



# 2025-2026 WINTER LEAGUE

## PLAYING GUIDE

### **MCAHA Mission Statement**

The MCAHA strives to provide patrons with the opportunity to play ice hockey in a competitive, but recreational, organized league environment that is founded on the emphasized principles of fair play, sportsmanship, camaraderie and safety.

### **Sportsmanship and Code of Conduct**

All MCAHA players are expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner and follow all rules as stated in the MCAHA Bylaws and this league playing guide. This includes, but is not limited to, respect for the officials, the scorekeepers, teammates, opponents, the patrons and Centennial Ice Arena Employees and facilities.

The MCAHA Board reserves the right and the authority to disqualify, suspend, or remove any player, spectator, or team which behaves in an unsportsmanlike manner before, during or after a game. Players, spectators, and teams are expected to clean up after themselves and refrain from leaving a mess or otherwise damaging arena facilities.

MCAHA enforces a zero-tolerance policy for abuse of officials and scorekeepers. Abuse includes verbal, physical or otherwise.

### **Rate Skates:**

Rate skates will be conducted at various times throughout the fall. Date announcements will be E-mailed and posted to League Social Media Accounts so monitor the MCAHA website and Facebook page to learn when they will be scheduled. These are very important because a player must have a current MCAHA rating to be able to play in any league. Players who participate in Fall League, may also gain a player rating through their participation in Fall League. Players that cannot attend a rate skate, or play Fall League will be assigned the highest rating in the division they intend to play in, and if the board deems they should be in a different division, the board reserves the right to move that player to an appropriate division/team.

We also encourage captains to come watch the rate skates to help us determine a consensus for initial ratings for players, and as an opportunity to scout for new players if you need to fill spots on your roster.

### **Season Length**

Season will be 20 games with games played throughout the week starting in early November and concluding in early April.

### **2025- 2026 League Fees**

***All rostered positions, skater or goaltender, require separate registrations, including if rostering as both a skater and a goaltender in the same division.***

#### **Skater Fees:**

- Fees this season are based on the division and time of registration.
  - Early registration (9/2/25-9/16/25) \$350 per individual skater per team
  - Registration (9/17/25-10/19/25) \$380 per individual skater per team
  - Late Registration (10/20/25-3/31/26) \$450 per individual skater per team. No prorated fees and no payment plan option for this registration.
    - Team placement will be based on roster availability, team need and competitive balance. The MCAHA Board will have final say after consulting with team captain(s). Placement is not guaranteed. In the event a player is not able to be placed on a team, league fees will be refunded.
    - **\*\*\*A late registration player is *not* immediately eligible to play when placed on a team. The Board will need up to 48 hours to complete the necessary administrative work. *PLAYERS WHO SIGN UP AFTER REGISTRATION HAS CLOSED WILL NEED TO WAIT UNTIL THE BOARD GIVES THEM APPROVAL TO PLAY.***
- A payment plan of five equal payments is available for skaters, with the first installment due at the time of registration. Payment plans must be fulfilled in February, or the skater will be ineligible to complete the season.
- **NEW FOR 2025-2026!!! MULTI-DIVISION SKATER DISCOUNT**
  - Skaters who roster to play in more than one division will receive a \$150 discount on any registration beyond their first registration.
  - Discounts will be credited back to skaters method of payment once all registration balances have been paid in full, and payments have been processed.

## Goalie Fees:

- Goalie fees this season are based on the time of registration. There is no payment plan option for this registration.
  - Early registration (9/2/25-9/16/25) \$130 which allows for play in up to two divisions.
  - Registration (9/17/25-10/19/25) \$150 which allows for play in up to two divisions.
  - Late Registration (10/20/25-3/31/26) \$180 which allows for play in up to two divisions. No prorated fees for this registration.
  - A late registration player is **not** immediately eligible to play when placed on a team. \*\*\*See late registration player notes from Skater Fees.
- **Players registering under the Goalie sign up, may not skate “out” as a forward or defenseman. In the event a goalie also wants the option to skate out as a player, that player will need to also register as a Skater.**
- Goalies who skate out, must skate out under a skater rating opposed to their goaltender rating.
- Goalie Registrations allow goaltenders to be a rostered goalie for one team, but may substitute as a goaltender in up to two divisions.

## Team Roster Submission:

Team captains will be responsible to submit team rosters prior to the start of the season through Sports Engine within the guidelines of rostering rules outlined therein. The team roster registration link will be on the front page of our website MCAHABillings.com. Please indicate on the roster submission if you have available spots for un-rostered “Free Agent” players on your team.

## Team Roster Sizes

Skaters	Min: 13	Max:18
Goalies	Min:1	Max: 2

## Free Agents:

Due to the growing number of participants in the MCAHA, we will allow players that do not currently have a team to register as a Free Agent. The MCAHA will try to accommodate free agent players by creating additional teams, or adding players to existing teams, but we cannot guarantee placement on a team due to rostering rules. Players signing up as free agents will need to select the division in which they'd like to play, and the Board will attempt to place them on a team roster in accordance with rostering guidelines, and regulations.

We will give preference to free agent players who have not been already rostered in other divisions first, compared to a free agent looking to play in multiple divisions. If we cannot find a suitable team to roster a free agent on, we will refund the registration fees. If a player registers as a free agent, and following sign up, agrees to play for a particular team, both the player and the Captain of the team must notify the Hockey Operations director at, [mcahahockeyops@gmail.com](mailto:mcahahockeyops@gmail.com).

**Player Ratings**

All players will be rated on an A, B, C, D, E scale. Ratings are developed by the Player Ratings Subcommittee with input from the previous season’s Captains, referencing the USA Hockey rating system, established hockey evaluation guides, and previous season statistics.

Letter Grade	Rating Definition	Previous MCAHA Rating	USA Hockey Resource Guide Level
E	Considered a Novice Level of Player. Generally, players started as adults, have a limited hockey background, or who’s skating abilities have not yet progressed to the next level	1,2	Novice
D	Considered a developing Intermediate level player. Generally, players in this category may have experience as Adult Recreational Players, or early youth hockey. Still developing positional play, strategies, and fundamentals. May include more experienced players who have started slowing down, or looking for a slower pace.	3,4	Bronze
C	Considered an upper Intermediate level player. Generally, players in this category are more experienced Adult Recreational Players or may have played up to Midget or High School in a non-traditional hockey area.	5,6	Intermediate
B	This Player is an Advanced Level Adult Player with high basic hockey skills. Generally, players in this category played High School Varsity Level, Junior C, or Competitive Midget	7,8	Silver
A	Players that have mastered the skills of the game and would be considered an Elite Level Adult Player. Players in this category include players who participated at the highest levels of organized hockey, or professionally.	9,10	Gold

**Divisions:**

The MCAHA offers 4 divisions of hockey designed for various levels of skills, and hockey backgrounds. All players who are new to hockey, and have little to no background are highly encouraged to participate in an adult co-ed learn to play format geared to learn the basic skills and rules of hockey prior to registering to play in our team league format. Please refer to the Greenhorn page on our MCAHA Website for more information.

**Recreational:**

Designed to be a slower paced league for developing emerging skills, and players who may need a slower pace than higher levels. Geared towards E and D level players. Generally, players in this division have started playing as adults, and are fairly new to the game of hockey, or may have aged out of higher leagues.

- Player Ratings Allowed E & D

**Intermediate: NEW for 2025-2026**

Designed to be a more gradual and natural step in advancing skill development beyond the basic hockey core skill set through increased competition. In this division, a player's skill development should start to transition more towards focusing on player awareness, positioning, team strategy, and team play. The average player in this division should have a solid foundation in all primary skills, have experience playing hockey either through years of youth hockey, or adult hockey, and should be looking to have a more competitive experience while learning more advanced skills. Players in this division should expect a large range of varying skill levels geared to D, and C Level Players.

- Player Ratings Allowed E, D, & C

**Advanced: NEW for 2025-2026**

Re-designed this season to be the first stepping stone into focusing on being a competitive division of play. The NEW Advanced Division is geared towards C and B Players who are looking to either try and take their skills to the next level in a competitive nature, or looking to take a step down from the speed of the Elite Division. Generally, players in this division have a background playing youth, high school, or advanced organized hockey, or have progressed their skills enough through years of adult hockey.

- Player Ratings Allowed: B, C, and advanced D or E players

**Elite:**

Designed to be the highest division of play for A and B players or C players who are up for the challenge. This Division will include players that may have once played at a high level (former pros, college and junior players, college club, midget and travel, etc), have mastered the speed and skill of the game, and feel confident playing at this level.

- Player Ratings: A & B, high level C

### **Players Outside League Parameters**

The MCAHA strives to create leagues with parameters that yield similarly skilled teams and gradual increases in competition between the divisions. However, we understand that camaraderie is also a foundational building block of our association's success. With that in mind, we do allow players with lower ratings to participate in higher paced leagues, we also encourage players to play in leagues that are appropriate to their skill levels. We want to offer the opportunity for players to play with friends without sacrificing league integrity.

### **Player Substitutions:**

Player substitutions are allowed in games as long as they are registered and rostered **within the same division**. Skaters who are not registered to play in a division will not be allowed to legally sub in that division. Players registered as Skaters, may substitute as any position in the same division of which they registered. Players registered as Goalies, may only play as goalies unless also registered as a player.

Captains will be given a list of players who have indicated a willingness to be a sub at the beginning of the season from within their team's division. We will be monitoring this for abuse/stacking, and players playing in additional divisions bypassing paying league fees. The Board requires captains and/or refs to notify a Board member if you see a team rule violation within 48 hours. The Board will not take action if notification is received after 48 hours. We will research the potential infraction, and if verified, the game will be modified as a forfeit for the team who violated the team rules. The forfeited game will be scored as 1-0 with no stats for either team.

### **The requirements to use a Substitute Player will be as follows:**

- Only an option if the team in question has one goalie and less than 10 rostered skaters.
- Captain has to notify the scorekeeper of all substitute players **AND** opposing team captain of the substitution **before** the game starts.
- All substitutions are to be same ratings, or below. (Example, if you are missing a B skill level, you may replace it with a B skill level or lower. You cannot sub a higher rated player for a lower rated player.)
- Teams must adhere to roster rating rules regardless of substitutions
- Teams who dual roster a player as both a skater and goaltender

### **League Parity**

Despite player ratings, the Board reserves the right to move players if their actual level of play is deemed more appropriate for another division. The Board may also choose to shift players within divisions in attempts to maintain some level of league parity. Any such moves would include consultation with the affected team captains and involved players.

## **Captains**

Captains will be held to a higher standard than players and have the following responsibilities:

- Create a team per guidelines in this Season Playing Guide and Association Bylaws.
- Assign at least one Alternate Captain.
- Obtain on their own or work with the board to ensure each team has necessary jerseys.
  - Light AND dark jerseys (with individual numbers) are required for each player on each team.
  - Jerseys must have a “C” and “A” designating the Captain and Alternate Captain.
- Recruit substitute players/goaltenders per guidelines in this Season Playing Guide, and make sure your team roster conforms to team rules for each and every game.
- Ensure that only rostered players are on the player’s bench during games.
- Consult on player ratings at the end of the season.

## **Trades**

Captains may initiate player trades within their division. Once the captains agree upon a trade, it must be brought before the MCAHA Board for approval. Trades may not violate the established team ratings parameters. The involved players may not play for 48 hours after the trade to give the registrar time to adjust the rosters with USA Hockey and SportsEngine.

## **Game Format**

Games will consist of:

- 3-minute warm-up before the game starts.
  - Warm up shall start once end board doors are closed and the nets are set
- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> period 15-minute run time with 1-minute intermission after periods.
- 1st and 2nd periods will be stop time for the last 2 minutes of each period.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> period 15-minute stop time.
- One **30** second timeout is allowed per game per team.
- Overtime will be a best of 3 shootout. During the initial shootout, players will alternate shootout attempts, with the home team deciding who shoots first. If tied after 3 shooters, the shootout will move to sudden death elimination with shooters making their attempts at the same time. All players (except goalie) must shoot before any player may repeat. If one team has fewer skaters than the other, and have gone through their entire line up, both teams may restart their shootout lineup, and do not need to repeat the first shootout order.
- Teams earn 2 points for a win, 0 points for loss, 1 for a shootout loss.

Players are allowed 3 goals per game. If a player scores more than the allotted 3 goals, they will receive a verbal warning for the 4<sup>th</sup> goal (and goal will not count). The subsequent faceoff will be in the defending zone of the offending team. A Delay of Game Penalty will be assessed to any player scoring additional goals after receiving the warning. A player that has scored 3 goals and is awarded a penalty shot may still take said penalty shot (and goal counts). A player that has not scored 3 goals and is awarded a penalty shot, if scored, will count towards the 3-goal limit. A player who has scored 3 goals during a game may participate in a tied game shootout.

## **Penalties**

Minor penalties will be 3-minutes in duration during run time periods and 2-minutes during stop time periods. If a minor penalty carries over from a run time period into a stop time period, the following actions will be taken:

- If the penalty has more than 2-minutes left to be served, time will be dropped to 2-minutes at the start of the 3rd period.
- If the penalty has less than 2-minutes left to be served, no reduction of time change will be applied.

Major Penalties will be 7-minutes in duration during run time periods, and 5-minutes during stop time periods. If a major penalty carries over from a run time period into a stop time period, the following actions will be taken:

- If the penalty has more than 5-minutes left to be served, time will be dropped to 5- minutes at the start of the 3rd period.
- If the penalty has less than 5-minutes left to be served, no time change will be applied.

Misconduct Penalties will be 10-minutes in duration of game time, regardless of run time or stop time periods.

Any player that receives 3 penalties in one game will receive a Game Ejection with no additional suspension (unless necessitated by the called penalties).

- **Note**—The calling of a double-minor, minor plus misconduct, or major plus misconduct all count as two individual penalties towards the 3-penalty rule.

## **Playoffs**

Playoff timing and format are often impacted by things outside of our control. The Board will communicate playoff decisions as soon as is practical.

## **MCAHA Issued Jerseys**

While each team is encouraged to provide their own jerseys, it is understood that under some circumstances that may not be possible. MCAHA shall maintain a small number of jersey sets that may be rented to teams on a season by season basis.

Jerseys purchased and printed by the MCAHA will have the association logo on the front, a number printed on the back, and will be one of the 5 designated colors:

- Red
- Blue
- Yellow
- Black
- White

**Team Names**

Team names must be approved by the MCAHA Board. Captains will be required to change any team name that is deemed vulgar or generally offensive. Any costs associated with updating/changing jerseys due to an unapproved name are the burden of the captain/team.