



From the desk of
Tom Berry:

Youth Tier II/A
SPRING 2026
2026-27 Regular Season

To: Head Coaches, Association Presidents, MAHA Representatives

I wanted to take a few minutes to remind everyone of the MAHA and USA Hockey tryout rules and also emphasize that the rules for the MAHA Spring 2026 Season are the same as for the MAHA 2026-2027 Regular Season including those for rostering.

TRYOUTS

The MAHA has very specific rules on when tryouts can begin for Post Season (Spring 2026) and Regular Season (2026-27 fall/winter) play. Publicly in print, make it clear that the tryouts you are hosting are for the Spring 2026 Season team. These dates are shown on the MAHA website: <https://www.maha.org/2026tryouts>

The District Chairpersons have already received complaints of tampering and tryout violations. From the MAHA Vice-President of Youth Hockey: *"The basic rule of thumb is to be fair to opponents and respectful to players who may not be on your team next season. The wording from MAHA reads: No team may recruit or solicit players, offer contracts, hold tryouts, conditioning skates, or any activity that could be construed as a tryout/solicitation or recruitment or player evaluation until specific dates... Some options for coaches interested in recruiting would be to attend player's games, review LiveBarn video, or watch a practice. Everyone is allowed to have a wish list; you just have to wait to act. This rule applies to all team ice and activities."*

The MAHA Vice-President of Youth did clarify that you are not allowed to have anyone from outside your Association/Club on your current season (2025-2026) ice (or any ice for that matter with you or your staff present on the ice), even with the other coaches written permission.

Attachment 1 is a summary of the MAHA rules on tryouts/tampering.

This is the current language from USA Hockey:

"Tryout" means any process on or off-ice that evaluates a player or group of players for the purpose of choosing players for a program or team. A Tryout also includes any team practices, off ice training sessions, open skates, skills sessions, or identification skates which include a player that is not on a regular season USA Hockey Roster with that association's teams or program. USA Hockey programs, coaches and administrators are not permitted to operate a program outside of USA Hockey as a means of avoiding the prohibitions on tryouts or recruiting. While USA Hockey does not restrict a coach's private business, if a coach runs a private camp, meeting, event, skate or skills clinic outside of USA Hockey for one or more players, then the coach and/or team/program should be investigated as Code of Conduct/tampering and the player should face disciplinary action.

A player's obligation to his/her regular season team ends on April 30 of the current season or when his/her regular season team becomes inactive prior to that date. A team becomes inactive when their ice contract ends. An "interest" skate is considered a tryout. An "open skate" is considered a tryout.

Players on your current roster should not be skating with any other non Association/Club team, no exceptions.

The USA Hockey Coaching Ethics Code provides:

"Coaches will not recruit a participant who is already a member of another USA Hockey team. Direct contact by a coach or his/her staff or indirect contact through an agent or parent during the playing season with a participant who is a member of another USA Hockey team is considered tampering and is prohibited."

POSTING OF TRYOUT DATES

The MAHA has posted dates on when tryouts can begin. Here is the link for when your tryouts can begin.

<https://www.maha.org/2026tryouts>

Please note the distinction between Spring 2026 (Spring Tryouts) and the 2026-2027 Season (Fall Tryouts). In many cases the dates are different.

The MAHA recommends that tryout dates be posted on the Association/Club website. You may post elsewhere, but at a minimum, postings should be on the Association/Club website. Postings should include: National/Non-National bound, Age Classification, Tier, Youth/Girls', Date, Time, Location, Cost.

MAHA has also added a Tryout Locator to their website: <https://www.maha.org/2026tryouts> You are encouraged to post your tryouts on the MAHA site in addition to your Association/Club website.

ELECTRONIC SIGNUP

Associations/Clubs are encouraged to have some sort of electronic sign up.

USA Hockey membership numbers should be a required field in the electronic signup. This protects both the player and the Association/Club.

OUT OF DISTRICT PLAYERS YOUTH TIER 2 AND A

NEW FOR 2026-2027

See Appendix 1

INTER-STATE RELEASE FOR TIER 2/A PLAYERS

Tier 2/A players that live close to the state lines and do not have a place to play and/or the rink in the other affiliate is the closest option, must obtain a release in order to roster in the Affiliate that is not where their residence is.

Any players coming into Michigan from border states needs to get a release from either Mid-Am (Ohio and Indiana) or Wisconsin prior to being able to roster with one of our MAHA associations. Likewise, players leaving Michigan and going to those states must have MAHA signoff to roster in the other Affiliate.

The form is online on MAHA website [Moving to Michigan](#)

If a player is coming to Michigan, they must have the release completed by the bordering affiliate. It would then go to the Chairperson of the Michigan District for approval prior to rostering.

HOW MANY PLAYERS CAN BE ROSTERED

64th MAHA Annual Guide

II. Registration and Rostering: Participants and Teams

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4. Spring/Summer type teams formed to play between the end of the last USA Hockey Youth/Girls National Championship and August 31, have a limit of twenty-five (25) players on a roster and may dress twenty (20) players per game.

12 YEAR OLD PLAYERS

No player 12 years of age or younger (as defined in the age classification chart for the 2026-2027 Season is eligible to play on a team to compete in the District or National Championships or playoffs leading thereto.

MAHA RULES REGARDING COACH/MANAGER MOVEMENT

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VII. COACHING REQUIREMENTS

3. Any Association or Club with a head coach, assistant coach, or manager that formerly coached or managed in another Association or Club shall not be restricted on the amount of individuals from their preceding regular or post season team(s) pending the head coach, assistant coach, or manager has a signed letter from both the preceding and new association club approving the move; submitted both letters to the affected district(s); and receive approval from said district(s).

Where the above criteria are not met, the head coach, assistant, or manager that formerly coached or managed in another Association or Club shall not have a team with more than 50% of its players who played on a team coached or managed by one or more of these individuals during the preceding regular or post season.

TAMPERING RULES

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VII. COACHING REQUIREMENTS

REVISED FOR 2026-2027

11. No coach, manager, or other team official, connected with a rostered team may directly or indirectly entice, influence or contact a player on a rostered team. Violation of this rule will result in a recommended suspension of not less than one year.

XIV. SPRING/SUMMER LEAGUES

3. A player's obligation to his/her regular season team ends on April 30th of the current season, or when his/her regular season team becomes inactive prior to that date.
4. A player who is a member of an active regular season team may register and play in spring/summer leagues and conditioning programs if he/she has the written permission of his/her regular season team coach or manager.
5. A player's obligation to his/her spring/summer league or conditioning program ends with the completion of the league or conditioning programs schedule, or when he/she is released in writing prior to that date.

You are not allowed to talk to players/families prior to your first MAHA approved tryout date; except for those Tier 1 National bound teams.

ROSTERING

All teams will be required to be rostered for Spring whether they play games or not.

Rostering rules should follow the 2026-2027 Regular Season.

If you have coaches that will be moving up an age classification this Spring (example: 8U to 10U), the coaches will need to complete the age based modules in order to be on the roster. They can begin now meeting this requirement.

If you have new coaches, those coaches will need to register with USA Hockey as a coach, complete the USA Hockey background check, complete Safe Sport training, complete concussion training, and the age based modules prior to being placed on a roster. They can begin now meeting these requirements.

XIV. Spring/Summer League

10. Spring/Summer players must play in the USA Hockey age classification they will be in for the next Regular (winter) hockey season.

DUAL ROSTERING

In all Youth divisions, a player may register and play with a maximum of two teams at a time in the Spring/Summer season.

MAHA MICHIGAN RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS POLICY

This policy applies to all Tier 1 players; it also applies to Tier 2 National bound players; who have moved or are moving to Michigan. More information at: <https://www.maha.org/page/show/1208140-youth>

This is a very time intensive process.

TEAM NAMES

Teams may not use 'Selects', 'Elite', 'Premier', or the like in their team's name or market themselves as such including but not limited to tryout advertising, jerseys, player enticement, etc. Teams found in violation shall have the Head Coach suspended up to the remainder of the current season and the following season.

Associations/Clubs rostering these teams shall be subject to disciplinary action.

CONCUSSION TRAINING

Michigan's Sports Concussion Law requires coaches and other adults involved in youth sports to complete online concussion awareness training *every three years*. Anyone with a certificate on file prior to 4/2023, will need to recertify and provide an updated certificate prior to rostering to the Association/Club.

HELMETS

All Districts will continue with the USA Hockey required 30-day suspensions for on-ice helmet violations. This is a serious matter that could affect the USA Hockey Insurance for everyone involved. If anyone is on the ice including skill instructors, without a helmet, the suspension is to the head coach.

IV. Youth & Age Division Classifications

B. 14U - 18U Tier II Category and AA Division (Note: in the 16 and Under Age Classification, Tier II is "A") and 10U - 12U Travel Category and AA Division.

1. The Tier II category and the Travel Category AA Divisions are the next level of competitive hockey in Michigan. Teams in this category include teams which plays in a declared Tier II or Travel AA league or any team playing an independent schedule, registered as a Tier II or Travel AA team. The recognized Youth age classifications shall be the Youth 10U, 12U, 14U, 16U and 18U. The 14U, 16U and 18U age classifications are National bound classifications and the teams must meet all National bound eligibility requirements. Teams in the Youth 10U and 12U age classifications are eligible for MAHA State playoffs and must meet all requirements to be eligible for MAHA State playoffs.
2. 10U-14U Classification teams must ensure that no more than 50% of their rostered players reside outside the District in which the team is registered provided those players are Michigan residents, as defined by the MAHA Residency Policy and are MAHA registered participants. Said teams will be restricted to three (3) Out-of-State players (bordering states, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Indiana only).
3. A player who participated with an Association/Club at both 7U and 8U birth years regardless of residing in a different District or State (bordering states, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Indiana only) shall be considered an In-District player for that Association/Club continuing into the 10U Classification. Teams must follow all applicable USAH Rostering Rules.
4. A player whose USA Hockey registered home address falls within the same Michigan Public School District as the Association's/Club's home rink shall be considered an In-District player for that Association/Club.
5. Any team in the Youth 16U or 18U Age Classification shall be allowed an unlimited number of Out-of-District players provided those players are Michigan residents, as defined by the MAHA Residency Policy and are MAHA registered participants. Said teams will be restricted to three (3) Out-of-State players (bordering states, Ohio, Wisconsin and Indiana only).

IV. Youth & Age Division Classifications

C. 10U - 18U Travel Category and A Division

1. The Travel category is a level of select hockey in Michigan. Teams in this category include teams which play in a declared Travel A Division league or any team playing an independent schedule, registered as a Travel A team. The recognized Youth classifications shall be the Youth 9U, 11U, and 13U age classifications. The Travel category will be the A Division. Teams in this classification are eligible for MAHA State playoffs and must meet all requirements to be eligible for MAHA State playoffs.
2. A 14 and under, 12 and under and 10 and under team in this classification shall not have players who are in their last year of eligibility. In the 15/16 classification, no players from the 17/18 classification are allowed.
3. Teams must ensure that no more than 50% of their rostered players reside outside the District in which the team is registered provided those players are Michigan residents, as defined by the MAHA Residency Policy and are MAHA registered participants. Said teams will be restricted to three (3) Out-of-State players (bordering states, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Indiana only).
4. A player who participated with an Association/Club at both the 7U and 8U birth years regardless of residing in a different District or State (bordering states, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Indiana only) shall be considered an In-District player for that Association/Club continuing into the 9U Classification. Teams must follow all applicable USAH Rostering Rules.
5. A player whose USA Hockey registered home address falls within the same Michigan Public School District as the Association's/Club's home rink shall be considered an In-District player for that Association/Club.
6. In the 16U Classification teams will be allowed an unlimited number of Out-of-District players provided those players are Michigan residents, as defined by the MAHA Residence Policy and are MAHA registered participants. Said teams will be restricted to three (3) Out-of-State players (bordering states, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Indiana only).