockey to a federation outside North America, to be paid by the team requesting the transfer. In addition, foreign federations will charge USA Hockey an administrative fee as established annually by the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF). This fee must also be paid by the club requesting the transfer.

For information on transfers of Junior players, see Section XI: Junior Hockey.

XIV. DISABLED HOCKEY

A *Sled Hockey*

(1) **Minimum Disability Requirements**

Sled hockey is played by a wide range of players with mobility and cognitive limitations who have a permanent disability that limits participation in stand up hockey.

For participants in sled hockey with disabilities that may be perceived as not meeting the Minimum Disability Requirements will need to complete the Minimum Disability Form. If a player's disability is in question, the player, the player's family, or team coach/manager must provide a doctor's signed documentation along with their Minimum Disability Form completed. These must be provided at any time during competition. The Minimum Disability Form can be found online at usahockey.com/sledrules.

(2) **Sled Hockey Age Guidelines and Age Waivers** **Age Guidelines**

The adult sled hockey classification is for players 18 and older as of December 31st of the current playing season.

The youth sled hockey classification is for players under 18 as of December 31st of the current playing season. In addition, players who are 18 years old as of December 31st of the current playing season and in their last year of high school or equivalent program can be rostered and play in the youth sled hockey division if they have never played on any adult team in a USA Hockey sanctioned game.

All USA Hockey National Sled Hockey Teams are considered adult teams. Any player who has played with a USA Hockey National Sled Hockey Team, including the U.S. Women's Development Sled Hockey Team, will not be permitted to play on their youth team in sanctioned games and tournaments. They may participate in practices with youth teams to serve as a leader or mentor.

Adult to Youth Waivers

Players older than 17 as of December 31 of the current playing season and have participated in any USA Hockey sanctioned adult sled game and players older than 18 years of age as of December 31 of the current playing season, may be allowed to play in the youth sled hockey division if a waiver request is submitted and approved by the Sled Hockey Fair Play Committee.

The purpose of this waiver is to allow players with more severe disabilities to play in the youth division where competition is less physical and at slower pace. The approval of this waiver is based on many factors, but the major consideration will be based on the on-ice ability of the player.

The waiver submission deadline is December 31st of the current playing season, and must be submitted and approved before the player being allowed to play in the youth sled hockey division.

Approved Sled Hockey Age Waivers are valid for the entire USA Hockey membership season. If the waiver request is approved, players will be

permitted to play in any USA Hockey sanctioned game or tournament. Players are not permitted to be dual rostered during the same event/tournament.

A team manager or coach must submit a waiver request each playing season. Waiver requests may be submitted, depending on whether the previous season's waiver was approved or not. The process and guidelines for submitting a sled hockey waiver will be determined by the Disabled Hockey Section and posted online at usahockey.com. Submissions from individual players will not be accepted.

If a sled hockey age waiver request is denied, a team manager may appeal by submitting all supporting documentation via email to the chair of the USA Hockey Disabled Hockey Section within seven (7) days of the original denial. A committee of six (6) members (not including members of the Fair Play Committee) including the Disabled Hockey Section chair will review the appeal. The person submitting the waiver appeal will receive a return email with a determination within ten (10) days of the waiver request submission and if approved, an official letter of approval will be included. If still denied, this decision is final. If, however, such denial is related to the eligibility to participate in the Sled National Championship, then an additional appeal may be referred to and decided by the National Championships Appeal Committee as set forth in Bylaw 10.D.(3)(i).

Youth to Adult Waivers

Youth sled players who are 15-17 years of age as of December 31st of the current playing season may be allowed to play on an adult sled team if their skill level and age prevent them from playing in the youth sled division. These players must obtain an approved age waiver to roster with an adult team. Only one adult program may be joined per season. Waivers expire at the end of each season and must be re-applied annually. The Fair Play Committee may revoke a waiver at any time if it deems participation harmful to the player or the program. Players under 15 will not be permitted to play in the adult division.*

If a player aged 15 to 17 has waived onto an adult team for a season or for the Classic/Nationals, they may choose to play in the youth division the following season. All players seventeen (17) years of age or older on or before December 31 of that playing season on the team where this under-aged player participates must have a valid SafeSport training completed before the player can join the team. Please refer to Section III. Team Membership and Registration – A. Membership – for details.

Players in the youth division who are 15-17 years of age who are contemplating playing up to the adult division but are unsure if they're ready may roster and play on an adult team during the season for specific games and tournaments, with team and tournament director approval, to determine their appropriate path.** Once a player has submitted and received approval from the Sled Hockey Fair Play Committee to roster with an adult team, they will no longer be eligible to play on a youth team that season.

The waiver submission deadline is December 31st.

*An exception may be presented to the Sled Fair Play Committee for consideration using the age waiver process.

** Players must play over 50% of the in-season games in their age-specific divisions without an approved age waiver.

The Sled Fair Play Committee

The Sled Hockey Fair Play Committee will consist of members that appropriately represent the discipline appointed by the chair of the Disabled Hockey Section who represent the players and teams of the discipline. This committee shall review waivers, place teams in competitive brackets for the Sled Classic and National Tournament and other duties as relevant for the discipline.

(3) Sled Hockey Roster Eligibility

Sled Hockey players must register with their closest program, but may dual roster on two youth or two adult teams during the season to increase opportunities for play only if the player's home program does not participate in a league or the player's home program does not have a team at the player's competition level. In both cases, the player may dual roster with the approval of both the home program and when appropriate, their league. Sled players may not dual roster at the same game/event/tournament and must play with their local program if the local program is in attendance**. Roster and league eligibility shall be managed by the teams and league/tournament directors involved according to their local Affiliate or District, except for the Sled Classic and USA Hockey Sled Nationals. The rosters for those events shall be managed by the Disabled Hockey Section Fair Play Committee.

**girls/women sled players may dual roster during a tournament with tournament director approval in order to increase opportunities and grow the game.

A USA Hockey Sled National Championship Free Agent Pool Travel Roster will be created for those players who wish to participate in the Sled National Championship in the case when their home program is not participating. Teams and programs must submit the names of those players interested in being added to the National Travel Roster on behalf of their players by not later than December 31st of the current playing season to the Sled Fair Play Committee. Submissions from individual players will not be accepted. Requests to be added to a specific participating program's roster will not be accepted. Placement for players at Sled Nationals shall follow a double-blind process. Players and teams will be assigned numbers based on skill level and position. The Sled Fair Play Committee shall make the final decision on player placement.

Adult players wishing to participate in the Sled Classic Tournament will be rostered with a team that represents their closest NHL program. The Disabled Section will identify one official program per NHL team that will handle rosters for this event.

The Sled Fair Play Committee will only approve travel waivers the Free Agent Pool for the Sled National Championship.

USA Disabled Hockey will provide programs/teams and tournament directors with the tools they need to collect and approve waivers for their events. A receipt of all players waived for games/events/tournaments will be submitted to the Sled Fair Play Committee that demonstrates that both the home program and the program the player will be waived onto have approved for that transaction to occur. Tournament directors are expected to follow all USA roster rules when approving waivers. Failure to follow the rules may result in disciplinary action up to the denial of any further sanctions requests.

The process and guidelines for submitting a Sled Hockey age or distance Waiver will be determined by the Disabled Hockey Section and posted online at usahockey.com

Teams intending to participate in the National Sled Championship or the Sled Hockey Classic, must follow the respective roster rules as published in the Disabled Hockey Event Guidebook which will be posted online at usahockey.com

(4) Able-Bodied Players

Three Able-bodied players are allowed to play in the youth and adult sled hockey divisions for any USA Hockey sanctioned game or practice involving two sled hockey teams provided they are not replacing a disabled player when one is identified and available. Only two able bodied players are permitted on the ice at one time. Able bodied players are not permitted to be goaltenders. Able-bodied players are permitted to play in a game involving a sled hockey team versus an able-bodied team as long as the able-bodied players all are playing in sleds. All able bodied players must be marked on the roster or scoresheet as "AB"

B. Disabled Hockey National Tournaments and Events

Each season, USA Hockey shall conduct a Sled National Championship, Warrior National Championship, a Warrior Classic, a Sled Classic, a Special Hockey Classic and a Blind Hockey Classic, and may in its discretion conduct other national championships or events and tournaments in disabled hockey disciplines.

The rules and regulations governing eligibility and qualification as well as tournament-specific rules shall be published in the Disabled Disciplines Event Guidebook(s), which shall be published and available on the USA Hockey website on or before the start of the current playing season. The Event Guidebook(s) may be published as separate documents for each Disabled Discipline. Any changes to the Disabled Disciplines Event Guidebook(s) must be submitted to the chair of the Disabled Hockey Section by April 1 for consideration and ratification by the Disabled Hockey Section at the Annual Meeting. Except as set forth herein, to the extent of any contrary information in the USA Hockey Annual Guide, the Disabled Disciplines Event Guidebook(s) shall be the binding authority for the requirements, rules, regulations, operation and procedures of the Sled National Championship, Warrior National Championship, Warrior Classic, Sled Classic, Special Hockey Classic and Blind Hockey Classic and other applicable events. Any appeal of eligibility of a team, coach or player to participate in these events conducted by USA Hockey, following a final decision by the applicable registrar or eligibility committee appointed by the Disabled Hockey Section, are not subject to

Bylaw 10 and shall be referred to and decided by the National Championships Appeal Committee as set forth in Bylaw 10.D.(3)(i).

C. Warrior Hockey.

Warrior Hockey is dedicated to injured and disabled U.S. military veterans who have served our country and play the sport of ice hockey.

USA Hockey requires that all programs be fully sanctioned with all teams, players, volunteers, coaches and staff, fully registered with USA Hockey.

To be eligible, every player must have been discharged under “Honorable” conditions with the ability to provide official documentation from at least one of the six branches of service (Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Space Force) and/or their respective Reserve and/or National Guard components. Official documentation from the Department of Veterans Affairs is also acceptable provided it shows “Honorable” character of service. Any exceptions must be approved by the USA Hockey Disabled Hockey Section.

Players must also meet one of the following criteria for eligibility:

1. Players must possess a minimum of 0% combined service-connected disability through a Department of Veterans Affairs evaluation and show an “Honorable” character of service designation. Players must be able to provide the Department of Veterans Affairs Benefit Letter showing this information.
2. Players who are recipients of a Purple Heart Award are eligible regardless of their current Department of Veterans Affairs combined service-connected disability status but must have been discharged from the service. Players must be able to provide their Department of Defense issued Purple Heart Medal Award citation along with a DD214 showing “Honorable” service.
3. Rosters cannot exceed 20 players.

Proof of eligibility must be presented for verification before team check-in at USA Hockey events. Eligibility documentation will not be accepted on site at an event. The USA Hockey Disabled Hockey Section Chairperson in consultation with the Warrior Discipline representative must approve any exceptions to this eligibility criteria in advance of participation. Warrior Hockey is played utilizing Adult Hockey playing rules. All Warrior Hockey tournaments and events must follow the USA Hockey standard protocol for sanctioning.

The Warrior Advisory Committee

The Warrior Advisory Committee will consist of at least three people appointed by the chair of the Disabled Hockey Section who represent the players and teams of the discipline. This committee shall review and place teams in competitive brackets for the Warrior Classic and National Tournament and other duties as relevant for the discipline.

D. Blind Hockey.

Blind Ice Hockey is played similarly to typical hockey, with a few adaptations to make it accessible to players who are blind or visually impaired. The most significant adaptation is the puck, which makes noise and is larger and slower than a traditional hockey puck.

A blind hockey puck specification is:

- Material: 22-gauge steel
- Construction: Hollow
- Color: Black
- Contains: 8 ball bearings
- Diameter: 5 ½ inches / 14 centimeters
- Height: 1 7/8 inches / 4.8 cm
- Weight: 7.76 ounces / 220 grams

The sport of Blind Hockey is played by athletes who are blind or visually impaired. Players must meet the criteria of one of the three International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) classifications or the United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA) Recognized Low Vision Classification of B4. The criteria for each classification are below.

IBSA Class B1: There is no light perception in either eye up to light perception, but they are unable to recognize the shape of a hand at any distance or in any direction.

IBSA Class B2: From the ability to recognize the shape of a hand up to visual acuity of 20/600 and/or a visual field of less than 5 degrees in the best eye with the best practical eye correction.

IBSA Class B3: From visual acuity above 20/600 and up to visual acuity of 20/200 and/or a visual field of less than 20 degrees and more than 5 degrees in the best eye with the best practical eye correction.

USABA Recognized Low Vision Class B4: From visual acuity above 20/200 and up to visual acuity of 20/70 and a visual field larger than 20 degrees in the best eye with the best practical eye correction.

Blind hockey teams can include both youth and adult players. When both youth and adult players participate on the same team, all adult players are required to complete SafeSport training.

All Blind Hockey tournaments and events must follow the USA Hockey standard protocol for sanctioning.

E. Deaf/Hearing Impaired Hockey.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Hockey is for individuals diagnosed with hearing loss. Instruction is based on the player's ability to communicate with coaches using American Sign Language, lip reading, hearing aids, or cochlear implants. Interpreters may be used as needed and are welcome on the bench.

Eligibility for participation on a deaf/hearing impaired team requires that a player has at least a 55-decibel hearing loss in their better hearing ear. An audiogram test conducted by a certified audiologist may be required to be submitted. All other players need to be diagnosed with some hearing loss to participate.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing hockey teams can include both youth and adult players. When both youth and adult players participate on the same team, all adult players are required to complete SafeSport training.

All Deaf/Hard of Hearing Hockey tournaments and events must follow the USA Hockey standard protocol for sanctioning.

F. Special Hockey

Special hockey aims to give people with cognitive and/or developmental disabilities the opportunity to play ice hockey in an environment adapted to their level of ability. It emphasizes having fun through teamwork and social interaction and improving the quality of life through on and off-ice activities.

Individuals with developmental disabilities who experience limitations in three or more major core life competencies: capacity for independent living, economic self-sufficiency, learning, mobility, receptive and expressive language, and self-care/direction are eligible to play Special Hockey. Common developmental disabilities include, but are not limited to: Autism Spectrum disorders, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, ADD/ADHD, Seizures, Neurological disorders, and intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Special Hockey requires that players skate upright and unassisted. As such, assistive skating devices are not permitted during any games. However, players who are new to the sport and are developing their skating ability may use an assistive device on the ice during practice, provided its use does not endanger other participants on the ice.

Special Hockey players are rated as A, B and C based on their playing ability.

A Level

- Able to skate unassisted
- Able to play at a faster pace
- Able to play structured game with minimal to no assistance
- Has more advanced hockey skills
- Has better understanding of game rules and concepts
- Able to follow rules/instruction/drills
- Always engaged in the play
- Has the ability to change shifts on the fly
- Needs no prompting
- On-ice helpers are not permitted at this level.

B Level

- Able to skate unassisted
- Able to play at a mid-level pace
- Able to play structured game with minimal assistance
- Has mid-level hockey skills
- Has a basic understanding of game rules and concepts
- Able to follow rules/instruction/drills (occasional prompting may be needed)
- Mostly engaged in the play
- May need assistance in positioning

- May need occasional prompting

- On-ice helpers at this level are not permitted to have sticks on the ice. They must wear helmets in accordance with USA Hockey rules. They must be listed on the roster.

C Level

- May need assistance in skating

- Able to play at a slower pace

- Needs assistance to play a structured game

- Has lower level hockey skills

- Has limited understanding of game rules and concepts

- Has difficulty following rules/instruction/drills

- May need some/constant prompting to engage in the play

- Needs assistance in positioning

- On-ice helpers at this level are not permitted to have sticks on the ice. They must wear helmets in accordance with USA Hockey rules. They must be listed on the roster.

Special hockey teams can include both youth and adult players. When both youth and adult players participate on the same team, all adult players are required to complete SafeSport training.

All Special Hockey tournaments and events must follow the USA Hockey standard protocol for sanctioning.

G. Standing Amputee Hockey.

Standing Amputee hockey is played upright and follows typical ice hockey rules. It has allowed a growing number of athletes with congenital or acquired amputations or other physical impairments to participate. Players use prostheses to control a hockey stick or to skate.

Players may be added to Standing Amputee rosters if they are missing one or more upper or lower extremities.

Standing Amputee hockey teams can include both youth and adult players. When both youth and adult players participate on the same team, all adult players are required to complete SafeSport training.

All Standing Amputee Hockey tournaments and events must follow the USA Hockey standard protocol for sanctioning.