

MINNESOTA ARMED FORCES HOCKEY TOURNAMENT
TOURNAMENT RULE BOOK



MN Armed Forces Hockey (AFHT) Tournament Rules

Updated: 01MARCH2025

All games are played under the rules laid out in the USA Hockey playing rules. Specific modifications to USA Hockey rules are addressed below for the tournament otherwise the default rule is the USA Hockey rule. Tournament directors assume no responsibility for any claims arising through operation of the tournament and no allowances will be made for ignorance of the rules.

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PERSONAL PROPERTY

The tournament directors, officials and facility staff members accept no responsibility for lost or stolen personal property. We strongly suggest that no valuables be taken into the arena. It is the team's responsibility to lock their dressing room before going on the ice.

ACCIDENTS

All accidents/incidents must be reported to the Tournament directors and/or the arena management immediately.

TEAM JERSEY CONFLICTS

All players must wear matching sweaters, and be numbered differently. In the event of a conflict of team colors (the referees and team representatives will determine if there is a conflict) the Visiting Team will wear their alternate jerseys if available. If not, the Home Team will wear their alternate jerseys.

ROSTER/TEAM COMPOSITION

Each team is permitted to carry a maximum of **23** players on its roster (21 active skaters **along with 2 subs**). Of those **23**, 3 players can be "non-affiliated". "Affiliated" players are: Active duty military (friendly foreign military included), Guard or Reserve military members, retired military or honorably discharged military, direct children of military members, Police, Fire or EMS personnel. **The 2 subs cannot be on another team roster and can only take the place of a player on the active roster.** A team's goalie will not tally toward the "non-affiliated" count (See below) **or roster.** Exceptions to the roster rule (ie: Individual skating out on one team in a different bracket and playing goalie for another team in a different bracket) must be coordinated with the Tournament Directors. **IT IS THE TEAM CAPTAIN'S or MANAGERS RESPONSIBILITY TO VERIFY HIS/HER ROSTER BEFORE EACH GAME AT THE SCORERS TABLE AND SIGN THE ROSTER.** The use of an ineligible player or over the 3 allowed non-affiliated player rule will result in a default loss to the offending team.*

* **GOALIE RULE:** Goalies will not be factored into a team's "non-affiliated count." Teams are allowed 3 non-affiliated players with a civilian goalie NOT counting against that tally. If, at any time a civilian goalie is discovered to be serving in a capacity of anything other than netminder, that goalie will be counted against the team's "non-affiliated rule" subject to the ineligible player rule detailed above.

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MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENT

Players participating in the Armed Services Tournament must be 17 years of age or older. Any player under the age of 19 must have the pre-approval of the Tournament Management.

ALCOHOL

No alcohol will be permitted on the bench at ANY TIME during ANY GAME. Any player found drinking behind the bench during the game will be ejected from the game. Any player, coach, manager or team personnel suspected of being intoxicated and on the bench will be asked to leave the bench. Failure to comply will result in a BENCH MINOR penalty. Tournament staff reserves the right to eject a player and/or team from the game based on intoxication.

Each team captain is 100% responsible to see to it no legally underage (21) player consumes alcohol provided by event for AFH players.

GAME SHEETS

Game sheets must be verified and signed by the Team Manager/Coach or Captain before each game. All players must be assigned a playing number on the roster.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

A certain level of decorum and protocol must be adhered to ensure the standards of the military are neither compromised nor tarnished. Players' actions and behavior for the duration of this tournament must be and remain at their best. All members of this tournament are responsible to act appropriately and best represent their organization. Any inappropriate behavior on or off the ice will be dealt with by means of the utmost prejudice. Outright fighting (e.g. dropping gloves, multiple punches thrown, and blood drawn) will be grounds for immediate individual expulsion from the tournament and be considered as a "strike" against the team to whom the player is a member. Inappropriate behavior in the Hotel and/or rink brought to the attention of the AFHT staff will be evaluated and may be considered as a "strike" against the team to whom the player is a member. Since the AFHT staff will be employing a Three Strikes rule. Any team amassing three strikes will be asked to leave and be considered for permanent exclusion from the tournament. This is a military tournament and the standards of proper military bearing and professionalism still apply. Have a good time but remember you represent your respective country's Armed Forces and perception is often reality to the general public.

PENALTIES

Infractions will result in 1:30 minute minor penalty with major penalties resulting in either a 4:00 major, compounding of separate minor penalties, game ejection or whatever the refereeing official deems appropriate.

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MANDATORY EQUIPMENT

All players must wear what's considered "Normal player equipment" based upon the position played. (e.g. Goalie equipment will only be worn by goalies, etc). Helmets (with a chin strap), gloves, skates, elbow and shinpads must be worn by all players.

SLAPSHOTS

NO SLAPSHOTS are allowed during games. A players stick MAY NOT raise above the level of their knee in the initiation of a shot. All any shots where the stick raises above the knee will result in a dead puck and faceoff outside the zone. However, if it's generally agreed upon by the on-ice officials and the AFH directors that slap shots are used inappropriately, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and/or game ejections may be levied. **NO FAKE SLAPSHOTS.** No player may "fake" a slapshot or raise their stick above their knees in an attempt to freeze the defending players. Any "fake" slap shot will result in a dead puck and faceoff in the opposite zone.

OFFSIDE

The "Tag Up" Rule is in effect...if a team is offside, it will be permitted to "clear the zone" so play can continue.

Deliberate off-sides, as determined by the officials, will result in a face-off occurring in the offending teams zone.

ICING

All stoppages for icing will be initiated when the puck crosses the goal line of the non-offending team. All icing calls will be initiated by the offending team shooting the puck into the defending zone from behind the center red line. Officials will waive the icing call if the defending goaltender attempts to leave his/her crease to play the puck.

OFFSIDE PASSES

The center red line will not be in play for off-side passes. In other words, two line passes are permitted.

STICK MEASUREMENTS AND EQUIPMENT MEASUREMENTS

Stick and equipment measurements will not be permitted. However, if in the opinion of an official, any stick or equipment poses a threat to the safety of other players, the player will be asked to remove it from the game.

TIME-OUTS

Each team is permitted one 30-second time-out per game. Note that both teams cannot use their time-out during the same stoppage in play.

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LENGTH OF GAME

All games will be three run-time periods (17-17-17). Once the Zamboni leaves the ice surface and doors are shut, there will be a 3 minute warm-up. A referee or the timekeeper will alert the players when the game is about to start. **If during the 3rd period teams are within one goal, Stop-Time will be used during the last 2 minutes of the game,(time permitting)**

SKILL LEVEL - BALANCING OF TEAMS

The Hockey tournament officials reserve the right to move a team(s) to a different division based on skill level. A strong team in a lower division may exchange schedules with a weak team in a higher division, in order to create better divisional parity and competitive games. If in the course of division play within a pool, a team is moved from one level to another (ie: a team is moved from C division to B1 division or vice versa and that move creates a situation where a division switches from round robin play to bracket play, the team moved due to competition level is slotted into the Loser's bracket of the new division. The competition committee will meet to determine (with that Team's manager) how to record the goal differential and game score from Friday night for fair competition.

POOL PLAY/BRACKET PLAY/ROUND ROBIN PLAY

Pool Play: The tournament operates to the extent possible with an even number of teams (16, 18, 20 etc..) to establish pool play for the first three rounds. If an even number of teams exist at each division level AND the Tournament Directors are confident that teams are playing at their appropriate division level (previous tournament experience) the game schedules are posted using pool play.

Bracket Play: If an odd number of teams exist within a division or it is determined that a bracket format for a particular level division is more appropriate, games will be assigned according to bracket play ensuring that all teams that registered for the particular level play at least three games during the tournament. When establishing the bracket play, the previous years Champion from that division will receive the "shortest" path to return to the championship game. All other teams will be placed into the bracket play schedule for competition. To the extent possible, teams will be afforded the opportunity to play 3 games in the tournament. A team, based on bracket play, might end up playing 5 games in the tournament (5th game being the 3rd place game on Championship Sunday) based on number of teams in the division.

Round Robin Play: If a number of new teams or previous teams with new skaters register for the tournament and the Tournament Directors determine that Friday night must be used to confirm division assignments, then ALL games Friday night will be seeding games and the remainder of the tournament for those DIVISIONS AFFECTED will be round robin play(even numbered team divisions). If a division remains unaffected then Pool Play rules are in effect for only that division. (ie: B division teams are set with no possibility of a team being added or removed after Friday games, B-division will advance based on pool play results. B1 and C divisions have not been set yet, they will advance based on round robin play (see tie-breaker rules below). In instances where Pool Play is not in effect, team's first games will NOT count in the determination for WIN's but will count

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for Head to Head in tie-breakers if those two teams have played one another in a Friday game. All other tie breaker calculations will use remaining game statistics post the “seeding” confirmation game on Friday.

DEFAULTED GAMES

Any team that defaults a game, for any reason, will record a 5-0 loss for the purposes of record keeping. If both teams default a game, a 0-0 tie will be recorded, but NO POINTS will be given.

TIES IN STANDINGS

If 2 Teams are tied in the standings the following tie-break steps will be taken in this order:

1. Most Wins* (Teams awarded 2 pts – Win, 1pt – Tie, Zero points – Loss)
2. Head to Head Record
3. Goal Differential
4. Least goals against
5. Most goals for
6. Least penalty minutes

*If a lower division team has been scheduled to play a team in the Division above it, the lower division team can be awarded 3 points for a win, based on playing a game up a higher division.

*If a lower division team losses a game against a higher division team, they will record a 3-0 loss for purposes of Tie-Breakers (Unless the lower division team gave up less than 3 goals, then the lower number is used). Lower Division team can be awarded 1 point for the loss by the Tournament committee for playing up a division.

*If the Higher Division team wins a game against a lower Division team, they will record a 3-0 win for the purposes of Tie-Breakers.

****IF 3 TEAMS OR MORE ARE TIED IN THE STANDINGS THE FOLLOWING TIE-BREAK STEPS WILL BE TAKEN IN THIS ORDER:**

1. Goal Differential
2. Least goals against
3. Least penalty minutes
4. Most goals for
5. The maximum goal differential that will be recorded in a game is 7.

OVERTIME - BRACKET PLAY

In games prior to Championship Sunday that end in a tie at regulation, an immediate sudden death shoot-out will occur to determine the winner and who advances to which game in the bracket. Each team is allowed one chance per round. If one team scores and the other doesn't in that round, the team that scores wins. If both teams score during the round, the shoot-out continues until one team

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scores and the other doesn't in a round. ALL players (minus the goalie) on the ice for each team must be used before a player can make a second attempt during a shoot-out.

OVERTIME – POOL PLAY/ROUND ROBIN/PLAYOFF GAMES

In games prior to the playoffs that are pool play/round robin, all games ending in a tie will be recorded as such without a sudden death or shoot-out. However, if a playoff game is tied after regulation time has expired, a 5-minute (stop-time), 3-on-3 sudden death period will be played to determine a winner. All penalties incurred during the third period of regulation time will be in effect. All power-play situations will be played 4-on-3. Once the penalty expires, teams will play 4-on-4 until the next stoppage in play. Note that if a player incurs a penalty that has not expired during the overtime, they will be INELIGIBLE to participate in the shootout. If the score is still tied after the 5-minute overtime period, a 3-player simultaneous shootout will follow. If the score is still tied after the 3-player shootout, a sudden death shootout will decide the winner.

GAME PLAY DISPUTES

The Identified Team Captain from any team playing in the tournament may, at any time during the current game they are playing, dispute a goal call based on a blatantly missed off-sides or goaltender interference. Both TEAM CAPTAINS and BOTH OFFICIALS will meet at the scorers circle to discuss the goal call in a logical and non-confrontation manner. The clock will stop for .30 seconds while the dispute is discussed. Official's decision following the discussion IS final. Team CAPTAINS are allowed to dispute a goal call no more than once a game.

GAME EJECTIONS

Any player's team incurring a gross misconduct, fighting, "intent to injure" or abuse of an official penalty, may be assessed a 5 minute major penalty with the offending player being ejected from that game. After the ejection and subsequent end of the game, if the official deems it appropriate for the infraction, the Board of Directors will review the event to determine if any further punitive action will be administered. ("Punitive action" will be at the sole discretion of the AFHT Board of Directors with consultation with the officials and AFHT tournament personnel.) A GAME EJECTION does not automatically affect the player's ability to play in the next scheduled team game unless the official requests it or the Tournament Board determines that player should sit the next game.

PENALTY LIMIT

Any player receiving **3** of the following Minor penalties in one game is ejected for the remainder of that game. The minor penalties are: **Slashing, Checking, High Sticking, Roughing** and **Cross-Checking**. At the occurrence of the 3rd penalty, the offending play will leave the ice, the team will be assessed the minor penalty and place another player in the box to serve the penalty time. If the 3rd infraction of the game for the same player occurs with 5 minutes or less remaining in the game, the offending player will sit the rest of that game PLUS the 1st period of the team's next game.

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PENALTIES AND INTENT TO INJURE

Minor penalties will be assessed 1:30 minute penalties. Any penalty deemed by a referee to include an “intent to injure” element, will result in a 5:00 minute match penalty and a discretionary game ejection, this is regardless of whether the action caused injury or not. All related incidents will be reviewed by the tournament director for further possible punitive actions.

HIGH STICKING

A player who intentionally or with recklessness contacts an opponent above the normal height of his shoulders with a high stick shall be assessed a five-minute minor, major or match penalty at the discretion of the Referee. If injury results, a 5 minute major penalty shall be assessed. If, in the judgment of an on-ice official or AFH staff member that an “intent to injure” existed, punitive action may extend into a permanent tournament ban.

SPEARING

A match penalty will be assessed to any player who spears or attempts to spear an opponent. This penalty may carry an automatic tournament expulsion. If, in the judgment of the on-ice official or AFH staff that an “intent to injure” existed, the expulsion may extend into a permanent tournament ban.

BUTT-ENDING

A match penalty will be assessed to any player who maliciously butt-ends or attempts to butt-end an opponent. This penalty may carry an automatic tournament expulsion. If, in the judgment of an on-ice official or an AFH staff member that an “intent to injure” existed, the expulsion may extend into a permanent tournament ban. (Expulsion will not apply when the player incurs a minor penalty for “butt-end hooking”.)

CHECKING

Intentional body contact classified as “checking” is not permitted. A minor, major or match penalty will be called at the discretion of the Referee staff. If injury results, a major penalty, or match penalty will be assessed.

ROUGHING / ROUGHING AFTER THE WHISTLE

A minor penalty shall be assessed to any player who, in the referee’s judgment, is guilty of unnecessary rough play. Only when injury results from an infraction to this rule may a major penalty plus a game misconduct be assessed.

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SLASHING

A minor penalty shall be assessed to any player who maliciously swings their stick at an opponent (whether out of range or not) regardless of whether he/she actually strikes the opponent, or who, in the pretext of playing the puck, makes a wild swinging motion with the object of intimidating the opponent. If, in the judgment of an on-ice official or AFH staff member that an "intent to injure" existed, the expulsion may extend into a permanent tournament ban.

CROSS-CHECKING

A minor penalty, major or match penalty at the discretion of the Referee, shall be assessed to any player who maliciously cross-checks an opponent. A major penalty and a game misconduct penalty shall be assessed to any player who cross-checks a player from behind into the boards. This penalty carries a tournament expulsion or 1 game suspension (depending upon the severity of the check) at the convener's discretion. If, in the judgment of an on-ice official or an AFH staff member that an "intent to injure" existed, the expulsion may extend into a permanent tournament ban.

FIGHTING

All fighting majors will result in an expulsion from the tournament. If a player or players drop their gloves but do not engage in an altercation an automatic game misconduct will be assessed and is subject to further review and may result in suspension.

FIGHTING - OFF THE PLAYING SURFACE

A major penalty plus a game misconduct penalty shall be assessed to any player who physically assaults another player, official or tournament personnel off the playing surface. This penalty carries a tournament expulsion, NO exceptions! Further, facility security and local law enforcement will be called immediately.

MISCONDUCTS

A player, except a goaltender, incurring a misconduct penalty, shall be penalized for a period of ten minutes of playing time. A player serving a misconduct penalty shall remain on the penalty bench until the first stoppage of play following the expiration of his penalty. Any player who is assessed a second misconduct penalty in the same game shall automatically be assessed a game misconduct penalty.

If the misconduct penalty occurs in the third period, where the full 10 minutes cannot be served, an automatic 1 game suspension will be assessed. All misconduct penalties are subject to review by the Tournament Director. No player shall be required to serve a misconduct penalty for another player.

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GAME MISCONDUCTS

Any player or coach that receives a game misconduct penalty will be ejected from the balance of the game. If this penalty is assessed in the third period, an automatic one game suspension will be assessed. All game misconduct penalties are subject to review and possible further suspension.

GROSS MISCONDUCTS

If at any time, a tournament official observes a player abusing a refereeing official physically, that player may be banned for life from MN AFH tournaments. If a player is observed grossly abusing a player, refereeing official, or AFH tournament official verbally,, the incident will be reviewed by AFH tournament officials and the offending player may be subject to punitive actions at the discretion of the AFH tournament staff. (** racial, religious, blatant/malicious slurs, offensive language)