

Amherst Hockey Association

2011-2012 Operating Rules

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Amherst Hockey Association

2009-2010 Operating Rules

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Each year the Operations Committee updates the Operating Rules and reviews the changes with the 15 member Board of Directors. The Board, at its meeting on August 3, 2009, approved these Operating Rules. These Operating Rules are available from any Board Member or from the Association Web site, <http://www.amhersthockey.org>.

If you have any questions about the meaning or interpretation of any of these Operating Rules please contact Dave Foster, Vice President of Hockey Operations. fosterd@amherstma.gov or 413-259-2096

AMHERST HOCKEY ASSOCIATION - OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Amherst Hockey Association (AHA) is to provide a supervised, instructional, recreational, and competitive hockey program for the youth of Amherst and the surrounding communities. The Association annually serves approximately 350 skaters ranging in age from 4 to 18 as outlined by the Greater Springfield League, (GSL), and Mass Hockey rule. Teams from the AHA participate in inter-community and independent games at locations throughout the Northeast. Coaching and business management positions within the Association are strictly volunteer positions. Broad parental support is essential to successful operation of this program.

The AHA also benefits from its association with national, state, and local hockey organizations, which aid in maintaining a high quality program. Within Massachusetts, there are many associations like the AHA, which support competitive youth hockey teams. Northern Connecticut, Southern Vermont and Greater Albany also provide a wide array of competition for our skaters. The AHA will endeavor to have teams participate in tournaments to further expand the cultural and competitive spectrum that characterizes youth hockey.

During the regular season, AHA teams compete primarily against teams in the Pioneer Valley. The AHA is a member association in the Greater Springfield League (GSL). Despite wide differences in population bases and resources, the competition tends to be well balanced and the AHA squads are competitive and play clean hockey. This is a source of pride to the Association and a tribute to the dedication and hard work of our many skaters and volunteers.

In summary, the Association is part of a highly structured and vibrant national youth hockey program. The inter-community competition provides a unique opportunity for young athletes to test their skills against their peers from a broad geographic area while learning and having fun in the process. Our program is committed to growth and enjoyment for the maximum possible number of these young athletes. Every parent, friend, and skater can make a difference in achieving this objective. The information in the attached operating rules will tell you more about how the AHA works and who to contact to learn more. The Association encourages all to join in, and enhance the hockey program.

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- A.** The purpose of Amherst Hockey Association (AHA), hereinafter the “**Association**”, is to provide supervised, instructional, recreational, and competitive hockey programs for youths four (4) to eighteen (18) years of age in the greater Amherst area.
- B.** These rules have been prepared to provide Association members and skaters clear guidelines for how the programs will operate and to provide a mechanism to resolve disputes.
- C.** The Association shall provide equal opportunity to skaters, coaches, managers and administrators who participate without discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, sex, or national origin.
- D.** The Board of Directors, Officers, and Coaches of the Association will perform their duties in conformance with these Operating Rules, the Association's Constitution and by-laws, and to USA & Mass Hockey regulations. The Constitution and by-laws will supersede these Operating Rules in the event of a conflict.

2. AHA HOCKEY PROGRAMS

- A. USA Hockey:** Our Association is a member of USA Hockey, a highly structured national hockey program. USA Hockey is the national sanctioning body for Amateur hockey including the United States Olympic Team and all youth hockey within the United States. They provide the overall framework of rules by which local organizations form and compete. They also provide the centralized source for operating necessities such as liability insurance, equipment testing, rulebooks, and award programs.
- B. Massachusetts Hockey:** Our Association is a member of Massachusetts Hockey, the local representative chapter of USA Hockey. Massachusetts Hockey oversees competition within the state and has a primary role in organizing the annual statewide tournament ("playdowns") to select representatives to the national tournament.
- C. Greater Springfield League (GSL):** Our Association is a member of the GSL, and plays within District 6 of Mass Hockey. The GSL will schedule all league games for travel hockey playing in this league. League games can be played throughout the Northeast as far west as Albany NY, as far north as Brattleboro, VT & Keene, NH, and as far south as Middletown CT.
- D. Amherst Hockey Association:** Our Association provides three hockey programs to meet the needs of its skaters. These programs offer instructional, recreational and competitive levels of play in a supervised environment. Except as amended and extended by these rules, USA Hockey rules govern all AHA games and events.

- E. Learn to Skate Program:** This Instructional program is to meet the needs of the beginning skater and introduce basic skills in a non-competitive environment. Fun, skill and physical development are encouraged.
1. This program provides skaters an average of one hour of on-ice time per week, and is approximately eighteen (18) weeks long – starting in early November and ending in early March.
 2. Ice time will be at Orr Rink at Amherst College, or The Mullins Center practice rink at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
 3. The Initiation program is available to children ages four (4) through eight (8). The Coach-in-Chief or the Vice President of Hockey Operations shall determine if a skater should enter this program or another offered program. Selecting the program that best suits the skill of the skater is a goal of our Association. Players should spend no more than two (2) years at this level before moving on to either Advanced Initiation or a Travel Team.
 4. Because of the age and or abilities of skaters in this group, it is mandatory that a parent or an adult responsible for that child remain in the rink at all times while their child is in the rink.
 5. **Novice:** The Association will offer a novice team if there are enough children who meet the USA Hockey and GSL requirements, an approved volunteer coach and adequate ice time. The Association scheduler will arrange practice ice.
- F. Learn to Play Program:** This is a hockey program offered by the Association. This program stresses skill development and hockey concepts. Its goal is to prepare skaters for Travel Teams.
1. This program provides skaters an average of two on-ice sessions per week, and is approximately eighteen (18) weeks long – starting in early November and ending in early March.
 2. Ice time will be at Orr Rink at Amherst College, or The Mullins Center practice rink at UMass.
 3. This program is available to any skater between the ages of 4-8 and is available for skaters with birth years 2001 and younger. Skaters with birth years 2000 and older are expected to participate in the Travel program. Players should spend no more than two (2) years at this level before moving on to a Travel Team.
 4. Skaters with equal skill levels will be placed together so that drills flow more effectively during practice time. Depending on the number of skaters in each group, creating additional groups of equal skill levels is an option. Intersquad scrimmages will occur from time to time; teams will be created with team balance in mind.
 5. Because of the age and or abilities of skaters in this group, it is mandatory that a parent or an adult responsible for that child remain in the rink at all times while their child is in the rink.

6. **Novice:** The Association will offer a novice team if there are enough children who meet the USA Hockey and GSL requirements, an approved volunteer coach and adequate ice time. The Association scheduler will publish any additional ice time associated with this program on the master schedule.

G. Travel Program: This is for experienced coaches to teach higher-level skill development in a more competitive environment. A good balance of skater development, sportsmanship, effort, teamwork, and winning are goals.

1. Age Divisions: The Association adheres to the USA Hockey age divisions.

DATE OF BIRTH	AGE CATEGORY	AGE DIVISION
'93,'94, '95,'96	18 years of age and younger	Midget
'97&'98	14 years of age and younger	Bantam
'99&'00	12 years of age and younger	Peewee
'01&'02	10 years of age and younger	Squirt
'03 and younger	8 years of age and younger	Mite
2004 & younger	7 years of age and younger	Novice (Mini-Mites)

2. The Travel program operates from late August through early April.
3. The program provides an average of three (3) on-ice sessions per week for Mites through Bantams. League games are included in this number of sessions.
4. **Practices:** Travel teams practice at least once per week. Two or more practices when ice is available.
5. **Midgets:** The Association will offer a Midget program if there are enough skaters, an approved volunteer coaching staff, and adequate ice. The fall Midget season will run from late August through the end of November. An extended Midget season may be offered if; adequate interest, appropriate coaching staff, and league schedule allow. The extended season runs from December through early April. The Association scheduler will arrange all practice ice.

H. Clinics and other Programs: The Board of Director's may approve Clinics and other programs designed to meet the needs of specific skaters and or specific coaches. The Board will also approve associated fees.

3. REGISTRATION & FEES

- A. It is the policy of the AHA to assess fees on a fair and equitable basis.
- B. The Board of Directors establishes association fees each year. Fees are set based on the projected number of skaters and anticipated costs including ice rental, referees, and equipment. The Association fee will also include USA Hockey registration fees. The fee assessed each skater will be commensurate with the AHA hockey program in which they participate.
- C. Registration dates set by the Board of Directors are publicized in advance through various mediums prior to the set date. Registration fees are to be paid in accordance with the schedule set by the Board of Directors. The issuing party will be responsible for any additional fees incurred by the Association resulting from returned checks and cash payment may be required.
- D. Association fees, including USA Hockey registration fees, are not refundable unless approved by the Finance Committee. Their decision is final.
- E. Failure to pay fees within two (2) weeks of the due date will result in skater suspension from further participation in Association events pending settlement. The Treasurer will notify the President and Vice President of Hockey Operations of all incidents of non-payment. The President and Vice President of Hockey Operations will make a joint decision of how to proceed with the issue of non-payment. The President will notify the Vice President of Hockey Operations, who will notify the skater's parents and coach of the decision to suspend the skater until payment is received or arrangements with the Treasurer are made. Should payment be unresolved, further remedies will be considered to include, but not limited to, small claims court and/or reporting to credit bureaus.
- F. **Late Registration:** Skaters who register after the announced registration date will be accommodated only if there is space available. Additional fees will apply for late registration. Skaters, who register after December 15, will be subject to an additional roster modification fee as mandated by USA Hockey.
- G. **Birth Certificates:** Copies of birth certificates, or other proof of age satisfactory to the Board, may be required for all travel team skaters particularly in the instance of tournaments.
- H. **Tournaments:** Skater registration fees do not cover Tournament expenses, including Mass Hockey State play-downs. These additional fees will be collected separately from the participating skaters by that team's individual team representative. The Association may provide Tournament pins or other token gifts when needed. The equipment manager will maintain these gifts.
- I. **Scholarships:** The Association offers two scholarship programs as follows:

The Bud Fay / Dora Fuentes Scholarship - This fund is in memory of a long-time youth hockey volunteer and the mother of a former AHA skater. The scholarship is open to any AHA registered skater of any age or division with financial need.

The Green B. Williams Youth Hockey Award has been established in memory of a former AHA skater. The Program is open to AHA registered skaters in the mite through bantam travel divisions only. The skater must be at least 7 years old and a good student. Considered factors are financial need, attitude, sportsmanship and school achievement.

Applications for these programs are available from the AHA Registrar, President or Treasurer.

All applications and awarding of scholarship funds is kept confidential and reviewed only by the three person AHA Finance committee.

4. ICE ALLOTMENTS & SCHEDULING

- A. The availability of ice is very limited especially on weekday evenings and prior to the Orr Arena (Amherst College) opening. The Association Ice Scheduler will make every effort to provide the number of ice sessions described in Section 2 – Hockey programs.
- B. Most practices and home games are at Orr Arena (Amherst College) or The Mullins Center practice rink (University of Massachusetts). Practices at alternate rinks in the area are due to shortages of available local ice or at reasonable times.
- C. Ice time will be available in the last weeks of the travel season for the purpose of skater evaluations for the following season.
- D. On occasion, due to circumstances beyond our control, the rink operators might take scheduled ice back. If this happens, the Ice Scheduler will alert teams as soon as possible. It is important that players and parents frequently check the AHA website for changes to the schedule.
- E. Scheduling of practices and games for all teams, unless otherwise noted, will be the principal responsibility of the Ice Scheduler. The Ice Scheduler will make every effort to prepare schedules and to distribute them to the teams on a timely basis, but there are times when GSL scheduling will make this difficult to achieve.
- F. To utilize ice more efficiently, especially early in the season and during evaluations when ice is at a premium, teams will practice together. It is possible that all skaters within a division could be on the ice at the same time and on some occasions teams in different divisions will share the ice.
- G. **Single Team Practices:** During the season, single team practices will take place only if there is ice available. The Association will strive to ensure that single team practices are shared equally among all travel teams from the Squirt through Midgets age divisions, over the course of the season.
- H. **Beginner Skaters:** Skaters in the travel program identified, as beginners may be provided additional ice time at the Advanced Initiation level with approval of the Coach-in-Chief.
- I. **Independent Games:** The Association Ice Scheduler may schedule Independent games for travel teams during the season. The Association Ice Scheduler will consult with the coaches regarding the level of opposition, and travel desired. The Association may provide home independent games. Coaches should ensure their team receives reciprocal away games. The Ice Scheduler may develop additional guidelines concerning the scheduling of these games.

5. EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The Vice President of Hockey Operations and Coach-in-Chief will initiate the evaluation process at the end of the season. Skater placement within each division is based upon an evaluation process designed to assess the skater's abilities on a fair and impartial basis.

- A. The goal of the evaluation process is to place skaters on teams that will be competitive at the highest levels within each age division of the Greater Springfield League. The AHA will accomplish this by scheduling evaluators selected by the VP of Hockey Operations and Coach-In-Chief. These evaluators will be selected based on hockey knowledge and experience and will have no conflicting child as a member of that age group that they are evaluating.

The evaluation process will consist of a skills session for each age group and scrimmage(s). During the evaluation process, the evaluators will use a number assigned to each skater to identify that skater. In categories, ranging from skating and shooting, effort, teamwork, hockey sense and game play, skaters will be rated. Upon completion of the evaluation process, the skater's rating coupled with the amount of roster spots on the various teams will determine skater placement. In addition, prior to the start of the evaluation process, each Coach will complete a ranking of the players on his team from the current season. The Coaches will rank players into three groups based on their performance throughout the season. The three groups will be: Group 1 for the players that exceeded expectations; Group 2 for the players that contributed as expected; and Group 3 for the players that did not progress as well as the other players on the team. In addition, the Coaches will be asked to rate each player's attendance on a scale of 1, 2, or 3. A score of 1 means the player only missed a few events, a score of 2 means a player missed between 5-10 events, and a score of 3 means a player missed more than 10 events. As part of the placement process, and in the event skaters have similar evaluation ratings, 1) senior skaters within the division, or 2) have consistently played for the AHA, and 3) players with the higher Coaches ranking based on last season's performance which include an attendance grade, will be given first consideration for placement on the higher-level team. There is no assurance that a player will maintain the level of play they achieved in a prior year. Each year's evaluation is independent of any prior placement.

- B. Skaters must evaluate at their appropriate age division. During the evaluation process and in order to meet the needs of the association, the VP of Hockey Operations or Coach-In-Chief may ask a skater to evaluate with a higher age group in addition to his/her own group. At the conclusion of the evaluation process, and based on the effort and skills displayed, and the needs of the association, a team placement will take place. The practice of "playing up" is frowned upon by both USA Hockey and the AHA for appropriate development and safety reasons. Any consideration to do so is the exception.
- C. Skaters will not be allowed to play in a lower age group except in the Initiation Programs unless USA Hockey and GSL approve the request. A skater's parent will be required to provide all documentation at their own expense to gain the waiver from USA Hockey and GSL. Approval of the waiver may affect the skater's ability to skate in USA hockey sanctioned events.
- D. Skaters unable to participate in the evaluation process shall be placed on the lowest level team in their age division. If there is an opening on a higher-level team, everyone on the lower level team will be eligible to evaluate for the position. The skater that is clearly better on the lower level team may be asked to move to the next level by the Coach-In-Chief. In addition, based on our experience many players can change their mind about hockey over the course of the

Summer and the players can grow and change at different rates over the Summer, therefore it can make the player placement decisions made in the Spring challenging for the following Fall. To minimize this effect, the AHA will place fewer players on the upper teams and more players on the lower teams after the Spring Evaluations. Then in the Fall, the VP of Hockey Operations, the Coach-in-Chief and if need be the Hockey Operations Committee will reassess the players on the lower teams and if need be some player movement may happen following the guidelines outlined above.

- E. Parents can request a review of their skater's evaluation placement by submitting a written request within 7 days of placement to the VP of Hockey Operations. An Evaluation Review Board consisting of the President of the AHA, the Moderator of the AHA, and the VP of Hockey Operations, will review the appeal and take corrective action if required. If the Evaluation Board decides that it is necessary then the skater in question will be reviewed in the Fall and a decision regarding placement will be made in a timely manner. The decision of the Evaluation Review Board on the ultimate placement of the skater is final. If a review is requested, and the Evaluation Review Board determines that the skater needs to be reviewed, then all players on the lower level team will be eligible for review. The skater that is clearly better on the lower level team may be asked to move to the next level by the Evaluation Review Board.

F. Goaltender Evaluation:

Mite age skaters only evaluate as skaters.

Squirt age skaters interested in playing goal must evaluate as both a goaltender and a skater. Team placement will be a combination of these evaluations.

Peewee and Bantams wishing to play goal will evaluate as goalies and this evaluation will determine team placement.

Midgets (when applicable) wishing to play goal will be evaluated, as goalies and this evaluation will determine team placements.

G. Team Placement within GSL: The AHA will make every effort to field teams in the A-C divisions within respective age divisions. Where possible, teams will be comprised of 13 – 15 skaters and a goaltender. In cases where two A, B or C teams need to be formed within the same age division, the Hockey Operations Committee will make a decision on how these teams will be formed. The Operations Committee and the Coach-in-Chief may divide the teams in at least two ways:

1. Ability (creating a stronger and a weaker team)
2. Equitably (creating balanced teams).

This decision will be based on what is determined to offer the best competitive environment after deliberate consultation with GSL representatives, Hockey Operations Committee and the President of the Association.

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6. EQUIPMENT

All skaters must provide their own USA Hockey approved equipment as described below.

Equipment	Initiation	Advanced Initiation	Travel Teams
Helmet & Mask (6A)	Required	Required	Required
Shin Pads	Required	Required	Required
Elbow Pads	Required	Required	Required
Hockey Gloves	Optional*	Required	Required
Hockey Pants	Optional**	Required	Required
Shoulder Pads	Optional	Required	Required
Protective cup or pelvis protector	Optional	Required	Required
Mouth Guards (6B)	Optional**	Required	Required
Neck guard (6C) May be required at some tournaments	Optional	Optional	Optional
Goalie Throat guard (6F)	Optional**	Required	Required

* Some type of mitten or glove must be worn

** Recommended

- A. Helmets:** All skaters in the Association (Initiation through Midgets) must, when on the ice or on the bench during practices and games, wear helmets and masks properly certified by the Hockey Equipment Certification Council (HECC) and approved by USA Hockey. AHA and USA Hockey also require that its coaches, assistants and all on ice individuals wear helmets during practices.
- B. Mouth Guards:** Mouth guards for skaters in Advanced Initiation and on all travel teams are required. Mouth guards are strongly encouraged for all other skaters.
- C. Neck Guards:** Neck guards are not required due to the lack of HECC and USA Hockey specifications and certification. The intent of a neck guard is to prevent severe injury to the neck, especially cuts that involve the jugular vein, from skate blades and sticks. Consult with hockey equipment vendors to select the neck guard model to achieve this objective.
- D. Jerseys:** Each skater is responsible for providing a white and blue game jersey at the beginning of the season. Purchase jerseys through the Association equipment manager.
- E. Team colors:** are white helmets, red pants, and white socks with blue and red stripes. Coaches will instruct skaters to wear official Amherst Hockey team attire, and matching socks.
- F. Goalie Equipment:** The Association will provide goalies at the Mite, Squirt, Pee wee and Bantam levels with their pads, chest protectors, throat guards and gloves when the individual does not own his or her own. Goalies must provide the remainder of their equipment. Play will not begin unless the goaltender is properly equipped.

7. COACHING SECTION:

After the evaluation process and the assignment of skaters to teams, The Vice President of Hockey Operations and Coach-In-Chief will select a qualified head coach for each team. Under certain circumstances skater placement may be affected by coaching needs of the Association. A coach's meeting will be scheduled following the last evaluation skate where the new coaches will receive their team assignments. They will also receive a list of potential assistant coaches and their first ice session. Each coach will be required to call the families of his/her team to introduce him/her self, and welcome the skater to the team.

- A. Team Head Coaches shall select the team's Assistant Coaches and Team Manager subject to approval of the Vice President of Hockey Operations and Coach-in-Chief.
- B. **USA Hockey Education Program:** All coaches are REQUIRED to participate in USA Hockey clinics and become certified or "patched" at the appropriate level. The Coach-in-Chief will advise coaches of the dates and times of these coaching programs. Refer to Table 3 to determine the minimum level of coaching education required. Failure to complete or maintain the appropriate level of coaching certification may result in coaching replacement.

Table 3

COACHING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Level Of Play	Coaching Education Program Level
8 & Under (Mite)	Level 1
10 & Under (Squirt)	Level 2 <i>(Prerequisite Level 1)</i>
12 & Under (Pee Wee)	Level 3 <i>(Prerequisite Level 1 and 2)</i>
14 & Under (Bantam)	Level 3 <i>(Prerequisite Level 1 and 2)</i>
16 & Under (Midget)	Level 3 <i>(Prerequisite Level 1 and 2)</i>
18 & Under (Midget)	Level 3 <i>(Prerequisite Level 1 and 2)</i>
Midget I (Tier I & Tier II National)	Level 4 <i>(Prerequisite Level 1, 2 and 3)</i>
Tournament-bound)	

1. Coaches' certifications expire every three years; coaches must recertify when applicable to keep ones credentials current.
 2. Bantam and Midget coaches must be certified prior to November 1, 2008.
 3. All other coaches must be certified prior to December 31, 2008.
 4. All coaches with Advanced certifications do not require re-certification
- C. Coaches are REQUIRED to participate in AHA coaching clinics, meetings, and should attend a first-aid clinic at the beginning of the season. Coaches are encouraged to obtain CPR certification. The coach will have full authority to manage the team's on-ice activities provided they operate within Association policies, USA Hockey, Mass Hockey and GSL league rules and guidelines.
- D. Coaches are responsible for their own conduct as well as the conduct of their skaters while in any skating facility representing our Association. Anyone using obscene, profane, or abusive language or showing disrespect to the officials or their decisions, at a minimum, is subject to USA Hockey and GSL disciplinary procedures. Coaches will know, adhere to, and enforce the USA Hockey Zero Tolerance Policy.
- E. Coaches must be aware of all rink rules and policies. Where permitted, during practice times Coaches can allow skaters to be on the bench while the Zamboni is on the ice so long as the team sits on the bench. Skaters cannot enter the bench area before a game per GSL rules. The officials may assess a bench minor penalty if they do not adhere to this requirement.
- F. Unless otherwise provided for in these Rules, coaches will permit only Association registered members to participate in Association activities.
- G. Coaches shall maintain order at all times during games and practices. Only coaches and team skaters are allowed on the bench during a game. Coaches are ultimately responsible for their team during games and practices. Coaches are responsible for their team's locker room activities and behavior.
- H. Coaches may bench or suspend skaters from games for unexcused absences from practices and games. Additionally, coaches may bench or suspend a skater for reasons such as poor sportsmanship, malicious use of stick, fighting, abusive language, leaving bench without permission, throwing objects on ice, or refusing to leave the ice. Coaches must report these suspensions to the Vice President of Hockey Operations or Coach-in-Chief. Parents and skaters can appeal suspensions by notifying the Vice President of Hockey Operations.
- I. Coaches must play all scheduled games. GSL rules explicitly state that "a game cannot be canceled due to inclement weather on the day of a game if the scheduled ice rink is open...failure to have a team show up to play results in a forfeit". Contact the Association Ice Scheduler and Coach-In Chief as soon as possible in the event of a canceled game. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action by the Operations Committee.
- J. **Playing Time:** Winning is a consideration, but not the only one, nor the most important one. Coaches must care more about developing the skaters than winning the game. Travel team coaches may use their discretion in determining playing time based on the given game situations, but shall strive for ice equality for all skaters over the course of the season.

- K. **Dry Land Practices:** Coaches may schedule dry land practice time provided practice time and location is consistent with Association regular practice ice time. No coach may start before the official selection of teams.
- L. **Class Room Instruction:** Coaches may schedule classroom instruction provided the time is consistent with Association regular practice ice time.
- M. Unless notified otherwise by the Head Coach, dressing rooms are off-limits to all except team skaters and coaches ten minutes prior to, and immediately following a game or practice.
- N. With prior approval of the Vice President of Hockey Operations and under the direct supervision of the coach, on-ice volunteers maybe utilized during practices and other events provided the volunteer has signed a waiver and a CORI form.
- O. Head Coaches and Assistants Coaches should promote and participate in AHA team activities (e.g. annual banquet, fund raising, etc.)
- P. The Vice President of Hockey Operations and the Coach-in-Chief will continually monitor the performance of all coaches. If justified, the Hockey Operations Committee may take action including removal.
- Q. Head Coaches are responsible for filing an injury report with the Association for any injuries that occurred during AHA activities and must submit to the Safety Officer (or President) within 48 hours of the incident.
- R. During the hockey season, any coaches wishing to coach other hockey programs outside of the AHA are required to notify and discuss with the Hockey Operations Committee.
- S. **Team Meeting:**
The Head Coach and Representative of each team shall hold a team meeting with the parents soon after team selection. Coaches should explain their philosophy, attendance policy, primary goals, understanding the sport, understanding & minimizing the risk of injury, emergency procedures, equipment needs, the skater's responsibilities, the parent's responsibilities, the season schedule, along with a question and answer period. (Additional information on this is available from USA Hockey in the Establishing a Good Relationship between Coach and Parent brochure.)

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8. SKATERS' RESPONSIBILITIES and CONSEQUENCES

- A. Every skater must adhere to the following requirements at all times.
1. Skaters are required to comply with the USA Hockey Zero Tolerance Guidelines. Skaters will sign a form at the beginning of the season stating that they understand and will adhere to this policy.
 2. Use of profanity while at the rink, before, during or after games or practices may result in disciplinary actions and possible suspensions.
 3. Show respect for teammates, coaches, game officials, opposing team skaters, and spectators. Skaters, unless directed by the coaching staff, cannot address an Official regarding a call. Failure to follow this guideline could result in disciplinary action and possible suspension.
 4. Make every effort to attend all scheduled practices and games. The coach may excuse absences when notified in advance. Unexcused absence may result in disciplinary action by the coach. This could include reduced playing time and possible suspensions.
 5. Arrive at the rink early enough, ideally at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of practice or game, to be prepared to go on the ice surface at the scheduled time and to be available for off-ice meetings, coaching remarks, stretching and other activities that may be scheduled.
 6. Horseplay in and around all rinks such as floor hockey, locker boxing, throwing of tape balls or ice is strictly forbidden and put in place to avoid injuries to skaters and damage to the rinks. Skaters violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary actions.
 7. Skaters must be aware of all rink rules and policies. Skaters must keep off the ice until the Zamboni is off the ice surface and the gates are closed. When permitted, skaters are allowed in the bench provided they are seated and a coach is present.
 8. Skaters are not allowed on any ice surface unless in full uniform and a coach is present. Special exceptions to this rule must be approved by the Coach in Chief.
 9. Cooperate with coaches during practices and games and have fun!
- B. During practices or games, unsportsmanlike conduct, uncooperative, or disruptive behavior as well as lack of effort may result in consequences for that skater which could include: timeouts, benching, or suspensions for repeat offenses. In addition, playing time may be limited due to unexcused missed practices, disrupting practices, disruptive behavior in the locker rooms before or after ice times or on the bench during games.

9. PROTECTION of PARTICIPANTS

- A. Intent:** The intent of these rules is to reduce the risk of injury to Association participants while adhering to USA and Massachusetts Hockey guidelines.
- B. Screening Policy:** It is the policy of USA Hockey and the Association to reduce the risk to participants through a screening process of all coaches and other volunteers.
1. Association personnel must consent to a Criminal Offender Record Inquiry (CORI).
 2. The screening process, carried out in accordance with USA and Massachusetts Hockey guidelines.
 3. If screening reveals a person does not meet USA and Massachusetts Hockey guidelines, they cannot participate in an Association appointed position within Amherst Hockey.
 4. Any individual who does not consent to the application of these rules cannot participate in Amherst Hockey.
- C. Physical and Sexual Abuse Policy:** It is the policy of USA Hockey and this Association that there shall be no physical abuse of any participant. The Operations Committee will investigate any alleged incident of physical, or sexual, abuse, or substance abuse.
1. Physical abuse means physical contact with a participant that intentionally causes the participant to sustain bodily harm or personal injury. Physical abuse also includes physical contact that intentionally creates the threat of immediate bodily harm or personal injury.
 2. Physical abuse does not include physical contact that is designed to coach, teach or demonstrate a hockey skill. Permitted physical contact may include, but is not limited to, shooting pucks, demonstrating checking or other hockey skills, and communicating with or directing participants, during the course of a game or practice, by touching them in a non-threatening, non-sexual manner.
 3. Sexual abuse as defined by USA Hockey. It is the policy of USA Hockey and the Association that there shall be no sexual abuse of any participants in its programs. Neither consent of the skater to the sexual contact, mistakes as to the participant's age, nor the fact that the contact did not take place at a hockey function are defenses to a complaint of sexual abuse.
 4. Upon proof of violation of this policy, the person responsible for the action will be permanently banned from all AHA programs.

- D. Substance Abuse Policy:** All Association members shall report any incidents of substance abuse to the Association President immediately for action to be taken by the Operations Committee. During the season of practice or play a skater shall not, regardless of quantity, consume or use, possess, buy, sell, or give away alcoholic beverage, marijuana or any other controlled substance.
1. The First violation will result in a 4-week suspension.
 2. Second violation will result in a minimum 12-week suspension.
 3. Third offense will result in a ban from the Association.
 4. A request in writing, submitted to the Board of Directors needed to appeal all suspensions pursuant to this section.
- E.** Association fees are not refundable for any suspensions under these guidelines.
- F.** Any Association rule does not preclude the Association from notification of authorities or pursuant of any applicable penalties provided under the law.

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10. PARENTS' AND/OR GAURDIAN'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Know the details of these Operating Rules and ensure that they and their children comply with the Operating Rules and the directives of coaches, representatives, and division directors.
- B. Assume responsibility for their child's behavior during all practices and games. If the child is disruptive during practices or games, parents may be required to remain at the rink. A coach or team representative may make this request. If a parent is unable to remain at the rink after such a request, until a designated adult is present, the skater will not participate on the ice. This does not limit the coach to additional discipline in accordance with these rules.
- C. Parents are required to comply with the USA Hockey Zero Tolerance Guidelines. Parents must sign that they know and will adhere to this Policy. They will also make every effort to attend all games and practices and conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike and supportive manner. Any violation of this policy by a family member or guest of a skater may result in suspension of that skater.
- D. Attend team meetings; review the Association's Web Site at <http://www.amhersthockey.org>, the bulletin board at Orr Rink, or Association newsletters for information related to game and practice schedules, other association activities, and miscellaneous information.
- E. Your skaters should arrive at the rink early, ideally 30 minutes before games and practices, for them to get dressed, attend team meetings, stretch, and be ready to play at the scheduled time
- F. Unless notified otherwise by the Head Coach, parents must be out of dressing rooms ten (10) minutes prior to and immediately following games or practices. These times are set-aside for the coaches to address their teams.
- G. If issues or concerns arise regarding Association Policies and their implementation, parents should follow the dispute procedures as detailed in Section 13.
- H. **Volunteers:** Parent volunteers are needed to be; publicity representatives (write articles for insertion into local papers), to manage finances for the team's activities (team reps), and to accept appointments to other positions created by these Operating Rules, the By-Laws, the Constitution of the Association, or the President.
- I. **Fundraising:** Participate in mandatory fundraising activities including the coffee table and other designated fundraiser activities. AHA members are required to participate in fundraising (Refer to Section 11 for additional details concerning fund raising obligations).
- J. **It is the parents and coaches responsibilities to monitor the AHA website for changes to the practice or game schedules.**
- K. **Only AHA coaches and skaters are allowed on the bench during games, practices or ice resurfacing.**
- L. **It is the parent's and/or guardian's responsibility to ensure that all dues are paid in full for their skater's activities.**

11. FUNDRAISING

- A. The Association is a voluntary non-profit organization, "staffed" entirely by people who give their time to coach, schedule games, administer affairs, and raise money. The Association operates with a budget of approximately \$200,000.00 per year. To meet all financial obligations that are not met through Association fees, mandatory fundraising is in place. Fund raising activities designated by the Board require all skaters and parents to participate. These fund raising activities could include coffee table duty, candy sales, calendar fundraisers, etc.
- B. The Board of Directors has the authority to assess additional fees for non-participation in mandatory fundraising activities.
- C. **To reflect sponsorship, team names can be assigned; e.g., Amherst Savings Bank.**

12. OFFICIATING

- A. Unless otherwise specified, USA Hockey rules shall prevail in all games played by AHA teams. GSL rules shall apply for league games. The Association may impose additional rules as required.
- B. Any coach or parent with concerns about officiating should provide the specifics to the Coach-in-Chief as well as a description of the specific concern. The Coach-in-Chief will consult with appropriate USA Hockey, Mass Hockey, or GSL officials to address such concerns. Coaches should include copies of game sheets when they address specific concerns.

13. DISCIPLINE and PROBLEM RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

It is the policy of our Association, that all decisions affecting skaters, and parents are subject to review and the policy is subject to revision.

- A. **Suspensions:** In addition to Association rules, skater suspensions may result from infractions during USA Hockey or GSL games. Our Association will enforce such infractions in accordance with the rules of each organization. Suspension incurred at the end of the hockey season will follow those same guidelines in accordance with USA, GSL, and Amherst Hockey rules and regulations. (See section 7H for additional information regarding skater suspension)
- B. **On Ice Issues:** If a problem can not be resolved first by a parent and a coach, the following process has been established for them to resolve problems that may arise pertaining to coaching or other on-ice issues exclusive of the evaluation process;

Step 1: Bring the matter to the Team Representative. If the problem is not resolved to the mutual satisfaction of all parties; then

Step 2: Bring the matter to the Vice President of Hockey Operations. If the matter is still not resolved satisfactorily; then

Step 3: Request the matter go before the Operations Committee. The Operations Committee will collect information and make a ruling in the matter. If the matter is still not resolved to the mutual satisfaction of all parties; then

Step 4: Submit in writing a request to the President to have this matter brought before the Association Board of Directors. The decision of the Association Board will be final.

- C. If an Association member desires to have a specific issue discussed at an Association board meeting, after he/she has exhausted all resolution procedures, he/she must contact the President at least 24 hours in advance of the Association meeting to add to the agenda.
- D. Parents should bring problems concerning Association policies and their implementation to their Team Representative, not the coaches.
- E. **Conflict of Interest:** The President or Vice President of Association Activities must be made aware of any demonstrated conflict that includes any member of the Operations Committee prior to requesting placement on the Association's Board meeting agenda.

14. MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES

- A. All members of the Association are welcome to attend any regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors. The Board is to meet every month. Call any Board Member, or visit our web site for meeting dates, times, and location.
- B. All private purchases for an entire team used during Association functions require Executive Board approval (ice time, jerseys, hats, team patches, etc.).
- C. If requested, a skater or goalie may occasionally skate for a higher-level team in accordance to league rules. The coach of the team requesting that skater must consult with that skater's coach, and asks the parents of the skater requested.

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