



From the desk of
Tom Berry:

Girls Tier I
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/OUT OF STATE PLAYERS GIRLS'

Category	Division	Girls Classification	Out of District/Out of State	
Travel	AAA	12U	2 import players	d, e
Tier I	AAA	14U Nat bound	2 import players	d, e
Teri I	AAA	16U Nat bound	3 import players	d, e
Tier I	AAA	19U Nat bound	6 import players	d, e

d. An import player is an out of state player that lives in Michigan with a Michigan address whose parents have assigned guardianship to a family in Michigan. Import players must produce documentation from the school/district they are attending.

e. There are no District restrictions.

Tier 1 organizations are restricted to only two players per team that are non-US citizens.

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.

YOUTH AND GIRLS' TIER 1 PLAYER MOVEMENT RESTRICTION

ALL AGE CLASSIFICATIONS

MAHA rule applying to all Tier I teams: "For the 2026-27 Regular Season, once a player is approved on a MAHA Tier I roster, said player may not roster with another MAHA Tier I team for the 2026-27 Regular Season. Players wishing to leave said team may move to a Tier II program only. These players would fall under the financial policies in the MAHA Affiliate Agreement for MAHA Tier I players. In the case of a team-initiated player release, said player may roster with another MAHA Tier I or Tier II team and the financial policies in the MAHA Affiliate Agreement for non-Tier I players apply. There are no exceptions and no appeals."

As a reminder, in the 2026-27 Regular Season, once a player contract is signed the player is bound to the team and the team is bound to the player. There is no such thing as a "skill based cut". In a situation where a player is perceived not to be at the appropriate skill level required by the Club/Association, the Club/Association should work with the player and player's family to identify this concern and work out a plan that accommodates the player and the team which might include the relocation of the player to a different team which would then be considered a "mutual agreement". Associations/Clubs can contact the MAHA Vice President for Youth for guidance.

HOW MANY PLAYERS CAN BE ROSTERED

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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.

For the 2026-27 Regular Season, Youth and Girls' Tier I teams at the 18U, 16U and 150 youth classifications and 19U Girls' classification may roster and dress 22 players, of which not more than 20 shall be skaters.

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.

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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.

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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.

TEAM FORMATION

Beginning at the 14U age group at the Girls' Tier I and Girls' Tier II levels, to be able to roster a team there shall have been a Tier I, Tier II or Tier III team in the Association or Club one age classification younger or in the same age group in the previous regular hockey season. When starting a 10U or 12U team there is no requirement for an Association or Club to have had a team in the previous season at the age group below. For a 14U team to form, a 12U or 14U team must have been in place the previous year. For a 16U team to form, a 14U or 16U team must have been in place the previous season. For a 19U team to form, a 19U or 16U team must have been in place the previous season. An Association or Club that wants to form a Girls team, yet does not meet the previous year team requirement, can petition the MAHA Girls' Committee for an exception, and must demonstrate that the team formation is not creating negative consequences for Girls teams in other Associations or Clubs.

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.

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.