

NORWOOD YOUTH HOCKEY POLICIES & PHILOSOPHY

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NORWOOD YOUTH HOCKEY POLICIES & PHILOSOPHY

Pursuant to Section 4 of Article I of the By-Laws of the Norwood Nuggets Skating Club, Inc. and known as Norwood Youth Hockey, the following are the policies and philosophy of Norwood Youth Hockey (unless otherwise indicated, all capitalized terms used herein will have the same meaning as defined in the By-Laws):

I. PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION

The purpose of Norwood Youth Hockey is to provide hockey programs for the young people of the community and, in so doing, to provide a safe environment for healthy exercise in which the values of participation, team-play, good sportsmanship, and mutual respect can be learned simultaneously with hockey.

The mission of Norwood Youth Hockey is to provide competitive and instructional hockey programs for the young people of the community.

Each child's personal benefit and development is of paramount importance. Therefore, the Organization follows a strict value system in all of its activities including the following:

- Every child gets a chance to play regardless of ability, age or sex.
- Team play is recognized above individual contribution.
- Children are taught to win and lose gracefully.
- The Organization builds mutual respect for other players, coaches and referees.

II. TEAM ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION

A. LEAGUE/CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

Prior to the start of each season, the Vice President, in agreement with the majority of the Board of Directors, will determine which leagues and/or conferences the Organization will join.

B. LEVEL OF COMPETITION

1. Prior to the start of each season, the Level Director of each playing Level (i.e., Squirt, Peewee, Bantam or Midget), together with the Vice President and Board of Directors, will determine which playing Division the teams will be placed (i.e., A, B or C) within such Level.

There will be no distinction in hockey philosophy between the various Divisions (i.e., A, B or C) within each Level.

C. TEAM SIZE

1. The number of players on each team within a Level shall be determined by dividing the total number of players registered for each Level by the number of teams entered into leagues and/or conferences. The Level Director of each level shall be responsible for determining the number of players on each team in his or her Level in accordance with the rules for Player Selection included herein.

(a) In the event that there is a remainder after determining team size, the next higher Division team (i.e., the A team or the B team, if the A team chooses not to carry an extra player) has the option of carrying the extra player.

2. An ideal number of players for each team are sixteen (16) (including one (1) goaltender).

(a) Depending on the enrollment in each level, the number of players on each team may vary from the ideal in accordance with the following parameters:

- (i) Maximum – Seventeen (17) players (including two (2) goaltenders) or Sixteen (16) players (including one (1) goaltender).
- (ii) Minimum – Thirteen (13) players (including two (2) goaltenders) or Twelve (12) players (including one (1) goaltender).

The exception to this rule are Instructional and Mites team, which should be staffed, based on the number of players registered and the number of teams that can be accommodated. All of which is based on the discretion of the Instructional and Mite Directors.

D. TEAM PRACTICES

1. Assignments

Prior to the start of each session, the Vice President shall submit to the Board of Directors, a proposal stating the intended rinks which have been contracted and scheduled ice time at each rink.

(a) Practice schedules should be made within the following guidelines:

- (i) The time of scheduled practices should consider the ages of the team members.
- (ii) If two (2) or more teams are assigned to share the same practice ice, the teams should not be different by more than one Level. For example, Mites should not be on the ice with Pee Wees and Squirts should not be on the ice with Bantams. An exception to this rule is Skills Development, which typically groups three Levels at the second hour, due to the constraints of ice availability and cost of instructors.
- (iii) Practice should be scheduled on a day when a team is not scheduled in league play. If this is not possible, the practice should be scheduled no sooner than three (3) hours before the start of such game or three (3) hours after the time of such game.
- (iv) Two (2) practices on the same day should be assigned on consecutive hours.
- (v) When possible, consideration should be given to religious activities, school sports and functions, etc.
- (vi) Teams are encouraged to participate in non-league tournaments during the season; however, such play is optional at the discretion of the team coach, Level Director and team parents. Such tournament play will be considered in scheduling, if possible. Payment for such tournaments is the responsibility of the parents.

2. Practice Format

(a) It is the responsibility of each team's coaching staff to design and implement each practice.

- (i) Each practice should be designed prior to the scheduled ice time with consideration given to the objectives to be accomplished.
- (ii) Coaches or the coach's designee should arrive one-half (1/2) hour prior to practices and games to obtain a locker room.
- (iii) Coaches should take the time needed before practice to explain the objectives of the practice to the players in order to maximize the use of ice time.
- (iv) The first ten (10) minutes or so of practice ice should consist of full-sheet warm-ups and drills including all players on the ice. This portion of the practice should be managed cooperatively by the team head coaches and assistant coaches, and shall be led by the "senior" coach, unless the senior coach defers to another individual. A coach's seniority is determined by Division first, then by Level (e.g., the Pee Wee B Coach is senior to the Squirt A Coach).
- (v) The coaches may choose to run the rest of the practice together or (more common) divide the ice evenly between the teams and conduct their own practices.
- (vi) When possible, the coaches should try and end the practice with age appropriate "fun" activity (e.g., 3 – on – 3 half-ice games, penalty shot contests, etc.).
- (vii) At the end of the practice, the Coach or Coach's designee (a parent or adult assistant) should supervise the locker room activities and confirm that the locker room is being left in an orderly condition (i.e., no damage to the facility, free of debris on the floor, etc.). This person should be the last person to leave the locker room before it is locked

E. TEAM GAMES

1. It is the policy of the Organization to assure each player on each team receives an equal amount of ice time, as follows:

(a) Line Shifts

- (i) Frequent line changes are encouraged. Except for the Instructional and Mite Division, line changes should be made both "on-the-fly" and at stoppages in play, versus always waiting for a stoppage in play. The length of a shift should typically be no greater than 45 seconds.
- (ii) Given the nature of the game, exactly equal ice time for all forwards and defensemen, respectively, is not possible. However, shifts (on average) should be approximately the same length of time for each line.
- (iii) An injury or penalty to a member of a line may force a line change sooner than the regular length of a normal shift.
- (iv) The coaches have discretion as to the make-up of any line (i.e., double shifts, playing out of normal position) during the last two (2) minutes of any game when the score differential is two (2) goals or less.

(b) Missing Players

- (i) When a player is absent, such player's ice time is to be divided equally among present players, in a fair manner, at the coach's discretion.
- (ii) A coach may borrow players from other teams of the Organization, which are in an identical Level/Division, or in a lower Division of the same Level, only in accordance with league and/or conference rules. Such borrowing should not occur unless the number of players on a team would be less than the minimum desired amount, set forth above, without such borrowed player(s).

(c) Special Units

- (i) The forming of special units to kill penalties, power plays, etc. is discouraged on a regular basis, except in the last two (2) minutes of the game or, occasionally, to change the

tempo of the game. The forming of a special unit to kill penalties or play with a man advantage is not allowed except in the last two (2) minutes of a game.

III. DISCIPLINE

A. PLAYER DISCIPLINE/ATTENDANCE

1. Discipline

It is expected that each player shall behave in accordance with the strict value system followed by the Organization (see Section I). It is also expected that each coach shall maintain control over his or her players during practices, games, and anywhere on or near the rink premises.

(a) Minor disciplining of player(s) may be executed by having the disciplined player sit on the bench for short (i.e., 5-10 minutes) periods of time while the practice is resumed by the rest of the team.

(b) Major discipline of a player(s) during practice will consist of sending a player(s) off the ice for the remainder of that practice.

(i) In the event of a major discipline, the Level Director shall be notified, by phone, email or in person, after the practice in which such discipline occurs, and shall be informed of the identity of the player(s) and the reason for the discipline.

(c) Disciplinary action shall only be implemented because of unacceptable behavior and never because of poor play.

2. Attendance

Regular attendance, by all players, at both practices and games is important to the development of the team. Chronic absenteeism by a player should therefore be subject to disciplinary action. Any player who misses a combination of three (3) games and/or practices (“three strikes rule”) without permission, as outlined herein, will be subject to suspension of up to one period in the team’s next game. If more than three (3) unexcused games/practices are missed, the player will be subject to suspension for up to a full game (on a one-for-one basis for each missed event exceeding three (3)).

It is acknowledged that the players have activities other than the Nuggets, that may take higher priority on a given day. Missing a practice or game due to religious or education activities are tolerated. Missing a Nuggets practice to participate in another sports team’s game is tolerated. These types of absences, as well as those due to illness, will not count towards the three strikes rule. However, missing a Nuggets practice for another sports team’s practice is not tolerated, and this missed practice will count towards the three strikes rule. Also, skills development practices shall not count towards the three strikes rule.

After being disciplined according to the three strikes rule, players can re-start with a clean slate if they do not miss a practice or a game for four (4) consecutive weeks. All such discipline is at the discretion of the coach, subject to review by the Level Director. Coaches must be consistent with administering discipline and are encouraged to take attendance at practices and games.

A player who misses a practice or game due to serious injury (e.g., broken bone(s), concussion, etc.) or long-term illness must provide the Organization with a letter from his/her doctor stating that he or she is able to begin playing for the Organization again. If such injury or illness lasts for more than four (4) consecutive weeks, a proportionate share of such player’s tuition shall be refunded.

3. Disciplinary Procedures

- (a) Any action that results in the disciplining of a player must be explained by the coach at the beginning of the season to ensure that all players are aware of the rules of the Organization.
- (b) Players are not allowed to participate in making the decision to discipline other players or in the type of discipline which should be taken against another player. However, players may assist the coach in establishing rules for the team at the beginning of the season.
- (c) The coach can sit any player(s) on the bench for a game or any portion of a game when disciplining player(s) for conduct before, during or after a game.
 - (i) As soon as possible after the game, the coach shall notify his Level Director of such action.
- (d) For a first offense, only the Level Director, with the permission of the Board of Directors, may take any other disciplinary action. Discipline for a second or more offense shall be determined by the Board of Directors.
- (e) Prior to the start of each season, team head coaches shall be responsible for holding a team meeting with the parents and/or guardians and players to discuss the policies and discipline procedures to be used by such coach.

B. PARENTAL CONDUCT

1. Overview

Parents (which term shall include, guardians, siblings and other relatives of players) should be mindful that all participation in the Organization is on a voluntary basis. Coaches and members of the Organization's Board of Directors dedicate many hours to benefit the players in the Organization. No abuse, verbal or physical, of any member of the Organization by other members of the Organization will be tolerated.

2. Conduct

- (a) Parents shall refrain from using any obscene or foul language at any practice, game or other event sponsored by the Organization.
- (b) Parents shall abide by the rules of the various conferences in which teams participate, particularly any "zero tolerance policy".
- (c) Parents shall respect the coaches, directors, players and other members of the Organization at all times. Parents must refrain from arguing with coaches and other members of the Organization.
- (d) Open communication between parents and the Organization, in particular the team coaches, is encouraged. If a parent believes her or she is unable to resolve an issue with a coach, he or she should approach the parent rep of the team and then the Level Director of the Level in which their child participates. Level Directors have the primary responsibility to resolve such matters and shall report the nature of the issue and its outcome to the Board of Directors. Such participation by the Level Director may include joint meetings with the coaches and parents and a committee comprised of other members of the Board of Directors, if needed.

3. Discipline

(a) Depending on the nature of the offense, the Organization may take such action against any parent who violates any of the provisions of this section as it determines. Such action will be determined by a vote of the majority of the eligible voting members of the Board of Directors.

(b) Such action by the Board of Directors may include, but shall not be limited to, not allowing a parent to attend a team's practice(s) or game(s), suspending his or her child from playing, expelling a parent from the Organization or seeking any legal remedy it deems necessary. In the event a player is expelled from the Organization because of the conduct of a parent, no refund of tuition will be allowed.

4. Procedure

If possible, coaches and parents and/or legal guardians should first try to resolve any team or player concerns or issues themselves or with the assistance of the team's parent representative. If the issue cannot be resolved by the coaches and parents, then the Level Director for that particular team should be contacted to resolve any issue. If the problem remains unresolved after following the above procedure, then the matter should be brought to the attention of the Board of Directors, whose decision will be final, binding and conclusive.

IV. PLAYER/COACH SELECTION

A. Summary

The goal of the player selection process is to place each player at the appropriate skill level for the upcoming season. The Norwood Nuggets will try to achieve this goal by following a process that maximizes the probability of coaches making informed judgments of players' skill levels based on reasonably objective decision criteria.

1. To ensure that coaches are being fair and consistent in the player selection and coach selection processes, the Organization will appoint a Review Team consisting of the President and Vice President of Hockey, the Level Director of the level being reviewed, and two board appointed members. The Review Team will facilitate the evaluation process and also analyze the coaches' selections for consistency and fairness.

2. If the Review Team concludes that certain player selections are questionable base upon reasonably objective criteria, then the Review Team will meet with the particular coach, discuss the specific issues and concerns, and hopefully reach a consensus on the selections. If a consensus cannot be achieved, then the Review Team and the coach will present the case to the Board of Directors, who will make a final decision by majority vote.

3. In the event that a conflict of interest arises for any of the individuals on the Review Team, then it will be mandatory for that person to refrain from any discussions with the coach pertaining to the placement of his or her child. In the event that the Review Team must review a case with the Board of Directors for final judgment, then any Board member that has a conflict of interest must refrain from voting on this case. These measures are necessary to maintain the integrity of the review process.

B. Coach Selection

1. Objectives

The purpose of this process is to select the best head coach for every Level of the Organization. The selection process will define a set of procedures and guidelines that can be applied consistently and fairly from season to season.

2. Coach Selection Committee

A committee, chaired by the Vice President and comprising the President, Coach Coordinator and Instructional Level Director shall approve, by majority vote, the selection of coaches for each season.

3. List of Candidates

(a) In order to obtain applications from the most qualified individuals the Coach Coordinator shall publicize the coach selection process by emailing notices to current coaches and the General Membership

(b) Interested candidates must complete and submit an application Any individual selected as a coach shall also be required to complete the forms necessary to conduct criminal background checks on such individual such as the Criminal Offender Record Inquiry (CORI) under the guidelines of the Massachusetts Hockey Sexual and Physical Abuse Policy.

4. Preliminary Selection Review

(a) Coaches will be matched to teams based upon their desired position and experience.

(b) If there are unfilled positions, the Coach Selection Committee may reopen the process to recruit individuals for such positions.

5. Final Selection

(a) The Division A and Division B coaches should be selected as early as possible, but no later than April 1st of each year.

(b) In the event that a prospective Division A or Division B coach has a child who trying out for such team, the Coach Selection Committee shall make a reasonable judgment of such child's ability and whether such child has a reasonable chance of making the Division A or Division B team. If it is unlikely that such child is capable of making a Division A or Division B team, then the Coach Selection Committee may, at its discretion, offer other options to such prospective coach.

(c) The Division C coaches should be selected no later than May 31th of each year.

(d) The Coach Selection committee may seek any information necessary in order to make its decision, including interviewing candidates and seeking references.

(e) Members of the Coach Selection Committees should observe games coached by applicants if possible.

(f) In order to be selected, a coach must meet and understand the selection guidelines.

(g) All A and B Division coaches for the upcoming season should be notified that they have been selected by April 5th. This early notification of coaches is necessary to allow sufficient time for thorough player evaluations.

(h) B2/C Division coaches can be selected after tryouts, but no later than June 1st. This late selection of B2/C level coaches is advised as the parent coach candidates are often not obvious until after the A and B Division teams have been selected.

6. Coach Selection Guidelines

(a) Each coach candidate should have the following basic traits:

(i) Enjoys interacting with children/players.

(ii) Possesses good teaching and learning techniques.

(iii) Has knowledge and ability to teach proper hockey skills, fundamentals and team play.

(iv) Is responsible, honest and disciplined.

(v) Attempts to set an example of being a respected role model for the players, organization and community.

(vi) Attempts to be open-minded and remembers that the bottom line is to have fun.

(b) Each coach must understand that the ultimate responsibility of the team lies with the Head coach. The Head Coach of each team is responsible for the planning of practices and games. In the event that the Head Coach cannot attend a practice or a game, he will be expected to provide his assistants whatever information and materials necessary to run a successful practice or game. The Head Coach sets the example for the entire team. He must be aware that he is the primary contact that players and parents have with the Organization.

(c) The Head Coach must be aware that coaching is a major commitment involving practice time and/or games several days per week from September through April. The coach should be primarily committed to the Organization. Any commitments to other hockey organizations should be included in the coach's application.

(d) Prospective coaches must be aware that they will be expected to attend practices and/or games of players within their level or lower levels to aid in the team selection process.

(e) Every coach applicant must be patched through USA Hockey Coaching Clinics training for the appropriate Level and Division, prior to the beginning of the Massachusetts Hockey District Playdowns. The Organization will pay the cost of the fees charges for such clinic. Any coach not patched in accordance with applicable USA Hockey and/or Massachusetts Hockey rules may be immediately discharged from a coaching position by the Board of Directors.

(f) Coaches should be able to interact with players and parents and should select a team Parent Representative to assist in this process. The Coach must hold a team meeting at the start of the season to discuss team rules and objectives.

(g) The coach must establish a set of team rules and guidelines that are fair and enforced consistently throughout the entire season.

(h) Coaches must become familiar with the by-laws of the Organizations and attend all coaches' meetings.

(i) The coach should be willing to work with members of the Board of Directors and Officers of the Organization as necessary.

(j) The Head Coach will be allowed to select assistant coaches for his team subject to the approval of the Coach Selection Committee.

(k) The Coach must be able to meet the deadlines for completing the Player Development Reports each season.

(l) The Coach must be able to adhere to applicable rules set forth from time to time by USA Hockey, Inc. and Massachusetts Hockey, Inc.

7. Teams

The tentative number and Division (A, B, B2, or C level) of teams for each Level (Squirts through Bantams) should be established by the Board of Directors no later than April 15th. This early estimate of team placements is necessary to establish a preliminary list of available coaching positions for the upcoming season. In the event that his preliminary list of team allocations does not agree with what is approved by the Board then the Review Team must work with the Coach Selection Committee to meet with the coach(es) affected and see that the necessary adjustments are accomplished no later than June 30th.

C. Player Development Reports

1. Coaches for the current season must complete the Player Development Report (PDR) for each player on his/her team and pass them in to the Vice President of Hockey no later than March 1st.

2. PDR's should be photocopied and sorted so that all coaches for the upcoming season can have a full set of PDR's for every eligible player for that level. PDR's must be given to the upcoming coaches no later than March 15th.

3. Upcoming coaches are also encouraged to speak directly with current coaches to gain additional insight into players' strengths and weaknesses.

D. Game Observation by Upcoming Coaches

1. It is recommended that all upcoming coaches must observe at least one game for all teams that contain eligible players for that coach's team next year.
2. Level Directors should provide all upcoming coaches for their level with a list of all eligible players sorted by current team (lists to be provided by the Registrar), with jersey numbers (jersey numbers to be obtained by the Level Directors) indicated so that it is more efficient for the coaches to make evaluations at games. This should be accomplished before March 15th.

E. Tryouts

1. Tryouts will be scheduled by the Vice President of Hockey to be held during the months of March and April. The Vice President of Hockey will also arrange for tryout facilitators to conduct on-ice drills.
2. There should be two tryout sessions per group of players being evaluated for a given Level. If the number of players trying out for a given level exceeds 40, then the players should be divided into two groups (two separate sessions each per group).
3. The evaluators should be comprised of all four (4) independent evaluators (to be selected by the Level Directors and approved by the Review Team).
4. The combined ratings from all independent evaluators will be averaged and used as a guide by the Review Team when analyzing the selections made by the coaches.
5. One Review Team member (or their designee) must be present at all tryouts to act as an evaluation facilitator to ensure that the process is being followed within the guidelines established herein.
6. To maintain the integrity of the process, none of the evaluation facilitators should have a child that is trying out for that particular Level.
7. All players trying out must pay a \$300.00 deposit to the Registrar and have their parent or guardian sign a registration form. No player will be allowed to try out if they have a balance due on their account from the current season, unless special approval has been given the Finance Committee. Any player electing to withdraw from the Organization after tryout will forfeit the \$300.00 paid at registration, regardless of reason(s) for withdrawing. (Rev 2/06)
8. Upon the final tryouts the Review Team should provide upcoming coaches with a summary list of evaluation ratings for all players trying out for that respective level. The coaches can then compare the "composite" ratings to their own prior to making selection decisions.

G. Player Selection

1. All upcoming coaches must present their player selections to the Vice President of Hockey within one week of the receipt of evaluation ratings for their level.
2. The Review Team will analyze the selections and review them for consistency and fairness. Any issues or concerns regarding proposed selections will be handled in accordance with the procedure identified in the Section A. 2. of this Article IV.
3. All selections must be finalized by May 31st, but no later than July 31st

4. In the event that there are multiple A or B Division teams for a given Level, then the Review Team must insure itself that the teams are reasonably evenly matched. It is unacceptable for one team to be significantly stronger than the other.

5. In the event that there are multiple C Division teams for a given Level, then the final selection of C level teams will be accomplished during September of the upcoming season. This delay is advised as players at the C Division often develop significantly over the summer. Also, the Yankee Conference does not begin playing games until early October. Therefore, to ensure that the teams will be evenly matched, the September evaluation is advised for multiple C Division teams.

6. All players should be notified at the General Membership Annual Meeting (Bylaws, Section 4, Article A). All players who have submitted a valid USA Hockey Number for the upcoming season will receive a team selection letter.

If a USA Hockey Number has not been received by the time of the Annual Meeting, the selection letter will be mailed upon receipt of the USA Hockey Number.

V. POLICY REGARDING VERBAL AND PHYSICAL ABUSE

Norwood Nuggets Youth Hockey has adopted the USA Hockey Safesport Policies outlined in the Safesport Program Handbook, which can be found on the Documents page of our website.

The Policies outlined pertain, but are not limited, to:

- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Bully, Threats and Harassment
- Hazing
- Locker Room Policy
- Electronic Communications Policy
- Travel Policy