

<http://www.NMAHA.org>



NMAHA

HANDBOOK

(Revised December 2009)

Message from the NMAHA Board of Directors

This New Mexico Amateur Hockey Association (NMAHA) Handbook is meant to be a resource for the NMAHA hockey community. The Handbook reflects the philosophies, rules, and expectations of the Board of Directors of our Association and our affiliate organizations, USA Hockey, Inc. and the Land of Enchantment Amateur Hockey Association. Please read this Handbook with care.

We also hope that the Handbook will encourage you to become more involved in NMAHA's activities. We value and need your participation and support to make NMAHA's hockey programs a success. Feel free to contact a member of the NMAHA Board of Directors, a coach, or a manager to discuss how you can volunteer.

The success of NMAHA today is attributable to the countless hours that volunteers have devoted to hockey every year. We are grateful for the contributions of the many leaders who paved the way for NMAHA. We now look forward to the upcoming hockey season and to the continued growth of our program and our youth.

Let's work together to have a great hockey season.

Sincerely,

The New Mexico Amateur Hockey Association Board of Directors.

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THE NMAHA PHILOSOPHY

The primary purpose of NMAHA is to contribute to the development of our youth through the game of hockey. NMAHA is committed to providing our young people the opportunity to ***have fun*** on the ice while learning the basic skills of ice-skating and playing the game of hockey. Our program is available to all interested youth regardless of socio/economic background. As a team sport, hockey affirms the importance of commitment, self-discipline, and sportsmanship among participants and spectators. Our commitment is to assure that the young people who participate in NMAHA will develop skills and values, which will bring lifelong benefit to them and to society. Specific benefits participants of youth hockey receive include:

- Development of the skills necessary to play ice hockey
- Knowledge of the rules and strategies of the game
- Knowledge of conditioning techniques that affect short and long term health and performance
- Commitment to teamwork
- Enjoyment and recreation

MEMBERSHIP

Each family unit of a player meeting the age and classification requirements according to USA Hockey guidelines and whose prescribed fees are paid is a voting member of the Association. Each family unit is entitled to one vote in all matters pertaining to NMAHA for each skater registered and with no delinquent fees and is otherwise in good standing with NMAHA. Parents exercise voting rights as a representative of their children registered with NMAHA. Membership in NMAHA corresponds to the term of registration and automatically terminates upon withdrawal from the program or failure to re-register. Association members have the opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns at open board meetings held monthly.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The nine members of the NMAHA Board of Directors serve staggered, two year terms. Four or five board members are elected each year during the annual Board of Directors election in April. The by-laws of NMAHA authorize the Board to oversee the operation of the Association and carry out its goals. Board meetings are held monthly at Blades.

At the April meeting, the Board of Directors elects officers and assigns responsibility for specific activities carried out by NMAHA. For the list and contact information of the current Board of Directors, and those holding additional positions for NMAHA, please visit our web-site (<http://www.NMAHA.org>).

To facilitate communication between the Board and the membership regarding NMAHA activities, the manager or a designated representative of each team shall attend Board meetings. This responsibility can be rotated among parents as long as it is clear that representation is expected from each team at every Board meeting.

TEAM AND PLAYER CLASSIFICATION

As a registered member of USA Hockey, NMAHA abides by all of USA Hockey's regulations governing amateur hockey for both Recreational and Competitive Hockey.

Recreational (Rec) Team Hockey

Rec Team hockey focuses on providing instruction and playing hockey in a recreational environment. All children are offered the same opportunities and are treated similarly regardless of their abilities or the speed at which they learn. While scores are kept and games are won and lost, a strong emphasis is placed on sportsmanship. Players are divided into balanced teams. Player evaluation sessions may be held at the beginning of the season to assist in team assignments. These are not "try-outs," as every child will be placed on a team and will receive an equal amount of ice time. Coaches and assistants are selected from the parents of Rec Team players. Sponsors, managers, and off ice officials are also needed for each team. If you are able to volunteer for any of these roles, please contact the Vice President (VP) of Rec Hockey, the team manager, or your coach.

Competitive (Comp) Team Hockey

NMAHA will not be offering Competitive Team Hockey (Rec Teams only). For competitive teams, please contact the NM Renegades (<http://www.nmrenegades.com>).

High School (HS) Hockey

The Land of Enchantment Amateur Hockey Association (LOEAHA) has established the New Mexico Interscholastic Ice Hockey League (NMIHL). NMAHA follows the rules and regulations set forth by the NMIHL in its most recent handbook. NMAHA offers HS Hockey for those schools located within the Western Region of the greater Albuquerque area.

FALL SEASON SPORTS

NMAHA recognizes that many hockey players participate in other sports and extra-curricular activities, such as football and soccer. The NMAHA Board recognizes the value of these activities and supports the participation of our players in these endeavors. As such, coaches and schedulers should make every effort to avoid conflicts with the fall sports season. To the extent that conflicts do exist with fall sports schedules, NMAHA supports players in their efforts to fulfill their commitments to their fall sports by recognizing that their first priority should be to their fall team until the fall sports season has concluded.

PLAYER AGE/DIVISION CATEGORIES

USA Hockey sets the age categories for national youth hockey. Based on registration and participation, NMAHA attempts to field recreational/house (and competitive/travel for special tournaments, see page 8) teams at each level, in accordance with USA Hockey Age Classifications, as defined in the most current USA Hockey Annual Guide. NMAHA's goal is to keep players of the same age, physical, and emotional maturity together and to protect the integrity of each age division within NMAHA. As a general rule, players will not be allowed to play outside the appropriate age category in which he or she is classified, as determined by his or her birth year and USA Hockey policies.

USA Hockey and NMAHA Hockey Age Classifications

USA Hockey regards age as the age the player is on December 31st of the current year. For example; a child turning 13 on or before December 31st 2009, would not be allowed to register as a PeeWee (for 12 years and under), but would rather need to register as a Bantam (for 14 years and under) for the 2009-2010 Season. The below chart reflects NMAHA's division and age category.

<u>Division</u>	<u>Age Category</u>
*Mini-Mite	6 Years & Under
Mite	8 Years & Under
Squirt	10 Years & Under
PeeWee	12 Years & Under
Bantam	14 Years & Under
Midget	16 Years & Under
Midget	18 Years & Under

*Not recognized/registered by USA Hockey

NMAHA recognizes there may be circumstances indicating a player should "play up" in an age division above his or her USA Hockey classification, based on individual skill level and desire for continued player development.

Permission to "play up" may be granted by the NMAHA Board, only after the application process has been followed and a player evaluation has occurred. It must be stressed that all "play up" applications should be made by the parent/guardian and assessed by the Board of Directors in keeping with the best interests of the individual player, the affected team, and the association.

Only those requests following the "play up" application procedures and guidelines, as defined in the Handbook, will be considered. Consideration begins with completion of the "Application to Play Up."

To maintain the integrity of team rosters, "play up" applications must be completed and forwarded to the NMAHA Board within two weeks of the date of the registration of the

player concerned. Ideally, the desire to “play up” should be established and application made at the time of registration.

Player Evaluation

To be considered to “play up,” a number of conditions must be met. They are as follows:

1. A player must be evaluated to be within the top 10% of players within their appropriate age category and within the top 20% of registered players at the next age category (all percentages to be rounded up). This is to maintain age category integrity, comply with USA Hockey insurance requirements, and provide a safe, developmental environment for both the individual player and the players of the both teams concerned.
2. The losing team shall continue to have a minimum of 13 skaters plus a goalie rostered for a total of 14 skaters remaining on the team if a player plays up.
3. The gaining team shall have no more than 14 skaters plus a goalie for a total of 15 players if a player plays up.
4. The player is within one year of moving up in accordance with USA Hockey age classifications.
5. A panel comprised of a minimum of three members, ideally a “losing team” coach, a “gaining team” coach, and a neutral USA Hockey-certified coach will review the application and evaluate the player concerned – against both current age category and upper age category players. In an effort to insure playing up will not be detrimental to the safety or development of either the individual player or the respective team, size and maturity level should be assessed, in addition to player skill and ability. The panel will provide a written summary of the basis for their decision concerning the play up application.

To afford an equitable amount of playing time to all registered players, applications to “play up” will not be accepted, *without the consent of the gaining head coach*, if the gaining team’s roster will be increased above 15 registered players.

Special Circumstances

These policies and procedures cannot be expected to cover every instance. In the event of a situation not necessarily covered here, a written request for “play up” consideration may be made to the NMAHA Board of Directors, with justification for the request provided. The NMAHA Board may, at its discretion, move players upward in age classifications in order to achieve a balanced team population. Such Board decisions will be made in conjunction with and on the recommendation of coaches, with parents' approval.

REGISTRATION ON MORE THAN ONE TEAM

Although not encouraged, each player may be registered and rostered more than one Rec Team within NMAHA. Under all circumstances, attendance and participation at practices and games is expected for each player rostered on more than one team.

GAMES, TOURNAMENT AND FESTIVAL PLAY

Many games will be played during the hockey season, which runs from September through March. The regularly scheduled games during the hockey season are included in the registration fee for NMAHA.

Throughout the season, the opportunity for teams to play in various tournaments, festivals, or other related events may also arise. As the level of play at such events can vary greatly, it is the decision of the team's coaching staff, in conjunction with the team manager(s) and parents/guardians, as to which tournaments and festivals teams might enter. In most situations, there will be an additional cost to the players attending tournaments and festivals, which are not covered by the NMAHA registration.

Any tournament or festival listed for Rec Teams may be entered. At such events, in as much as possible, all registered players of that team shall have an equal opportunity to attend and play. For playing time equity, teams may desire to enter more than one team, providing each roster allows a minimum of 10 players and a goalie for each team entered. However, this is not a mandatory requirement and the reduction in playing time per player should be realized in advance, especially if team rosters exceed 15 players plus a goalie.

Tournaments or festivals to which a Rec Team may be invited, but are advertised as being for competitive-level teams, may be entered on a strictly voluntary basis. Entering such a tournament should be a joint decision of the team's coaching staff, the team manager(s), and parents/guardians. Due to the increased skill level at these type of events, the coaching staff reserves the right to decide to limit the roster size, by inviting only those players who have displayed an ability to compete at the level indicated. Communication by the coaches with all players and parents/guardians concerned is paramount to ensuring participation in such events goes smoothly.

COACHING

NMAHA's coaches come from a variety of backgrounds, but all share two important characteristics. They are ALL volunteers and they all care deeply about the development of all of the players on the teams they are coaching. Our coaches require the support of the parents of the players they are coaching. Anything parents can do to help with team activities is encouraged.

Prospective coaches must be nominated by the appropriate Vice President and approved by the NMAHA Board. Prospective coaches may be asked to interview with the Board or with a Selection Committee prior to being appointed. Selection criteria for becoming a coach become more rigorous as the age division and level of competition of the players increases. Mini-Mite and Mite coaches, for example, must be able to effectively communicate with, and possess skating skills more advanced than the skaters. They also should have at least a basic knowledge of the game of hockey. As players develop, it becomes increasingly important for coaches to be sufficiently skilled to be able to develop the skills of the most advanced player on a team. Coaches must also possess a thorough knowledge of the rules and strategies of the game.

All coaches must obtain the USA Hockey certification appropriate to the level at which they are coaching. USA Hockey provides training and certification to individuals who wish to coach through the Coaching Achievement Program. This program is administered through USA Hockey in the form of clinics. These clinics are specifically designed to supply each coach with the knowledge of his/her responsibilities and skills that will equip him/her to do the best possible job at any level of play.

USA Hockey and NMAHA require all persons interested in becoming coaches to attend these clinics. *Clinics are held in the fall and are paid for by NMAHA.* All coaches must be screened with a background check. If you have an interest in coaching or assistant coaching, please contact a Board member.

TEAM SUPPORT

There are many critical areas where parents can contribute to the welfare of a team. Two are covered below:

Managers: Every NMAHA team must have a manager. A manager provides a vital link between the coach and parents and has administrative responsibilities for filling out team rosters, ensuring that such rosters are properly filed with USA Hockey, scheduling games, preparing team rosters for tournaments, developing the team's budget, keeping track of donations received, designating a "team representative" and alternate to attend Board meetings, distributing and collecting team jerseys, obtaining Minor (off-ice) officials, notifying parents of schedule changes, making hotel arrangements under NMAHA's name for away games and tournaments as necessary, completing travel game score sheet rosters, and facilitating communication between coaches and parents throughout the hockey season.

The team manager will have the authority to ask NMAHA related spectators to leave games if situations unbecoming of NMAHA and USA hockey occur during an event or practice.

Off Ice Officials: Each team is responsible for providing a Scorekeeper, Timekeeper, and Penalty Box Official at their "home" games. These are relatively easy tasks to perform once you become familiar with the procedure. These responsibilities also offer a new perspective to the game. Off-ice officials are required to follow all instructions given by the on-ice officials before, during, and after games.

**The next two pages (Equipment Requirements and Registration) are situated as such to simplify printing out just those two pages for quick referencing while equipping and/or registering skaters.*

EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Each skater must wear the following USA Hockey required equipment when participating in games or practices:

1. Hockey skates [not figure skates].
2. USA Hockey-approved protective helmet with full-face protection of any style. (HECC seal of approval)
3. Ice hockey stick [not a plastic street hockey stick]. (UNCURVED sticks are strongly recommended for new players)
4. *Neck/throat protector. (Not required, but ***highly recommended*** for all levels)
*NMAHA recommends neck protectors made with ballistic nylon [Kevlar].
5. Hockey elbow pads.
6. Hockey gloves.
7. Hockey shin pads.
8. Hockey shoulder pads.
9. Hockey padded pants.
10. Colored mouth guard. NMAHA recommends that when using a mouth guard that attaches to the face mask, it is a type that will separate upon impact.
11. Protective cup/supporter. ("Jill" pelvic protector for girls)
12. Jersey - Home & Away game jerseys can be purchased from NMAHA. Jersey numbers are distributed first to returning team members. A returning team member can keep his or her number from the previous season. If that player wants to change his or her number, then the number goes to the next player who seeks the number and has paid the dues. For all new players on a team, the first person to request a jersey number will receive that number. The team manager will resolve any conflict over jersey numbers, which decision is final.

NMAHA has a limited supply of equipment, especially goalie equipment, which may be borrowed for the season, usually by scholarship players or players in their first year. Players should check availability before planning on using NMAHA equipment. Goalies must provide their own headgear, masks, and throat protection. All borrowed equipment should be returned in good and clean condition to the Team Manager at the end of each season. If you are interested in borrowing or donating equipment, please contact the NMAHA equipment manager.

REGISTRATION PAYMENT POLICY

Payment for registration fees must be made by check (personal, cashier or money order) or credit card (Visa/MasterCard) at the time of registration. **As NMAHA is a non-profit organization, all fees collected are NON-REFUNDABLE, and if for any reason your child cannot participate, all collected fees will be considered a donation.**

All players must have registered ***and*** paid the applicable fee with USA Hockey (on-line), ***prior*** to registering with NMAHA. The receipt for the payment of the USA Hockey dues ***must be*** presented at any in-person registration for NMAHA. There are two options for making payment of the applicable NMAHA fees. A player may either pay the registration fee in full on registration day, or a player may pay half of the amount due on

registration day, with the balance remaining to be paid within 30 days thereafter. Please check our web-site (<http://www.NMAHA.org>) for additional registration requirements, documentation, and pay options.

Any registration by a returning player made after registration day, but before the start of the season, must be paid in full. The last day registrations will be accepted, for returning players is **November 16th**. New registrants are welcome at any time in the Rec Program. **Late registration will NOT receive any pro-rated discounts.**

No player will be allowed to register until any outstanding balance from the previous season is paid in full. Additionally, no player will be allowed on the ice, for practice or games, after November 1st until all registration fees are paid in full, unless special arrangements have been made in advance and approved by the Board. NMAHA has a strict "NO PAY, NO PLAY" policy.

NMAHA will attempt to accommodate prospective participants. Therefore, the NMAHA Board reserves the right to make exceptions upon written request in extenuating circumstances.

Discounts

In an attempt to attract volunteers for our organization and reduce the financial burden on families who have a child rostered on more than one team or with more than one child playing hockey, the following discounts will apply:

- Board of Directors – 40% off registration fees *(this item passed by the outgoing 2008-2009 BoD's, to take affect starting the 2009-2010 season)*
- Head Coach – 40% off registration fees
- Assistant Coach – 20% off registration fees (for the first two assistant coaches whose children register to play hockey in a season)
- Team Manager – 20% off registration fees
- More than one child registered – 10% off registration fees for all children.
- Player rostered on more than one NMAHA team – 50% off registration fees for 2nd team.

Each discount is for one child only, unless otherwise stated. Only one discount can be taken for any one child. If a parent has multiple children who play on separate teams and the parent volunteers for both teams, the parent may apply the applicable discount for each volunteer position.

A Rec Coach or board member with no player on a team may use the discount to sponsor a specific player or contribute to the scholarship fund. A volunteer with a discount may transfer the discount to a player or the scholarship fund.

If eligible for a discount, please ensure that the applicable discount is noted at time of registration to the NMAHA representative and on the registration form.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is an integral part of the NMAHA budget process and has grown to represent a substantial proportion of the dollars raised by the organization. The primary purpose of fundraising is to minimize the amount of money that must be raised by the organization through registration fees. For this reason, it is hoped that all members will participate in NMAHA's fundraising activities, which include bingo. Please view this activity with enthusiasm. The Board will try to streamline NMAHA's solicitations of the area businesses. In doing so, all solicitations of businesses for support whether successful or not must be reported to the NMAHA Board. This will help us avoid approaching businesses repeatedly during any given period.

SCHOLARSHIP POLICY

It shall be the policy of NMAHA that, when available, scholarship funds will be accessible to those members of the association who demonstrate financial need.

It shall be understood by all applicants that upon approval of a scholarship request, applicant will be expected to volunteer time for the benefit of NMAHA as may be requested by the Board. Approval responsibility for scholarship applications shall rest with the Board of Directors.

To request a scholarship, if available, the following procedures should be followed:

- 1 Applicant shall signify desire for scholarship funding by indicating such desire on registration form at time of registration.
- 2 Applicant shall complete scholarship application.
- 3 Applicant shall furnish treasurer with copies of the two most recent years' tax returns.

The NMAHA Board of Directors will at all times strive to be reasonable and prudent in their endeavor to disburse scholarship funds fairly and equitably. Any scholarship information collected by NMAHA shall be held in strictest confidence. At no time will any association member or any other person having cause to review applicant information furnish said information to any unrelated third parties or in any way perform any action which might be deemed detrimental to the applicant.

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

NMAHA adheres to the Zero Tolerance Policy described in USA Hockey's rules. All players and parents/guardians will be required to sign a Zero Tolerance policy to participate in NMAHA hockey. The goal of this policy is to require all players, coaches,

officials, administrators, and parents/spectators to maintain a sportsmanlike and educational atmosphere before, during, and after all USA Hockey sanctioned games.

PLAYER BEHAVIOR AND CONDUCT

The NMAHA Board and its coaches, team managers, and volunteer parents all have a vested interest in providing a safe, fun-filled environment for each player. In return, each skater must understand that coaches, assistant coaches, and parent volunteers are to be treated with respect and consideration. NMAHA skaters are expected to be attentive to coaches' directions and instructions and to avoid disruption.

The Board will support the coaching staff in cases where reasonable discipline must be exercised in order to maintain an organized and enjoyable learning environment.

Punctuality: Ice time is valuable and should not be wasted. All participants should arrive at games and practices in sufficient time to allow for suiting up and the necessary pregame/practice instruction and/or warm-up. Unless your coach has told you differently, it is recommended that you be ready to "take the ice" at least 10 minutes before the scheduled starting time.

Attendance: Reliable attendance is essential to personal skill development and the development of team continuity.

Conduct: All players must display good sportsmanship both on and off the ice at all games and practices, regardless of whether a contest is won or lost and regardless of how a game is officiated. Damaging or defacing property and the general display of poor sportsmanship reflects poorly on the individual, the team, and the Association. Such behavior is unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately and severely by team coaches and/or the NMAHA Board.

Repeated or a severe incident of bad sportsmanship or other inappropriate or unacceptable conduct will result in disciplinary action by the Board. Any participant found guilty of a major or persistent violation of USA Hockey, LOEAHA, or NMAHA rules shall be dismissed from the program without refund. Coaches have the right to discipline, by way of "sit outs" and other means, any behavior not consistent with the philosophy of NMAHA. NMAHA will adhere to all USA Hockey and league rules with respect to minor and major penalties.

In accordance with USA Hockey procedure, the Board, or a Board appointed committee, shall review match, game, or gross misconduct penalties received by a NMAHA player during a game. It is the responsibility of the team coach to report any such incident, in writing, to the NMAHA Board within 24 hours of the occurrence. In addition, all match or gross misconduct penalties and recommended actions, will be reported by the Board to the LOEAHA. Parents who disagree with a coach or Board Committee decision should submit their written grievance to the NMAHA Board for consideration. Also see Grievance Procedures.

PARENT CONDUCT

All parents must display good sportsmanship at all games and practices, regardless of whether a contest is won or lost, and regardless of how a game is officiated. As parents or guardians, we must be positive in our attitudes toward the game of hockey and emphasize the cooperative nature of the game. Negative and rowdy behavior in or around the hockey rink reflects directly and poorly on the whole organization. We must foster good relationships between our young players within the Association and with officials and our competitors. As parents, we must set positive examples for our children. In accordance with USA Hockey's policy of ZERO TOLERANCE, the following actions are ***not*** acceptable:

- Yelling at or threatening referees, opposing players or coaches before, during, or after games or practices.
- Direct confrontations with coaches, parents or players.
- Demonstrations of frustration or anger after a game loss.
- Unnecessary or exaggerated celebration of a goal scored or a game won that would embarrass or demean the opposing team.
- Any physical abuse of any other person.
- Any threat of physical abuse of any other person.
- Approaching the bench during a game situation unless summoned by a player or coach.

Disruptive or abusive parents may be asked to leave a rink by rink employees, game officials, Board of Directors, or team manager and compliance is expected (*the Blades front office has a letter granting permission of these individuals to remove disruptive persons from their private business*). Such conduct may result in an immediate suspension from NMAHA functions until a Board hearing is held on the matter. Further penalties may be assessed at that time.

COACHES' CONDUCT

NMAHA coaches are expected to be positive role models of behavior for their players by adhering to the same rules of conduct as those outlined for parents above. At no time is a NMAHA Coach to permit a player not registered with USA Hockey and NMAHA to participate in a NMAHA practice or game. Such conduct may result in an immediate suspension from coaching duties until a Board hearing is held on the matter. Further penalties may be assessed at that time.

VISITORS POLICY

Coaches will not allow any non-USA Hockey or NMAHA registered player to attend any of their practices. Coaches will not allow any visitors to their practices without first seeking the permission of their VP. The VP will grant the permission at his/her discretion and advise the Board.

The Board understands that coaches may want or need to invite players to a practice to fill out their lines from time to time. Teams with only one goalie may want to borrow another for practices. If this is the case, please talk to the VP responsible for the team. The Board is specifically concerned with younger and older age players joining outside their age group classification. Same-age player visitors on an occasional basis will be considered.

In addition, some of you have contacts with adults in the community who have a wealth of hockey experience and will be a benefit to the development of our children. These people typically are not USA Hockey registered and, therefore, not covered by USA Hockey insurance. Submit a request through the appropriate VP, and a formal request can be written to LOEAHA to allow these non-USA Hockey visitors to our practices without compromising anyone's insurance.

REMEMBER THAT EVERY PARENT, COACH, AND PLAYER REPRESENTS NMAHA AND MUST ACT APPROPRIATELY.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Any parent or guardian of a NMAHA player may appeal any decision regarding discipline or suspension of their child or themselves. The grievance or notice of appeal should be placed in writing and presented to the NMAHA Board within 10 days of the action taken. NMAHA has standardized hearing procedures for the conduct of hearings and appeals. These procedures will be made available to parties participating in a hearing before the NMAHA Board. The player involved shall not play until the issue has been resolved.

Only grievances (complaints) submitted to the Board in written form will be acted upon. All grievances must be signed by the party submitting the grievance. All grievances submitted in an anonymous form will not be grounds for NMAHA action.