

At the June, 2016 Annual Congress, the USA Hockey Board of Directors approved the following changes to current Rules and Regulations:

Programs and Philosophies of USA Hockey: a new category – Flex Hockey

- **Flex Hockey** -- This program is designed to provide opportunities to play for enjoyment, fitness, relaxation and fellowship. The focus is on creating a fun, safe environment where participants can be active in the sport of hockey with flexible participation commitment and varied playing formats and varied playing rules.

Flex Hockey programs would be no-check, ages can be mixed and rosters optional. Your Registry will allow you to identify Flex Program players on the Personnel screen and you can create of Report of those participants. A Flex roster can be created if wanted.

New Age Classification effective for the 16-17 season:

Fifteen (15) (Tier I National Bound Teams only)

15 Only 2001 (in Tier I level only)

Note: The 15-year-old age category shall be for the Tier I Youth level only and shall be limited to players age 15 (as defined in the age classification chart for the current season). Players that are not age 15 in the current season shall not be permitted to play at the 15-year-old age classification under any circumstances.

Disabled Hockey – two new Classifications and an age change effective for the 16-17 season

(1) Classifications

- Adult Sled (Sledge) **(19 & Over)**
- Youth Sled (Sledge) **(18 & Under)***
- Special (all ages)
- Amputee/Standing (all ages)
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing (all ages)
- **Blind / Visually Impaired (all ages)**
- **Warrior Hockey (veterans with a disability playing upright)**

*Sled (Sledge) players over the age of 18 may be allowed to play on a youth sled (sledge) team if their skill level and age prevents them from playing in the adult sled (sledge) division, upon approved waiver.

**In any Disabled Hockey classifications, the local program, league, Affiliate or USA Hockey may require that players 18 and over complete a background screen in accordance with USA Hockey's SafeSport Program prior to participation. Players may be prohibited from participating in disabled classifications based on a violation of the USA Hockey SafeSport Program policies through a summary suspension where appropriate, or following a hearing in accordance with USA Hockey Bylaw 10.

High School Divisions clarified (effective for the 2016-17 season)

The High School National Championship Tournament will be divided into two divisions, with Division 1 and Division 2 separated and each Division competing for their own National Championship. The tournaments will be held in the same place at the same time.

Following are the definitions to be used for each Division:

High School/Prep School Division 1: Formal high school and prep school teams or non-varsity teams consisting of full time students attending the same high school or prep school or full time students that are eligible to play sanctioned varsity sports at that school.

High School/Prep School Division 2: Formal high school and prep school teams or non-varsity teams consisting of full time students attending more than one high school/prep school.

Girls' High School/Prep Division 1: Formal high school and prep school teams or non-varsity teams consisting of full time students attending the same high school or prep school or full time students that are eligible to play sanctioned varsity sports at that school.

Girls' High School/Prep Division 2: Formal high school and prep school teams or non-varsity teams consisting of full time students attending more than one high school/prep school.

Note: The intent of the above descriptions is to make Division 1 the designation for "pure" high school teams and Division 2 for "combined" teams. Tournament eligibility requirements will remain the same with each Affiliate determining its representative for the tournament. To encourage the growth of "pure" teams, any Affiliate with Division 1 teams would have to send a Division 1 team to the tournament before being allowed a slot in the Division 2 Tournament. Besides meeting Division 2 team requirements, all Division 2 teams must play a regular season schedule in a high school league as a team and shall not be an all-star team formed for the purpose of attending the National Tournament.

Any Affiliate with "pure" teams that cannot field a "pure" team for the Division 1 side of the tournament can petition the USA Hockey High School Section for a waiver of the Division 1 requirement. Waivers will be considered on an individual basis.

Tryouts/Player Selection – effective for the 2017-18 season

Tryouts for all Tier I & II 14U – 18U Youth and 14U – 19U Girls Teams

Effective as of the 2017-18 season, no youth or girls Tier I or Tier II team may recruit or solicit players or offer contracts to players for the following season, or hold development camps, tryouts, player selections or any activity that could be construed as a tryout/solicitation or recruitment for the following season, until 48 hours after the last game of Youth National Championships (both Tier I and Tier II Nationals must be completed). (*i.e.*: if National Tournament ends at 4 PM on Monday, tryouts can begin after 4 PM on Wednesday). Any violation of this prohibition may subject the coach, team, program and/or responsible administrators to appropriate discipline, or ineligibility of the team or coach, as determined by the Affiliate.

Except for spring or summer season hockey, Affiliates are strongly encouraged to have rules for house, recreational and other youth and girls hockey teams that are not registered as Tier I or Tier II teams, prohibiting tryouts or player selection until after a certain date that is appropriate for such Affiliate.

Youth Tier I Standards and Criteria effective as of the 2017-18 season.

USA Hockey recognizes Youth Tier I programs/teams only at the 14U, 15(only), 16U and 18U age levels. The following criteria must be met for any team to be classified as a Tier I team in any Affiliate:

- Tryouts for Tier I teams must be published and advertised. No youth Tier I or II team may recruit or solicit players or offer contracts to players for the following season, or hold development camps, tryouts, player selections or any activity that could be construed as a tryout/solicitation or recruitment for the following season, until 48 hours after the last game of Youth National Championships (both Tier I and Tier II Nationals must be completed). (i.e.: if National Tournament ends at 4 PM on Monday, tryouts can begin after 4 PM on Wednesday). Any violation of this prohibition may subject the coach, team, program and/or responsible administrators to appropriate discipline, or ineligibility of the team or coach, as determined by the Affiliate.
- The number of Tier I teams in each Affiliate in each age classification shall be limited by the number of players registered in that Affiliate in that age classification. In each age classification, the Tier I teams shall not exceed fifteen percent (15%) of the total players registered in that age classification in that Affiliate during the preceding season, provided that, subject to Affiliate approval, each Affiliate shall be permitted to have at least one team per age classification. Each Affiliate's player registration numbers for the preceding season shall be provided on or before September 1 each year. For the purposes of this calculation, each team shall be presumed to have twenty (20) players. For example, the total number of players in that age classification shall be multiplied by 15%, and the product shall then be divided by 20 players, which shall determine the number of Tier I teams permitted in the Affiliate. If an Affiliate has 360 players in an age classification, then 15% of that number would equal 54 players eligible for Tier I. In order to have teams of 20 players, the Affiliate would be limited to 2 Tier I teams at that age.
- Notwithstanding the use of 20 players per team in the calculation of the number of teams that may be registered in an Affiliate at the Tier I level, all teams at 14U, 16U and 18U classifications must have a minimum of 15 players (including goalkeepers).
- In order for any team to be eligible for National Tournament play, the program/association must have been in existence and registered with the applicable Affiliate for a minimum of three (3) prior consecutive years.
- The Association/Program must have at least two (2) National Tournament Bound teams from the 14U, 16U, 18U or 15-year-old age categories in either the Tier I or Tier II categories, each of which must have a minimum of 15 players per team.
- It is recommended that each player on the team have on-ice and off-ice practices consistent with the ADM recommendations for that age group (which practices may include practices on other teams).

E. Girls Tier I Standards and Criteria

This section is effective as of the 2017-18 season.

USA Hockey recognizes Girls Tier I programs/teams only at the 14U, 16U and 19U age levels. The following criteria must be met for any team to be classified as a Tier I team in any Affiliate:

- Tryouts for Tier I teams must be published and advertised. No girls Tier I or II team may recruit or solicit players or offer contracts to players for the following season, or hold development camps, tryouts, player selections or any activity that could be construed as a tryout/solicitation or recruitment for the following season, until 48 hours after the last game of Girls National Championships (both Tier I and Tier II Nationals must be completed). (i.e.: if National Tournament ends at 4 PM on Monday, tryouts can begin after 4 PM on Wednesday). Any violation of this prohibition may subject the coach, team, program and/or responsible administrators to appropriate discipline, or ineligibility of the team or coach, as determined by the Affiliate.
- The number of Tier I teams in each Affiliate in each age classification shall be limited by the number of players registered in that Affiliate in that age classification. In each age classification, the Tier I teams shall not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the total players registered in that age classification in that Affiliate during the preceding season, provided

that, subject to Affiliate approval, each Affiliate shall be permitted to have at least one team per age classification. Each Affiliate's player registration numbers for the preceding season shall be provided on or before September 1 each year. For the purposes of this calculation, each team shall be presumed to have eighteen (18) players. For example, the total number of players in that age classification shall be multiplied by 20%, and the product shall then be divided by 18 players, which shall determine the number of Tier I teams permitted in the Affiliate. If an Affiliate has 350 players in an age classification, then 20% of that number would equal 70 players eligible for Tier I. In order to have teams of 18 players, the Affiliate would be limited to 3 Tier I teams at that age.

- Notwithstanding the use of 18 players per team in the calculation of the number of teams that may be registered in an Affiliate at the Tier I level, all teams at 14U, 16U and 19U classifications must have a minimum of 15 players (including goalkeepers).
- In order for any team to be eligible for National Tournament play, the program/association must have been in existence and have registered Girls team(s) with the applicable Affiliate for a minimum of three (3) prior consecutive years.
- It is recommended that each player on the team have on-ice and off-ice practices consistent with the ADM recommendations for that age group (which practices may include practices on other teams).

Numbers and qualifications of teams for District and Nationals:

Nationals – Youth Tier I, Tier II, Girls'/Women's, High School Varsity and/or Prep School

(a) The Youth Tier I and Girls Tier I National Championship Tournament shall include a total of 16 teams, comprised of one team representing the host, one team from each USA Hockey District sending a team, and at-large teams selected by a Nationals Selection Committee established by the Youth Council Chair and National Championship Chair, with at-large bids chosen utilizing information the Nationals Selection Committee determines shall be used to evaluate teams, including without limitation, published national rankings, head to head competition among teams and common opponents, league records and other information at the discretion of the Nationals Selection Committee. The Youth Tier II, Girls' Tier II, Women's and High School National Championship Tournaments shall include up to 48 teams, which may include a host representative, as determined by the Youth Council. All teams (Tier I, Tier II, Girls'/Women's and High School) will be placed and/or seeded by the Nationals Selection Committee.

Girls Teams age classifications for Districts and Nationals

(3) PARTICIPATION IN OLDER DIVISIONS OF DISTRICT OR NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS – 2016-17

A youth or girls player may play on a team in an older classification only if the applicable Affiliate's rules or decisions, and the applicable local program's rules or decisions, permit that player to do so. A youth or girls player residing in one Affiliate may not play on a team in an older classification in a different Affiliate unless both the Affiliate where the player resides and the Affiliate where the player desires to play have granted permission to play in an older classification. In the event a youth or girls player has been denied the permission to play in an older classification in an Affiliate other than the Affiliate where the player resides, the player may appeal such denial to the USA Hockey Player Development Committee.

(4) PARTICIPATION IN OLDER DIVISIONS OF DISTRICT OR NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS – 2017-18

Beginning in 2017-18 season, no player twelve years of age or younger (as defined in the age classification chart for the current season) is eligible to play on a team intending or declared to compete in the District or National Championships or playoffs leading thereto. A player thirteen years of age or older may play on a youth or girls' team in an older classification at a District or National Championship Tournament only if the applicable Affiliate's rules or decisions, and the applicable local program's rules or decisions, permit that player to do so. A player residing in one Affiliate may not play on a team in an older classification in a different Affiliate unless both the Affiliate where the player resides and the

Affiliate where the player desires to play have granted permission to play in an older classification. In the event a youth or girls player has been denied the permission to play in an older classification in the Youth or Girls' District or National Championships on a team in an Affiliate other than the Affiliate where the player resides, the player may appeal such denial to the National Championship Appeal Committee.

All other requirements, rules, regulations, operation and procedures of all USA Hockey District and National Championship Tournaments shall be set forth in the District and National Championship Tournament Guidebook.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE POLICY (revised)

It is the considered judgement of the Board of Directors of USA Hockey that consumption/use/abuse of mood altering substances is detrimental to a healthy state of mind, body, and spirit in an athletic participant. This is especially true for those participants aspiring to develop their talents in the furtherance of their playing, or coaching, or officiating careers in the sport of ice hockey. Therefore, with the best interests of its participants in mind, USA Hockey prohibits use by any participant of alcohol or drugs, as these terms are defined below, during participation in its programs as follows:

1. Zero tolerance for possession or use of drugs by any participant unless participant is currently under a doctor's care and the medication is required for treatment of an illness or injury;
2. Zero tolerance for providing or condoning the use of alcohol or drugs to a minor athlete by a coach, assistant coach, manager, official or any other person who is in a position of authority over that athlete;
3. Zero tolerance for being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while supervising minor athletes or while participating in a USA Hockey practice, game or event; and
4. Abuse of alcohol by a participant while participating at a USA Hockey event other than that prohibited by #3 above.

Violation of this policy shall subject the participant to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or disqualification from membership. Further, USA Hockey hereby recommends that each and all of its teams, associations, programs and affiliates develop and enforce alcohol and drug abuse policies and practices that are consistent with this policy.

For the purposes of this policy, the word "alcohol" shall include the following:

1. Intoxicating beverages

For purposes of this policy, the word "drug" shall include the following:

1. Any controlled substances.
2. Prescription or prescribed controlled substance when used to an excess in violation of doctors orders, or to produce the state of intoxication in the participant.
3. Any mood altering or psychoactive substance that produces a state of intoxication in the participant.

Further, the word participant shall include players, coaches, referees, and all persons involved in the conduct of an ice hockey contest.

[For additional information or to access the complete Bylaws, Rules and Regulations of USA Hockey click here.](#)