

Thief River Falls  
Amateur hockey Association

HANDBOOK

AND

BYLAWS

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## **PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide the Players, Coaches, and Parents of the Thief River Falls Amateur Hockey Association (TRFAHA), an affiliate of the Minnesota Hockey (the state affiliate of USA Hockey), a set of guidelines and expectations to follow for the hockey season.

This handbook is to be used in conjunction with the TRFAHA bylaws, Minnesota hockey rules and regulations, and USA hockey rules and regulations. The rule and regulations set forth in this handbook under TRFAHA and those set forth by Minnesota Hockey and USA Hockey will be enforced by the Board of Directors.

These policies and guidelines are provided for the benefit of parents, players and those individuals who volunteer their valuable time as team managers and coaches. Please take time to carefully read and understand this handbook so there is no misunderstanding of the stated rules and regulations.

## **THIS IS USA HOCKEY YOUTH HOCKEY**

The USA Hockey mission statement for its Youth Programs is as follows:

- To provide an improved grassroots foundation for the growth and development of USA Hockey, designing programs aimed to increased participation, improved skills and a responsible environment for the conduct of youth hockey.

### **THIEF RIVER FALLS AMATEUR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION MISSION STATEMENT**

The primary purpose of the Thief River Falls Amateur hockey Association is to educate players in the fundamental skills and strategy of hockey and sportsmanship while offering a program which is compatible with the high school “style of play”.

The program shall provide a disciplined, competitive environment which encourages every player to perform to the best of their ability while having fun, learning and playing the game. Also to foster the development of accountable, confident individuals who understand success and rewarding involvement requires commitment, effort and enthusiasm.

### **MINNESOTA HOCKEY PREEMINENCE**

The Thief River Falls Amateur Hockey Association, an affiliate association of the Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association (AKA Minnesota Hockey or MAHA) shall abide by the act in accord with the Articles of Incorporation, By-laws, Rules and Regulations, Playing Rules and decisions of the Board of Directors of MAHA and/or decisions of the Affiliate. Further, Thief River Falls Amateur Hockey Association shall assist MAHA in the administration and enforcement of the provisions for the By-laws, Rules and Regulations, Playing Rules and decision of the Board of Directors of MAHA, within and upon its members and/or within its jurisdiction and agrees to be guided by the following core values of USA Hockey and MAHA.

- **SPORTSMANSHIP-** Foremost of all values is to learn a sense of fair play. Become humble in victory, gracious in defeat. We will foster friendship with teammates and opponents alike.
- **RESPECT FOR THE INDIVIDUAL-** Treat all others as you expect to be treated.
- **INTEGRITY-** We seek to foster honesty and fair play beyond mere strict interpretation of the rules and regulations of the game.
- **PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE AT THE INDIVIDUAL, TEAM AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS-** Each member of the organization, whether player, volunteer or staff, should seek to perform each aspect of the game to the highest level of his or her ability.
- **ENJOYMENT-** It is important for the hockey experience to be fun, satisfying and rewarding for the participant.
- **LOYALTY-** We aspire to teach loyalty to the ideals and fellow member for the sport of hockey.
- **TEAMWORK-** We value the strength of learning to work together. The use of teamwork is reinforced and rewarded by success in the hockey experience.

MAHA acknowledges that Thief River Falls Amateur Hockey is and shall remain a separate entity with the complete authority to conduct its affairs and programs, subject only to the express obligations and restrictions contained in the affiliate agreement.

## **TRFAHA OBJECTIVES**

- To provide an opportunity for Physical Conditioning and to teach players how to maintain good health for adulthood.
- To provide an opportunity for social education by providing a place to be part of a peer group. To develop individual as well as team work skills.
- To develop commitment, discipline and responsibility by taking part in practices and games and developing respect for one's self as well as others.
- To achieve excellence by participating to the best of one's ability, learning to prepare oneself mentally and physically for competition, and through dedication and hard work to improve their own individual and team skills.

# PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

**Thief River Falls Amateur Hockey Association Coaches Curriculum Committee** with the approval of the Board of Directors is responsible to develop the program under the guidelines required of USA Hockey and Minnesota Hockey. There are four distinct categories within USA Hockey model of its structure to help meet the needs of the youth player.

- 1) **Initiation Program-** This program is designed to meet the needs of the beginning players. Basic skill will be taught equally in a non-competitive environment. Fun, physical development and a social environment are stressed.
  - **TRFAHA LEVEL ONE and LEVEL TWO:** It's a structured, learn to play hockey program designed to introduce beginners to the game's basic skills. It enables participants to become contributing members of a team effort, to develop self confidence and to experience a sense of personal achievement.
- 2) **Recreational Program-** The backbone of youth hockey, recreational hockey encourages internal or "house league" play. This program is designed to provide opportunities to play for enjoyment, fitness, relaxation and fellowship. Skill development and team concepts are stressed, rather than winning.
  - **TRFAHA LEVELS 3 through 6:** Still retains the structure through Level 4 of initiation program and also starts to provide players an opportunity to experience the fun of team play. Individual skill development is still the focal point while introducing team concepts.
  - **Level 3 & 4:** Start to experience the structure of a game environment in a positive manner. In-house games provide equal shift and rotation to help the younger player develop a understanding for the basic rules of the game and learn what being part of team is about. Level 4 players will have the opportunity to participate in games and Mite Jamborees with other communities in the area providing a low-key full-participation event.
  - **Level 5 & 6:** The in-house program continues to develop individual skills, as well as game and rink awareness. Players develop their understanding of positions and rules of the game. Development of players has progressed to where developing passing and receiving skills, team concepts of offensive and defensive play, injury prevention, and respect for teammates and coaches, opponents, and officials is stressed.
- 3) **Competitive Program:** Well qualified coaches teach higher-level skill development for players within local associations who have the desire and ability for a competitive experience. Balance of winning and sportsmanship is stressed, and travel for competition should be reasonable. Team objectives include local, league, state and national championships.

- Travel team hockey becomes available for the Squirt player on the boys side and 8U and 10U on the girls side. It allows the player and parent to understand what traveling hockey by playing regular officiated three period games with other communities at home and away. Players are introduced to changing on the fly, penalty killing, power plays, and possibly overtime situations while stressing team play and heads up awareness. The above listed traveling teams will also be exposed to a more competitive situation by participating in invitational tournaments.
  - Pee Wees, Bantams, and Girls 12U & 14U travel teams provide the nucleus of our competitive program. Less time spent on developing individual skills and the main objectives stress developing team concepts, team work ethic, and team objectives. Importance of proper nutrition, fitness and training is stressed. The player needs to start developing personal goals and training habits, as well as learning how to be supportive of teammates. The teams participate in the District League play as well as non district games. All teams gain experience by going to out of town tournaments. The end of the season team objective is to be competitive in the District Tournament where success can lead to participation in Regional, State, and National Tournaments.
- 4) **Select-** USA Hockey supports a high-level program which draws from the very best players across the country, then prepares them to play for the United States in international competitions.
- TRFAHA and Lincoln High School through the head high school coaches nominate top players for the USA Hockey Olympic Development for boys in the Select 15, Select 16, and Select 17 Development Programs and for girls through the Girls Select Development Program. Nomination does not guarantee an invitation to select tryouts.

# **PLAYER PLACEMENT**

## **Boys & Girls Programs:**

Boys and girls play together in Levels 1 through 3 which covers the ages 4-7. Girls in levels 4, 5 & 6 travel with their age respective girls travel teams.

However, TRFAHA is trying to develop a Girls In-house program geared for the beginning girls, ages 9-12. This will allow the girls to try the sport and help them develop their skills. Girls that have come up through with the boys are encouraged to continue to skate with the boys until age 11.

At age 11, the girls participate in the girls program, and boys participate in the boys program. Player numbers determine the number of teams at each level.

## **Level 1 through 6**

At the start of the season all players age 4 to 10 will be evaluated in a skills testing session to help with proper level placement for practice. TRFAHA tries to match the players skills and skating ability to the proper level to assure mastery of skills that are taught in a progressive order. TRFAHA is obligated to follow age requirements established by USA Hockey in determining placement of older players.

After the initial evaluation some players may still be moved around if the coach determines the player really belongs in a different level. Coaches will contact parents to discuss any changes with parents if it is in the best interest of the player.

## **TRAVEL TEAMS**

Age requirements as specified by Minnesota Hockey determine at what level a player is participating. Numbers become the determining factor in how many teams are at any given level. Where there are two or more teams required, players on the "A", "B", or "B2" team in a level.

Players for teams are selected based on their ability, attitude, team work and self discipline by the coaches assigned to coach the various teams. Coaches try to keep team size to be no less than 12 players and more than 16 players plus two goalies. Minnesota Hockey rules allow roster changes until the end of December.

## **PEE WEE, Bantam, & Girls 12U & 14U teams:**

These teams participate in District and non-district games in the region. There are out of town tournaments where teams from different areas are all playing to give players exposure to other styles of hockey in a tournament environment. The season culminates with participation in the District Tournament and can lead to post season play through Region, State and National Tournament Play-offs.

- IF A TRAVELING TEAM ADVANCES TO A REGIONAL, STATE OR NATIONAL PLAY-OFF TOURNAMENTS, TRFAHA WILL DETERMINE A COST PER PLAYER TO HELP WITH LODGING, MEALS AND TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES.

If a team wants to add post season games or invitational tournament(s) at the end of a season it is up to the coach and parents. Any tournament fees, coaches travel expenses are to be paid for by the parents of the players.

## **PLAYER MOVEMENT**

All TRFAHA players will participate at his or her respective level of play as determined by ages specified by Minnesota Hockey with the following exceptions:

1. If it is determined a second year mite(as defined by Minnesota Hockey age) has developed skills that will better the players development, that player can be moved to Squirt B Level.
2. If due to a players birth date and year in school that player may only get to play one year of Bantam or 14U hockey. That player may move up a level no later than his or hers first year of Pee Wees or Girls 12U of play.
3. If in the goal tenders position at a given level of play does not have adequate numbers at that position, a goal tender from one level younger may be moved up to accommodate that need.
4. Any other potential player movement will be recommended by coaches to the TRFAHA Board of Directors for discussion and approval.
5. ALL PLAYER MOVEMENT FOR IN-HOUSE AND TRAVEL TEAMS MUST BE APPROVEDBY THE TRFAHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

## **SAFETY**

The safety on the hockey players in T.R.F.A.H.A. is one of the most important concerns for the program. It is required that each player wear proper protective equipment to ensure safety. F a player does not have a certain item of equipment, please contact the youth hockey coordinator to see if T.R.F.A.H.A. may have the item in question for the player to use. The coach has the responsibility to make sure that players are wearing the appropriate equipment at all times.

### **PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT REQUIRED AT EACH LEVEL:**

Level 3 and below: Helmet w/face mask\*, elbow pads\*, hockey skates required

Level 4: Helmet w/facemask\*, shins\*, elbow pads\*, athletic supporter with cup protection or pelvic protector, hockey skates and attached mouth guard required once Blue and Gold teams start playing.

Level 5 & 6: Helmet w/ face mask, shins, elbow pads, hockey skates, hockey gloves, athletic supporter with cup or pelvic protector, attached mouth guard.

Travel Teams: Helmet w/ face mask, shins, elbow pads, athletic supporter with cup or pelvic

Protector, attached mouth guard, hockey gloves, shoulder pads, breezers. Please note that Minnesota Hockey requires the mouth guard at all levels of hockey and overrides USA's rule that does not require it until after squirts. USA hockey requires it to be attached to facemask.

(\*denotes equipment TRFAHA provides to players 8 & under)

## INJURY

Coaches and general managers must keep a injury log on all injuries that require medical attention or cause a player to miss practice or a game. Coaches and general managers are to turn in the injury log to the youth hockey coordinator at the end of the season.

Any injury that requires medical attention or causes a player to become unconscious must be recorded on a injury report form and turned into the youth hockey coordinator as soon as possible. Please turn in report forms on concussions even if the player did not become unconscious just for tracking purposes. This is important as there may be claims made to USA Hockey's insurance.

**On injuries that require medical attention a doctor's release is necessary before the player can return to practice or games.** All rehabilitating players must wear full equipment on the ice when attending practice. When a player is not playing a game due to injury but wants to be in the box with the team they are required to wear their helmet with face mask and the team jersey.

All general managers will be given copies of insurance claim forms. USA Hockey Insurance kicks in after the player's primary provider and there is still a high deductible applied before USA Hockey's insurance will pay anything.

## ILLNESS

For short term illness such as colds and flu, only the player and the player's parents will be able to determine if the player is well enough to play. However, if the coach feels the player is not in condition to play, the coach may send the player home. T.R.F.A.H.A. wants players to be in the best health possible before participating in games or practices for the benefit of the player as well as other players.

Players who missed school due to illness are not to practice or participate in games for that day and should stay home. Parents should leave a message for the coach.

## **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

It is the responsibility of the player and parent to notify the coach before missing practice or games for :

- 1) Family obligations
- 2) Religious obligations
- 3) School obligations
- 4) Illness or injuries

**Wednesday nights:** Church night, practices are scheduled for those that can attend. Every church is on a different schedule and it is impossible to schedule and avoid conflict. TRFAHA understand this and expects players to go to their religious commitment. For those that can attend practice they are encouraged to do so. It is also understood that players may be leaving early or coming late to practice on Wednesday to accommodate church.

### **Missing School or Sunday Worship**

TRFAHA does the best it can to not schedule games that conflict with worship or require players to miss school. Teams go to two tournaments and District, Regional, or State Play-offs that may require time away from school and conflict with church, as tournament formats and the teams performance control the game times. Some games may be scheduled during the week because no other ice available, TRFAHA will do the best it cant o minimize the need for early release for travel reasons. Parent can inform the coach that their player will not take part in a scheduled game if they feel it is the best interest of their player to not miss school or church on those occasions.

## **BAD WEATHER**

When school is canceled for storm related reasons ice is available for practice as long as the City of Thief River Falls will let arenas be open. It is not expected that players living in the country would consider attending these practices, but often driving conditions in town allow the in town player to attend with no problem and they want something to do. Listen to KTRF for storm related announcements.

Travel to games during adverse conditions. Please keep posted to the radio for weather / travel conditions. We do ask team members to check in with the coach or general managers before leaving if weather is an issue. Decisions to cancel games are not made easily but we do not want to risk anyone being stranded or put at risk during a storm for a game of hockey. Generally the Youth Hockey Coordinator, Board President, and High School Coaches will be in contact with towns where games are scheduled checking conditions and making the decisions. It may be necessary during a weekend for a coach or another board member to make the decision and contact the other teams involved ASAP.

## OPEN HOCKEY

Open hockey is a time when players of a designated age group can work on individual hockey skills including skating, stick handling, shooting, etc. In addition, team skills including passing, position play, and team organization may be worked on. At open hockey, there is no body-checking allowed. Body-checking is skill which involves a higher risk of injury and should be taught at team practices for level pee wee and above.

- **PLAYERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO USE THIS TIME TO WORK ON SKILLS THAT THEIR COACHES HAVE EXPRESSED THEY NEED TO WORK ON.**

**Scrimmaging:** Players may work individually, in groups, or may start scrimmages. Players should not be expected to play in scrimmages. One end of the rink should be set aside for players to work on individual skills.

No swearing, rough play or fighting is allowed and will result in removal from the ice.

**SUPERVISION:** Open hockey is run by the City of Thief River Falls Park and Recreation Department. The arena staff has the authority to allow a player from outside and scheduled level on the ice. Factors taken into consideration include the number of players on the ice and the level designated on the schedule to have the ice. A general rule of thumb is if attendance at the session is low, a player can move up one level above his/her skating level. Older players are often intimidating to younger players and playing down a level is not promoted. Rink attendants will usually allow an older sibling to go out to work with a younger sibling. Keep in mind younger players often do not have adequate equipment on to be out with older players. Varsity players are allowed on the ice at all levels to work with players.

Disciplinary action during open hockey will be handled by the rink attendant and TRFAHA will fully support that discipline.

**EQUIPMENT:** Players are required to have full equipment on at open hockey.

## **COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Winning is a consideration, but not the only one, nor the most important one. Care more about the child than winning the game. Remember, players are involved in hockey for fun and enjoyment.
- Be a positive role model to your players, display emotional maturity and be alert to the physical safety of players.
- Be generous with the praise when it is deserved; be consistent and honest; be fair and just; do not criticize players publicly; learn to be a more effective communicator and coach; don't yell at players.
- Adjust to personal needs and problems of players; be a good listener; never verbally or physically abuse a player or official; give all players the opportunity to improve their skills, gain confidence and develop self-esteem; teach them the basics.
- Organize practices that are fun and challenging for your players. Familiarize yourself with the rules, techniques and strategies of hockey; encourage all your players to be a team players.
- Maintain an open line of communication with your players' parents. Explain the goals and objectives of your association.
- Be concerned with the overall development of your players. Stress good health habits and clean living.
- To play the game is great to love the game is greater.

## **USA HOCKEY COACHING ETHICS CODE AGREEMENT**

All USA Hockey coaches (head, assistant and instructors) must abide by the USA Hockey Coaching Ethics Code, and understand that violations may result in full or partial forfeiture of coaching privileges in programs, at sites or events under USA Hockey's governance. The Ethics Code Agreement states that the coach and/or instructor has read and will abide by USA Hockey's Coaching Ethics Code.

All registered Coaches (head and assistant) and instructors must sign the Coaching Ethics Code Agreement in order to be eligible to coach or instruct in any regular season activities (practices, clinics, games, tournaments, tryouts, etc.) Coaches and instructor's need only have to sign this document once and it will be valid for the duration of the coach's instructor's participation with USA Hockey programs. All coaches have an obligation to be familiar with the USA Hockey's coaching Ethics Code, or as it may be amended from time to time. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of an ethical standard is not itself a defense to a charge of unethical conduct.

Coaches and instructors will receive the Coaching Ethics Code and sign the ethics agreement through their respective association and/or Registrar. Each coach must have a signed agreement properly filed prior to the start of the season. Each association is responsible for enforcing and tracking signed ethics code agreements for their coaches.

For more information refer to the USA Hockey Annual Guide and USA Coaching Ethics Code Book COACHING ETHICS CODE non-compliance with the code of ethics and

expectation of coaches will result in a review of the coach by the Coaches Curriculum Committee, Board of Directors, A.C.E. Coordinator(s), and Youth Hockey Coordinator to determine disciplinary action.

Coaches are expected to coach within the rules and regulations as set forth by the T.R.F.A.H.A. and its Board of Directors, Minnesota Hockey, and USA Hockey. These rules and procedures include, but are not limited to, those listed in this handbook.

### **Minnesota Hockey Sexual and Physical Abuse Screening Program for all Coaches and Administrators**

- The personnel of all MAHA associated organizations shall be screened pursuant to screening rules as set forth in the Minnesota Hockey Handbook.
- For purposes of these screening rules, personnel shall include officers, member of boards of directors, coaches, team managers, referees and coaching or referee instructors, whether or not they receive compensation for their services. Other personnel may be included at the discretion of the MAHA Screening Committee.
- For purposes of these screening rules, personnel shall include officers, member of boards of directors, coaches, team managers, referees and coaching or referee instructors, whether or not they receive compensation for their services. Other personnel may be included at the discretion of the MAHA Screening Committee.
- MAHA affiliates or associated organizations may, in their discretion, apply the requirements of these screening rules to other volunteer personnel not carried on rosters or registered by means of a USA Hockey individual Member Registration form and not specifically mentioned herein.
- An individual who does not consent to be subject to the application of these screening rules shall not be allowed to participate in screened activities.
- Criminal Background Check: Each person to be screened as provided by the screening rules set forth in the current Minnesota Hockey handbook shall sign a consent form provided by Minnesota Hockey. Such form shall be signed each year and shall authorize Minnesota hockey or its designee to perform a background check to determine whether the signer is the subject of any reported criminal conviction.
- If the Screening Committee determines that the member is disqualified and prohibited from participating in screened activities, its Chair shall notify in writing the member, the member's affiliate, the Minnkota District Registrar and the cognizant MAHA District Director that the member is not eligible to participate in screened activities.

