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Arlington Hockey Club Coaches Information Guide 2024 – 2025 Season



Arlington Hockey Club

COACHES INFORMATION GUIDE 2024 – 2025 SEASON

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Arlington Hockey Club! AHC is a non-profit organization that aims to offer the highest quality, affordable opportunity for kids to play hockey. We strive to provide age- and skill-appropriate player development and coaching for all participants through our instructional, developmental, and travel programs.

By volunteering to coach, you'll contribute to some of the club's most critical objectives—teaching kids the game of hockey, sportsmanship, responsibility, and other life skills. We greatly appreciate the time and commitment you're devoting to the program and want to help in any way we can to ensure your success and enjoyment in creating a safe and fun environment for your team.

This informational packet will help you get started as a coach in the AHC!

COACHING REQUIREMENTS

In order to coach amateur hockey a number of credentials are required at the local (AHC), state (MA Hockey), and national (USA Hockey) levels. These requirements include: completing a background check, registration with USA Hockey, SafeSport certification, coaching modules for your appropriate coaching level, and completion of a Coaching Education Program (CEP) coaching class. In the following sections we provide instructions for completing all of these requirements.

Coaching certification is required for all coaches, and *teams are not able to play in the MA State Tournament without certified coaches*. For more information regarding USA hockey coaching requirements, see:

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

USA HOCKEY REGISTRATION

All coaches and managers must be registered with USA hockey. This helps track coaching credentials and provides insurance for all participants in the hockey program.

Register at:

<https://membership.usahockey.com/register/age>

BACKGROUND CHECK

A background check must be completed for every coach and manager in the program. USA Hockey is now conducting background checks across all registered coaches. Please note, background checks are good for two seasons. If you completed one last year just verify in your USA Hockey online account that it is up to date. If you need to renew, you will need your USA Hockey registration number and photo ID to complete the background check, which can be found at:

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

SAFE SPORT

SafeSport training is required by USA hockey for all coaches and managers. The goal of this program is to provide information to help prevent abuse from occurring in hockey. You must first register and then complete the training. To register and begin the on-line training, please visit:

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

AHC Midget players who are 17 before Dec. 31 of the season they're playing in, must also take SafeSport training as a USA Hockey requirement. To complete the training takes approximately 90 minutes.

COACHING MODULES

Starting at the mite level of hockey, completion of a series of on-line coaching modules is part of the USA hockey certification and must be completed at the beginning of the season. Completing the modules can take 6 – 8 hours.

The requisite coaching modules can be found at:
<https://learning.usahockey.com>

CEP CLASS

USA hockey requires attendance of a coaching clinic for the hockey level you will be coaching.

Registration for the coaching clinics can be found at:
<https://www.usahockey.com/coachingclinics>

COACHING RESOURCES

Please register for an AHC account through the AHC web-site (www.arlingtonice.com) and login to familiarize yourself with the site and find your team. The web-site can be a great way to communicate with your team and parents. In addition, the AHC site is compatible with the Crossbar app, which is available for both iOS and Android phones through the associated app store. The app shows the schedule for games and practices and is another way to communicate with the team.

There are many coaching resources available to you through AHC, Massachusetts Hockey, USA Hockey, and other sources, which we encourage you to use as you find appropriate. Below are some resources that you may find helpful as you plan your season.

In addition to these resources, most equipment for practices and games are provided. All AHC coaches must have their own helmet to wear at all practices, as required by AHC, MA Hockey, and USA Hockey. Pucks, goals, and cones are provided at the rink, however, it's a good idea to bring your own whistle and other materials you may need (e.g., ice marker,

white board, stopwatch, puck carrier for games, etc.).

AHC CONTACTS

Michael Raab, President, RMichaelRaab@gmail.com

Ken Simmons, Inter-City Travel Director,
KJSimJr@gmail.com

Paul Collins, Girls Director, paullyc@gmail.com

Bobby Leighton, Vice-President, In-house Director,
leighton55@gmail.com

Bruce Newell, Registrar, COVID Safety Director,
ahfscregistrar@gmail.com

The AHC web-site has additional contact information and can be found at arlingtonice.com.

USA HOCKEY

USA hockey has a full assortment of coaching resources organized at:

<https://mobilecoach.usahockey.com/#home>

The web-site includes practice plans, drills, videos, an app., and some software to enable you to make your own plans.

OTHER ON-LINE RESOURCES

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

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1BVXUUhU20_qr7jT1twWfPiPF0J4mWzv_2?usp=sharing

<https://www.youtube.com/user/USAHOCKEYHQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXHXKnR5fRzXC842uU8bRTw>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/howtohockeydotcom>

Constraints Led Approach (CLA):

<https://thecoachessite.com/constraints-ice-hockey-practice/>

<https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/336314/Bartalis%20Balazs.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SEASON

TEAM

AHC aspires to provide a fun and safe hockey experience for players of all ages and skill levels, while teaching life lessons such as respect, teamwork, sportsmanship, and responsibility. The coach plays a critical role in organizing and delivering this experience. While there are many resources for coaching at all levels, below are a few basic tips we think will be helpful for beginning coaches.

- *Always be positive.* Kids respond to the demeanor of the coach, so your positive attitude will be reflected by your players.
- *Come to practices and games prepared.* Communicate practice plans at least the day before practice so all coaches understand the plan going in to practice and have a chance to discuss any issues or suggestions prior.
- *Be on-time,* as it will set the tone for the team and make sure ice time isn't wasted.
- *Don't be afraid to ask for help,* feedback, or input if you need it.

PARENTS

Kids respond to the feedback and attitude of parents, so it's very important for parents to be positive and supportive of all players. Communicating this to parents at the beginning of the season can be helpful so that they begin the season with the right perspective and expectations.

AHC and all local rinks observe USA Hockey's no tolerance policy with regards to parents admonishing the referees, coaches or players. Parents agree to follow this policy at registration. If a parent is yelling negative comments or being disruptive, they can be asked to leave the rink for the rest of the day.

Introduce yourself to your team via email or phone, and hold a short, (pre-season) meeting for in-person introductions, to set goals, and discuss expectations for the season. Emphasize having fun, good sportsmanship, and safe and fair play. Have one or more follow-up meeting(s) during the season to get feedback from parents, and have a parent meeting at the end of the season. It is a good idea to provide a list of players' names, numbers, and their associated parents' names and contact information, so everyone knows the players and families on the team (the Crossbar app also provides a roster with parents' names). If possible, *it's also helpful to recruit a volunteer team manager* to help coordinate some team responsibilities, schedules, and activities.

PRACTICES, GAMES, AND THE SEASON

Kids learn through fun, so try to employ various games and rewards as parts of practice and drills. Don't be discouraged if everyone isn't doing the drill correctly all of the time—hockey practice with young kids is commonly chaotic and disorganized.

To make the most of the ice time, come prepared and have some of the coaches get equipment together for the various drills and stations before, or at the beginning of, practice while the kids are warming up.

- During practice, try to maximize participation in each drill --- *minimize time in lines.*
- Organize players according to ability so they have a challenge, are not bored, but also don't get discouraged. As their skill levels converge more, start to mix the groups to build trust among teammates.
- *Use drills that include your goalie and help them improve their skills.*

In addition, as part of practices AHC provides skills sessions for all players in the travel hockey program. Coaches are encouraged to attend the skills sessions and incorporate some of the same drills into their practice sessions to reinforce the skills learned.

For games, all AHC teams play in the Valley League (<https://www.valleyhockeyleague.com>). This league begins with a parity round to place teams together into competitive leagues, then proceeds with the normal league play and concludes with playoffs in March/ April. Coaches should come prepared to games. Mites and squirts need not engage in significant stretching or dryland warm-up prior to the game, but starting with peewees and beyond, players should stretch and warm-up for at least 20 minutes prior to the game. Before taking the ice, as time allows, discuss points of focus, strategies, and tactics briefly. During the game, try to let players on the ice play and focus on talking to players on the bench; always remain positive, supportive, and encouraging. After the game, talk briefly to the team about the game, focusing on staying positive and encouraging players.

It's required at the squirt level and beyond, to *have pre-printed roster stickers* that can be placed on the game sheet prior to each game, saving time and efforts from having to fill out the roster manually. Templates for roster stickers are available on the AHC Crossbar website under Resources for Coaches.

If you need help organizing practices, plans, or drills, please contact the appropriate program director, Player/ Coach Development committee (see below), or explore the USA Hockey resources detailed above.

If your team, or individual players want to do more practice, one option is to set-up additional skills time, which can be found at any number of places in the local area (for example, Freddy Meyers, Driscoll Skills, Greg Carter, Max Pro, Skater's Edge, Fusion, Hockey House, etc.). If your team decides to do additional practice sessions at the Hockey House, let us know and we can help negotiate a discount to the normal rate.

At the end of the season we ask coaches to fill out evaluations for the players on their team and return those to the Intercity Program Director. These evaluations are used as necessary to set-up tryouts and as part of the evaluation process.

TOURNAMENTS

Tournaments enrich the hockey experience for players and provide a great forum for competition and fun during the season. We encourage teams to participate in sanctioned tournaments (which rely on USA Hockey insurance coverage) during the season, the cost of which must be covered by the individual teams:

<https://www.mahockey.org/sanctioned>

AHC also hosts the Winter Classic Tournament in Arlington, providing a tournament opportunity for every travel team in the Intercity Travel Program. Each team is responsible for recruiting three external teams for their bracket, as well as putting together a raffle basket for the tournament.

Finally, the top AHC teams at each level (e.g., Bantam AAA, Pee wee AAA, etc.) play in the Thanksgiving Tournament in Falmouth, MA. The cost of the tournament must be covered by the team, and the club usually arranges for a room block at a local hotel in Falmouth, MA.

COMMITTEES

AHC is assembling several committees to act as resources for the club and to enrich participation for all members of the club and community. Two relevant committees to coaches and teams will be the Player/ Coach Development Committee, and the Events Committee.

The Player/ Coach Development Committee has the goal of assisting coaches with age-appropriate development and practice plans, development monitoring programs, and to help ensure AHC is using modern training methods, e.g., CLA and USA Hockey's ADM. Members of this committee will

contact coaches in time, but if you need assistance or would like to discuss player or coach development or safety, this is a resource for the club.

The Events Committee works to enrich the AHC experience for players and their families through team, hockey, and community oriented events. Events organized by the committee are not required, but optional, with the aim of supplementing AHC's on-ice offering with additional activities. If you have a manager for your team, please have them reach out to the Events Committee to introduce themselves and see how the committee may help your team. Examples of events that the committee may help you organize are team building outings, attending a high school or college hockey game, or finding an additional tournament for your team to participate in. In most cases these activities need to be funded by the individual teams themselves, unless the committee notifies team's additional funding is available.

OTHER RESOURCES

A number of other resources are described below.

Goalies. Players that specialize in playing goalie and are the primary goalie for their team at the squirt level or higher, are eligible for a \$500 season tuition. The club has equipment available for all goalies. The club also offers goalies the opportunity to participate in a specific goalie training program called Stop-It, and weekly goalie skills when offered. Please put your goalies in touch with your program's Director for more information on how to get involved.

Software. The USA Hockey Mobile Coach app and desktop software can be used by all AHC coaches and the full app features (available as an in-app purchase) is reimbursable through the club. The app has drills and can be used to share practices between coaches. We are also recommending the Team Genius Academy and USA Hockey's Intelligym as resources players can use to improve their individual skills.

Equipment. AHC periodically runs an equipment drive. The purpose of the equipment drive is to collect used equipment from the club and redistribute it to families in AHC's Instructional and Developmental programs. See the AHC website for more details.

Jersey names. If desired, once the jerseys have been distributed, players can get their names printed on the back of their jerseys. Sports Etc. in Arlington does printing and it may be worthwhile to collect the jerseys and names to have them done together as a group, which will ensure a consistent font and style. Usually the individual players' families pay for this, and it's not required, but if there are issues with resources for it, please reach out to the AHC contacts listed above.

Stickers. Club stickers for helmets, sticks, skates, etc. can be obtained through the Stick Bandits website. Younger players in particular often like stickers for their helmets and sticks.

Patches. USA Hockey offers free hat-trick, playmaker, and shut-out ("zero club") patches to squirt and higher players that earn them throughout the season. If a player on your team scores a hat-trick, playmaker, or a goalie has a shutout, you can send a copy of the game sheet with additional information through the web-site below to get the patch for your players.

<https://mahockey.sportngin.com/register/form/261835292>

Additional Reading. "Be All In: Raising Kids for Success in Sports and Life" by C.P. Rapone and K. Keane. "Range" by D. Epstein



www.arlingtonice.com

Ed Burns Arena
422 Summer St.
Arlington, MA 02474

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I.: GAME CANCELLATIONS

Try not to cancel any games. Games are difficult to reschedule and rescheduling Valley League games costs AHC and the cancelling team money (about \$700: \$315 for ice, about \$80-\$100 for officials, and \$20 for a timekeeper, in addition to the \$270 game fee that has already been paid). If a canceled game is not rescheduled, your team is charged with a forfeit loss and AHC is charged your opponent's game fee. Note: There is no cost to your team or AHC if your opponent cancels a game. They are then responsible for rescheduling and providing ice, officials and a timekeeper.

Other options

- Submit day off requests to the AHC Intercity Travel Director, Ken Simmons, as soon as you know your team is going to have a conflict during the season
- If you are canceling because you are short on players, call up players from a lower-level team
- If you must cancel, please reach out to the other team and see if they are willing to "mutually cancel" the game; mutual cancels do not cost either team any money and the Valley League will reschedule the game
- If you feel the game date or time is unreasonable (e.g. too late on a school night or on a holiday) contact the AHC Intercity Travel

Program Director to request that the league reschedule the game

If you have no other option and must reschedule a Valley League Game, the standard process when a team has a conflict with a game is the following:

1. Contact your opponent - this is the most important first step so that they are aware of your conflict and so they don't arrive at a rink to find no opponent to play
2. Submit a Game Cancellation form – this can be found on your dashboard when you log into VHL website. Note - when the form is submitted, the game status will show as a FORFEIT - but this is simply a place holder until the game is made up. Once the league receives a copy of the make-up game sheet, they will remove the forfeit and replace it with the actual game score. Contact your program's director if you need assistance with submitting a Game Cancellation form.
- 3) Reschedule the game - this is often done on either practice ice from one of the two teams, or if another VHL team cancels a game on you, you can utilize that ice (and referees) for a make up game like this! If you end up rescheduling the game on your own ice, contact the AHC's Director of Scorers/Referees, Matt Enos, at mattenos@comcast.net.
- 4) Submit the Game Sheet - once the game is played, please send a copy of the completed game sheet to the league office via mail, fax, or scan/email to: Valley League 7 Parkridge Rd. Haverhill, MA 01835 Fax 978-557-5519 Email: mattjohnson@valley-associates.com