

PIHL VARSITY PLAYOFF GUIDE



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Priority

- Have fun and make the postseason experience a positive one for all of our student-athletes!
- Our values of sportsmanship and excellence are always a priority.
- The best way to make the playoffs enjoyable is to come with a positive attitude and put forth your best effort.

Sportsmanship

- Sportsmanship is everyone's responsibility.
 - When we succeed at this task, we succeed as a league.
 - If we fail at this task, we fail as a community.
- The behaviors of the adults directly influence the behaviors of the minors, both on and off the ice.
 - Coaches must set the right example and be the first to address their unruly players.
 - Spectators must create an exciting, supportive environment.
- Respect for the game can never be sacrificed due to the desire to win.
 - Our four champions must win with dignity; all of the other teams must lose with grace.
 - True character is best displayed in adverse situations; the "heat of the moment" is not an excuse.

COMPETITION INFORMATION

Start Times

- Games shall begin only at the published start time.
 - No game shall start earlier than the posted start time since most games will have a live broadcast.
 - All teams must be ready to enter the ice at the scheduled start time.
- Delays shall always be accommodated if the previous game has not yet been completed.
 - If a previous game runs longer than its ice slot, the warm-up period for the next game will begin immediately upon conclusion of the ice being resurfaced.
 - Any other type of delay prior to or during a game shall be managed by the on-ice officials.

Time of Play

- All games shall be played with three, 17-minute periods using stop time.
 - The PIHL running-clock policies remain in effect for playoff games.
- Intermission protocols remain the same from regular-season games.
- There shall be no curfew – and therefore no curfew rules – applied to any playoff game.
- Each team is granted a timeout of 1-minute in duration during regulation time.

Overtime Periods

- All playoff games with a tied score at the end of regulation time shall continue into sudden-victory overtime.
- All overtime periods shall be 17 minutes of sudden-victory, stop-time play.
- The on-ice manpower for all overtime periods shall be based upon 5-on-5 play, minus applicable penalties.
- Teams shall switch ends between the end of the third period and the start of overtime, and teams shall then switch ends for each subsequent overtime period.
- The ice shall be resurfaced following the conclusion of only odd-numbered overtime periods (1st, 3rd, etc.), and the intermission shall end immediately upon completion of the ice cut.
- Intermissions in overtime without an ice cut shall be 3 minutes in duration.
- Each team shall be permitted a maximum of one timeout of 1-minute in length in overtime, regardless of whether a timeout was used or was not used by the team during regulation time.

OPERATIONS INFORMATION

Rules & Rulebooks

- The Penguins Cup Playoffs are governed by the Penguins Cup Playoff Rules, in addition to all applicable PIHL Playing Rules and PIHL Administrative Policies and Procedures.
- The PIHL Varsity Class D2 Playoffs are governed by the Varsity Class D2 Playoff Rules, in addition to all applicable PIHL Playing Rules and PIHL Administrative Policies and Procedures.
- The USA Hockey Rulebook and the PIHL Playing Rules direct the on-ice play of all playoff games.
- All playoff rule documents are posted on the PIHL website on the appropriate 2025 playoff pages.

Scoresheets

- Coaches shall place a straight line through "scratched" players and apply a signature to the team's roster area prior to the start of the game.
- Any player serving a suspension must be properly noted.
- No other markings are to be made by the teams on the scoresheets, which includes the expectation that all players are to wear their assigned jersey numbers.

Game Supplies

- Each team is responsible for providing its own warm-up pucks, water bottles, and other game supplies.
- The home team must wear predominantly white uniforms; the away team must wear predominantly dark uniforms; no third/alternate jerseys are permitted for use in playoff games.
 - All PIHL uniform rules apply to all playoff games, including matching helmets, socks, and shells.
- Each team shall have its Team Book immediately available at all playoff games, including all copies of all scoresheets from its regular-season and playoff games.

Suspensions and Discipline

- All unserved suspensions accrued during the regular season shall carry-over into the playoffs.
 - A scrimmage/exhibition game cannot be used prior to the playoffs to serve a suspension.
 - All suspensions and disciplinary actions received during the playoffs shall apply to subsequent rounds for winning teams and/or into the next PIHL regular season for losing teams.
 - All questions regarding suspensions shall be directed to the PIHL Commissioner's Office only; no other entity shall be authorized to provide an official statement on suspensions.
- No protests shall be permitted during playoff games.
 - All disputes shall be resolved by the PIHL Playoff Committee.
- There shall be no guarantee that a Match Penalty hearing will be conducted prior to a team's next playoff game.

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

Game Staffing

- The PIHL will arrange for all on-ice officials, emergency medical providers, and security guards for all games.
- The PIHL shall supply 2 persons for all playoff games to serve as Game Coordinators
 - Any in-game music conducted by the home team in first-round games must be done from a league approved location only. The PIHL coordinates these items at the semifinals and finals.
- Admissions policies are further outlined in the Admissions section of this guide.
 - The participating teams must each supply 1 admissions person at each qualifier and quarter final game.
 - The PIHL will supply admissions staffing for all games in the semifinals and finals.

On-Ice Officials

- All games will utilize a 4-man (2 referees, 2 linesman) officiating system.
- The on-ice officials are always the authority on the game, as a representation of the rulebooks.
 - The Off-Ice Officials and any other league personnel are there to assist in game operations.
 - Off-Ice Officials and league personnel do not intervene with nor overrule the on-ice officials pertaining to matters of penalties and on-ice play.

Team Personnel

- Up to 30 players and up to 5 team personnel may sign-in for free admission to the team's playoff game. These individuals must appear on the team's certified USA Hockey roster and shall include the team's locker room monitor.
- Approved individuals shall be issued an event credential upon check-in, which shall be worn at all times within the facility when not in game uniform.
 - Only credentialed individuals shall be permitted in restricted areas, and credentials shall not be shared with unauthorized individuals.
- Teams are to use only the locker room to which it is assigned and leave that room cleaner than it was found.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Travel & Arrival

- Only the PIHL Commissioner's Office has the authority to postpone/delay a game for any reason, including adverse weather conditions.
- Please immediately contact the Commissioner's Office if the team encounters travel issues on the way to a game.
- Players and team officials shall check-in at the designated table prior to semifinal and final games before attempting to enter restricted areas.
- Additional instructions for accessing the check-in area for the championship games shall be supplied to the participating teams in advance of those games.

Spectators

- The USA Hockey Zero Tolerance Policy shall be strictly enforced at all games.
- The security guards will monitor spectator behavior and reserve the right to eject any unruly fan(s) without warning.
- Spectators who enter restricted areas -- namely, locker room hallways -- will be ejected from the premises.
 - Restricted areas must remain clear of unauthorized individuals for the safety of our student-athletes.
- No spectators are permitted inside the playing area for any reason, including championship celebrations.
 - There will be special post-game arrangements granted to the winning teams off the ice after the championship games for pictures with family and friends.

Photos & Videos

- Only media personnel with PIHL-issued credentials will be permitted outside of general seating areas to take photographs before, during, and after all playoff games.
 - Other persons with cameras, including "team photographers" and freelance photographers, are not restricted in taking photographs from the general seating areas (with the purchase of a game ticket).
- No photographers/videographers are permitted on the ice or on the benches for any playoff game prior to, during or immediately after the championship games.
 - Only photographers/videographers with approved credentials are permitted on the ice during the championship presentations.
 - The PIHL enlists a photographer to take all on-ice pictures for the Championship Games, and those photographs will be made available for purchase.
- Please allow ample space and limit all types of obstructions and distractions for all broadcast crews set-up in the general seating area at playoff games.
 - The media sections for the semifinals and finals are reserved only for credentialed media members who are covering or broadcasting our playoff games.

QUALIFIERS & QUARTERFINALS INFORMATION

Prices & Passes

- Spectator admission is \$7 for all adults and all students for all qualifier/play in games.
 - Children under 9 are free.
- Spectator admission is \$10 for all adults and all students for all quarterfinal games.
 - Admissions prices may increase for later rounds, as outlined in the playoff rules.
- No association-made passes or PIHL association passes shall be accepted for admission to playoff games.
 - Credentialed media members and individuals with PIHL Staff credentials shall be admitted for free upon displaying the valid credential.
- The admissions monies are used to cover the costs of the playoff games (ice, staffing, etc.).

Staffing & Supplies

- Each participating team shall provide 1 representative for admissions.
 - This representative must arrive 45 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the game and remain on-duty until the end of the first period.
 - The PIHL provides all admissions staffing for the semifinals and the finals.
- The admissions representative from the home team shall bring a cash box and ample start-up money.
 - There should be an abundance of one-dollar and five-dollar bills in the start-up money.
- The admissions representative from the away team shall bring at least two copies of the PIHL-issued admissions signs and one copy of the PIHL Admissions Control Sheet.
 - Both forms are available on the PIHL website on the appropriate 2025 playoff pages.

Start-Up

- An admissions table/area shall be established 45 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the game in a location that ensures all spectators pay the admissions fee. Team representatives must remain at the admission's table until the end of the 1st period.
- Both team representatives should count the total amount of money in the cash box and record it on the Admissions Control Sheet as the "Starting Amount in Cash Box."
- The two copies of the PIHL-issued admission signs shall be displayed in prominent locations in the admissions area.
- Associations who fail to collect the applicable admissions for their respective games shall each be responsible for half of the game costs.

Wrap-Up

- Admissions should remain in operation until the end of the first period.
- Upon closing, both team representatives must count the amount in the cash box and record the agreed total on the PIHL Admissions Control Sheet as the "Final Amount in Cash Box."
 - The "Total Gate Money Collected" is the final amount minus the starting amount.
- The home team shall deposit all gate money in their association's account.
- The home team shall send the PIHL Admissions Control Sheet to the PIHL League Office within 5 business days of the date of the game, along with a check in the amount exactly equal to the "Total Gate Money Collected."
 - All checks should be made payable to the "PIHL"
 - The PIHL mailing address is: PO Box 10838, Pittsburgh PA 15236

SEMI/FINALS INFORMATION

Prices & Passes

- Spectator admission is \$10 for adults and students for all semifinal games (plus fees where applicable for digital tickets); children 9 and under are free.
- Spectator admission is \$10 for adults and students for all final games (plus fees where applicable for digital tickets); infants are free.
- Associations do not need to provide staffing or start-up cash for semifinals and finals admissions.

Check-In

- All team personnel as defined under Personnel Information in this guide, must check-in at the League table set up outside of the entrance to the locker room hallway.
 - Teams shall coordinate internally which 5 team officials shall use the check-in option.
 - Event credentials are not to be used by anyone other than the person to which it is issued.

Broadcasts

- All semifinal and final games shall be broadcast by a media outlet approved by the PIHL Commissioner's Office.
- No other broadcast (live or recorded; audio or video) of the games is permitted by any entity without first obtaining the express written consent of the PIHL Commissioner's Office.
 - If a media outlet is interested in any type of broadcast of the games for any purpose, that group must be in contact with the PIHL Commissioner's Office at least 24 hours prior to the game.

Game Protocols

- All players will enter (and later exit) the ice only via the designated runway.
- Teams will be introduced as a full group (not as individual players) to start the event.
 - The visiting team going first, with all players skating immediately to its blue line.
 - The home team will be introduced second, with all players skating immediately to its blue line.
 - In the spirit of good sportsmanship, players are not to turn their back on the opponent during the intro.
- The National Anthem will be played while both teams are on their respective blue lines, facing the flag.
 - Players are not to move until the song is fully completed.
- The 5-minute warm-up period will begin at the conclusion of the National Anthem.
- The opening face-off must take place within 1 minute of the conclusion of the warm-up period.
 - Teams must collect pucks and perform any team huddles within that period of time.
 - Five starters and a goaltender must be ready for the opening face-off at the completion of the 1 minute.
- The ice will be resurfaced at the second intermission, which shall be set to 10 minutes in length on the game clock.
 - The pace of this resurfacing shall not dictate the intermission length; only the game clock.
 - Any overtime intermission with a resurfacing shall end immediately at the completion of the resurfacing.