

WCIHL Introduction & House League Sections

WARREN COUNTY INLINE HOCKEY LEAGUE

Handbook Of Policies, Rules And Guidelines

1. INTRODUCTION

The WCIHL is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization which has existed in Bowling Green since 1995. The WCIHL encourages, develops, advances and administers amateur youth hockey in Bowling Green and its surrounding communities. The WCIHL strives to afford people the privilege of participating in youth hockey and related activities in an environment which allows players to learn the fundamental skills of hockey and experience the fun of playing the game without placing undue emphasis on "winning." By so doing, it is the WCIHL's intention to promote the development of character, integrity, good sportsmanship and an appreciation for teamwork and its importance.

2. THE GOVERNING BODY

The WCIHL is a nonprofit league organized under the laws of the State of Kentucky. The WCIHL adheres to the Official Playing Rules published by USA Hockey, Inc., and generally follows the guidelines and policies of USA Hockey, Inc., except as otherwise set forth herein, or as established by the WCIHL Board of Directors. The WCIHL is currently affiliated with USA Hockey, Inc.

The activities of the WCIHL are managed by a Board of Directors (not less than 9 or more than 13) who are elected by the WCIHL players and families at an election held during each spring season. The fiscal year for the WCIHL commences July 1 and ends June 30.

The Board of Directors generally meets at least once each month. Currently it is the 3rd Wednesday of the month. A majority of Directors (at least 5) serves as a quorum and is required for all official Board actions except as otherwise designated. Board meetings are open to the public and visitors.

Officers of the Board consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Other members of the Board are appointed to various positions including Head of Coaches, Head of Referees, Concessions, Rink Maintenance, Equipment Manager, and Fund Raising Director.

Special committees are formed as necessary to work on special projects or to oversee certain activities. Committee members need not be on the Board of Directors, although all committees have at least one member who is a Board member. All Board members

and officers of the WCIHL are volunteers. They receive no compensation or remuneration for their work on behalf of the League.

3. GENERAL PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND PLAYER CLASSIFICATIONS

A. General Program Structure

The WCIHL program structure is generally consistent with that recommended by USA Hockey. This category is:

1) Recreational - The backbone of youth hockey is recreational hockey. This program encourages internal or House League play. This program is designed to provide opportunities to play for enjoyment, fitness, relaxation and fellowship. Skill development and team concepts are emphasized, rather than winning.

B. Player Classifications

WCIHL House League teams are divided into multiple player classifications. These hockey player classifications are also commonly referred to as Divisions. The classification of a player is determined by his/her age on December 31st of the upcoming Fall playing season.

The classifications are:

ADULT – 19 years and older.

MIDGET 18U - 18 years old or younger.

MIDGET 16U - 16 years old or younger.

BANTAM - 14 years old or younger.

PEEWEE - 12 years old or younger.

SQUIRT - 10 years old or younger.

MITE - 8 years old or younger.

The classifications for the 16U and 18U may be combined for Midget division, 14U and 12U may be combined for the Bantam division and the 10U and 8U may be combined for the Squirt division.

C. House League

The regular WCIHL seasons extend from early September to late November and from early March to late May. During this time the WCIHL conducts a House League

program. The House League program provides recreational players with the opportunity to learn and develop the fundamental skills of hockey. It strives to provide equal playing time for all House League players in accordance with playing rules established by the WCIHL.

After players learn to skate, there are hockey skills sessions available which are conducted by WCIHL coaches or other volunteers. These skills sessions are usually offered in the spring after the WCIHL regular season ends, during the summer and in the fall before the regular season begins. The skills taught include skating, puck handling, passing, shooting and other hockey skills.

THE HOUSE LEAGUE

The goal of the WCIHL House League is to provide an opportunity for individual and team skill development, and an equal opportunity for each player to enjoy hockey for fun and ~ exercise. The House League program includes Initiation and Recreational levels of play, as defined by USA Hockey.

All players will be assigned to a team after the House League evaluation. Depending upon the number of registered players, House teams will average 7 to 8 players and one goalie. The House League will practice and play games at Basil Griffith Park on Three Springs Road in Bowling Green KY

A. House League Structure

The House League program structure will generally adhere to the program structure and player classifications as set forth by USA Hockey. However, in the House League the WCIHL currently consists of three "divisions" rather than five as defined by USA Hockey. Players are enrolled in a division based on their age attained at midnight, December 31st, of the current Fall season. The current divisions are:

ADULT – 19 years and older.

MIDGET- 18 years old or younger.

BANTAM - 14 years old or younger.

SQUIRT --10 years old or younger.

The WCIHL reserves the right to establish, or eliminate, different playing divisions and different age criteria for playing in any division in its House League if its Board of Directors determines this to be necessary. This may include allowing players, upon

request, to play up in older age divisions when the Board of Directors determines they are capable of doing so.

B. Player Evaluations

Before the start of the season, the House League will evaluate all players to determine their skill level. The evaluations will be performed by an Evaluation Team consisting of coaches and/or other qualified individuals.

The results of this evaluation will be used by the coaches to conduct a draft, making reasonable attempts to assemble evenly matched teams. Players will be evaluated within their division based on the following skills:

Skating

Shooting

Passing and receiving

Puck handling

Goal tending

C. House League Draft

Following the House League evaluations for each division, the coaches in that division will conduct a draft under the guidance of the Head of Coaches or his designee. Coaches will use the player's evaluation scores to rank them among their peers within the division. The coaches will also try to take into account player size and experience when drafting. The coaches will then place the players on teams. Roster size will vary any where from 6 – 10 players per team. The main contributing factor to the size of each team will be based on how many participants we have in that particular age division.

All reasonable attempts will be made to conduct the draft fairly and equitably, to draft teams that will be evenly matched, and to draft so as not to create any team or teams that have an unfair competitive advantage or disadvantage. Attempts will be made to place members of the same family, who are playing or coaching within the same division, on the same team in order to ease the travel burden on families. However, because of the many variables involved in providing team balance and equality, it may not be possible to accommodate all requests for players to be on the same team for carpool purposes or for other reasons.

D. House League Playing Rules

The House League generally follows the official playing rules published by USA Hockey. There are exceptions, however, to some of these rules in order to allow the House League to function as intended. For example, limitations on the number of goals scored by an individual player may be imposed by the WCIHL where none are imposed by USA Hockey. The length of time which players are on the ice ("shift time") is limited in the WCIHL House League whereas USA Hockey has no such limitations. These rules may change or vary from season to season.

Some of the rules and policies which are unique to the WCIHL House League include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. PRACTICE/GAME TIMES – Practice times will range from 1 hour to 1 ½ hours each. The time length of each game is currently broken down into 2 -20 minute halves with the clock running continuously.

2. PLAYING TIME – While we don't have a minimum or maximum as to individual playing times, players should expect to play roughly the same amount of time as each other.

3. PENALTY TIME - Some penalty times in the House League vary from those provided for by USA Hockey. Please see below:

WCIHL House League Penalty Times

(in minutes)

	<u>Squirt</u>	<u>Bantam</u>	<u>Midget</u>	<u>Adult</u>
Minor:	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Double Minor:	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Major:	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0

Misconduct: 10 MINUTE FOR ALL AGES

4. THREE (3) GOAL LIMIT - There is currently a three (3) goal limit per player in all 10U and below division's in House League games. This rule provides as follows:

There is a three (3) goal limit per player in ALL HOUSE LEAGUE GAMES IN DIVISIONS BELOW AND INCLUDING 10U.

A. After an individual player has scored three (3) goals in one game, any further goals scored by that player SHALL BE DISALLOWED and will NOT be counted on the scoreboard or recorded on the official score sheet.

After a player who has already scored three (3) goals the referee SHALL DISALLOW ALL additional goals from that player and shall recommence play with a face-off at the nearest high zone face off dot.

5. "PLAY-UP" RULES - Generally all players in the WCIHL shall be required to play or participate on teams within the division required by their age as of December 31 for the Fall season in question. There are exceptions to this rule in the House League which include, but may not be limited to, the following:

A. A player may be asked to "play up" in a higher age division temporarily or permanently under certain circumstances, including when such action is needed to insure competitiveness in one of more playing divisions, or where there is a shortage of key players (e.g. goalies) or due to a shortage of players generally (e.g. only eight players register for a team), or a shortage of talented players within a particular division.

B. A player may be permitted to "play up" in a higher age division on a permanent basis under the following conditions: the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the player gives their written permission to the Board of Directors for their child to "play up" and the Board approves their request.

c. Request to play up a division

A player may make a request to the WCHIL board to play up into the next division. The WCIHL board will review all requests to play up and base approval on the following criteria:

1. The board will determine, after sign ups and any assessments, the number of players that are needed to maintain an acceptable roster and appropriate number of teams in each division for competition. The goal will be to keep divisions competitive by first keeping players in their respective age divisions.
2. The board will determine how many roster spots will be available in each division to honor play-up requests.
3. Players will only be allowed to play up a maximum of 1 year (2 seasons) prior to their normal change of divisions based on age requirements.
4. Players will be chosen based on their in-line hockey skills and capabilities based on prior seasons or assessments by coaches and/or board members.

In addition, any player who may have already moved up divisions and doesn't meet this requirement will still be allowed to play in the higher division.

D. A player may be permitted to "play up" in a higher age division on a temporary basis under the following conditions:

- 1) When the player's parent(s)/guardian(s) give their written permission to the Board of Directors for their child to "play up ", AND,
- 2) When the coaches of the lower division team and the higher division team give their permission for the child to "play up"; OR,
- 3) When the parent (s)/guardian(s) of the player give their written permission to the Board of Directors for their child to "play up" and the Board of Directors grants permission for the player to "play up."

In regard to when players may "play up," the following principles will be adhered to by all players, parents, coaches and Board members involved in these decisions:

- a) The safety of all players is always a primary consideration of the WCIHL and its coaches. No player will be allowed to "play up" when it would be unsafe to do so.
- b) The WCIHL seeks to promote competitive teams in all divisions within the House League. Promotion of competitive teams does not mean that "winning" is the WCIHL's primary objective. Players will not be allowed to "play up" solely to allow higher division teams to win more games. Likewise, players will not be prevented from "playing up" solely to maintain a winning advantage for the lower division team to which a player would normally belong. Players who are "playing up" should not be allowed to dislodge or bump off of team rosters those players who are already properly on such rosters by virtue of their age. The interests of the WCIHL as a whole shall be considered paramount to the interests of individual players, parents or coaches. Circumstances which are not expressly mentioned in this rule shall be governed by the decisions of the Board of Directors.

6. "PLAYING-DOWN" - No WCIHL player will be allowed to play down in a lower age division than that which is required by his age attained as of January 1st prior to the season in question. Circumstances which are not expressly mentioned in this rule shall be governed by the decisions of the Board of Directors.

7. TOURNAMENT PLAY – The WCIHL uses various formats for tournament play. Every team will play at least 1 playoff game. The format will be either a round robin format or a highest seed format. The format depends strictly on how many teams there are per division.

8. GAME FORFEITURES – In accordance with USA Hockey Rules, no team shall be allowed to start a game with less than 5 players on the playing surface. If after the conclusion of any warm-up time, a team cannot place five eligible players on the surface to start the game, the offending team shall be assessed a bench minor penalty. If the team is still unable to play within 5 minutes, the Referee shall suspend the game and the game shall be declared a forfeit.

The above-listed rules are not intended to be all inclusive. Rules may be added, dropped or modified at any time. Parents and players should remember that the WCIHL House League is intended to promote and encourage kids to have fun learning to play

the great game of hockey. It is not intended to promote or overemphasize individual accomplishments (e.g. scoring lots of goals) or "winning." The WCIHL Board of Directors will change its By-Laws, Rules and Regulations as deemed necessary from time to time in order to insure that its purpose and objectives are being met.

E. The Cost of House League Play

Each season the WCIHL Board of Directors establishes registration fees for the House League.

In addition to registration fees, players who need to rent equipment may do so from the WCIHL for a rental fee. (Further details about equipment rental are provided elsewhere in this handbook.)

Player's Responsibilities Section

PLAYER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The WCIHL wants all youngsters who participate in the WCIHL hockey program to have fun, develop their skills, and get along with their teammates. As with most activities, the benefit the player will get from the sport is directly related to the amount of effort they put into it. The player's responsibilities listed here will help players know what is expected of them and what they can do to get the most out of their ice hockey experience.

All players will be assigned to a team with at least one head coach and one assistant coach. Players are responsible to the coaches and to the team. Players should show appropriate respect to their coaches, to all other coaches and WCIHL officials, to their teammates and to other players.

All players are required to follow WCIHL and USA Hockey playing rules and the WCIHL and Warren County Parks and Recreation Departments Player's Code of Ethics.

WCPR CODE OF ETHICS

ARTICLE I. A coach, manager, supervisor, sponsor, spectator, participant, player or sport official shall not:

- A.** Curse (malicious or otherwise, verbally, written, or electronically / e-mail communication or by physical gesture) another manager, coach, player, referee, official, or spectator of the Warren County Parks and Recreation Department Youth Sports Program.
- B.** Push, hit, strike, or threaten (verbally, written, or electronically / e-mail communication) a referee, coach, player. Spectator or official of the Warren County Parks and Recreation Department Youth Sports Program.
- C.** Be drinking or under the influence of alcohol or controlled substance while on park or school premises; before, during or after an event.
- D.** Act in an irrational manner, make a public spectacle or nuisance of oneself during, before or after a scheduled event of the Warren County Parks and Recreation Department while on park or school premises.*
- E.** Violate the rules and regulations of the activity or program they are involved.
- F.** Any act that undermines league policy or procedures.
- G.** Instigate with proof of two (2) witnesses an infraction listed in rules A, B, C, D, E and F.
- H.** Be dismissed from the Warren County Parks and Recreation Department or sponsoring league scheduled game or contest.

*When one violates Article I, D, the League Board of Directors may implement the Zero Tolerance rule resulting in the child or children of the individual violating the rule being

dismissed from the sponsored program for one year from the date of the infraction. No Appeal.

ARTICLE II –Penalties

A. First Offense

Dismissal from the sponsoring program for the remainder of the season and post season activities. Violation of the rule in the latter part of **ARTICLE I.** **A coach, manager, supervisor, sponsor, spectator, participant, player or sport official shall not:**

- I. Curse (malicious or otherwise, verbally, written, or electronically / e-mail communication or by physical gesture) another manager, coach, player, referee, official, or spectator of the Warren County Parks and Recreation Department Youth Sports Program.
- J. Push, hit, strike, or threaten (verbally, written, or electronically / e-mail communication) a referee, coach, player. Spectator or official of the Warren County Parks and Recreation Department Youth Sports Program.
- K. Be drinking or under the influence of alcohol or controlled substance while on park or school premises; before, during or after an event.
- L. Act in an irrational manner, make a public spectacle or nuisance of oneself during, before or after a scheduled event of the Warren County Parks and Recreation Department while on park or school premises.*
- M. Violate the rules and regulations of the activity or program they are involved.
- N. Any act that undermines league policy or procedures.
- O. Instigate with proof of two (2) witnesses an infraction listed in rules A, B, C, D, E and F.
- P. Be dismissed from the Warren County Parks and Recreation Department or sponsoring league scheduled game or contest.

*When one violates Article I, D, the League Board of Directors may implement the Zero Tolerance rule resulting in the child or children of the individual violating the rule being dismissed from the sponsored program for one year from the date of the infraction. No Appeal.

ARTICLE II –Penalties

B. First Offense

Dismissal from the sponsoring program for the remainder of the season and post season activities. Violation of the rule in the latter part of and Recreation Department Youth Sports Programs activities. If deemed necessary by Warren County Parks and Recreation Department or League board of Directors, legal action may be taken against the individual violating the Code of Ethics.

Violation of Rule: H

A. First Offense

Dismissed for one (1) game and one (1) week from the date of the dismissal, no contact with the team until the suspension is lifted.

B. Second Offense

Dismissal from the sponsored program for the remainder of the season.

While it is fun to play hockey and win, players should understand that winning is not the most important thing in youth hockey. It is more important for players to improve their skills, learn about teamwork, loyalty and discipline, and to have fun, whether they win or not!

B. USA Hockey Core Values

To help understand what the players' responsibilities are, it might be helpful to consider the **USA Hockey Core Values** which are set forth below:

SPORTSMANSHIP - Foremost of all values is to learn a sense of fair play. Become humble in victory, gracious in defeat We will foster friendships with teammates and opponents alike.

RESPECT FOR THE INDIVIDUAL - Treat all others as you expect to be treated.

INTEGRITY- We strive to foster honesty and fair play beyond mere strict interpretation of the rules and regulations of the game.

PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE AT THE INDIVIDUAL, TEAM AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS - Each member of the organization, whether player, volunteer or staff, should seek to perform each aspect of the game to the highest level of his or her ability.

ENJOYMENT - It is important for the hockey experience to be fun, satisfying and rewarding for the participant.

TEAMWORK - We value the strength of learning to work together. The use of teamwork is reinforced and rewarded by success in the hockey experience.

C. Basic Player's Responsibilities

* All players should be supportive of their coaches and teammates. All comments should be supportive, positive, constructive and enthusiastic.

* Players should give their best efforts during games and practices.

* Players are expected to be at all games and practices. They should arrive well ahead of time so that they can get dressed and ready to participate in team activity as decided by the coach. If a player will be late or miss a game or practice, it is that player's responsibility to inform the coach ahead of time.

* At times, the coaches will inform the players of upcoming activities and scheduled events, or changes to the schedule. Sometimes the coaches will give players paperwork or other information that needs to be given to their parents. Players are responsible for passing this information to their parents.

* Players are responsible for their own equipment. They should make sure they have their required equipment present and in good condition for every game and practice. Required equipment is listed below:

HECC-approved helmet with face mask that provides full facial protection, and any chin protection that accompanies the face mask.

- ◆ Colored (non-clear) Internal mouthpiece
- ◆ Elbow pads
- ◆ Shin pads
- ◆ Gloves
- ◆ Skates
- ◆ Stick

* Players should see to it that their equipment is properly cared for after use. This includes drying and washing equipment and/or making sure it is in good condition. (If equipment is damaged or in questionable condition, this should be reported to parents or coaches.) Players should make sure that they have sufficient amounts of tape and other items required for their equipment.

* It is important that hockey players keep in shape. This includes following a proper diet, especially before games and practices. Players should exercise and stretch to keep physically fit between games and practices. For maximum benefit and improvement, players should also skate for recreation, such as at public sessions, skill sessions and other instructional programs.

* All concerns, problems and questions should be directed to one of the coaches at the proper place and time. Problems should also be discussed with parents who, in turn, can discuss them with the coaches at the appropriate place and 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.

D. Players' Communications With Officials

One common misconception is that the captain of the team is the only player who is entitled to talk to an official during a game. Although USA Hockey playing rules clearly outline the proper procedure for a captain to approach an official, there may be times when a non-captain can communicate a concern or ask a question of the official. In these instances it is important for the captain or player to remain calm and refrain from using abusive or threatening language. The concern or question should be related to a rule interpretation and not to the official's judgment. Be specific and respect the official's response, whether you agree or not. A well-timed and phrased question will keep the officials on their toes and will help establish a mutual respect.

Many officials will speak up or verbalize during play in an effort to keep play moving or diffuse a potentially volatile situation. When this occurs, please keep in mind that the official is communicating for your benefit and is not keen on having to repeat the warning. This procedure is often used in situations where the puck is stalled along the boards and the players are making very little effort to keep the puck in play. Your cooperation when the official says "move the puck" will help avoid an unnecessary stoppage of play, minimize the potential for injury and decrease your odds of having a penalty assessed for delay of game.

Parent Responsibilities and Spectator Reminders

PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The sport of youth hockey is greatly enhanced by the support, cooperation and assistance given by parents. The most important part of a parent's support is the encouragement they give to their child, the player. Parents can help their child and everyone involved in youth hockey by showing an interest in the sport and the team. Parents are encouraged to support team functions and are invited to volunteer to help the WCIHL in any way they can. Without the involvement of parents who volunteer to help the WCIHL, there would be no youth hockey program in Bowling Green.

Parents provide an example for players to follow. They should serve as role models to the players by the manner in which they enjoy the game and by the support they give coaches and the WCIHL program. Any concerns or opinions that parents wish to express to coaches or officials should be communicated in a mature and appropriate way at the proper place and time.

Parents and coaches should try to develop relationships that will provide an enjoyable experience for everyone involved. Parents and coaches should develop a working relationship that will help the player achieve his or her maximum benefit from playing ice hockey.

Remember, parents, your child is playing hockey. Help your child play the game for him or herself, to achieve their own goals. It is important that too heavy a burden not be placed on your child to win games. A recent survey revealed that 72% of children would rather play for a losing team than ride the bench for a winning team. Players gain the most by learning about themselves and about sportsmanship while they are enjoying the exciting sport of hockey.

A. Philosophy For Parents

The WCIHL does not presume to tell parents how they must rear their children. However, the WCIHL does feel that there are some concepts about youth sports that all parents should try to keep in mind as they watch their children win, lose, succeed and fail in youth sports, including youth hockey.

1) Do not impose your ambitions on your child. Remember that hockey is your child's activity. Improvement and progress occur at different rates for each individual. Don't judge your child's progress based on the performance of other athletes, and don't push them based on what you think they should be doing.

2) Be supportive no matter what. There is only one question to ask your child — "Did you have fun?" If games and practices are not fun, your child should not be forced to participate.

3) Don't undermine your child's coach. Do you undermine your child's coach by trying to coach your child on the side? Your job is to support and love your child no matter what, and the coach is responsible for the technical part of the job.

4) Try to say only positive things at a hockey game. At a hockey game, you should cheer and applaud, but never criticize your child, other children, the coaches or officials. Always strive to set a good example for your child.

5) Try to acknowledge your child's fears.

A first hockey game (or every hockey game) can be a stressful situation. It is totally appropriate for your child to be anxious. Don't yell or belittle, just assure your child to do the very best they can do. You should expect no more.

6) Try not to criticize the officials. If you do not have the time or the desire to volunteer as an official, please don't criticize those who are doing the best they can.

7) Respect your child's coach. The bond between coach and player is a special one and one that contributes to your child's success as well as fun. Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child. It will likely confuse your child and detract from the experience he or she is having. Speak to the coach at the appropriate time and place.

8) Give your child goals besides winning. Giving an honest effort, regardless of the outcome, is much more important than winning. An Olympic swimmer once said, "My goal was to set a world record. Well, I did that but someone did it too, just a little faster than I did. I achieved my goal and I lost. That does not make me a failure. In fact, I am very proud of that race."

9) Always place your child first above everything. Ask yourself this question — Are your child's goals more important to you than they are to your child? Remember that the focus of youth sports should be fun. Children are constantly changing and their goals, interests and participation in activities will change as well. Parents should remain flexible, patient and always supportive while their children strive to find their niche in life.

10) Have realistic expectations for your child. There are more than 500,000 players registered with USA Hockey. The odds of your child becoming a star in the NHL are daunting. Counting the number of Canadian, Russian, and European players playing in the NHL, your child's chances of making it to that level are very small. Remember that hockey is much more than just the NHL. Ask your coach why he coaches. Chances are he was not an NHL player but still got enough out of hockey that he wants to pass that love for the sport on to others. Hockey teaches self-discipline and sportsmanship. It builds self-esteem and fitness. It provides lifelong friendships and much more. Hockey builds good people and you should be happy that your child wants to participate.

B. Basic Parents' Responsibilities

* All parents should be supportive of their player, their teammates, coaches and other parents. Comments should be supportive, positive and constructive.

* Parents, together with the coaches and players, share the responsibility for player safety. Parents should make sure that players are aware of basic on-rink safety, as outlined in this handbook.

* All parents and players must obey the WCIHL rules, policies, guidelines and codes of conduct. Parents and players should also read and follow this Handbook of Rules, Policies and Guidelines.

REMEMBER: Participating in WCIHL activities is a privilege, not a right. Players and parents are required to follow the rules, policies and guidelines of this association.

* Parents should help players be responsible for their own equipment. They should make sure they have all their required equipment present and in good condition for every game and practice. Required equipment is listed elsewhere in this Handbook.

* Parents and players should see to it that their equipment is properly cared for after use, including drying and washing of equipment, and making sure it is in good condition. (If equipment is damaged or in questionable condition, this should be brought to the coaches' attention.) Make sure that players have sufficient amounts of tape and other items required for their equipment.

* Parents should ensure that players attend all games and practices and arrive in plenty of time so that they can get dressed and participate in team activity as decided by the coach. If a player will be late or miss a

game or practice, it is that player's responsibility to inform the coach sufficiently ahead of time. Parents should make sure that the player carries out this task.

* Parents should remember that at times the coaches will inform the players of upcoming activities and scheduled events, or changes to the schedule. Sometimes the coaches will give players paperwork or other information that needs to be given to their parents. Players are responsible for passing this information to their parents, so parents might want to ask players after practices or games if there is any information for them.

* Parents should be instrumental in helping their hockey player keep in shape. This includes following a proper diet, especially before games and practices. Players should exercise and stretch to keep physically fit between games and practices. For maximum benefit and improvement, players should also skate for recreation, such as at public sessions, skill sessions and other instructional programs.

REMINDERS FOR SPECTATORS AT WCIHL EVENTS

The WCIHL wants everyone who participates in or observes hockey practices, games and other programs to enjoy themselves. The following reminders might help everyone in the stands and on the rink to have a good time:

- A)** Remember that children play organized sports for their own fun. They are not there to entertain you, and they are not miniature pro athletes.
- B)** Be on your best behavior. Don't use profane or abusive language or harass players, coaches, officials or other spectators. -
- C)** Applaud good plays by your own team and the visiting team.
- D)** Show respect for your team's opponents. Without them, there would be no games.
- E)** Never ridicule or scold a child for making a mistake during a game.
- F)** Respect the officials' decisions.
- G)** Encourage players always to play according to the rules.

Coaches Section

WCIHL COACHES

The WCIHL recruits and develops volunteer coaches whose role is to help players get the most out of their participation in hockey and to set a positive role model and example for the players. Coaches are encouraged to participate in training programs designed for coaches, including the required Coaching Education Program clinics offered by USA Hockey.

Each team will normally be assigned a head coach and at least one assistant coach. While each coach may share equally in the duties required to run the team, the final responsibility for the team belongs to the head coach. Coaches are to ensure that all WCIHL and USA Hockey standards are adhered to by themselves and their players.

Coaches should develop relationships with players so that they can teach, lead, protect and care for them. Coaches must also develop relationships with parents in order to provide a fruitful and enjoyable experience for everyone involved. Coaches and parents should develop a working relationship that will help the player achieve his or her maximum benefit from playing hockey.

The on-rink conduct of hockey teams is frequently a reflection of the coach's attitude toward the game. Excessively penalized play, unnecessary roughness, verbal abuse of officials and opponents and toleration of profanity will be considered a product of the coach's approach to the game. Coaches will share responsibility with the parents and players for players' actions during games and practices and while in any facility

Coaches should try to be good communicators. The coach must make sure that all players and parents are aware of the practice/game schedule. The coach should be able to clearly communicate practice and game objectives to players and parents. Coaches should listen to concerns expressed by players and parents in order to maximize the hockey experience for all involved whenever possible.

A. WCIHL Coaching Philosophy

Although all WCIHL coaches are volunteers who are not compensated for their time and effort, they are nevertheless expected to remember that they are entrusted with the minds and hearts of children who want to learn to play hockey and have fun. With this in mind the WCIHL encourages its coaches to adhere to the following WCIHL Coaching Philosophy:

1) Coaches should be reasonable in their demands on young players' time, energy and enthusiasm and remember that they have other interests.

- 2) Coaches should teach players that rules of the game are mutual agreements which no one should deliberately evade or break.
- 3) Coaches should group players according to age, height, skill and physical maturity whenever possible.
- 4) Coaches should avoid over-playing the experienced or exceptionally, talented players. The "just-average" players need and deserve equal time and attention.
- 5) Coaches should remember that children play for fun and enjoyment and that winning is only part of it. Coaches should not ridicule or verbally abuse children for making mistakes or losing a competition.
- 6) Coaches should insure that equipment and facilities meet safety standards and are appropriate for the age and ability of the players.
- 7) Coaches should schedule the length of practices and competitions, taking into consideration the maturity level of the children involved.
- 8) Coaches should develop team respect for the ability of opponents, as well as for the judgment of officials and opposing coaches.
- 9) Coaches should remember that children need a coach they can respect. They should be generous with praise when it is deserved and set a good example.
- 10) Coaches should make a personal commitment to keep themselves informed on sound coaching principles and the principles of growth and development of children.

B. Basic Coaching Responsibilities

- 1) Coaches should be present before, during and after games and practices in order to coach their players. A coach should always be present on the rink when players are on the rink for practice, and on the bench when players are on the rink for a game. Dressing areas should be supervised by team coaches while in use before and after games and practices. If a coach cannot be present, he should try to arrange for a suitable adult replacement.
- 2) Coaches should see to it that no one is on the bench unless they are players or coaches on the teams that are currently playing or practicing or are authorized to keep score or serve as timekeeper.
- 3) Each coach, home and away, should provide one volunteer adult to serve as either scorekeeper or timekeeper during games.
- 4) It is the coach's responsibility to be prepared with game or practice plans before his team goes on the rink. Practices should be fun and challenging for the players. Coaches

should maximize the use of rink time and organize practice so that it builds on game philosophy. The use of scrimmages at practice should be minimized so that more emphasis can be placed on development of individual skills. If a scrimmage is necessary, it should be controlled and add to the players' learning experience.

5) Coaches should help to ensure that players are wearing all the required, approved protective equipment, including mouth pieces, while on the rink. (Required equipment is discussed in more detail in the Required Equipment section of this handbook.) Coaches should help to ensure that all equipment worn by a player is proper, safe and fits correctly.

6) WCIHL coaches are expected to be familiar with the WCIHL Player's Code of Conduct and to enforce this code where applicable.

C Communications Between Coaches and Officials

Coaches and officials have more in common than most people think, especially at the younger levels of hockey. They both are teachers of the game and their communication with each other will go a long way in creating a positive atmosphere. Officials should communicate with coaches who are behaving in a non-threatening manner. Oftentimes, a coach may simply need a brief explanation of the rule or a reminder as to the proper interpretation. Officials who honor these requests from coaches are establishing a mutual level of respect that benefits everyone involved.

However, some coaches are assessed penalties because they perform in an abusive or threatening way. Screaming at the official from across the ice, berating an official for a judgment call or standing on the dasher boards are all threatening situations that officials are instructed to penalize. These confrontational situations do not portray a positive image and often will lead to very little constructive communication with the official.

Coaches who remain calm and word their questions or concerns in a non-confrontational manner will more than likely receive an acceptable response from the official. For example, a coach who asks the official, "What did you see when our player was tripped on that last rush?" should receive an honest explanation from the official. In the meantime, the coach who screams, "That was a trip. Why didn't you call it?" will only create a confrontational environment that is not beneficial.

Required Hockey Equipment Section

REQUIRED HOCKEY EQUIPMENT

A. Selection of Equipment

Although players are primarily responsible for the care of their hockey equipment, parents should realize that selection of equipment is important. When purchasing or renting equipment, remember two important factors: 1) assure that the player is adequately protected and 2) be sure the equipment fits so that it allows freedom of movement so the player can perform the necessary skills he/she must use in practices and games.

Coaches and parents should help to ensure that players are wearing all the required, approved protective equipment, including mouthpieces, while on the rink for games and practices. It is important that all equipment worn by a player is proper, safe and fits correctly. If you feel your child's equipment does not fit properly, it is your responsibility to return it to the place where it was purchased or rented and arrange for suitable equipment to be provided to your son or daughter.

Any player on the rink, on the bench, or in the penalty box must be fully dressed with all approved, required protective equipment. All equipment must be designed specifically for hockey. Any player who enters the surface without all the proper equipment will be asked to leave the rink, and may return only when the equipment deficiency is corrected. Game officials may impose penalties upon players or teams using improper equipment (e.g., It is a misconduct penalty for any player to play without a mouthpiece; it is also a penalty to play with a stick that is broken.)

When purchasing equipment it is best to acquire equipment that fits now. Purchasing equipment that allows too much room for growth can be unsafe. Required equipment is listed below, along with guidelines for proper fit and care.

B. Required Equipment

* **Helmet** - The helmet must be approved by the Hockey Equipment Certification Council (HECC) and must be accompanied by a face mask that provides full facial protection, and any chin protection that accompanies the face mask. All helmet and face mask straps must be properly fastened. If a player's helmet/face mask comes off his/her head during play, the player may not resume play until their helmet/face mask

has been replaced. If the goalkeeper's helmet/face mask comes off during play, the referee must stop play immediately.

* **Internal mouthpiece** - A colored (non-clear) internal mouthpiece is required to be worn by all players including goalkeepers. The mouthpiece must cover all teeth of one jaw, customarily the upper.

* **Elbow pads** - Straps should remain tight, providing a snug fit over the elbow. Elbow pads should extend down the forearm to the top of the glove.

* **Shin pads** - Shin pads should cover the leg from the top of the skates to above the knees, overlapping a few inches above the bottom of the hip pads or hockey pants. The knee is a primary area of concern for protection. The pad should cover the knee when the leg is straight and when it is bent at the knee. Pads should bend just below the knee in order to conform to the bent leg.

* **Gloves** - Gloves should have ample room for the fingers and thumb and must not be too snug in the wrist area. The cuff of the glove should come up far enough to adequately cover the wrist area, extending up to the bottom of the elbow pads. No portion of the palm should be missing or torn.

RENTAL OF EQUIPMENT FROM THE WCIHL

The WCIHL currently maintains an inventory of hockey equipment. This equipment is given to **NEW** players who register to play in one of the WCIHL's leagues or other sanctioned activities after a deposit check is made to the WCIHL. This inventory includes helmets, gloves, elbow pads and shin guards. Most of this equipment is for player's ages 5 to 12 (Mites to Pee Wees). Older players should plan to purchase their own equipment. A deposit is required to insure that the equipment is returned in good condition. That deposit will be returned to the owner when the equipment is turned back in. Equipment that is lost or damaged must be paid for by the participant and will result in forfeiture of their deposit or a direct charge to the participant by the WCIHL.

The WCIHL also provides game uniforms to House League All-Star teams. These uniforms must be returned at the end of the game. Lost or damaged uniforms must be paid for by the participant by forfeiture of a deposit or payment of a direct charge levied by the WCIHL.

Participants are responsible for maintaining and caring for their equipment while it is in their possession. Equipment which breaks or becomes unsafe to use should not be used under any circumstances.

PROPER CARE OF EQUIPMENT

Proper equipment care is necessary to ensure the safety of the player. All equipment should be aired out and allowed to dry after each game and practice. Placing equipment outside in the sunshine is an extremely effective way to dry and "naturally deodorizing" equipment. "Try it, you'll like it"

* **Helmet** - Periodically tighten all screws and wash the interior with soap and a damp cloth.

* **Internal mouthpiece** - The mouthpiece should be kept in a separate case and rinsed thoroughly before and after each use.

* **Elbow pads** - Check the straps for wear and/or elastic fatigue.

* **Shin pads** - Check the knee area for cracks. Make sure padding is not ripped or torn.

* **Gloves** - Oil the leather, especially the palms. If the palms are worn, make sure the fingers cannot come out through the palm area. If so, they must be replaced.

* **Skates** - Skates are the hockey player's most important piece of equipment. Young hockey players will be at a tremendous disadvantage without properly fitting skates. Skates should not be bought several sizes too large so that a player may "grow into them." Oversized skates will retard the skating development of every youngster. Typical hockey skate sizes are different than normal shoe sizes, and should be approximately one-half size smaller than a child's normal shoe size. Skates should fit snugly with only one pair of athletic socks. When the player's toes are pushed all the way to the front of the boot, there should be only enough room at the heel area for a pencil to fit between the heel and the back of the boot. When properly laced, players should not be able to lift their heels, and their toes should be able to move. Rapidly growing youngsters might outgrow more than one pair of skates in a season. Look for "good buys" on skates, but make sure they fit properly.

If skates have removable insoles, the insole should be removed between uses to allow for proper drying of the foot bed. Periodically polish the leather, check for loose rivets, and check laces for wear. It is a good idea for players to carry an extra pair of laces in their equipment bag.

* **Sticks** - Sticks must be made of wood or other material approved by the USA Hockey Rules Committee (this includes most modern fiberglass and aluminum ice-hockey sticks), and must not have any projections. Sticks blades must be a minimum of 2" wide at any point. If the blades are less than the 2" minimum, they are considered "illegal" and therefore must be replaced. Adhesive tape of any color may be wrapped around the stick at any place for the purpose of reinforcement or to improve control of the stick or the puck. If a player's stick breaks during play, that stick may no longer be used.

Sticks come in different "lies." Lie refers to the angle between the blade of the stick and the shaft. The smaller the angle, the higher the lie. The most common lie is a five or six for skaters and a twelve or thirteen for goalies. When the player assumes the ready position, the entire bottom portion of the stick blade should be flat on the ice. If just the heel of the stick touches, try a lower lie. If just the toe of the stick touches, try a higher lie.

To determine proper stick length, place the front bottom corner of the stick on the ice between the skates. The top of the shaft should touch the player's face between the chin and lips. If the player is wearing shoes instead of skates, the top of the shaft should touch closer to the player's nose.

The stick should be replaced at the first sign of cracks, splintering or other damage that might cause the stick to break and possibly injure another player. (It is a penalty to play with a chipped, splintered or broken stick.)

Other Equipment

Players should wear a loose hockey jersey as part of their equipment. Players who do not have all of the necessary equipment or do not have properly fitting equipment should not practice or play games until they have what they need.

Final Section

INSURANCE

You should know that a portion of your child's registration fee to play hockey in the WCIHL goes to purchase Excess Medical and Catastrophic insurance to cover your son or daughter in the event of a hockey related injury. This insurance is provided through USA Hockey. Since the details of the applicable insurance policy are subject to change, they will not be detailed in this handbook. However, a summary of the insurance program is contained here. The insurance information contained here is not legally binding and is subject to change without notice.

Excess Medical insurance is secondary, meaning that it only covers certain expenses NOT COVERED BY YOUR INSURANCE POLICY. There is a maximum limit to this coverage, usually up to \$25,000/medical and \$1,000/dental NOT COVERED BY YOUR INSURANCE POLICY. There will also be a deductible, normally between \$100 to \$250. The excess medical coverage does not cover physical therapy or chiropractic expenses.

Catastrophic Insurance also is secondary to your primary coverage. There is normally a \$25,000 deductible. The policy currently covers lifetime medical, dental, and rehabilitation expenses of \$1,000,000 per accident.

These two types of insurance cover your son or daughter in North America at USA Hockey sanctioned games, tournaments and practices. In any event, IF YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER IS INJURED, YOU SHOULD REPORT ANY INJURY TO YOUR CHILD'S COACH OR TO A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS. Then, YOU SHOULD COLLECT UNDER YOUR PRIMARY INSURANCE POLICY and then UNDER THE POLICY provided through USA Hockey if certain expenses are not covered under your policy.

PAYMENT OF FEES

Players are expected to pay registration fees in full at the beginning of the season or other sanctioned activity or program. This money is necessary to pay for the ice which the WCIHL must purchase for practices, games, skills sessions, etc. The WCIHL does not provide "scholarships" or subsidize players who are unable to pay the applicable fees. Under certain circumstances the WCIHL will consider allowing payment on an installment basis or other terms established by the WCIHL.

Deposits which may be required for uniforms or rented equipment will be cashed and deposited by the WCIHL if the WCIHL's uniforms and/or equipment are not returned at the time and place designated by the WCIHL.

Participants who have not fully paid all applicable registration fees or have not returned WCIHL uniforms or equipment, or who are otherwise indebted to the WCIHL may be

precluded from registering for any WCIHL activities until they have paid all fees and satisfied their entire indebtedness.

VOLUNTEERS

The WCIHL needs volunteers! Our youth hockey program depends upon people who volunteer their time and effort to serve you and your children. The people who register your child, rent him equipment, publish the WCIHL Newsletter, schedule all of your child's practices and games and coach him/her throughout the season are all volunteers. The people who serve on the Board of Directors and help organize and run league activities are all volunteers. None of these people receive any compensation for their work. Please consider helping our league continue to help children have fun playing hockey.

If you are interested and willing to help out in some capacity, just call any member of the WCIHL Board of Directors. Their names and phone numbers are posted on the bulletin board located at the front entrance of the rink.

REVISION OF THIS HANDBOOK

The WCIHL may change or revise its policies, rules and guidelines at any time as deemed necessary by the Board of Directors and without prior notification to participants in the WCIHL. These changes or revisions may be included in revised editions of this Handbook when published by the Board of Directors.

Registration Dates

Spring Season: The last Saturday in January and the first Saturday in February.

Fall Season: The last Saturday in July and the first Saturday in August.

Check WCIHL.com for locations and times of each registration date.