



MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 8, 2026
TO: All AAHA Member Associations and Leagues
FROM: Glenn Hefferan, President
SUBJECT: 2026-2027 Tryout Rule Changes

On February 19, 2026, the Atlantic Amateur Hockey Association Board of Directors passed legislation that updated our Rules and Regulations. The complete updated Rules and Regulations will be published on our website shortly. In the meantime, please review the attached excerpts from both the USA Hockey-approved legislative proposals and our Rules and Regulations that govern tryouts.

USA Hockey Annual Guide Approved Legislative Proposal – Registrar’s #8

C. Registration

The team roster registration form (1-T) shall be completed and forwarded to the official district registration office by the appropriate date as set forth in the USA Hockey Annual Guide of the current playing season for teams eligible for district playoffs and national championships.

The team roster registration form (1-T) shall not be effective until the date it is approved by the official District or Associate Registrar through the USA Hockey portal.

One Team – One Roster - Players rostered on a Tier 1 declared team may not be rostered on any other regular season, Invitational Tournament or Pre/Post roster unless properly released from their Tier 1 team per section III.B.(b), or as permitted under Rule & Regulation III.F.

A limit of twenty (20) players at any one time may be registered per team except for (1) high school, girls high school, college and women’s college which may roster 30 players and may dress 20 players, (2) adult and women’s teams which may roster 25 players and may dress 20 players, **and (3) Tier I teams at the 18U, 16U and 15O youth classifications and 19U girls classification which may roster and dress 22 players, of which not more than 20 shall be skaters (see Section XI: Junior Hockey for junior roster limits).** Affiliates may allow their post-season (spring/summer) teams, formed to play between the end of the last USA Hockey Youth/Girls National Championship and August 31, to have a limit of twenty-five (25) players on a roster and may dress twenty (20) players per game. A player may be registered in only one (1) national ice hockey federation.

The regular season shall be September 1 through August 31. New members or those members who register on or after April 1 of any calendar year are eligible for participation from the date of their registration through August 31 of the following calendar year.

EXCERPTS FROM THE AAHA 2026-2027 RULE BOOK

RELATED TO TRYOUTS.

(Complete Update to be published shortly).

Article IV. TRYOUTS

A. TRYOUTS

1. At the end of each playing season, all players are free to try out for any USA Hockey Member Association on the official AAHA Tryout Dates, which are published on the AAHA website.

B. TIME FOR TRYOUTS

1. Associations and/or Teams may not hold tryouts for the upcoming season before the official AAHA tryout dates, as published on the AAHA website.
2. Any Association and/or Team that provides a written contract or requires the collection of money from a player or a player's family, parent/guardian, before the official AAHA tryout dates shall be subject to sanctions. See the USA Hockey Annual Guide for more information on www.usahockey.com.
3. Associations and/or Teams may not hold tryouts, evaluations, training camps, skills sessions, or any other program that includes players not currently registered with that Association before the official AAHA tryout dates.
4. Associations and/or Teams found in violation of AAHA Governing Documents may be subject to suspension and/or sanctions in accordance with the USA Hockey Annual Guide.

C. SIGNING PERIOD

1. A player may not be signed to a contract for the following season before the official AAHA tryout dates. All player contracts must include the player's team age classification and level before being signed by the player and the parent or guardian.
2. For 13-Only through 19U, player contracts are valid from the date the player contract was signed until 48 hours after the conclusion of the USA Hockey National Championships of that season (the first day of tryouts for the following season).

3. For players 12U and younger, player contracts are valid from the date the player contract was signed until 48 hours after the conclusion AAHA District Championships of that season (the first day of tryouts for the following season).
4. Additional information on roster restrictions is provided in the Rosters Article.

Article V. ROSTERS

A. REGISTRATION OF TEAMS

1. In accordance with the USA Hockey Annual Guide, Team Membership and Registration, all AAHA Association teams must:
 - a. Register with USA Hockey in the manner prescribed.
 - b. Register their teams through the official USA Hockey Registry.
 - c. Be in good standing with the AAHA.

B. ELIGIBILITY AND SEASON DATES

1. USA Hockey defines the regular season as September 1st through August 31st. The AAHA recognizes that some of its teams may begin their playing season sooner than September 1st. The AAHA Registrar designates the earlier season start date in the USA Hockey Registry Technical Bulletin each year to permit the AAHA playing season to begin before September 1st. All team rosters must be approved by the AAHA Registrar before the first game is played.
2. In accordance with the USA Hockey Annual Guide, all teams must be registered and approved before playing any games. Deadlines for registering teams are as follows:
 - a. Approved Tier I (AAA) teams - October 15th
 - b. Approved Tier II (AA, A, B) teams - February 15th
 - c. Approved High School (Scholastic) teams - February 15th

C. PLAYER ROSTERING

1. Roster Forms: All Associations must submit USA Hockey rosters for approval using the USAH Registry to participate in USA Hockey-sanctioned games and tournaments. Specific details regarding roster approval requirements may be found in the USA Hockey Registry and the AAHA Technical Bulletin, published each season.
2. Tier I Youth – 2 Player Roster Rule: The Tier I Youth 2 Player Roster Rule limits the number of eligible players who can be rostered on a USA Hockey Tier I Youth Team.
 - a. No team can be the recipient of more than two (2) players from any single Tier I or Tier II Youth or Girls team from another Association's previous season team (10U classification and higher).

- b.** Players exempt from this provision are those who:
 - i.** Play at the 18U Youth level; or
 - ii.** Move up or transfer from within the same Association or from the prospective Tier I AAA team's feeder team(s), provided the player(s) were on the same Association or feeder team's roster in the previous season; or
 - iii.** Attend an on-ice tryout with their original Association and are subsequently cut or are not offered a player contract.
 - iv.** Join an Association that is based at the same ice arena that the Head Coach's and/or Assistant Coach's team used for the majority of their practice and home game ice in the prior season.

- 3.** Tier I Girls – 2/4 Roster Rule: The Tier I Girls 2/4 Player Roster Rule limits the number of eligible players who can be rostered on a USA Hockey Tier I Team.
 - a.** No team can be the recipient of more than two (2) players from any single Tier I Youth or Girls team from another Association's previous season team (10U classification and higher).
 - b.** No team can be the recipient of more than four (4) players from any single Tier II Youth or Girls team from another Association's previous season team (10U classification and higher).
 - c.** Players exempt from this provision are those who:
 - i.** Play at the 19U Girls level; or
 - ii.** Move up or transfer from within the same Association or from the prospective Tier I AAA team's feeder team(s), provided the player(s) were on the same Association or feeder team's roster in the previous season; or
 - iii.** Attend an on-ice tryout with their original Association and are subsequently cut or are not offered a player contract.
 - iv.** Join an Association that is based at the same ice arena that the Head Coach's and/or Assistant Coach's team used for the majority of their practice and home game ice in the prior season.

- 4.** Tier II Youth and Girls Rosters: A Tier II Youth or Girls team shall not roster more than three (3) players from another Association's Tier II roster where the Head Coach and or Assistant Coach were on the other Association's previous season's roster. Example: Coach Smith from Association "A" leaves after the current season to coach for Association "B" at the same age level and category, or the next older age level or category. Only three (3) players from Association "A" can be rostered for the coming season on Coach Smith's upcoming season team. Players exempt from this provision are those who:
 - a.** Attend an on-ice tryout with their original Association and are subsequently cut or not offered a player contract.

5. Girls teams at Tier II 14U and 16U National Tournament Bound levels: No team can be the recipient of more than two (2) players from any single Tier II Girls 14U or 16U National Tournament Bound team from another Association's previous season team. Players exempt from this provision are those who:
 - a. Attend an on-ice tryout with their original Association and are subsequently cut or not offered a player contract.

6. Non-Tier I, Non-Tier II, Youth or Girls Teams, and Independent Teams: The roster of a Non-Tier I, Non-Tier II, Non-National Bound, Independent Team and/or Tournament Team in Youth or Girls categories shall not roster more than two (2) players who appeared on another Association's Tier I Youth or Girls National Tournament Bound Roster, or four (4) players who appeared on another Association's Tier II Youth or Girls National Tournament Bound Roster from the previous season. Players exempt from this provision are those who:
 - a. Legitimately try out with their original Association and are subsequently cut, or who are not offered a player contract.
 - b. Join an Association based at the same ice arena that the Head Coach's and/or Assistant Coach's team used for the majority of their practice and home game ice in the prior season.

D. PLAYER VERIFICATION

1. All players must complete the Player Verification process, as outlined on the AAHA website.

E. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

1. Notwithstanding the in-season player movement rules herein, during the season, a player may play ice hockey for only one Association.

F. DUAL ROSTERING

1. Players may only appear on one USA Hockey roster with one Association during the USA Hockey regular season - September 1 (or as permitted by the AAHA Registrar) through the end of the USA Hockey National Championship Tournament, with the following exceptions:
 - a. A Junior team as permitted by the USA Hockey Junior Affiliated player rule.
 - b. AAHA recognized scholastic teams (plays in a scholastic league).
 - c. AAHA in-house and recreational teams.
 - d. AAHA Affiliate-sponsored teams.
 - e. AAHA In-Season Tournament team as outlined in the In-Season Tournament rule.

2. Girls may be dual rostered on one (1) Youth and one (1) Girls travel Association team. However, at the 12U level and higher, the dual rostered player must declare

in writing to the AAHA Registrar by February 15th on which National and/or District Championship Bound team the player wishes to be eligible to participate should both teams advance to AAHA post-season play.

If the player does not indicate which team she wishes to be eligible for District, State, Regional, and National Tournaments, the AAHA Registrar shall have the final authority to certify the eligibility of any such player solely based on the date the earliest team roster registration form is received, as provided above.

G. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- 1.** No player may be added to a team roster or participate with a team within the AAHA if the player has an outstanding financial obligation to the player's previous USA Hockey-registered Association until it is resolved with the previous Association and a financial release has been issued.
- 2.** It is recommended that each Association include a notice in its player contract stating that the person signing the player contract agrees to be bound by this Article regarding Player Eligibility, the AAHA's Outstanding Financial Obligation List, Releases, and Appeals.
- 3.** All Association payment plans should be in writing.
- 4.** Associations may submit a list of players who have not satisfied their financial obligation to the AAHA by March 1st of the current season to have the players' names added to the Outstanding Financial Obligation List. This list shall be published and distributed to all AAHA Associations. Players named on the list will not be permitted to be added to any AAHA roster until their financial obligation is satisfied. Once the financial obligation is satisfied, the Association must notify AAHA to remove the player's name from the Outstanding Financial Obligation List. It is recommended that Associations notify the signatory(ies) of the player agreement by no later than February 28th of the Association's intent to add the player's name to the Outstanding Financial Obligation List.
- 5.** Any player who is placed on the AAHA Outstanding Financial Obligation List has the right to appeal in accordance with the Suspensions, Protests and Resolution of Disputes Article if they disagree with the Association's inclusion of their name on the list.

H. NATIONAL/DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIP AGE ELIGIBILITY

- 1.** Pursuant to USA Hockey - District, State, and National Championship requirements, players 12 years old and younger shall be prohibited from being rostered on any Youth or Girls teams older than 12U, with the following exceptions:
 - a.** 12U youth players playing in a 14U non-checking youth classification.

- b. A 12-year-old goaltender may be rostered on the 14U-A or 14U-B team of the same Association where the player was rostered the previous season, provided the Association's Coaching Director submits a 12U Goaltender Waiver Form available on the AAHA website, and it is approved by the AAHA. The team rostering the underage goaltender is not eligible to compete in the USA Hockey National Championship Tournament or in any regular-season games or playoffs leading up to it. The proposed goaltender must have been rostered and played on a travel team from the immediate prior season with the same Association requesting the waiver. New players to the Association are not eligible. If granted, the waiver is non-transferable to another Association.

I. EXCEPTIONAL STATUS AT TIER I-16AAA

- 1. AAHA National Tournament-bound 16U AAA Youth teams may only roster two (2) underage players (those defined as eligible to play on a 15 Only team). There is a one (1) player limit for a player who was rostered with a different AAHA Association the previous season. The total number of players permitted to be rostered is two (2) players.

a. TIER I AND TIER II GIRLS ROSTERING

Tier I and Tier II AA and A 14U teams: No underage players are permitted to play up to 14U AA; however, up to two (2) 12-year-old Girls may play up on a Girls 14U Tier II team that is not District or Tournament-bound.

- b. Tier I and Tier II AA 16U teams: A maximum of two (2) second-year 14U players may play up at 16U. First-year 14U players are not permitted to play up.
- c. Tier I and Tier II AA 19U teams: Unlimited second-year 16U players may play up to 19U. First-year 16U players are not permitted to play up.

Article VII. ADM COMPLIANCE

A. ADM COORDINATOR

- 1. The AAHA has appointed an American Development Model (ADM) Coordinator to oversee the program. The ADM Coordinator, in consultation with the Coach in Chief, will make recommendations regarding ADM implementation and compliance with AAHA's Governing Documents to the AAHA Executive Board annually, before the AAHA Annual Meeting. The ADM Coordinator will be responsible for ADM implementation, compliance and management for the AAHA.

B. ADM COMPLIANCE DESCRIPTION

- 1. ADM compliance in the AAHA includes the following categories. The overall ADM model is available on the USA Hockey website.

2. 6U Games, Teams and Players:

- a. All 6U teams are required to play cross ice. 6U teams are not permitted to play full ice at any time.
- b. Cross ice station-based practices and small area games.
- c. Mini nets or ADM skill nets. Use of goaltenders at this level is optional and may be decided on a case-by-case basis by each Association.
- d. USA Hockey-approved blue pucks must be used.
- e. Regular season length - approximately 20 weeks as published in the AAHA 6U/8U Guidelines on the AAHA website.
- f. USA Hockey-certified officials should officiate all games.

3. 8U Games, Teams and Players:

- a. All 8U teams are required to play either cross-ice or half-ice. 8U teams are not permitted to play full ice at any time.
- b. Half ice or cross ice station-based practices and small area games.
- c. Recommend ADM skill (or intermediate) nets if available.
- d. Rotation of players as goalies with full equipment.
- e. USA Hockey-approved blue pucks must be used.
- f. Regular season length - approximately 20 weeks as published in the AAHA 6U/8U Guidelines on the AAHA website.
- g. Recommend a minimum of two practices to one game ratio for travel teams (2:1 practice to game). All 8U registered "In House" or "Recreational" teams are required to play half or cross ice, but are not required to meet the 2:1 practice-to-game ratio.
- h. A maximum of 20 "game days" in a season. A "game day" may include more than one game, but should not exceed more than 3 hours of on-ice play in that game day.
- i. Participation in a maximum of 2 tournaments (excluding AAHA-hosted jamborees) is permitted per season.
- j. USA Hockey Officials are required for all games. One official per half ice game.

C. AGE COMPLIANCE

- 1. 4-year-old and Younger: Players who are 4 years old or younger, regardless of team classification, are not permitted to play at the 10U level or higher under any circumstances
- 2. Travel Players: Players who are 7 years old or younger shall not be permitted to play up to the 10U level or higher on any travel or independent team.
- 3. Scholastic Players: Players who are 5 or 6 years old and attend school are permitted to be rostered on Elementary (scholastic) rosters, if permitted by their league rules. Please refer to the Scholastic/High School Article for details.

4. In-House and Recreational League Players: Players that are in the 8U birth year classification may participate in In-House or Recreational leagues at the 10U age level without an ADM waiver. Players who are 6 years old and younger are not permitted to play at the 10U level or higher under any circumstances other than the exception listed in the Scholastic/High School Article.

D. WAIVER PROCESS

1. Each Association may request up to two (2) waivers for 8U Major (oldest birth year in the classification) players from within the Association to be rostered on a 9U Tier I (AAA) travel team, any 10U Tier II travel team, or any 10U independent team. This waiver limit applies to both girls and youth classifications, meaning each Association is limited to two (2) waivers in total, regardless of tier or classification.
2. To be considered for a roster waiver, the 8U Major (oldest birth year in the classification) must have been included on an approved USA Hockey roster for the prior two seasons, the most recent being with the Association requesting the waiver. New 8-year-old players at any Association, whether new to the sport or new to the Association, are ineligible. Waivers are granted to the Association, not to the player. The player does not retain approval if they change Associations.
3. The Under-Age Player Roster Waiver Form, found on the AAHA website, must be completed and submitted electronically by the Association's Coaching Director to the ADM Coordinator. Submission of the request will attest that the player(s) are significantly proficient in participating in the levels described above. The ADM Coordinator will review and authorize the request.
4. The ADM Coordinator is authorized to periodically audit Associations that were granted ADM waivers and may assign an experienced hockey coach to review an Association's selection of those player(s) receiving waivers.
5. Abuse of this waiver policy will result in the loss of an Association's ability to participate in this waiver process for a minimum of one season, as determined by the ADM Coordinator.
6. The ADM Coordinator has the authority to deny an Association's issuance of a waiver in cases where the ADM Committee believes the Association misused the waiver process.
7. Under no circumstances will more than two (2) Under-Age Waiver requests be sanctioned in a single season for an Association unless there are exigent circumstances, which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

E. NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ADM RULES

1. Non-compliance with the AAHA ADM Rules may result in sanctions and/or monetary fines to the Association, not to exceed \$1,000.00 per violation.

F. DEFINITION OF ADM TEAM CATEGORIES

1. In-House: Teams do not leave the building
2. Recreational: Teams that leave the building to play other “rink-run” recreational teams and play a maximum of 25 games per season.
3. Travel: Teams that leave the building and may be members of a league.
4. Independent: Teams that leave the building and operate independently of any league.

D. RECOGNIZED ASSOCIATION DEVELOPMENT LEVELS AND TRYOUT DATES

1. AAHA acknowledges that Associations may choose to roster non-National Tournament-bound teams at their approved tier (e.g., Major, Minor, AA, A, B, National, Premier, Elite, etc.) to support the league's and its members' overall player development objectives and in accordance with the Annual Guide.
2. AAHA Associations approved for Tier I AAA National Tournament-bound teams (13O, 14U, 15O, 16U, 18U Youth and 14U, 16U, and 19U Girls) are allowed to field Tier I AAA 10U and 12U Major and Minor teams. Approved Associations may advertise and hold tryouts for these teams in accordance with the AAHA Tryouts Article.
3. AAHA Tier I Associations are only permitted to field one (1) team per age level authorized by the AAHA. Associations are not allowed to advertise or roster more than one (1) Tier I AAA team per level they are approved for. During Tier I tryouts, Associations may not tryout more than one (1) team per age level and may not sign players to any additional team at that age level until the appropriate AAHA tryout date.
4. Associations approved for Tier II AA National Tournament-bound teams (Youth 14U, 16U, 18U, and Girls 14U, 16U, and 19U) may offer Tier II AA 10U and 12U teams. Approved Associations may advertise and hold tryouts for these teams in accordance with AAHA Tryouts Article.
5. Associations approved for Girls Tier II AA National Tournament-bound teams are limited to one National Tournament-bound team at 14U, 16U, and 19U levels.
6. AAHA team classifications are in alignment with the USA Hockey Annual Guide. AAHA Associations shall not make any reference or indicate in any way “Tier I Mite”, “AAA Mite”, “Full Ice Mite”, or similar term associated with their Tier I or Tier II

program.

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- 2.** AAHA Associations approved for Tier I AAA National Tournament-bound teams (13O, 14U, 15O, 16U, 18U Youth and 14U, 16U, and 19U Girls) are allowed to field AAA 10U and 12U Major and Minor teams. These levels cannot use the Tier I designation. Approved Associations may advertise and hold tryouts for these teams in accordance with AAHA Tryouts Article.
- 3.** AAHA Tier I Associations are only permitted to field one (1) team per age level authorized by the AAHA. Associations are not allowed to advertise or roster more than one (1) Tier I AAA team per level they are approved for. During Tier I tryouts, Associations may not tryout more than one (1) team per age level and may not sign players to any additional team at that age level until the appropriate AAHA tryout date.
- 4.** Associations approved for Tier II AA National Tournament-bound teams (Youth 14U, 16U, 18U, and Girls 14U, 16U, and 19U) may offer Tier II AA 10U and 12U teams. Approved Associations may advertise and hold tryouts for these teams in accordance with AAHA Tryouts Article.
- 5.** Associations approved for Girls Tier II AA National Tournament-bound teams are limited to one National Tournament-bound team at 14U, 16U, and 19U levels.
- 6.** AAHA team classifications are in alignment with the USA Hockey Annual Guide. AAHA Associations shall not make any reference or indicate in any way “Tier I Mite”, “AAA Mite”, “Full Ice Mite”, or similar term associated with their Tier I or Tier II program.

Article IX. TOURNAMENTS

- 10.** Limitation on Dual Rostering: No player rostered on a Tier I AAA or Tier II team, including teams designated as AA, A, or B at any age classification, shall be permitted to participate with more than one team in a District Championship or National Tournament Bound Championship in the post-season.