

WALKER YOUTH HOCKEY POLICY HANDBOOK

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Mission Statement

Walker Youth Hockey partners with Minnesota, local communities and WHA schools to administer hockey as a fun, always adult-supervised, winter activity.

Philosophy

- Hockey and ice-skating are healthful youth activities. Children are involved in a socially positive activity while receiving the health benefits of regular exercise.
- In the winter, Walker Area Community Center staffs the warming house at the outdoor rink seven days a week. Hackensack and Longville also have rinks, which is supervised during organized skating events. Walker Youth Hockey encourages children to play at the rink, an adult-supervised park.

Regulations

- Walker Youth Hockey will abide by the rules, regulations and By-Laws of USA Hockey and Minnesota Hockey.
- It is encouraged that coaches at all levels stress academic achievement along with hockey skills.
- No player at any level will be allowed to use tobacco products of any sort, or use alcoholic beverages of any kind. Profanity before, during or after any game or practice will not be tolerated.
- All on-ice practices, games and related activities must be supervised by a coach and/or an adult member of the Walker Youth Hockey Association.
- Youth hockey registration fees will be determined by the Board on an annual basis.

The Walker Youth Hockey Association recognizes, supervises and is responsible for competition in the following team categories:

Varsity: To play at the Varsity level, a player must meet high school eligibility requirements set by the Minnesota State High School League. At the Varsity level the total number of games to be played during the season shall also be set by Minnesota State High School League.

Bantam: To play at the Bantam level, a player's birthdate must fall within the range as set per the guidelines of Minnesota Hockey. At the Bantam level, the total number of games to be played during regular season play shall not exceed 45, including invitational tournaments.

Peewees: To play at the Peewee level, a player's birthdate must fall within the range as set per the guidelines of Minnesota Hockey. At the Peewee level, the total number of games to be played during regular season play shall not exceed 35, including invitational tournaments.

Squirt: To play at the Squirt level, a player's birthdate must fall within the range as set per the guidelines of Minnesota Hockey. At the Squirt level, the total number of games to be played during regular season play shall not exceed 30, including invitational tournaments.

Mites/Mini-Mites: To play at the Mite/Mini-Mite level, a player's birthdate must fall within the range as set per the guidelines of Minnesota Hockey. The emphasis shall be on equal participation rather than winning. The total number of games will include 1 – 2 jamborees with the option to form a traveling team (12 games max.)

Player Movement and Participation

The Walker Youth Hockey Board of Directors believes that players should play on teams by age group as defined by Minnesota Hockey. Exceptions may be made based on the items below.

Minnesota Hockey and Walker Youth Hockey will not allow players to “play down” a level.

- Any decision on the movement of players to another age level of participation shall be made by the Youth Hockey Board based on the recommendation of the Hockey Development Committee. Factors to be considered:
 1. Coaches' recommendation
 2. Player's ability
 3. Parent consent
 4. Short and long term effect of movement for teams involved
 5. Roster needs for teams
 6. Players will be allowed to move between A and B teams at the discretion of the team coaches. No movement will be made, however, after the date set by Minnesota Hockey regulations.
 7. When the number of participants allows for (2) teams, there will be A and B teams selected at the Bantam, the Girls 14 & Under, Peewee, Squirt, Girls 12U and 10U levels. A third party skills evaluation will be done of the players with the A coach making the final decision. The number of players shall be divided as equally as possible between teams.
 8. No team selections shall be made until the players have practiced together for one week and there have been two inter-squad scrimmages. The coaches under no circumstance shall announce any players as having been selected for the team prior to the announcement of the entire team.
 9. No player shall be allowed to be a member of more than one skating level or on more than one traveling team.

Player Movement by His/Her Grade Level

Players will have the opportunity to move up a level, should they choose. Players that qualify must request to the HDC Committee their desire to move up prior to the start of the season.

Player Participation

It is fundamental that all players on a team receive an approximately equal amount of playing time. However, Peewee, Girls U12, Bantam and Girls U14 level coaches may use discretion to make exceptions to this rule under some conditions, such as:

- Penalty situations
- Overtime periods
- Closing minutes of a close game
- District, Regional or State play-offs
- Disciplinary measures as defined at parent meeting by the coach prior to the season.

Playtime for all players, Peewee/12U, Bantams/14U will be kept fair throughout the regular season. The amount of playing time will be based on:

- Attendance
- Effort
- Willingness to adopt the “team” philosophy
- Attitude

During post-season play, the amount of playing time will be based on:

- Skills developed throughout the year
- Willingness to adopt the “team” philosophy
- Effort
- Attitude

It is expected that all players will play, however, the coach is afforded the flexibility in determining the amount by the above factors.

Play time for all players in the Mite, Squirt and 10U levels should be made as equal as possible. All players in the Mite, Squirt and 10U levels should be afforded the opportunity to participate in special team situations (power play/shorthanded/overtime, etc.).

Concussions

Minnesota Concussion Law (SF 612) will be followed by the Walker Youth Hockey Association. A copy of this policy can be obtained from the front office of the Walker Area Community Center.

Coaches Selection

The ACE Coordinator should consider NEW applicants on the following criteria:

- General coaching philosophy and willingness to perform within the Walker Youth Hockey guidelines.
- Willingness to put in long hours during the season.
- Other considerations:
 1. Coach of the team for the previous year
 2. Experience as an assistant coach in Walker Youth Hockey
 3. Experience as a coach in other youth hockey programs

Ice Time

It is the Walker Youth Hockey’s goal to secure ice time for all teams such that each team will be allotted enough ice time to provide a quality hockey experience for all players. Scheduling of the ice will be done by the Ice Scheduler and reviewed by the ACE Coordinator. Walker Youth Hockey will follow the HEP guidelines as closely as practical for allotted practice and game times.

Guidelines

Because older players are available for later ice hours than younger players, and older players have more stamina than the younger players, the older groups will inherently receive more and later ice hours.

To maximize the use of available ice, every team may be asked to share part of their practice ice hours with another team.

Rules

Walker Youth Hockey plays by the rules of USA Hockey, as modified by Minnesota Hockey for youth level of play. Walker Youth Hockey will only play against teams who are registered with MN/USA Hockey.

Referees

At the Squirt level and above, two referees must be on the ice with appropriate Minnesota Hockey Certification.

Player Behavior

Walker Youth Hockey wishes to avoid distractions that should be addressed by family. As such Walker Youth Hockey will not tolerate inappropriate language, or actions. The coach may suspend any player for the remainder of a practice or game and the immediate next practice or game. If the coach feels additional suspension is in order, the coach must bring the issue before the Hockey Development Committee. The Committee may recommend removal from further participation to the Walker Youth Hockey Board.

Parent Grievances

It is the intent of the Walker Youth Hockey Board of Directors to provide an opportunity for parents and players to express their concerns and receive a timely and appropriate response. In order to ensure a respectful and professional experience, the board insists that players, parents, coaches and board members follow the Grievance Procedures as follows:

1. Cooling Off Period. There are to be no spontaneous grievance related conversations immediately following a game or practice. Players and parents agree to wait at least 24 hours after a game or practice prior to initiating a conversation with a coach, HDC members and board members. Coaches, HDC members and board members agree to not participate in any conversations where the grievance procedure has not been followed.
2. Grievance Forms. The coach will discuss with HDC prior to any conversations being held between a parent and a coach, a grievance form must be completed by the parent, signed and placed in the Walker Youth Hockey box at the WACC. (Forms available at www.leechlakehockey.com). The Walker Ace Coordinator will be responsible for delivering the form to the coach. This will allow the coach the opportunity to be prepared to discuss the issue.
3. Parent/Coach Meeting. The coach will contact the parent and arrange a time to meet with the parent and player (if appropriate), within reasonable time, in order to resolve the issue. Both parent and coach agree to conduct themselves professionally and respectfully at all times. At least one member of the HDC and/or Hockey Board will be present during all conversations where a grievance form has been filed.
4. Coordinator Involvement. In the event the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of the parent, coach or both, a meeting will be scheduled with the Walker Ace Coordinator, the parent(s) in order to resolve the issue.
5. Grievance Committee/HDC. In the event that the issue is not resolved the ACE Coordinator will bring the grievance to the HDC Committee. A meeting may be scheduled at the request of the parent.
6. Board of Directors. In the event the issue is not resolved, the parent may request a meeting with the Walker Youth Hockey Board.

In the interest of protecting the family orientated environment of the Walker Youth Hockey Association, it is imperative that this policy be followed by all. Failure to follow this policy may incur punitive action by Walker Youth Board of Directors.

Hockey Equipment Requirements

- HECC approved helmet, facemask and mouth guard.
- Sharp skates that fit
- Shin guards
- Elbow pads
- Breezers with proper thigh, kidney and tail bone protection
- Protective supporter

Equipment

- Although checking is not officially allowed until Bantams, all of the kids play with intensity and body contact; your kids will be safer and enjoy the sport more, if they have proper equipment that fits well
- Parents often wonder why their child must wear a mouth guard when he/she has a full face mask – by keeping the teeth from coming together, mouth guards help prevent spinal injuries.
- Shin pads must be worn under sweat pants or hockey socks. Elbow pads must be worn under the jersey.

Meetings

All Walker Youth Hockey Association board meetings are open to the public and all parents, coaches and players are invited to attend.

Any member of Walker Youth Hockey may request to be added to the agenda by contacting the President of the Walker Youth Hockey prior to a scheduled meeting.

HDC meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month or as deemed necessary by the ACE Coordinator. These meetings are not open to the Association at large.

Zero Tolerance Policy

USA Hockey and Minnesota Hockey have a Zero tolerance policy in place which Walker Youth Hockey will follow. A copy of this policy can be obtained from the Walker Area Community Center.

Sexual and Physical Abuse Policy

USA Hockey and Minnesota Hockey have a Sexual and a Physical abuse policy in place that Walker Youth Hockey will follow. A copy of this policy can be obtained from the Walker Area Community Center.

Consumption/Use/Abuse of Mood Altering Substances

USA and Minnesota Hockey have a Consumption/Use/Abuse of Mood Altering Substances policy in place that Walker Youth Hockey will follow. A copy of this policy can be obtained from the Walker Area Community Center or be found on line at www.leechlakehockey.com

Screening Policy

USA Hockey requires screening of all coaches, officials, team managers and anybody who has contact with youth players. Walker Youth Hockey complies with the screening requirements of USA Hockey.

Fundraising

Each hockey family is required to do a minimum of 30 volunteer hours. Volunteer hours may be obtained by doing any combination of the following:

- Work stations during home games
- Work stations during tournaments
- Assisting with monthly pull tab audit
- Assisting with selling meat raffles tickets at Charlie's, Third Base or McGuires

Hours will be based on actual time worked.

Fundraising is not required at the Mini-Mite and Mite level, but is encouraged.

It takes many more hours than the required 30 to keep hockey going, we cannot rely on just a few people to do all of the work. Many people do above and beyond, such as team managers, Zamboni drivers, Equipment Manager, Fundraising Coordinators, Board Members, Coaches, etc. and do not receive credit. We all need to work together and remember that hockey is run by volunteers.

Organizational Structure

USA Hockey www.usahockey.com

This is the governing body of the sport of 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 developing, advancing and administering the sport. USA Hockey is the official representative of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) and the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) in addition to its real purpose which is to administer youth hockey in the United States.

Minnesota Hockey www.minnesotahockey.org

This is the state affiliate organization of USA Hockey. It is responsible for administering youth hockey in Minnesota including sanctioning teams for district, regional and state playoffs at the Peewee, Girls 12U, Girls 14U and Bantam levels.

There are 16 Minnesota Hockey districts in Minnesota. Walker Youth Hockey Association is in District 15.

District 15 Hockey www.district15.pucksystems.com

There is not a structured district playoff program for Squirts and below. It is up to the local organization to determine the extent of play. It may be limited to "in-house" or between community associations in and outside the district. Minnesota Hockey rules limit Mite/Mini-Mite play to in-house and within the home district.

Policy Handbook Changes

The policy handbook may be changed by one reading at a meeting of the Board of Directors at which time a two-third affirmative vote of the Board of Directors will affect the policy handbook change.