



CHICAGO BLUES HOCKEY CLUB

2025-2026 Program Guide

chicagoblueshockey.org

The **Chicago Blues Hockey Club** welcomes your family to the upcoming season, and we are excited you have chosen the Blues for your child's youth hockey experience! Our mission is to provide a safe, fun and competitive environment for young athletes that fosters their hockey development as individuals and teammates, while promoting citizenship, respect, work ethic, and sportsmanship for the game. The Chicago Blues strive to be recognized as the #1 Tier II hockey organization in the Midwest, instilling long-term values and skills in our players while positively impacting the communities we serve.

This manual serves as a guide for parents, Team Managers, players, and coaches of the Blues. Please consult this manual first if you have any questions about how the club operates. Please reach out to your Team Manager or coach with any questions that can't be answered through this manual, or with any concerns or suggestions you have. Questions or concerns that cannot be addressed at the team level should be directed to Rick Patrone, the Chicago Blues Club president.

We look forward to a great hockey season!

The Chicago Blues Board of Directors

Rick Patrone, *President*

Raj Kamruddin, *Vice President and NIHL Representative*

TJ Skattum, *Treasurer*

Sara Gerardi, *Secretary and Webmaster*

Sean Ryan, *Registrar*

Ken Kazcmerek, *Rules and Ethics*

Mark Brunetti, *Director Liaison*

Anna Benedikt, *Director of Managers*

Carol Kuhn, *Media and Promotions*

*Under the Internal Revenue Code 501 (c) (3),
Chicago Blues Hockey is a non-for-profit organization.*

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Program Structure

Levels of Play

Pre-Hockey - Ages 4 and Up
Mite U8 - 2017/2018/2019 birth years
Squirt U10 - 2015/2016 birth years
Peewee U12 - 2014/2013 birth years
Bantam U14 - 2012/2011 birth years
Starting U15 - 2010 birth year

Pre-Hockey

Our MinorBlues and FutureBlues programs lay the foundation for young children to develop their love of hockey. For Ages 4 and up, our programs are designed to focus on skating & skills fundamentals in a fun environment with leadership from USA Hockey-certified instructors. The program follows the USA Hockey American Development Model (ADM) and runs throughout the year to give as many participants as possible the opportunity to learn to play hockey.

League Participation

The Chicago Blues will participate in the following leagues for the 2025-2026 season:

- Mite Travel Hockey (AAU) - [Chicago United Hockey League \(CUHL\)](#)
- Tier II Travel Hockey (AA)- [Central States Developmental Hockey League \(CSDHL\)](#)



Season Schedule

Generally, Blues teams will follow this basic structure for regular practices, games, and tournaments. Please note that this structure will vary from team to team.

- 2-3 practices per week (can be full ice or shared ice)
- Regular off-ice strength and conditioning training
- 1 Director-led, on-ice skills training session per week
- Average of 1-2 games per week
- Tournaments: will vary by team. Expect a mix of out-of-town and local tournaments, approximately 4-5 per season

Coaching Structure

Every team is run by one of the clubs' Hockey Directors. The Hockey Director oversees all on and off ice matters regarding the team. He is responsible for tryouts and evaluations, scheduling, organizing and running practices as well as game day lineups and coaching. The hockey director may coach up to five (5) assigned Chicago Blues teams, including attending team practices, home and away games (to the extent possible given conflicts in team schedules), tournaments, showcases, off ice training, and supervision of team activities.

Every team will also have a head coach and assistant coach when possible. These coaches may be paid coaches or parent volunteer coaches. All directors and coaches maintain the level appropriate USA hockey coaching education program certifications and to perform coaching services subject to the supervision and direction of the Chicago Blues Board of Directors and coaching committee. All coaches have a hockey background and have completed SafeSport Training as required by USA Hockey.

Hockey Directors and coaches shall be in good standing and abide by the current rules, regulations and policies of USA Hockey, AHAI and the Chicago Blues.

In the event that the hockey director has schedule conflicts with multiple teams, the head coach will be responsible for practice and/or game day operations including on ice coaching, game lineups, supervision and locker room supervision. The head coach will have full responsibility and will be in communication with the hockey director.

Goalie Coaching

In addition to regular team practices, the Blues offer additional goalie practices throughout the season. The schedule of goalie practices will be posted shortly after tryouts. For additional information on the Blues' goalie program, please contact Ken Kaczmarek at ken@selectgoaltending.com.

Tryouts and Team Placement

Registration

All players must register online and pay the registration fee in order to try out and be placed on a team. The registration fee is \$350 for Mites and \$400 for Squirts-Midgets. ***This fee is non-refundable once you have completed the registration process, unless you are not offered a roster spot on a Chicago Blues team by the completion of tryouts.*** Please be sure to register with an email address that you check frequently. Additionally, In order to attend any on-ice event, every player must be registered with and have a valid USA Hockey number.

Preseason Clinics

Optional preseason conditioning clinics are offered as a part of the registration and tryout process. Dates and times are posted alongside tryout dates on our website. **Checking Clinics** are required for all first-year Bantam players.

Tryouts

The Blues will conduct tryouts for teams, and the Hockey Director is responsible for establishing the proper number and structure of tryout sessions. Prior to tryouts information will be shared on our website with an overview of the program to be offered, anticipated costs, registration requirements, as well as the dates and times related to the program's activities.

Players should attend all tryouts as instructed. Unless waived by the Hockey Director, in consultation with the Board, players must attend at least one tryout session.

Tryouts and team selections will be conducted in a fair and impartial manner under the supervision of the Hockey Director. All roster spots on Blues teams are open for competition. Directors are responsible for the selection of players for his/her team. Such decisions will be made in a fair and impartial manner, based upon the player's abilities and the needs of the team. Skating skills, experience, work ethic and commitment are among the criteria that coaches may consider when making selections. Race, gender, ethnic background and religion are not.

The highest tiered teams in Midget, Bantam, Pee wee and Squirt levels will select first and will continue until the roster is filled, regardless of birth year. Subsequent teams will be filled as the tryout process goes on.

Team Placement

Team placements will be made immediately after tryouts conclude. The Hockey Director will send an email to all players selected for a team, and families will have 48 hours of time to accept their placement and complete their financial arrangement.

2025-2026 Player Fees

Level	Skater Fee	Goalie Fee
Mite	\$3,000	\$1,800 (Mite 1&2 only)
Squirt 1-3	\$5,400	\$3,250
Pee wee Major CSDHL	\$5,700	\$3,400
Pee wee Minor CSDHL	\$5,700	\$3,400
Pee wee 3-5	\$5,600	\$3,350
Bantam Major CSDHL	\$5,800	\$3,500
Bantam 1-3	\$5,600	\$3,350
U15	\$6,350	\$3,800

Payment Options

1. Payment in full via credit card or ACH
2. Payment via 4 payments
 - First payment due at roster spot acceptance (immediately after tryout)
 - September 30
 - October 30
 - November 30

Slush Fund

Each Team Manager maintains a team fund to cover tournament expenses for the team, coach and any other additional expenses the Team Manager/coach may anticipate. At the start of the season, each family will be asked for a deposit to contribute to that account. The amount varies by team, but is typically \$400-\$700. The manager will keep a detailed ledger that is always accessible to families. In some instances, it may be necessary to collect additional money to provide for the slush fund. At the end of the season, if there are funds remaining, it can be re-distributed equally among contributing families, or be used for an agreed-upon team purpose.

Participation Hours and Fees ("DIBs")

The Chicago Blues Hockey Club is successful thanks to the families that volunteer their time and energy. Each family is asked to complete 10 DIBS credits over the course of the season. Families may opt out of this with a \$500 payment at the time of registration instead.

When the season begins and you are rostered, every family will turn in a check to their Team Manager for \$500, made out to Chicago Blues Hockey Club, with a date of March 31, 2026. If your DIBs are completed over the course of the season, that check will be destroyed. If they are not completed, the check is cashed after March 31, 2026.

DIBs opportunities are available throughout the year. DIBs opportunities are available throughout the year by logging into your Chicago Blues Crossbar account on your computer, clicking on "Account, and then "Volunteer", or by claiming team-related volunteer opportunities at the beginning of the season.. See your Team Manager or the Blues DIBs Coordinator, [Nicole Mattio](#), for any questions.

IMPORTANT NOTE: While the system we use to manage our DIBs credits refers to those credits as "hours", we do not track our volunteer requirements by hours (this is a limitation of the system). We refer to them as "credits", and this allows for more flexibility in the opportunities we are able to offer our families.

Uniforms and Appearance

All players rostered on a current Chicago Blues team are required to have the following equipment requirements met before their first game:

- All players must wear a black helmet.
 - Only Chicago Blues helmet decals and numbers are allowed on helmets. These will be provided to each new player by your manager.
- All players must wear plain black pants or an official Chicago Blues shell.
- All players must wear predominantly black gloves.
 - White and or gray trim colors are accepted.
- Chicago Blues Hockey bags are not required, but will be available for purchase.

Warm-ups and Dress Code

Each coach will communicate his/her expectations for the player dress code. A Chicago Blues warm up will be provided for each player.

Jerseys

Each player will receive home and away socks as well as a practice jersey included in their registration fee. Game jerseys and shells can be purchased during registration. Jersey numbers for new Blues players are handled at the discretion of the Apparel Coordinator and specific information will be communicated to you and your player as needed. If you have any questions, please contact [Ashley Kazmierczak](#).

Blues Logo Usage

Please do not create your own Blues logo gear without permission - this includes team gifts, tournament swag, etc. All items need to be reviewed and approved by the Apparel Coordinator.

Regular Season

Team Rules

Coaches may adopt appropriate team rules governing the conduct of team players. This may include, among other things, game dress codes, arrival times before games, procedures on notification of absences and parents' admission to the locker room before and after games. Team rules must be consistent with the substance of this and other Blues policies and clearly communicated to players and their parent(s).

Scheduling

Your Team Manager will schedule all games for your regular season, and/or seeding round. The schedules with practices are updated on your team's page on the Blues website, and in the Crossbar app..

Exhibition Games

The Blues allow teams to play exhibition games. The games will be available for scheduling based on open practice/game slots available from the Hockey Director. The cost for the referees of these games are payable by the individual team and will not be reimbursed by the Blues. Exhibition games apply towards the overall game count as allotted by AHA.

Tournaments

The Hockey Director will decide the tournaments your team will be attending.

Most out of town tournaments require that you stay in a tournament-affiliated hotel. Your manager is responsible for making the reservations for your team. Your Team Manager and/or coach will handle all contact with the tournament director.

The Blues will reimburse each team for one tournament. The reimbursement amount varies slightly depending on the age of the team.. The cost of participating in tournaments shall be paid for through the teams slush fund contributed to by the families.

League Playoffs and State Tournament

Information about League Playoffs and the AHA State Championship tournament will be communicated later in the season from your Team Manager. Once your regular season schedule is released please take note of the dates you will be asked to hold in February and March for these events.

Off Ice Facility

The Chicago Blues are partnered with [Goodman Elite Training](#) as the official off ice trainer. Each team will receive their off ice schedule at the beginning of the season. Off Ice training may occur before or after weekly practices.



Parents Serving as Off-Ice Officials

Timekeepers, scorekeepers and penalty box supervisors are considered off-ice officials. Your behavior and conduct are reflective of your team and this organization.

Rules regarding off-ice officials:

1. The managers and coaches in charge of a team for a game (including tournament games) shall be regarded as responsible for their team's player, goalkeeper and coach eligibility, and for the conduct of their team officials, players and parents during that game and while at the place where the game is being played.
2. Each manager, head coach and assistant coaches are obligated, when requested, to do whatever possible to assist game officials and others involved in controlling the spectators at that game who are traveling with the team, or when playing at their home rink. Suspension for the coach or manager or the entire team, or an assigned loss of game could result from lack of such action attempting to control any person or group in the arena.

Team Photos

The Blues organization purchases will contract a team photographer. The pictures are taken at the Edge Ice Arena. More information will be given out once the dates/times are scheduled.

Disciplinary Policy and Code of Conduct

Overview

This disciplinary policy provides the framework to address violations of rules and regulations established by Chicago Blues Hockey Club, Central States Hockey Development League, Northern Illinois Hockey League, Amateur Hockey Association of Illinois or USA Hockey. This policy is not intended to resolve private disputes or issues that arise regarding general operations.

Rules and Ethics Committee

The Board of Directors will establish a Rules and Ethics Committee to investigate and provide recommendations regarding disciplinary violations. The Committee will serve and be appointed as needed by the Board of Directors. The Committee will work under the supervision of the President and report their findings to the Board of Directors.

Code of Conduct

Players

- Play for fun.
- Work hard to improve your skills.
- Be a team player – get along with your teammates.
- Learn teamwork, sportsmanship and discipline.
- Be on time.
- Learn the rules and play by them. Always be a good sport.
- Respect your coach, your teammates, your parents, opponents and officials.
- Never argue with an official's decision.

Parents

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

Spectators

- Display good sportsmanship. Always respect players, coaches and officials.
- Act appropriately; do not taunt or disturb other fans; enjoy the game together.
- Cheer good plays of all participants; avoid booing opponents.
- Cheer in a positive manner and encourage fair play; profanity and objectionable cheers or gestures are offensive.
- Help provide a safe and fun environment; throwing any items on the ice surface can cause injury to players and officials.
- Do not lean over or pound on the glass; the glass surrounding the ice surface is part of the playing area.
- Support the referees and coaches by trusting their judgment and integrity.
- Be responsible for your own safety – be alert to prevent accidents from flying pucks and other avoidable situations.
- Respect locker rooms as private areas for players, coaches and officials.
- Be supportive after the game – win or lose. Recognize good effort, teamwork and sportsmanship.

Zero Tolerance

The USA Hockey Board of Directors has developed a Zero Tolerance Policy regarding the verbal abuse of officials and inappropriate spectator behavior. This Zero Tolerance Policy has been unanimously endorsed by the Youth, Junior, and Senior Councils, the District Referees-In-Chief, and the Coaching Education Program Directors for immediate implementation have unanimously endorsed this Zero Tolerance Policy.

To make ice hockey a more desirable and rewarding experience for all participants, the USA Hockey Board of Directors has instructed the Officiating Program to adhere to certain points of emphasis relating to sportsmanship. These points were written and implemented to maintain a sportsmanlike and educational atmosphere before, during and after all USA Hockey sanctioned games. This includes parking lots for the rink.

Players

A minor penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct (Zero Tolerance) shall be assessed whenever a player:

- Openly disputes or argues about any decision by an Official.
- Uses obscene or vulgar language, including swearing, in a boisterous manner to anyone at any time, even if it is not directed at any particular person.
- Visually demonstrates any sign of dissatisfaction with any Official's decision, in a manner that openly embarrasses the Official and/or challenges his judgment.

Any time that any player persists in any of these actions, he/she shall be assessed a Misconduct Penalty. A Game Misconduct shall result if such player continues.

If any player receives a game misconduct for Zero Tolerance abuse of an Official, we as an organization will add a one (1) game suspension to the one (1) game suspension the player is already serving. If there is a second offense of the same nature, that player will be suspended for an additional three (3) games. A third offense will result in the player being suspended for the Blues and will not be permitted to play again for the Blues until such player applies for reinstatement before the Board of Directors.

If any player receives a gross misconduct penalty, then the player will receive from the Blues an additional three (3) game suspension. A second offense will result in that player being suspended from the Blues and will not be permitted again for the Blues until such player applies for reinstatement before the Board of Directors.

All above violations have a right of appeal through the Blues.

Coaches

A Bench Minor penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct (Zero Tolerance) shall be assessed whenever a coach:

- Openly disputes or argues about any decision by an Official.
- Uses obscene or vulgar language in a boisterous manner to anyone at any time.
- Visually displays any sign of dissatisfaction with an Official's decision, in a manner that openly
- embarrasses the Official and/or challenges his judgment. This includes standing on the boards or standing in the bench doorway with the intent of inciting the Officials, players, or spectators.

Any time that a Coach persists in any of these actions, he/she shall be assessed a Game Misconduct Penalty.

Officials

Officials must apply these guidelines in a realistic manner and must be careful not to get overly technical in their enforcement. This policy is designed to eliminate direct confrontations with Officials while still allowing players and coaches an avenue to communicate in a calm and reasonable fashion.

Officials are required to conduct themselves in a businesslike, sportsmanlike, and non-vindictive manner at all times. The actions of an Official must be above reproach. Actions such as "baiting" or inciting players or coaches are strictly prohibited. On ice officials are ambassadors of the game and shall always conduct themselves with this responsibility in mind.

Parents and Spectators

On-ice officials will stop the game when the parents/spectators displaying inappropriate and disruptive behavior interfere with other spectators or participants of the game. The on-ice officials will identify violators to the coaches for the purpose of removing parents/spectators from the spectators viewing and game area. Once removed, play will resume. Lost time will not be replaced and violators may be subject to further disciplinary action by the local governing body. This inappropriate and disruptive behavior shall include:

- Using obscene or vulgar language in a boisterous manner to anyone at any time.
- Taunting players, coaches, officials or other spectators by means of baiting, ridiculing, threatening physical violence, or physical violence.
- Throwing any object in the spectators viewing area, players' bench, penalty box, or the on-ice surface, that in any manner creates a safety hazard.

Any violators will be escorted from the facility and not allowed to return until the next day. In addition to the USA Hockey sanctions the Blues Hockey Club has implemented the following rules:

First Zero Tolerance offense will result in a thirty (30) day suspension. Second offense will result in a sixty (60) day suspension and a third offense will result in a suspension from the Blues. They will not be permitted to return until they apply for readmission to the club through the Board of Directors. Suspension means that you will not be able to watch your child skate at all.

That includes all practices, practice games, league games and tournaments. All above violations have a right of appeal thru Blues. Every skater and each of their parents must sign a Zero Tolerance Policy Statement. It confirms that they have read and agree with the policy. Skaters are not allowed to participate in league or practice games until they and their parents have signed zero tolerance statements.

Twenty Four Hour Rule

The Chicago Blues Hockey Club subscribes to the following "24 Hour Rule" policy with regard to the reporting of a complaint or issue of concern. Please keep the intent of this rule in mind. The intent is not to discourage discussion, but to impose a period to allow emotions to cool and to allow a civil conversation to occur.

1. There shall be no contact with any member of the coaching staff regarding an issue of concern before, during or after a hockey game for a 24 hour period following the occurrence of an issue of concern.
2. Should there be an issue of concern after the 24 hour period has passed, the parent shall contact the **Team Manager** and schedule a meeting or discussion which may be documented and attended by the manager and coaching staff. The meeting shall be confidential and should the coaching staff feel the manager's attendance improper, they shall utilize the assistant coaches to document the meeting. These documents shall be maintained by the coach for future reference should the need arise.
3. Should satisfaction not be accomplished by the meeting, a Blues Hockey Director shall be notified and meet with the parties and reporting to the coaching committee or board of directors based on the need.
4. Should the matter be unresolved after the coach and directors meetings, the board of directors shall be notified and will schedule a meeting or respond in writing based on the complaint content. Should this rule be violated, the suspension under the ZERO TOLERANCE policy is 30 days.

Locker Room Policy

1. Purpose

The Chicago Blues Hockey Club (CBHC) is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and positive environment for all players, coaches, and staff. This locker room policy outlines the rules and expectations to ensure the well-being and privacy of everyone. This locker room policy is designed to create a safe and respectful environment for all members of the Chicago Blues Hockey Club. Adherence to these guidelines is essential for maintaining the integrity and positive culture of our team.

2. Cell Phones and Recording Devices

- a. Prohibited Items: Cell phones and other recording devices are strictly prohibited in the locker room at all times.
- b. Enforcement: Coaches and team managers are responsible for enforcing this rule. Violations will result in disciplinary action.

3. Behavioral Expectations

- a. No Bullying: Bullying in any form is not tolerated. This includes physical, verbal, and cyberbullying.
- b. Respectful Language: Players and staff must use respectful and appropriate language at all times. Vulgar, offensive, or derogatory language is strictly prohibited.
- c. Inclusive Environment: The locker room must be a safe and inclusive space for all team members. Discrimination or harassment based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic is not tolerated.

4. USA Hockey SafeSport Guidelines

- a. Compliance: The Chicago Blues Hockey Club adheres to the USA Hockey SafeSport guidelines to ensure the safety and protection of all participants.
- b. Reporting: Any suspected violations of SafeSport guidelines must be reported immediately to the designated SafeSport Coordinator or team management.
- c. Training: All players, coaches, and staff are required to complete SafeSport training as mandated by USA Hockey.

5. Supervision and Access

- a. Adult Supervision: At least one screened and approved adult must be present at the locker room when minors are present. This ensures a safe and supervised environment.
- b. Restricted Access: Only players, coaches, and authorized personnel are allowed in the locker room. Parents or guardians should seek permission before entering.

6. Disciplinary Actions

- a. Consequences: Any violation of this locker room policy may result in disciplinary actions, including but not limited to, suspension or expulsion from the team.
- b. Investigation: Reports of policy violations will be investigated promptly and thoroughly by team management and/or the Rules and Ethics Committee.

7. Contact Information

- a. For questions or concerns regarding the locker room policy, please contact your Hockey Director

The Chicago Blues Hockey Club reserves the right to update or modify this locker room policy at any time. All changes will be communicated to players, parents, and staff and updated on the official Chicago Blues Hockey Club website.

Contact Information

Website: chicagoblueshockey.org

Key Contacts

Please remember that your Team Manager should be your first point of contact for all questions. If you need additional assistance, please utilize the below contacts.

Board President	Rick Patrone	coachrick27@gmail.com
Board Vice President	Raj Kamruddin	rkamruddin@yahoo.com
Board Treasurer	TJ Skattum	tjskattum@gmail.com
Board Secretary/Webmaster	Sara Gerardi	saramccabe30@gmail.com
Registrar	Sean Ryan	sean.chicagoblues@gmail.com
Rules and Ethics	Ken Kaczmarek	ken@selectgoaltending.com
Director Liaison	Mark Brunetti	avemetal1@hotmail.com / 630-542-6075
Directors of Managers	Anna Benedikt	2016chicagoblues@gmail.com
Media and Promotions	Carol Kuhn	carolhoffman@gmail.com
DIBS and Volunteer Coordinator	Nicole Mattio	Nicole.ChicagoBlues@gmail.com
Gamesheet Questions and Issues	Steve Feinberg	steve@gamesheetinc.com
Apparel and Equipment	Ashley Kazmierczak	chiblueshockey.apparel@gmail.com
General Blues Email		chicagoblueshockeyclub@gmail.com

Social Media

The Blues maintain an active presence on social media which helps us find new players and stay connected to our community. Please follow our socials and submit pictures, videos, and stories by direct messaging us on any platform.

 linktr.ee/chicagoblues - contains links to all current events, important information, merchandise and apparel sales

 facebook.com/chicagoblueshockey

 instagram.com/chicagoblues_hockey

 x.com/ChiBluesHockey