

Minneapolis Hockey

Parent Guide



Creating Lasting Experiences
TEAMWORK | RESPECT | FUN

AN INFORMATIONAL GUIDE ON YOUTH HOCKEY AND THE MINNEAPOLIS HOCKEY "STORM" PROGRAM

Dear Minneapolis Hockey Families:

Welcome to Minneapolis Hockey.

What we know today as "Minneapolis Hockey" evolved from the neighborhood associations in Minneapolis (i.e. Southwest, Washburn, Roosevelt, South, etc) that thrived in the 1940's through the 1970's. Since the 1980's, changes in the population demographics of Minneapolis along with the growth of competitive hockey in the suburbs forced change on the traditional "neighborhood model" of youth hockey in Minneapolis and St. Paul. While suburban associations grew larger with population increases, the growth of the neighborhood associations were limited by their aging demographics and geographic boundaries. In the late 1990's, neighborhood associations in Minneapolis began to run cooperative programs with other neighborhood associations in order to field competitive teams. Today, Minneapolis has one comprehensive "competitive" hockey association that plays against the other city-wide associations in Minnesota. Through its evolution, Minneapolis Hockey has come full circle to regain its stature as a thriving hockey community in Minnesota.

Today, competitive youth hockey in Minnesota is not the same as it was in the 70's and 80's when many of today's parents played youth hockey. This guide is intended to offer insight into the organization, structure, planning and execution of today's competitive youth hockey program in Minnesota and in Minneapolis.

Minneapolis Hockey Association, Inc. is a 501(c)3 organization that promotes and supports youth hockey in Minneapolis. The Minneapolis Hockey "Storm" brand is recognized state-wide as the comprehensive, inclusive, brand of youth hockey in Minneapolis, welcoming boys and girls from many socio-economic, racial and religious backgrounds who attend public schools, private schools and who are home schooled, who seek a competitive hockey experience. We hope this information (and links to more detailed information) will serve as a resource for players, coaches, administrators and parents who, by working together, will provide a nurturing, fun, athletic experience for our players.

Special note: This Parent Guide includes tidbits of expanded information in the "Hockey 101" sections. Hockey 101 information is intended to offer a deeper explanation of the specific topics. Also, we understand that being new to hockey can be a daunting experience, especially for parents of the youngest players. Regardless of the age of your player, if you are new to hockey, we encourage you to reach out to our Mite leaders to help steer you to the resources that will assist you in your journey. Contact information can be found on the Minneapolis Storm web site at www.mplshockey.com

Contents

Types of Youth Hockey	4
Youth Hockey Structure	4
Minneapolis Hockey Association	5
Core Values	6
Administration	6
Chart: Age Groups, Season Length & Typical Playing Frequency	14
Ability Levels	14
Hockey Play Expectations	17
Evaluation & Team Selection	20
Coaching	24
Behavior Expectations	25
<i>Player</i>	26
<i>Parent/Guardian/Spectator</i>	26
<i>Coach</i>	27
Conflict Resolution	29
<i>Minneapolis Hockey Formal Grievance Process</i>	30
Parent Guide Conclusion	32
<i>Additional Resources for Parents:</i>	32

Types of Youth Hockey

Throughout the years, organized youth hockey in Minnesota has evolved into two distinct types of programs.

Recreational: Recreational hockey, also known as "Park & Rec," "Neighborhood Hockey" and "House-league" hockey typically mixes players of different abilities to play a 3-4-month winter season against similar teams within a limited geographic area. Organizations providing recreational hockey usually do not provide comprehensive programs for all ages and for girls. Recreational hockey is usually coached by parents at all age levels and utilizes a combination of outdoor ice and indoor ice. Recreational hockey may, or may not, provide the benefits offered by Minnesota Hockey or USA Hockey (the governing bodies of competitive youth hockey). Recreational programs do not offer comprehensive off-season or summer hockey programs.

Competitive: Competitive youth hockey, sometimes referred to "traveling hockey," is the most popular type of organized hockey being played today. Competitive youth hockey in Minnesota is governed by "Minnesota Hockey" under the national umbrella organization known as "USA Hockey." Competitive youth hockey programs are organized by local association with city-wide, or school-wide, geographic boundaries. The competitive hockey season is typically 5-6 months, from October to March. League games are played against other associations. Tournament games may be played against teams from Minnesota, neighboring states and from Canada. Teams may have parent or non-parent coaches who are all educated, trained and certified to coach by USA Hockey. Competitive hockey teams are comprised of players with similar abilities that, ideally, play against other teams of similar abilities. Most competitive hockey associations, including Minneapolis Hockey, also offer comprehensive off-season and summer hockey programs.

Youth Hockey Structure

It's important to know that Minnesota is unique in the structure of competitive hockey in the United States. Unlike most of the USA, Minnesota structures youth hockey with geographic boundaries and a strong emphasis of community organization from youth through high school programs. Described below are the primary organizational entities that play a part in our statewide competitive youth hockey environment.

Association/Affiliate: Minneapolis Hockey Association, Inc. ("Minneapolis Hockey" or "MHA") is a nonprofit 501(c)3 entity run, by volunteers. MHA is an affiliate of District 3, Minnesota Hockey and USA Hockey. MHA organizes its competitive youth hockey operations in Minneapolis and runs a charitable gambling business in to help offset the cost of playing competitive hockey.

Hockey 101: Youth associations in Minnesota are widely considered to be the player funnel for the public high school program within the city of the association. MHA players attend more than 60 public and private schools with many being home-schooled. As recently as the 2009-2010 season, MHA graduates played in 12 different high school hockey programs. MHA has a very close relationship with the Minneapolis High School boys and girls programs. While MHA supports the Minneapolis High School programs, we do not give preferential treatment to players due to their current school choice or high school path.

District 3: Competitive youth hockey in Minnesota is managed by 13 geographical "Districts" within the state governing body called "Minnesota Hockey." Each District administers the youth hockey leagues and District tournaments for its member-affiliates (associations) as well as manages the referees for league and tournament games. Minneapolis Hockey is a member of Minnesota Hockey - District 3. To learn more about District 3, please visit:

<http://www.d3hockey.org>

Minnesota Hockey: Minnesota Hockey is the statewide governing body of amateur hockey in Minnesota and an affiliate of USA Hockey. Since 1947, Minnesota Hockey (formerly known as the Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association) has been providing volunteer services for the development and promotion of all youth hockey in Minnesota. When you register with Minneapolis Hockey, all players and coaches will first become registered members of Minnesota Hockey. To learn more about Minnesota Hockey, please visit:

<http://www.minnesotahockey.org/page/show/80470-home>

USA Hockey: USA Hockey, Inc., is the National Governing Body for the sport of ice hockey in the United States. Its mission is to promote the growth of hockey in America and provide the best possible experience for all participants by encouraging, developing, advancing and administering the sport. As the National Governing Body for hockey, USA Hockey provides training programs for coaches and referees as well as insurance benefits for players, coaches and referees. When registering in MHA, all players and coaches will first become registered members of USA Hockey. To learn more about USA Hockey, please visit: <http://www.usahockey.com>

Minneapolis Hockey Association

Minneapolis Hockey Association, Inc. is the "competitive" youth hockey association offering comprehensive hockey programs for boys and girls living or going to school in Minneapolis. MHA is guided by the following core values of the governing bodies of USA Hockey and Minnesota Hockey.

Core Values – Creating Lasting Experiences

Teamwork: We value the strength of learning to work together. The use of teamwork is reinforced and rewarded by success in the hockey experience.

Respect: 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.

Fun: We seek to foster an environment where hockey is fun and is played for the love of the game.

Administration

Structure: The Minneapolis Hockey Board of Directors is the governing body of Minneapolis Hockey. Members in good standing within Minneapolis Hockey are welcome to attend monthly board meetings typically held on the 3rd Monday of each month. The Board of Directors oversees the hockey operations, support programs and charitable gambling operation of MHA. Additional information on the Minneapolis Hockey Board of Directors can be found at:
www.mplshockey.com/page/show/285-board

Registration: Prior to the beginning of the season, all players and coaches must register with USA Hockey, Minnesota Hockey and Minneapolis Hockey. Players register through the MHA web site, which is managed by SportsESportsEnginee.

Registration Timeline: Registration typically begins in late July – early August and is open until mid - November. There may be a registration deadline for older players. Players may register at any time; however, no player is allowed to participate in hockey activities until registration is complete and all the necessary documents have been received by MHA.

Registration Process: Through the MHA on-line registration process is for each family to establish a SportsEngine account with our service. Each player will register with USA Hockey, Minnesota Hockey and Minneapolis Hockey. In addition to completing registration on-line, each family must complete a "Volunteer Agreement" prior to taking part in hockey activities. In addition, each team may need to collect a copy of each player's birth certificate (which will be returned), and may collect a Consent to Treat form, after the teams are selected but before games begin. Families will also be asked to acknowledge that they have read, understand, and will abide by the policies and processes set forth in this Parent Guide at the time of registration.

Finance: Upon registration, Minneapolis Hockey collects "Player Fees" from respective members based on the age of the players. In addition, it is possible that the respective teams may determine a need to collect "Team Fees" to pay for the cost of activities that are not allocated by Minneapolis Hockey.

Player Fees: Player Fees should be viewed as the price paid by players for the hockey programs provided by Minneapolis Hockey. Minneapolis Hockey sets Player Fees through its annual budget process that is approved by the MHA Board of Directors. The association's budgets are determined by the anticipated costs of playing hockey within the competitive hockey environment governed by Minnesota Hockey and District 3, the expected number of players within each age group and the forecasted contribution of charitable gambling, and other fundraising, to MHA.

Team Fees: Each MHA team is budgeted by their respective "hockey activity" based on the age of the players (See Types of Hockey Activity). Every team within each age-group is budgeted to play its respective league games. Squirts/10U and older teams also are budgeted two "local" tournaments (one possibly being the Minneapolis Cup or Winter Storm tournament), one "overnight" tournament and the respective district/region/state tournament(s). MHA will pay for all District 3 league games and District 3 tournament. Each team, at their own discretion, may utilize excess indoor ice inventory, at no additional charge, or find and purchase additional practice ice, games/scrimmages and tournaments over and above the activity scheduled by the association. MHA does NOT restrict additional activities determined by the team, however, the cost of the additional activity may be assessed to the families on the team. Each Team Manager is given a "team checkbook" to help manage additional costs incurred by non-budgeted activities. It is worth noting that player/family travel expenses, hotels, food, team apparel and team parties are NOT included in Player Fees, as well as individual admission or "gate fees" at tournaments, including the Minneapolis Cup and Winter Storm tournaments. The following guidelines are offered to help manage expectations of typical minimum team fees assessed to each player over and above player fees. Actual team fees may be more, or less, than these guidelines.

- Mighty-mites/6U - \$0
- Mites/8U - \$25 (if a team participates in a "Festival")
- Squirt/10U.... A-team - \$175.... All other Squirts/10U teams - \$150
- Peewee /12U... A-team - \$250..... All other Peewee/12U teams - \$175
- Bantam/15U... A-team - \$350.... All other Bantam/15U teams - \$200

Financial Aid & Payment Terms: Minneapolis Hockey offers a limited amount of financial aid and tailored payment terms to qualifying members. The

amount of aid available is based on the budget set by the MHA Board of Directors. Those families receiving Financial Aid or tailored payment terms must complete all volunteering obligations to be considered for aid or terms the following season. Financial Aid and payment terms are not offered for any "Team Fees." Please contact the Minneapolis Hockey Treasurer if you have additional questions regarding financial aid or payment terms.

Delinquent Account: Existing and new members (parent and/or guardian) that possess a debt with Minneapolis Hockey on the day that the player(s) registers will not be allowed to participate in any Minneapolis Hockey sponsored programs until the debt is paid in full. Members (parents/guardians) incurring a debt after January 15 of the current season, or have not fulfilled their payment terms as of January 15 of the current season, are no longer "members in good standing" of Minneapolis Hockey until the debt is paid, in full. Minneapolis Hockey may restrict or prohibit participation for all players within the family that incurs a debt or has not fulfilled payment terms on, or after, January 15 of the current season. Debts that remain beyond May 31 of the current season may be reported to credit agency(s) and/or turned over to a debt collection agency.

Refunds: Partial Player Fee Refunds are not available after a player has been assigned to a team and participates in one on-ice team activity. In addition, Partial Player Fee Refunds are not available to players who fail to provide notice that they are withdrawing from participation in MHA within 48 hours after being notified of their team assignment. All withdrawal notices must be delivered to the applicable age-level coordinator in writing or via email.

If a player has not participated in a team activity and has provided notice as described above, and a Partial Player Fee Refund is available, the Partial Player Fee Refund shall be calculated as follows: (all amounts paid) less (5% of the total player fee) plus (the pre-season ice fee for that player's level, if any).

Preseason ice fees are subject to change, but currently are as follows:

- The preseason ice fee for Mites/8U and Squirts/10U is \$75
- The preseason ice fee for Peewee/12U and Bantams/15U is \$150

For Example: Total fees for Bantams are \$2,025. Bantam Player elects to pay fees using the two-payment option. Bantam Player has made the first payment, which consists of a fee down-payment of \$810.00. The player withdraws after he is assigned to his Bantam team following tryouts by delivering a withdrawal notice within 48 hours as described above and before participating in any on-ice team activity. The player will receive a Partial Player Fee Refund in the amount of \$558.75 ... ($\$810 - (\$2,025 \times .05) - \150).

A player's date of registration, frequency of preseason clinic attendance or player evaluation attendance is not considered when determining Partial Player Fee Refunds.

A refund of USA Hockey fees is not available. A refund of "AA/A/B1 Tryout Fees" is not available. A refund of any Team Fees is not available. Allow 21 days to receive Partial Player Fee Refunds. All requests for Partial Player Fee Refunds must be made in writing or via email to the age-level coordinator of the player.

Website: Important association and team information is communicated via the MHA web site. Only authorized personnel are allowed to manage the MHA web site. Team managers are given authorization to manage their team's web page. The MHA Executive Committee reserves the right to restrict unauthorized content on the web site or team page. Board of Director information and contact information is found on the MHA web site at:

www.mplshockey.com/page/show/285-board

Communication: Important association information is most commonly communicated via email, through the MHA registration database. Our MHA database is not shared with entities outside MHA, however, through the registration process you also register with USA Hockey and MN Hockey. MHA assumes no responsibility for database management of USA Hockey or MN Hockey. It is important to understand that MHA does NOT manage the email distribution list.....our registered members manage and control their own email capabilities through their SportsEngine "Account Settings." Each registrant must include one email address at the time of registration. Additional addresses can be added so long as they are also "confirmed," via email, by the additional addressee(s). MHA cannot control the many email spam filters and protection control mechanisms of our registrants and, therefore, does not "guarantee" your receipt of email communication. Additional information on email communications through the SPORTSENGINE system can be found at: <http://support.SportsEngine.com/>

Volunteering: Volunteering is an essential component of running a viable youth hockey program. All players are supported through the fundraising, administration, and hockey-program support of our volunteers. At the time of registration, all families must contribute a "Volunteer Deposit" (check) that can be earned back through volunteering at MHA-supported tournaments and other non-tournament, "association" volunteering opportunities. To learn more about volunteering, please visit:

<http://www.mplshockey.com/page/show/20758-volunteer-opportunities->

Hockey Administration: The hockey season is organized and administered by an Ice Scheduler and volunteers in the following roles:

Directors: Age Level Directors at each age-level help forecast and plan the season for their respective age groups, assist the Ice Scheduler in scheduling games and distributing indoor ice to each team, purchases tournaments for each team, communicates player evaluations and team placement, and may assist Team Managers or Team Liaisons with administrative or hockey-related issues.

Team Manager: Volunteer Team Managers organize and maintain the "team registration binder," organize volunteers needed to play games (game-clock, penalty box, score sheet), manage the team finances through the team checkbook and organizes non-hockey activities for the team (parties, meals, etc). Each team has one team manager.

Team Liaisons: Team Liaisons manage hockey-related concerns between player/parents, the head coach and the Hockey Committee. The Team Liaison may involve the Coordinator or Hockey Committee leader(s) with hockey-related issues.

Ice Management: The Ice Scheduler, Age-level Directors and coaches schedule all games, tournaments and indoor practices. The season's game schedules and tournament dates are distributed by the team managers. Practice times are distributed in one-month increments, through the team websites, typically a few weeks prior to the beginning of the month. The Executive Director and Coordinators are aware of common conflicts for certain age-groups. They attempt to schedule around those conflicts, however, it is impossible to forecast all conflicts. All Squirt/10U, Peewee/12U and Bantam/15U teams may play on any given day of the week. All concerns of team scheduling must be communicated to the Executive Director or Coordinator by only the Team Manager.

Team Management: Each team is "managed" by the collaborative efforts of the Head Coach, Team Manager and Team Liaison.

Coach Stipend: A coaching stipend may be paid to non-parent coaches in order to help off-set the cost of coaching hockey. Parent coaches are volunteers and are not paid a coaching stipend.

Team Website Use: Each team manager is responsible for managing their team page on the Storm website. Only authorized content (rosters, schedules, game results & team photos) may be posted on the Storm website. Parents/players are not obligated to post individual player pictures on the "roster" of the team web site. Ultimately, MHA reserves the right to post team pictures and action photos on its web site and may restrict teams from posting inappropriate pictures or content.

USA Hockey Registration: Each team manager is responsible for managing the

"team binder" that contains the teams USA Hockey Registration and other documents.

Hockey Operations

Philosophy: Minneapolis Hockey subscribes to the hockey development philosophy of the American Development Model (ADM) and Long Term Athletic Development (LTAD) programs developed by USA Hockey. ADM provides age-appropriate guidelines and curriculum to hockey associations across America to help more kids play, love and excel in hockey. LTAD principles are used as a basis on which to make our existing systems and structures more consistent. For more information on ADM and LTAD, please see: <http://www.admkids.com/>

Hockey Committee: The MHA "Hockey Committee" is comprised of hockey-knowledgeable individuals appointed by the MHA Executive Committee. The Hockey Committee plans the amount of appropriate hockey activity within the competitive environment of District 3 and Minnesota Hockey. The Hockey Committee also determines the playing levels for each age group, selects tournaments for each team, plans and organizes the evaluation process for each age group, selects coaches for each team, and may conduct year-end coaching interviews and/or conduct year-end coaching surveys.

Player Participation Rule: Minnesota Hockey governs the geographic boundaries of associations in order to support community/school-based hockey. The "Player Participation Rule" stipulates where players should play hockey based on their community or school.

Essentially, all players must play in the association of their residence location or of their school location. Additional stipulations may apply to playing in the association of your school location. The Minnesota Hockey Participation Rule (formerly the "Residency Rule") can be found on the Parent Resources page of the MHA web site or can be found in the "Youth Rules and Regulations" of the Minnesota Hockey Handbook at: www.minnesotahockey.org

Commitment: Playing in the MHA program requires a higher level of commitment for players and parents than recreational hockey programs. Coaches at all levels will expect players to attend the hockey activities (practices, games, scrimmages and tournaments) set forth by the association and team. If a player is to miss a hockey activity, it is expected that they will communicate their absence to the coach as far in advance as possible. Each coach may establish team rules that may include age-appropriate consequences of missing a hockey activity. Please see "Typical Playing Frequency" of all age groups below prior to registering for MHA. Players or parents with concerns about their level of commitment should inquire with the coordinator of their age-group or the Minneapolis Hockey VP-Hockey prior to registration.

Ability-appropriate Play: Countless studies on youth sports conclude that players thrive best (develop and enjoy playing the sport) when playing on teams within their individual ability level. Minneapolis Hockey values players being fairly evaluated and placed on teams with players of similar abilities and playing against teams with similar abilities. By doing so, each player will have an opportunity to learn hockey through a rewarding, growth-oriented experience. Minneapolis Hockey will not force a player to play at a higher level than evaluated within the competitive environment of District 3 and Minnesota Hockey. Parents can also choose for their player to “play down” to a lower ability level if they are concerned about the enjoyment, competitiveness or safety of their player at a higher level. Parents cannot selectively choose to “play up” to a higher level. In rare situations, Minneapolis Hockey may restrict players as “practice-only” players on C (Youth) or B (Girls) teams if deemed necessary by the Hockey Committee. Coaches do not have the ability to restrict players as practice-only players without consent of the Hockey Committee.

"Youth" teams versus Girl teams for female players: Most girls prefer playing hockey with/against other girls. Minnesota Hockey allows girls to play on "youth" teams, which includes boys, or female-only "girls" teams. Minnesota Hockey established the girls programs to serve those associations that have enough female players to field female-only teams and play under the unique, no-checking rules of the girls' leagues. The MHA girls program is designed to be as supportive and rigorous as the youth program of the same age group. Typically, there are fewer players in the girls program vs the youth program, therefore, a direct comparison between youth and girls programs does not apply. *Minneapolis Hockey encourages all girls to play in the girls program.* However, MHA does not restrict girls from playing on youth teams based on the players ability-appropriate placement on youth teams. If you have questions on the MHA girls program, or the merit of the girls versus youth programs, please contact the MHA Girls Director.

Playing-up/down: Minneapolis Hockey values playing hockey within the age group set forth by Minnesota Hockey and within the ability group as determined through player evaluations. The following guidelines are used for requests to play-up or play-down based on age or ability.

Age: Players with July and August birth dates are allowed to "Play-up" to the *next age group* if they are in the same school grade as their peers. The Hockey Committee may consider a request to "play-up" to the next **age** level based on the individual merit of the request. Players are not allowed to "play-down" to the next age group, regardless of age, school grade or hockey ability. Families are responsible for the Player Fees of the age-group where the player is ultimately placed.

Ability: Players are not allowed to "play up" to a higher *ability level* as determined through player evaluations and team placement. The Hockey

Committee may consider moving a player up, prior to December 31 of the current season, if a player on the higher ability level team is injured. Occasionally, a goalie may be called upon to play-up if a higher ability team does not have a goalie due to illness or injury. A higher ability goalie may not play down, regardless of injury or illness. In addition, immediately following team placement, a player may choose to "play down" on a team at the next ability level within their age group; however, a player choosing to play-down will be assigned a team by the Hockey Committee and will not be given a choice of teams to play on.

Hockey 101: Depending on the supply of permanent goalies for Squirt/10U-Bantam/15U teams, it's possible that lower-ability teams may have two goalies while higher-ability teams may have one goalie. Teams cannot "move goalies down" but teams can "move goalies up" to substitute for sick or injured goalies. In addition, if there are not enough "permanent" goalies for each team within an age group, MHA may offer a goalie at a younger age group to "move-up" in age, in order to provide an older team a permanent goalie. In rare situations, MHA may seek substitute or "spare" goalies from other associations, which are approved by Minnesota Hockey, prior to participating on Storm teams. Permanent goalies are typically placed on older, higher-level, teams first. Ultimately, if there are not enough goalies for each team, MHA will provide goalie pads to swap among players on teams that are not assigned a permanent goalie.

Waivers: A "waiver," approved by the President and/or Board of Directors from MHA, grant permission for players to play for an association not consistent with the current Player Participation Rule set forth by Minnesota Hockey. MHA supports the Player Participation Rule established by MN Hockey in order to support the development of our hockey programs and coaches, to support the growth and development of Minneapolis Hockey fundraising activities, to support the arenas and neighborhood rinks in Minneapolis that are partially funded by Minneapolis tax payers, and to support the overall growth of hockey in Minneapolis. Locations of arenas, playing with a specific friend or relative, or playing in a "less expensive" association are not considered grounds for waiver. MHA considers each waiver-in and waiver-out request based on the individual merit of the request. In general, MHA does not consider non-school waiver requests to associations or districts that do not freely waiver players, without condition, to MHA. District 3 and the reciprocating district have the final approval of all waiver requests. Additional information on the Player Participation Rule can be found on the Parent Resources page of the MHA web site and in the Player Handbook at: www.minnesotahockey.org

Age Groups & Playing Frequency: Players are divided into 2-year age groups established by Minnesota Hockey. Youth teams follow Mighty-mite, Mite, Squirt, Peewee, Bantam and Junior Gold age-group titles. Girls' teams follow 6U, 8U, 10U, 12U and 15U age-group titles. Below are the age group and the typical hockey playing frequency for MHA teams.

Additional information on each age group can be found on the Storm web site at the time of registration.

Hockey 101: In Minneapolis, competitive soccer (MU) and competitive baseball (MYBA), and other sports are grouped in 1-year age increments. Summer hockey, (aka: "AAA" hockey) is grouped in birth-year age increments for youth teams and 2-year age groups for girls teams. Competitive winter hockey (MHA), on the other hand, is grouped in 2-year age increment for both girls and youth teams. Due to hockey's 2-year age grouping, you cannot compare or make assumptions of how teams will be structured from year to year as you may with other sports that are in 1-year age increments.

Hockey 101: Many studies conclude that "hockey development" is best gained through a combination of structured practices & games (as provided by MHA), unstructured recreational hockey ("Pond Hockey") and participation in other sports that promote overall athletic development. MHA encourages players to find time for unstructured, outdoor, "pick-up/pond hockey" (at a local park) during the winter season and encourages players to play other sports in the off season. MHA does NOT encourage participating in other competitive (traveling) sports during the winter hockey season while playing in MHA programs.

Chart: Age Groups, Season Length & Typical Playing Frequency

Age groups reflect the age at which players begin the season.

*At this time, MHA does not have a Junior Gold program but may waive Jr. Gold players to neighboring associations.

Age Group Youth/Girls	Age on July 1 of current season:	Play Begins	Season Ends	Typical Frequency of Play (i.e. "Scheduled indoor Ice Touches")
Mighty-Mite / 6U	4-6 years old and new skaters up to 8 years old.	Early November	Late February	Twice Per Week
Mite / 8U	6-8 years old and "veteran"	Early October	Late February	2-3 Times Per Week
Squirt / 10U	9-10 years old	Mid-September	Early March	2-4 Times Per
Peewee / 12U	11-12 years old	Mid-September	March	3-5 Times Per
Bantam / 15U	13-14 years old	Mid-September	March	4-6 Times Per
Junior Gold*	15-17 years old	November	March	4-6 Times Per

Ability Levels

Hockey 101: Mite/8U and Mighty-mite/6U programs are not strictly divided into ability levels but are divided by ages, with some exceptions. 10U, 12U & 15U girls teams are formed at the A and B levels. In District 3, Squirt, Peewee & Bantam youth teams are

formed at the A, B1, B2 and C levels for league play. Technically, B1 and B2 are viewed as the same ability level according to the rules of Minnesota Hockey, but may differ in the structure of the leagues and year-end tournaments in District 3. Festivals and Jamborees for younger age group are the same thing as "tournaments" for older age groups. Festivals/jamborees typically use coaches as referees and sometimes do not post scores on the scoreboard while tournaments always use district-supplied referees and utilize a scoreboard.

Mighty-Mite/6U and Mite/8U: MHA programs for the younger age groups are based primarily on the age of the player, with some exceptions. Players are observed throughout the early stages of the season with teams being formed in November. While teams are based primarily by age, the leaders of the younger programs may observe exceptions to final team placement based on the experience or ability of a player. The Mighty-Mite/6U programs are designed for skating development through practices that instill a sense of fun in the sport. The Mite/8U programs are designed for skating and hockey development and may include American Development Model practices, small space games, cross-ice games, half-rink games and full-rink games. Mites play in our own (in-house) Minneapolis Hockey Mite league. Some Mite/8U teams with final-year age players, players turning 9 during the season, may play scrimmages or Jamborees against teams from other associations.

Squirt/10U, Peewee/12U and Bantam/15U Age Groups: District 3 organizes four ability-based leagues for Squirt, Peewee and Bantam teams and two ability-level leagues for 10U, 12U and 15U teams. In addition, Minnesota Hockey organizes regional and state tournaments for AA, A and B ability-levels for both youth and girls teams. MHA teams are determined by the age and ability-level of the players. Players of the same age group are evaluated and placed on teams through the MHA evaluation process. Minneapolis Hockey values offering similar frequency of play for all ability levels within the same age group. With the exception of youth Junior Gold and girls-15U ages, "inter-level play" (ex: A-level teams competing against B-level teams in games or scrimmages) is NOT allowed under any circumstances.

- **AA-Level:** Beginning in the 2012-2013 season, Minnesota Hockey added the AA level of play for Bantam and Peewee MHA teams will be evaluated annually to determine if playing at the AA level is appropriate.
- **A-Level:** The highest level of play for Minneapolis Hockey teams within each age group of girls and youth teams is the "A" level. MHA plans to field one A-level team at the Squirt, Peewee, Bantam, 10U, 12U and 15U age-groups. It is possible that the Hockey Committee may determine to add a second A-level team for

any age group based on player numbers and skill of Squirt/10U through Bantam/15U ages. One A-level team for 15U may be a cooperative arrangement with another association. It is reasonable to expect that A-level teams are comprised mostly of 2nd year players within the respective age groups, who dedicate significant time to hockey development throughout the year. A-league games for Bantam, Pee wee and 12U begin in early November. A-league games for 15U begin in mid-November. A-level teams for Pee wee/12U, Bantam/15U and Jr. Gold ages may qualify and advance to district, regional and state tournaments.

- **B1-Level:** The second highest level of play for YOUTH teams within each age group is the B1-level. MHA typically fields one or two B1-level youth teams at each age group. It is reasonable to expect B1-level teams are comprised of 1st and 2nd year players, within the respective age groups, who dedicate significant time to hockey development throughout the year. B1-league games for Bantam and Pee wee begin in early November. B1-league games for Squirts begin in early December. B1-level teams for Pee wee and Bantam ages may qualify and advance to district, regional and state tournaments. Squirt B1 teams conclude their season in the District 3 tournament in early March.
- **B2-Level:** The third highest level of play for YOUTH teams. MHA typically fields two or more B2-level youth teams. It is reasonable to expect B2-level teams are comprised of 1st and 2nd year players within the respective age groups, who may participate in hockey development throughout the off season. B2 League games for Bantams and Pee wees begin in early November. B2-league games or Squirts begin in early December. In District 3, B2-level teams do not advance to regional or state tournaments. All B2 teams may conclude their season in the District 3 tournament or year-end festival.
- **B-Level:** The developmental level of play for GIRLS teams at each age group. It is reasonable to expect B-level girls teams are comprised of 1st and 2nd year players within the respective age groups, who may or may not participate in hockey development throughout the off season. B-league games for 12U begin in early November. B-league games for 15U and 10U begin in Late November or early December. B-level teams for 12U and 15U ages may qualify and advance to district, regional and state tournaments. 10U B-level teams conclude their season in the District 3 tournament in early March. In addition, other Districts in Minnesota Hockey do not differentiate between B1 and B2 levels for youth (boys) teams. Minnesota Hockey considers all B1 and B2 teams to be eligible for all B-level invitational tournaments held in Minnesota.
- **C-Level:** The developmental level of play for YOUTH teams within each age group. The Storm typically fields one or more C-level youth teams at each age group. It is reasonable to expect C-level teams are comprised of 1st and 2nd year players, within the respective age groups, who may or may not participate in

hockey development throughout the off season. C-level teams do not advance to regional or state tournaments. All C-league games begin in early December and all C teams may conclude their season in the District 3 tournament or year-end festival which is typically held in early March. There is not a C-level for girls' teams.

Hockey Play Expectations

Minneapolis Hockey will provide a similar frequency of play for each team within each age group. The frequency of play, types of play, time of play and location of play may vary from team to team. Access to additional indoor ice inventory will be posted on the "Dryland/Ice" web page on a monthly basis and will be assigned to teams on a first-come, first-serve basis. Teams who claim an excessive amount of additional indoor ice inventory and/or do not use the inventory that they claim may be restricted from claiming additional inventory. Minneapolis Hockey does not restrict teams from adding and purchasing additional play at their own discretion. Due to teams' ability to add "free" outdoor ice or dryland activities, or through adding free indoor ice activities through excess inventory of the association's ice purchases, and a team's ability to purchase additional practice ice, scrimmages and tournaments on their own accord: There should be no expectations that teams within the same age-group or ability level will experience "equal" types of play, frequency of play, time of play or location of play through the season.

Philosophy: Minneapolis Hockey believes all of the below "Types of Play" are valuable to teach and develop hockey players in an age-appropriate, ability-appropriate, fun and encouraging environment. By the end of the season, the teams in each age group will be scheduled similar frequency of "indoor ice touches" by MHA. It is reasonable to expect variances in the types and frequency of play between teams within an age group due to the different sizes of the leagues, the length of the leagues, ice availability to support the leagues, unforeseen cancelations and rescheduling of practices and games, ice swapping among coaches and ability of teams to use excess inventory of associations ice purchases and ability to purchase additional ice, scrimmages and tournaments. Minneapolis Hockey may utilize 17 indoor ice rinks at 11 different arenas. We attempt to consolidate Mite/8U and Mighty-mite/6U indoor activities at Parade Ice Gardens. All age groups may use any of the rinks utilized by MHA throughout the season. All teams may use outdoor rinks or the Parade dryland facility throughout the season, and may conduct dryland practices at other arenas or outdoors.

Types of Play: Types of hockey play organized by MHA may include; preseason clinics;

preseason training camps; dryland training (indoors and outdoors); solo-ice practices; shared-ice practices; studio-ice (small rink) practices; outdoor-ice practices; controlled scrimmages; refereed scrimmages; league games; exhibition games (outside MN); tournament games; Cross- ice games (Mites) festivals; jamborees; district tournaments; regional tournaments and state tournaments. All age groups and teams may, or may not, participate in all types of play throughout their season. It is worth noting that dryland training and outdoor-ice practices do not add material cost to the association's budget or team expenses. Each coach, at their own discretion, may add dryland training and outdoor-ice practices to their team schedule at no additional cost.

Time/Days of Play: Minneapolis Hockey schedules hockey activities based primarily on the age of the players. Mighty-mite/6U and Mite/8U hockey activities are typically held between 8am and 6pm on Saturday's and Sundays and before 7pm on weeknights. Squirt/10U activities are typically held any time prior to 8pm on weekends and between 5pm and 8pm on weeknights. Peewee/12U activities are held any time prior to 9pm any day of the week. Bantam/15U activities are held prior to 10pm any day of the week. It is possible that higher-level (A or B1) teams may receive addition activity at less desirable times.

Location of Play: Minneapolis Hockey considers Parade Ice Gardens and Northeast arena to be our primary "home arenas"; however, in order to serve our association, we may utilize 18 sheets of ice at 10+ different arenas for indoor practices and home games including: Parade Ice Gardens (3), Northeast Ice Arena (1), Minnehaha Academy Arena (1), Augsburg Arena (2), Mariucci Arena (1), Ritter Arena (1), John Rose Oval (1), Breck/Anderson Arena (1), St. Louis Park Rec Center (2), HatTrick Hockey (2) and Richfield Ice Arena (2). We attempt to consolidate all activities for younger teams at Parade Ice Gardens and Northeast Arena; however, all teams may be scheduled activities at any of these arenas throughout the season.

Hockey 101: Minneapolis Hockey typically registers our Squirt/10U-Bantam/15U teams for their winter weekend tournaments in July and August, prior to the beginning of the season, when there is space available for the preferred tournaments and when there are "early bird" discounts available. MHA considers coaches' input and past experiences when choosing those tournaments in which our teams will participate. In addition to weekend tournaments, each Squirt/10U and older team MUST participate in the District 3 Tournament at the end of the season, and some teams may advance to Region and State tournaments. MHA understands the importance of the time of games and convenience of arenas, particularly when the time and location of games affect school attendance. Minneapolis Hockey does not control the time or location of any tournament games that we do not host. Players in Minneapolis Hockey attend more than 75 different schools. It is possible that tournament games may be inconvenient for school schedules and/or may be scheduled during the school day on a Friday, requiring players to miss school in order to attend games. Although all tournaments attempt to minimize conflicts with school, it is reasonable to expect Squirt/10U and older players may experience some conflict or inconvenience with school schedules throughout the

season. Minneapolis Hockey supports families who prioritize school, or other family priorities, over hockey games. If you foresee a conflict that impacts your players game attendance, we ask you to please notify your players coach as early as possible.

Hockey 101: Hockey is a Contact Sport. Hockey should be considered a contact sport at all ages and abilities. While USA Hockey rules govern "checking" within girls and youth play, it is reasonable to expect that physical contact between players may happen at all hockey events.

Summer Hockey: A significant amount of research has been done through USA Hockey's ADM & LTAD programs on the amount of hockey recommended for each age group. For your planning purposes, historically, MHA offers three types of off-season hockey development programs. Each program is designed to be similar, or better, than those offered by "private training companies," but at a fraction of the cost. Information on the Minneapolis Storm summer programs is typically distributed in March.

Equipment Requirements: Equipment used by all players must conform to USA Hockey regulations. All players at all age levels must wear the following equipment for **all** on-ice hockey activity. Our MHA "Storm" uniform equipment color is Black.

- Approved HECC Helmet with full face guard and chin strap (Black)
- Mouth Guard
- Shoulder Pads
- Elbow Pads
- Hockey Gloves (Black)
- Breezers / hockey pants (Black)
- Protective cup - boys
- Pelvis protector - girls
- Shin Pads
- Well-fitted Skates
- All hockey sticks must have an enclosed (butt) end
- All goalies must wear full goalie equipment as approved by USA Hockey

We encourage players of all ages to put their name and phone number on all hockey equipment.

Jersey Policy: MHA provides home and away game jerseys for all Squirt/10U through Bantam/15U teams on an annual basis. The cost of game jerseys and socks are included in the MHA Player Fees. The GAME jersey and socks must be kept clean and in good condition. All dirty, permanently stained, or torn jerseys must be replaced as required by the team leaders (Head Coach, Team Manager and Team Liaison). The cost of replacing a uniform is the responsibility of the player's parent or guardian. Game jerseys may be provided for some girl's teams that include players from other associations. All game jerseys must have the "STOP" patch on the back. It is worth noting that MHA does not provide player name patches for the back of game

jerseys. All MHA teams are REQUIRED to wear uniforms provided by MHA only. In no event shall any team wear uniforms that are not provided, or sanctioned, by MHA. Any team that fails to adhere to this policy shall forfeit, and reimburse to MHA, all moneys provided by MHA in their team account. ALL MHA GAME JERSEYS ARE INTENDED TO BE WORN ONLY FOR GAMES.

Practice Jersey Policy: MHA reversible practice jerseys are required and available at registration or at the concession stand for \$25. This jersey can be worn from year to year. If the jersey is lost or your player out grows their jersey replacement jerseys will be available to purchase. This Jersey is required for all 8U/Mite and older players.

Hockey 101: It's been said that the #1 injury to hockey players are skin ailments due to equipment that does not properly fit or is not kept clean. Minneapolis Hockey recommends that parents check the fit of their players equipment a few times each season and replace equipment that does not fit. Players should wear a clothing barrier under their equipment that can be routinely washed. Equipment should be allowed to completely air-dry after each use. All equipment should be professionally washed at least once a year (many dry cleaning businesses do this). All "used" or "handed-down" equipment should fit properly and be professionally washed prior to use. Players should NOT share equipment, clothing or towels. We recommend that players thoroughly wash their hands soon after using hockey gloves and off-ice training equipment.

Evaluation & Team Selection

Minneapolis Hockey conducts formal player evaluations (tryouts) for Squirt/10U through Bantam/15U age players. Mite/8U players are observed throughout their preseason clinics and into November, and placed on teams of players with similar abilities, based primarily by age, with some exceptions. Mighty Mite/6U players do not play on "teams," but are placed in practice groups.

Player Evaluation Philosophy: Fairly evaluating Squirt/10U through Bantam/15U players, and placing players on ability-appropriate teams, is a critical component to ensuring the best hockey experience for all players. General "hockey-ability" for each age group is evaluated through a series of preseason ice sessions (tryouts) designed to "pool" (group) players of similar abilities and then assign players onto teams within their pool, based on the needs of the team. The evaluation process itself involves hockey knowledgeable evaluators, assigned by the age-level Hockey Committee, who make independent evaluations of players based on general hockey skills including, but not limited to, skating ability, stick handling, shooting, speed and general "hockey sense." Most evaluators are not parents; however, hockey-knowledgeable parents may be assigned to evaluate players, but they cannot evaluate players in the same age-group and gender as their own children.

Non-parent team coaches evaluate and have input on the composition of the team. Minneapolis Hockey allows parents to watch the evaluation process so long as parents remain QUIET AT ALL TIMES while evaluations are taking place (no cheering allowed) and exhibit a positive spirit to all players, coaches, evaluators, administrators and other parents. Parents who are not quiet and/or supportive to all players, administrators, evaluators and on-ice coaches during evaluations will be asked to leave the arena and will not be allowed to return until team practices begin. The length of evaluations is based on the number of players within each age group. The Hockey Committee attempts to balance conducting a thorough evaluation in a minimal amount of time. Due to high numbers of players at a particular age group, there may be a fee for trying out for the A or B1 teams within that age group. The evaluation plan for each age group is posted on the MHA web site prior to the beginning of evaluations. MHA reserves the right to change the evaluation plan at any time and for any reason deemed necessary by the Hockey Committee. Players are NOT obligated to participate in evaluations. Those choosing to not participate in evaluations will be placed on the lowest ability level of their age group.

Evaluation Logistics: For players at the Squirt/10U age and older, each player is given a numbered piney to wear for evaluations. The piney must be returned after teams are selected. Through the evaluation process, players are referred to by their piney number. Evaluations begin by “pooling” each age group with players of mixed abilities. The evaluators conduct scrimmages and/or drills to determine the “pace of play” and abilities of each player. At any time during the evaluation process, the evaluators may “re-pool” players observed to be of similar abilities. The process of re-pooling is communicated via the MHA web site. Because the re-pooling process is unknown in advance, all players/parents should be prepared to participate in all scheduled activities for their age group. The A-level pool is determined first, followed by the B1, then B2, then C pool. Each re-pooling further narrows the similar abilities among players within the pool. Teams are selected once the final pool of players within each ability group is determined. Players who miss evaluations due to sickness, injury or vacations may be given an extended evaluation period on a team, or may be outright placed on a team based on the Hockey Committee’s knowledge of the player.

Evaluation Timeline: Bantam, Peewee and 12U evaluations are held in early October with a goal of team placement on/by mid-October (MEA Weekend). Squirt and 10U evaluations are held in mid-October with a goal of team placement on/by November 1. Mite and 8U “observations” are throughout October. Team placement happens in November. Teams are formed by age, school and “pool ability.” There are some age-exceptions to Mite team placement (advanced 7-year old may be placed with 8-year-old. Beginning 8-year old may be placed with advanced 6-year-old, etc.). Mighty-mite and 6U teams are formed primarily by age and previous experience at the Mighty-mite/6U level. All team rosters must be final by/on December 20 for final approval by MN Hockey.

Team Placement (Squirt/10U – Bantam/15U): Teams are formed based on evaluation results and team needs. Because of the nature of relationships changing among children, it is impossible to manage player dynamics (current friendships) in the equation of team formation. Minneapolis Hockey values players forming friendships with all new team mates. There should be no expectation that any group of players will play together in subsequent seasons. A-level teams are typically formed first, as determined by the highest-ranking core group of players (roughly 3/4 of the team). The age of the remaining players in the pool is the first consideration for coaches' selection by prioritizing the 2nd year players of the qualifying group to complete the team. Subsequent teams are formed similarly by evaluators and coaches who select from the group of players remaining in the pool. When forming more than one team at any ability-level, the Hockey Committee, evaluators and prospective coaches may reasonably balance teams based on ability, age, geographic residence or school-based "clusters" of players placed on the same team. Dividing teams "equally" is not achievable by any method of team placement; therefore, there should be no expectation that "reasonably balanced" teams at the same ability level will, necessarily, be "equal" in terms of competitiveness. It is our goal that each team within the ability level be reasonably competitive within their league. The Hockey Committee may "tier" teams at the same ability level, that is, form teams based on the ability pool "ranking" of players through the evaluation process rather than balancing those specific teams, but only if it is determined by the Hockey Committee, evaluators and prospective coaches that the lower-tiered team(s) has a reasonable chance of being competitive as defined by a .350 winning record considering wins, losses and ties in league play. Parent-coaching considerations do not factor into team placement.

Player Movement: In rare situations, MHA may adjust rosters after the original team placements are concluded, but prior to December 31 of the current season, to compensate for unforeseen circumstances such as, but not limited to, injury, sickness or players (families) moving out of Minneapolis. The age-group Hockey Committee, in consultation with the head coaches of the teams affected by player movement, ultimately decides which players will be offered a position on a different team. Players offered a position on a new team are not required to accept the new position. Except for "Substitute / Reserve Goalie" requests, Minneapolis Hockey freezes all Squirt/10U – Bantam/15U Rosters on December 31 of the current season regardless of the number of players on the roster.

Hockey 101: It is very rare that an association has the perfect number of "permanent" goalies to ideally place two goalies on each team. When we have a shortage of permanent goalies, the MHA Hockey Committee considers the "best fit" of goalie abilities, and other considerations, to determine goalie placement. One of the "other considerations" is the MN Hockey "Substitute Goalie" rule that allows goalies to temporarily play-up, but not play-down. Typically, when we have a shortage of permanent goalies, MHA will place one goalie at a higher level that allows teams to temporarily "pull-up" a substitute from a lower level, if needed. MHA may also voluntarily exchange goalies with neighboring associations in order to fill goalie needs or "play up" goalies to an older age group. Permanent goalies are typically placed on older, higher-level, teams first. Ultimately, if there are not enough goalies for each team, MHA will provide goalie pads to swap among players on teams that are not assigned a permanent goalie.

Hockey 101: With the understanding that children grow and develop differently, particularly where teams are formed with children in 2-year age increments, parents of hockey players can form reasonable expectations of ability placement based on the age of the player and what level they played the previous season. Because of the 2-year age increments, it should be understood that a lower level of play in an older age group is typically a "step-up" in the pace of play than a higher level in a younger group. For example: the pace of play at Peewee-B2 (12U-B) is typically faster than the pace of play at Squirt-A (10U-A). For players who did not thrive in the previous season, and/or do not participate in off season training, there should be little expectation that the player will advance more than one level and will, most likely, stay at the same level in the next season. This guideline should not be misconstrued as predetermined team placement and is intended only to manage player/parent expectations of team placement. Parents of players who thrived the previous season and moderately participate in hockey activity (more activity than "pond hockey" or one week-long hockey camp) in the off season can **generally** expect the following:

Last season was in the <u>1st Year</u> of the age group and thrived at:	And is advancing to the 2nd year of the <u>same</u> age group...	...Will likely play at this level of the <u>same</u> age group:	Last season was in the <u>2nd Year</u> of the age group and thrived at:	And is advancing to the 1st year of the <u>older</u> age group...	...Will likely play at this level of the older age group:
A -level	→	A	A -level	→	B2, B1 or A
B1 - level	→	B1 or A B2,	B1 - level	→	C, B2 or B1
B2 - level	→	B1 or A	B2 - level	→	C or B2
B - level (girls)	→	B or A	B - level (girls)	→	B
C - level	→	C, B2 or B1	C - level	→	C

Hockey 101: Parents are a tremendous influence on players to help minimize undue anxiety during tryouts and to manage potential disappointment in final

*team placement. Minneapolis Hockey player evaluations are designed to minimize player anxiety while being as thorough and fair as possible. The tryout period is a great time for parents to help minimize stress on players by eliminating negative comments regarding the process, evaluators, coaches or the outcome of team placement. While many associations do not allow parents to watch evaluations (literally do not let parents in the arena or paper-over all windows to the arena) MHA DOES allow parents to observe, but not participate in, the evaluation of their own players. **Parents who watch the evaluation process should refrain from making comments about other players and should disregard any comments of their player made by other parents or previous coaches.** By taking a neutral stance on the outcome of player evaluations, a parent is telling their player that they are supportive and proud of their effort and accomplishment, regardless of what level/team they land on. There is no "superior" level of play when all players are enjoying participating in hockey. We encourage parents to have a growth-mindset: To encourage the positive growth of all players, regardless of their team placement.*

Coaching

Coach Selection Process: The Hockey Committee recruits and recommends placement of coaches based on parent evaluations, coaches' interviews, coaches' qualifications and the interest of the coach. Minneapolis Hockey seeks qualified non-parent coaches for all Peewee/12U and Bantam/15U ages at all ability levels.

Parent vs Non-Parent Coaches: Minneapolis Hockey values qualified coaches regardless if they have a son or daughter on the team. For older age groups; when determining coaching positions between similarly qualified coaching candidates, Minneapolis Hockey values non-parent head coaches. All coaches, regardless if parent or non-parent, paid or volunteer, are expected to be dedicated to all coaching duties throughout the entire season. Volunteer coaches are expected to be as dedicated as paid coaches. Head coaches may be a head coach for only one team. Head or assistant coaches may be assistant coaches for one additional team. No coach can be a head and/or assistant coach on more than two teams.

Coaching Requirements: All coaches (head and assistant) must complete a Minnesota Hockey Confidential Screening and Consent form (background check), a USA Hockey Consent to Treat form and must gain the appropriate level of coaching certification from USA Hockey. All coaches must wear HECC-approved helmets, with chinstrap buckled, during all on-ice activity. Failure of a coach to wear an HECC-approved helmet with chinstrap buckled while on the ice may result in the coach being removed from the team for the remainder of the season. For additional

information on USA Hockey coaching education requirements, please visit:
www.usahockey.com

Hockey 101: The "Minnesota Model" of association hockey can only survive through the generous contributions of our volunteer coaches. Next to our players themselves, volunteer coaches are our associations' greatest asset. Volunteer coach placement cannot happen until the evaluation and team placement process concludes. MHA does NOT consider coach-placement above player placement, that is, we do NOT purposely place a player up or down in order to fulfill a coaching vacancy. Even though MHA continually recruits qualified coaches, it is possible that a team may begin the season without a coach. If a team begins the season without a coach, it is reasonable to expect the team will have joint practices with another team until a coach is placed. If placing a coach takes more than a few weeks, MHA will pair a qualified volunteer or non-parent coach on the team until a non-parent coach can be hired or until a parent can become certified to coach.

Behavior Expectations

Beginning in the 2013-2014 season, all affiliate associations within Minnesota Hockey have implemented the USA Hockey Safesport Program. The USA Hockey SafeSport Program addresses player safety issues including physical abuse, sexual abuse, screening, locker room supervision and hazing policies, in addition to Codes of Conduct applicable to administrators, coaches, officials, parents, players and spectators. Each USA Hockey Affiliate shall have an Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator whose duties will include monitoring the training of local program administrators and others within the Affiliate, serving as the Affiliate's initial contact for persons reporting suspected abuse, misconduct or other violations, and compiling information on program infractions. Contact information for the Minneapolis Hockey SafeSport Coordinator can be found on the "Board" page of the Minneapolis Hockey web site. For more information, the SafeSport Program Handbook can be found on the "Parent Resources" page of the Minneapolis Hockey web site or at: www.usahockey.com

Please review the Minneapolis Hockey Core Values on page 5.

Minneapolis Hockey is dedicated to being a caring, welcoming, community of players, parents, coaches, referees, spectators and administrators, both within and outside of our community. Through our words, actions and communications with others, we set a positive example and focus on solving potential conflict through involvement and respectful dialog. We help all stakeholders in Minneapolis Hockey succeed by being positive role models and we minimize conflict through adherence to our association Codes of Conduct.

Codes of Conduct: The following Minneapolis Hockey codes of conduct are adopted from *USA Hockey Official Rules and Casebook of Ice Hockey*. Each player, parent,

guardian, spectator and coach is expected to adhere to these Codes of Conduct.

Player

- Play for fun.
- Work hard to improve your skills.
- Be a team player; get along with your teammates.
- Learn teamwork, sportsmanship and discipline.
- Be on time for practices and games.
- Learn the rules and play by them. Always be a good sport.
- Respect your coach, your teammates, your parents, your opponents, the officials and the facilities where you play.
- Never argue with an official's decision. Do not use abusive or vulgar language when addressing other players, officials, coaches or parents.

Parent/Guardian/Spectator

Parent/Guardians are responsible for the behavior of all spectators that they invite and/or attend games together.

- Do not force children to participate in sports, but support their desire to play their chosen sport. Children are involved in organized sports for their enjoyment. Make it fun.
- Encourage children to play by the rules. Remember, children learn best by example, so applaud the good plays of both teams.
- Do not embarrass players or fellow spectators by yelling at players, coaches or officials. Showing a positive attitude toward the game and all its participants will benefit all players. Do not use abusive or vulgar language when addressing players, officials, coaches or other parents.
- Emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit your young athlete. De-emphasize games and competition, especially in the lower age groups.
- Know and study the rules of the game, and support the officials on and off the ice. This approach will help develop and support the game. Any criticism of the officials only hurts the game.
- Applaud good efforts in both victory and defeat, and enforce the positive points of the game. Never yell or physically abuse children after the game or practice - it is destructive. Work toward removing the physical and verbal abuse in youth sports.
- Recognize the importance of coaches. They are important to the development of all the players and the sport. Communicate with them and support them.
- If you enjoy the game, learn all you can about hockey - and volunteer.

Coach

- Winning is a consideration, but not the only one, nor the most important one. You should 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. Do not use abusive or vulgar language when addressing players, officials, parents or other coaches.
- Be generous with your 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 the 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 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.

Bullying and Hazing: Bullying and hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with Minneapolis Hockey Core Values and Code of Conduct and are prohibited at all times. "Bullying" means exposing, repeatedly and over time a person to negative actions by one or more person(s). "Negative Actions" means intentionally inflicting or attempts to inflict injury or discomfort upon another. Negative actions include, but are not limited to, threatening, taunting, teasing and calling names and hitting, pushing, kicking, pinching, restraining, making faces, dirty gestures, and/or intentionally excluding someone from a group.

Reporting Bullying and/or Hazing: Any person who believes he or she (parent of players) has been the victim of bullying or hazing or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute bullying or hazing shall report the alleged acts immediately to an age-level coordinator or officer of the Minneapolis Hockey Board of Directors. Minneapolis Hockey may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the complainant, reporter, player or other pending a completion of an investigation of bullying and hazing. Minneapolis Hockey will discipline or take appropriate action against a member or player in Minneapolis Hockey who retaliates against another Minneapolis Hockey member or player who makes a good faith report of alleged bullying and hazing. "Retaliation" includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment.

Verbal and Electronic Communication, Social Media, Blogs and Forums: All members (parents/guardians) and players in Minneapolis Hockey should speak in a positive, respectful manner about our Minneapolis Hockey community and stop gossip when heard. Rumor, hearsay, innuendo, gossip and/or slanderous statements verbally communicated, distributed via email, posted on social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snap Chat, etc), blogs or “forums,” by members of Minneapolis Hockey (players, parents, family members, coaches, administrators, etc) will not be tolerated. Parents, and other spectators invited by parents, MUST refrain from making critical statements regarding the ability or performance of ANY youth hockey player. Positive reinforcement and encouragement to players is always welcome. Statements (verbal or written) interpreted by the Grievance Committee as being detrimental toward anyone involved in Minneapolis Hockey, our opponents, referees or anyone else involved in youth hockey will be grounds for restrictions, suspension and/or dismissal from Minneapolis Hockey.

Locker Room Behavior and Supervision: USA Hockey has recently issued a policy of locker room supervision to prevent poor behavior between players, between players and coaches and between players and other adults. As per USA Hockey policy, at least one responsible adult must be present directly monitoring the locker room during all team events. Ultimately, it is the Head coach’s responsibility to ensure a locker room monitor is present at all team events when using locker rooms. To learn more about USA Hockey policies, please visit www.usahockey.com

Use of Cell Phones and Photography Equipment: The use of cell phones and all photography equipment is prohibited in all locker rooms. It is the locker room monitor and team coaches’ responsibility to prohibit use of cell phones and photography equipment in locker rooms. Minneapolis Hockey, along with all coaches and locker room monitors, reserve the right to collect cell phones and/or photography equipment from players entering locker rooms for the duration of the hockey activity. Cell phones or photography equipment that is collected must remain off for the duration of the hockey activity. Those collecting cell phones or photography equipment are NOT responsible for the safe keeping of all equipment while in their possession. We encourage players to not bring cell phones/photography equipment to the arena.

Music in Locker Rooms: MHA teams are allowed to play music in locker rooms so long as the music is not explicit and/or vulgar and the volume does not go beyond the closed door of the locker. Coaches and locker room monitors are to regulate the volume and content of the music. The privilege of playing music may be restricted or eliminated at any time by the team coaches or the age-group Hockey Committee.

Lost or Stolen Items: MHA is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Valuables should not come to the rink including, but not limited to music equipment, iPods/iPads, cell phones, jewelry, cash or credit cards. Players are responsible for the supervision of their hockey equipment and should take particular care attending to their hockey sticks at all times. We encourage players of all ages to put their name and phone number on all hockey equipment.

Consequences of Poor Behavior: The consequences of violating the Player, Parent/Spectator or Coaches Code of Conduct, guidelines or policies within this Parent Guide, including but not limited to the Formal Grievance Policy set forth below, may result in MHA, in its sole discretion, restricting or revoking the player's, parent's, spectator's or coach's privilege to play, coach, view, attend, assist or volunteer at any MHA events including off-ice events, team parties and any events hosted by other athletic groups (such as high school, college or professional hockey events) that include MHA members. The consequences of violating the Player, Parent/Spectator or Coaches Code of Conduct, guidelines or policies within this Parent Guide may also result in expulsion from Minneapolis Hockey. Player Fees or Team Fees will not be reduced or refunded for players whose playing privileges are restricted or revoked. Restricting or revoking the privilege to volunteer at MHA events may include forfeiture of a family's Volunteer Deposit.

Restrictions of Playing Hockey: At any time throughout the year, including off-season clinics, training programs and Pond Hockey sponsored by MHA, a player may be restricted from playing hockey by Minneapolis Hockey, Minnesota Hockey, District 3 or the team head coach, due to injury, poor player behavior (on or off the ice), excessive absences, unpaid fees or poor parent behavior.

Conflict Resolution

Minneapolis Hockey values the input of its members, players, coaches, trainers and consultants throughout the season. We actively seek suggestions for improving the overall hockey experience for all our stakeholders. The best way to offer suggestion for improvement is through respectful, direct, oral communication with the parties influencing your (player's) experience. In addition, Minneapolis Hockey conducts a year-end Parent Survey giving each member a formal opportunity to voice their compliments, concerns and suggestions.

The most frequent types of conflict have to do with challenges or perceptions regarding the coaching of a team, such as playing time, positions played, practice behavior, etc. Coaching challenges should first be addressed to the coach or team liaison and can be escalated to the age-level Coordinator/Director to be resolved amicably.

Through the course of the season, conduct, conflict or disputes may arise that require the intervention of a third party "Grievance and Disciplinary Committee." Minneapolis

Hockey is dedicated to maintaining a positive hockey experience for all participants. When a member of Minneapolis Hockey believes a Minneapolis Hockey Code of Conduct has been violated, or a conflict or dispute requiring intervention occurs, they must follow the Formal Grievance Process below to seek formal resolution. Minneapolis Hockey does not entertain anonymous grievances or complaints. Minneapolis Hockey does not entertain grievances against referees. Except where directed otherwise (e.g., our policy on bullying and hazing), we recommend the following 3-steps be initially followed in the event of a concern:

1. Wait 24 hours after the incident/situation occurs to contact anyone (a cooling-off period).
2. The situation should be brought to the attention of the head coach and/or age- level coordinator.
3. An attempt should be made to discuss and resolve the situation with the parties involved, including the head coach and/or age-level coordinator.

If the conflict cannot be resolved through these initial 3 steps, then Minneapolis Hockey has adopted the following Formal Grievance Process for resolving the conduct, conflict or dispute.

Minneapolis Hockey Formal Grievance Process

1. The Complainant must complete a Minneapolis Hockey Formal Grievance Form, which is found on the Parent Resources page of our web site, indicating the specifics of the situation. Using Email, social media or other forms of communication to air your grievance to others will not be entertained by the Grievance and Disciplinary Committee and may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from MHA for the complainant and his/her direct family members.
2. The complainant can choose to initiate the formal process through the President, Executive Director or Secretary of the Minneapolis Hockey Board of Directors. The completed Formal Grievance Form must be submitted as an attachment via email to the President, Executive Director, or Secretary. The initial email and Formal Grievance Form attachment shall NOT be copied (CC or BCC) to any other parties other than a spouse or guardian of the complainant. Distributing the completed Formal Grievance Form to other parties may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from MHA for the complainant and his/her direct family members.
3. Receipt of the completed form will be acknowledged to the complainant.
4. The President, VP – Operations and Secretary will initially discuss the merit of the complaint. If determined necessary, the head coach, age-level Coordinator/Director, and/or VP-Hockey shall be notified of the complaint. Depending on the severity of the complaint, the President, VP - Operations and Secretary may implement a “gag order” against any or all parties involved in the complaint and/or immediately suspend any party to the complaint from

any or all activity in Minneapolis Hockey as a means to distance or safeguard any stakeholders. Violation of an initial gag order and/or suspension may result in additional disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from MHA for the complainant and his/her direct family members.

5. If warranted, the President, VP-Operations and Secretary may form an ad hoc Grievance and Disciplinary Committee that will investigate the circumstances and to consider the facts of the complaint. The Grievance and Disciplinary Committee may interview or meet with the involved parties, as necessary.
6. If formed, the Grievance and Disciplinary Committee will be an ad-hoc committee that will be formed based on the grievance or situation being considered. The committee will always consist of the Grievance and Disciplinary Chairperson (a designated board member) and at least two other board members whom are not directly involved in the complaint. As necessary, two other Minneapolis Hockey members at large, who do not have direct involvement in the conflict, may be chosen to be on the Grievance Committee.
7. The Grievance and Disciplinary Committee Chairperson will strive to meet at a mutually convenient time and place for both parties within 10 days of receiving the completed Formal Grievance Form. In some cases, when this may not be possible, the Grievance and Disciplinary Committee will decide how to best advance the grievance resolution with appropriate sensitivity to time.
8. The Grievance and Disciplinary Committee will discuss and decide resolution of the complaint after the parties involved have been dismissed from the meeting. The Grievance and Disciplinary Committee Chairperson will notify the parties involved of the Committee's decision verbally, within 24 hours of the conclusion of the meeting. The Committee's decision may, or may not, be communicated in writing at the sole discretion of the Committee. The Committee's decision may include additional action or disciplinary measures against any MHA party involved in the complaint.

The recommendation, action and/or disciplinary measures of the Grievance and Disciplinary Committee will be final unless the recommendation of the Grievance and Disciplinary Committee involves an individual's expulsion from Minneapolis Hockey. A Committee's recommendation involving expulsion of a member, administrator, player, coach, trainer or consultant will be escalated to the Minneapolis Hockey Board of Directors for final resolution.

Minneapolis Hockey will not tolerate retribution by a member, administrator, player, coach, trainer or consultant against another for seeking conflict resolution through this Formal Grievance process. Any such retribution shall be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from Minneapolis Hockey.

Parent Guide Conclusion

Youth hockey continues to grow and evolve in Minnesota with a range of options for young players. In Minnesota, there is also a movement of private, expensive, for-profit hockey training and leagues that are established under the guise that “more hockey” – especially for younger players – is “better” for player development. And at the other end of the organized youth hockey spectrum, here in Minneapolis, we also have a more recreational, less expensive, options for playing hockey with the Minnesota Hockey Rec League or the Minneapolis Park & Rec league. The “Minnesota Model” of community-based competitive hockey programs, of which Minneapolis Hockey is a part, is often the envy of the rest of America. After all, Minnesota Hockey has developed more high-level players, more satisfied youth hockey players of all levels, and more life-long players than anywhere else in the U.S.

Minneapolis Hockey programs are designed to fit within the competitive (“traveling”) hockey environment in Minnesota, with varying levels of play, for varying abilities of players (A, B1, B2 & C for boys and A & B for girls). Our programs are designed for players who want to be “the best that they can be” and for parents seeking growth-oriented, activity-based, physical fitness and a participation outlet for their children.

It is our intent to balance “hockey development” with an overriding priority of “child development” for all of our players. Our hope is to provide programs that our association members measure in terms of “great memories” over “winning records” ...“new friends” over “trophies won”...“light bulbs turning on” (development – at any age – on the hockey rink) and “light bulbs never turning off” (developing a life- long love of the game).

Expanding our great Minneapolis Hockey culture in a common direction takes a village. We welcome you into our village!

Additional Resources for Parents:

Minnesota Hockey Education Program: <http://minnesotahockeyhep.com/>

USA Hockey Responsible Sports Parenting:
http://www.usahockey.com//Template_Usahockey.aspx?NAV=PL_06&ID=19212

MHA web site / Parent Resources: <http://www.mplshockey.com/page/show/284-resources-for-parents-of-storm-players>