



**2026 GIRLS U18 NATIONAL
PLAYER DEVELOPMENT GUIDE**

USA Hockey Girls Player Development Program

The enclosed guide outlines USA Hockey’s Girls Player Development Program. USA Hockey continues to make modifications to enhance the effectiveness of its female player development programs and align with U.S. Women’s National Team programming. The Girls Player Development program aims to further develop and evaluate the top female players for the next level of play and create a competitive environment for the best female players across the country. The enclosed guide provides specific details about the objectives, eligibility, and dates of the 2026 Girls Player Development Program.

USA Hockey Girls National Development Camp OBJECTIVES

The objectives at all three USA Hockey Girls National Development Camps are:

- ✓ Long-Term Athlete Development
- ✓ Off-Ice Development
- ✓ On-Ice Development
- ✓ National Competition
- ✓ Evaluation & Assessment
- ✓ Synergy with Women’s National Team



Objectives & Development Process

USA Hockey's girls player development program aims to develop and evaluate the top female players for the next level of play and create a competitive environment for the best female players across the country. The overall objective is to provide all girls who participate in USA Hockey's National Player Development Camps with the resources for effective training to maximize their playing potential. The experience at national camps exposes participants to various 'best practices' and training strategies so players can return home with the tools to develop their skills over the course of that season (and seasons to come). The age-appropriate resources and developmental programming at Girls National Player Development Camps are aligned with the Women's National Team's training, expectations, and culture. This gives emerging U18 players the proper foundation necessary to progress and develop into players that have the hockey skills, off-ice training, and mental skills necessary to succeed at the highest level. Four-time Olympian, Julie Chu, notes the benefits of these camps:

“National Player Development Camps are critical to the improvement of our players and the foundation for our future National Team members. Having gone to these development camps as a player, and more recently as a coach, I know the difference they can make. They allow our players to understand what it takes to train and compete against the best in our nation. Instead of waiting until players are older to understand the culture and the standards of our program, the development camps introduce these concepts early on so these players are better prepared to represent the United States at the collegiate and international levels.”

Players during off-ice training at 16/17 Camp



USA Hockey continues to enhance its scouting and evaluation process and tracks each individual player who advances to any of the Girls National Player Development Camps. District Tryouts are the best way for USA Hockey to evaluate players and compare players' abilities among the best in each District. USA Hockey also works to evaluate players and scout games throughout the hockey season. USA Hockey values players who possess individual and team skills, hockey sense, a high compete level, and show continued improvement.

USA Hockey looks for players who leverage the information and resources shared with them and who demonstrate steady improvement in the various areas they were exposed to during previous camps (i.e. mental performance, physiological performance, strength & conditioning, and on-ice concepts). Every player at these ages who is applying the training strategies provided by USA Hockey will have the opportunity to maximize their development. Nicole Hensley, member of the gold-medal winning 2018 Olympic Women's Hockey Team, provides her take on the increase in talent at each age and continuous improvement:

“As a Strength and Conditioning coach at camp, it was impressive to see the improvement in off-ice testing numbers and how the players value their off-ice training. The camps stress the importance of getting better every day, and each girl receives feedback they can take home with them and continue to work to improve their own game.”

Being identified as a player who advances to the U18 Women's National Team Festival indicates that she has advanced quickly in the 15-17 year old range, but USA Hockey cautions that being selected to this camp is not an effective long-term indicator of who will be an elite player at the collegiate and/or National Team level. Every girl who attends a USA Hockey National Player Development Camp has the potential to emerge as an elite player.

While playing for a competitive collegiate program is a goal for most players who attend National Player Development Camps, USA Hockey also understands the overarching goal and dream of each player is to play for Team USA on an international level. It is important to note the average age of a player on the 2022 U.S. Women's Olympic Team was 25.9 years of age (7 years of development beyond the oldest U18 birth year). Recognizing the importance of long-term athlete development is a critical component to players putting themselves in the best position to reach their goals.



Three-time Olympian, Kacey Bellamy

Kacey Bellamy, three-time Olympian, shares her experience with the development program:

“Working towards your goals, day in and day out, representing your country proudly, and doing it with your best friends is not only an honor but also a dream. USA Hockey has given me the opportunity to be a part of something bigger than myself. It has surrounded me with some of the most competitive, driven, and hardworking people, with whole-hearted, genuine personalities that have left lasting impressions on my heart.”

Eligibility Criteria for Girls National Development Camps

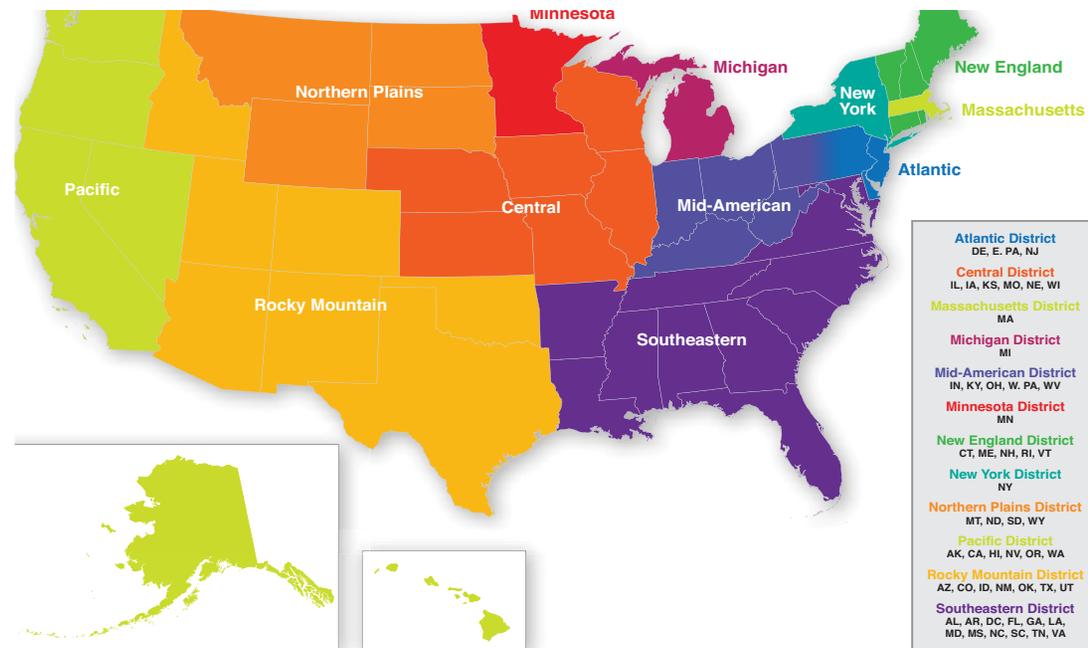
Each player must meet the criteria below to be eligible for potential advancement to the 2026 Girls National Development Camps:

1. Player must be in one of the three eligible birth years (2009, 2010, or 2011)*;
2. Player must hold U.S. citizenship; and
3. Player must participate in the tryout process in her “home district”

**To be eligible for the U19 Training Camp you must be in the 2007 or 2008 birth years and hold U.S. citizenship; however, no district tryout process will be held to select players for this camp*

Each District has a unique player development process that must be followed to be eligible for opportunities at the Affiliate, District, and/or National level. A player’s “home district” is the district where her family’s primary residence is and players must return to their “home district” to tryout. The typical player development process that a player must follow is:

Affiliate/State or Open Tryout → District Tryout → District, Regional, and/or National Player Development Camps



Note: Not all district’s have an Affiliate/State tryout prior to the District Tryout. See the District-Specific Guide. Players on the U18 Women’s World Championship roster waived to the final phase of the district tryout process and are not required to attend an affiliate tryout or any earlier phases of a district tryout.



2026 GIRLS 15 PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CAMP

Participants: 204 Players (12 Teams)
108 Forwards
72 Defense
24 Goalies
Birth Year: 2011
Camp Dates: July 19-24, 2026
July 17-19 (Goalies)
Location: Miami University (Oxford, Ohio)

The Girls 15 Camp delivers a competitive, age-specific environment with on- & off-ice training, seminars on nutrition, mental performance, strength & conditioning, video, and physiological performance.

Each District has forward & defense allocations based on the number of female players registered in each district in the 2011 birth year. Each district receives 1 goalie allocation (the remaining 12 goalie spots are 'at-large' allocations).

**Goalies selected to the Girls 15 Camp are also required to attend the Girls 15 Goalie Camp (July 23-25) **

Players selected to attend the Girls 15 Camp may be eligible for advancement to U18 WNT National Festival (see Notification Timeline below).

2026 GIRLS 16/17 PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CAMP

Participants: 170 players (10 teams)
90 Forwards
60 Defense
20 Goalies
Birth Years: 2009-2010
Camp Dates: July 13-18, 2026
Location: Miami University (Oxford, Ohio)

The 16/17 Camp provides a competitive and challenging learning environment for participating players. In addition to USA Hockey's priority of focusing on player development, this camp is an evaluation-based camp to determine which players will advance in the remaining available spots for the U18 WNT National Festival.

Each District receives allocations (i.e. a specific number of spots at the forward and defense positions) for the 2009 & 2010 birth years generated by the number of registered girls in the District coupled with the performance of that District's specific birth year in prior years. All goalie positions are considered 'at-large' allocations. USA Hockey appointed scouts will evaluate goalies at their District tryout and work with each District's evaluation team to identify the goalies who will advance to the 16/17 Camp.

2026 U18 WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM FESTIVAL

Participants: ~46 players (2 teams)
~24 Forwards
~16 Defense
~6 Goalies
Birth Years: Primary focus is 2009-2010 birth years (though 2011s are eligible)
Camp Dates: August 2-9, 2026
Location: Lake Placid, New York

There are no set allocations for this Women's National Team Camp. USA Hockey's national scouting/evaluation staff leverages in-season competitions, district tryouts, the Girls 16/17 Camp, along with prior regional, district, and National Player Development Camp experience to collectively evaluate and select players for the U18 WNT National Festival. The U-18 WNT coaching staff and WNT player development staff provide programming to promote individual and team development on- and off-ice. This camp is also an evaluation-based camp to evaluate players for the 2027 U-18 Women's National Team and to determine which players will advance to the U18 Select Series Team to compete against Canada the following week (August 10-16, 2026).

2026 GIRLS NATIONAL U19 TRAINING CAMP

Participants: 38 Players (2 teams)
20 Forwards
14 Defense
4 Goalies
Birth Year: 2007 & 2008
Camp Dates: July 13-16, 2026
Location: Miami University (Oxford, Ohio)

The U19 Training Camp is an evaluation and development camp for players in the 2007 & 2008 birth years. USAH will select players based on national scouting of in-season competition. No tryouts will be held at the affiliate or district level for this camp. Players will receive an invitation on the National Notification Date.

FALL U18 WNT SELECTION CAMP

Camp Dates: October 2026
Location: Blaine, MN
USA Hockey will host a final evaluation camp to help evaluate and select the players for the U.S. 2027 U18 Women's World Championship roster.

The National Player Development Camp Fee is \$375 and each player is responsible for booking and paying for her own travel.

Note: Players attending any of the National Development Camps, Festivals, or Training Camps may be tracked for future National Team opportunities and are also eligible to advance to the U18 Select Series Team that plays a three-game series against Canada (August 10-16, 2026). Approximately 25 players will be chosen to the U18 Select Series roster.

**DISTRICT TRYOUT AND PERSONNEL INFORMATION - PLEASE REFER TO DISTRICT-SPECIFIC GUIDE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION****Atlantic District**

Tryout: April 25-26, 2026
Ice Works Skating Complex (*Aston, P.A.*)

Girls Council Representative:
Pete Rothman - pete@rothmancpa.com

Central District

Tryout: April 10-12, 2026
Arctic Ice (*Orland Park, IL*)

Girls Council Representative:
Andy Bradford – abradford@depere.k12.wi.us

Massachusetts District*

Open Tryout: April 11; **Festival:** April 25-27 (*TBA*)
Final 40: May 17-18, 2026 (*TBA*)

Girls Council Representative:
Mark Lissner – mlassner@mahockey.org

Michigan District

Tryout: April 24-26, 2026
Patterson Ice Center (*Grand Rapids, M.I.*)

Girls Council Representative:
Jean Laxton – VPGirls@maha.org

Mid-American District

Tryout: March 13-15, 2026
Kent State Ice Arena (*Kent, O.H.*)

Girls Council Representative:
Ladd Wagner – lwagner@midamhockey.com

Minnesota District*

Tryout (16/17 Spring Festival):
April 17-19, 2026; TBD (*TBD, M.N.*)

Tryout (16/17 Final 54s; 15s Spring Festival):
April 23-26, 2026; TBD (*TBD, M.N.*)

Tryout (15 Development Camp):
June 9-14, 2026
St. Olaf College (*Northfield, M.N.*)

Girls Council Representative:
Cheryl Mechelke - wildcm1210@yahoo.com

New England District

Tryout: April 17-19, 2026
New England Sports Center (*Marlborough, MA*)

Girls Council Representative:
Cheri Bonawitz – cbona288@gmail.com

New York District*

Tryout: May 1-3, 2026
TBD (*Skaneateles, N.Y.*)

Girls Council Representative:
Joe Eppolito – joe.eppolito@nysaha.com

Northern Plains District*

Tryout: May 14-17, 2026
ICON Sports Center (*Grand Forks, N.D.*)

Girls Council Representative:
Kari Riley – mahasafesport@yahoo.com

Pacific District*

Tryout: May 7-10, 2026
City National Arena (*Summerlin, N.V.*)

Pacific District Girls Camp Director:
Alex Morrison - pacificgirlscamp@gmail.com

Rocky Mountain District*

Tryout: May 8-10, 2026
Children's Health Star Center (*Farmers Branch, TX*)

Girls Council Representative:
Ted Skinner – teskinner4@gmail.com

Southeastern District

Tryout: April 24-26, 2026
TBD (*Nashville, T.N.*)

Girls Council Representative:
Jane Solverson – jane.solverson@gmail.com

USA Hockey National Office

Director, Girls Hockey
Kristen Sagaert – kristen.sagaert@usahockey.org

A player must tryout through her home district process (i.e. where her family's primary residence is). All participants must adhere to the specific registration deadlines provided by the Affiliate/District. The person assigned to run Player Development Camps may be different than the Girls Council Representative in some Districts. The Girls Council representative above can be a resource to get you in touch with the correct person at the affiliate and/or district level.

*Please note that Districts with asterisks have multi-step player development processes, and the dates provided above are ONLY representative of the District Tryouts and may not represent the first or only stage of the tryout process within that District (For a more detailed schedule: [District-Specific Girls Player Development Guide](#)).



To streamline the communication surrounding selections, USA Hockey and its twelve districts follow a National Notification Timeline to notify players of Girls National Camp Selections on targeted dates built into the annual District Tryout calendar. A player will be notified of her selection to National Camp via email from the National office and a list will be posted on each camp website (available here: <https://teamusa.usahockey.com/playerdevelopment>) on the date(s) listed below.

Girls 15 Camp Process: USA Hockey allocates forward, defense, and goalie spots for the 2011 birth year based on number of female players registered in this birth year in each district. Each district receives 1 goalie allocation. The remaining 12 goalie spots are 'at-large' allocations, available to any goalie in the 2011 birth year from any district. Players will be evaluated at their 2026 District Tryout to be selected for the Girls 15 Camp.

Girls 16/17 and Girls 15 Camp Process: USA Hockey allocates forward and defensive spots for the 2009 and 2010 birth years based on the prior performance of that districts' specific birth year. All goaltender spots for the 2009 and 2010 birth years are considered "at-large," available to any goalie in the 2009 and 2010 birth years from any district. Players will be evaluated at their 2026 District Tryout to be selected for the Girls 16/17 Camp.

U18 Women's National Team Festival Selection Process: USA Hockey's national scouting/evaluation staff leverages in-season competitions, district tryouts, district camps, along with prior regional, district, and National Player Development Camp experience to evaluate and select the 46 players. A partial roster for the U18 WNT Festival will be named on May 21, 2026. Additional players from the Minnesota 15s may be added on June 15, 2026 once their district tryout process is complete. Players attending the Girls 16/17 Camp will be competing for a roster spot at the U18 WNT Festival and those players will be announced on July 19, 2026 after the completion of the Girls 16/17 Camp.

Alternates: Alternates will be emailed on the National Notification Dates for each camp. If a selected player has an extenuating circumstance (injury, sickness, etc.) that prevents her from participating in camp, a player named as an "Alternate" may be invited by the National Office to attend camp after the final National Notification Timeline date, and this invitation to attend the camp may happen as late as the start (or even a few days into) any camp.

NATIONAL NOTIFICATION TIMELINE

1

MAY 21, 2026

- All player selections for Girls 16/17 Camp from all districts, including naming alternates
- Partial roster named for the U18 WNT Festival (except MN 2011s and players advancing out of Girls 16/17 Camp)
- Player selections for the Girls 15 Camp (except MN 2011s)

2

JUNE 16, 2026

- Minnesota 2011s named to Girls 15 Camp and Girls U18 WNT Festival
- Final "Alternate" selections named for the Girls 15 Camp

3

JULY 19, 2026

- Final player selections and "alternate" selections named for the U18 WNT Festival from players at the Girls 16/17 Camp will be named on July 19.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why attend USA Hockey Girls Player Development Camps?

USA Hockey hosts a series of annual National Player Development Camps for girls ages 15, 16 and 17. Participants are chosen through an annual evaluation process conducted at the local and District levels. Participants receive on and off-ice training under the direction of leading USA Hockey coaches, current and former Women's National Team players, and collegiate coaches. At its camps, USA Hockey reinforces the integral role that continuous improvement and on-going training have on players' development.

Is the curriculum the same at all Girls National Player Development Camps?

The Girls National Player Development Camps provide players with age-appropriate resources and developmental programming directly aligned with the U.S. Women's National Team's training, expectations, and culture. The curriculum provided at all girls player development camps incorporates four key areas: on-ice training, off-ice strength/conditioning, nutrition, and mental skills/team building. The curriculum is built as a progression from the Girls 15 Camp to the Girls 16/17 Camp to the U18 WNT Festival, providing players with additional layers of information, resources, and training to help advance each player to the next level.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for advancement to a Girls National Player Development Camp, a female player must:

1. Be born in 2009, 2010, or 2011 birth years;
2. Hold U.S. Citizenship; and,
3. Participate in her "home district" tryout.

Are players allowed to attend more than one District Tryout in a given year?

No, a player may only participate in the District Tryout process in one District in a given year.

Are dual-citizens eligible for Girls National Player Development Camps?

Yes. An age-eligible, female player is eligible for Girls National Player Development Camps as long as she has proof of U.S. Citizenship. However, for a dual-citizen to be eligible for international or IIHF-sanctioned events (i.e. U18 World Championships), additional requirements must be met.

I'm in the process of obtaining my U.S. citizenship. Am I eligible for Girls National Player Development Camps?

No. A player must have proof of her U.S. Citizenship in order to be eligible for Girls National Player Development Camps. However, some Districts may allow a non-U.S. citizen in this scenario to attend a District opportunity (tryout or camp) under the condition that she is ineligible for potential advancement to any of USA Hockey's Girls National Player Development Camps.



Three-time Olympian, Meghan Duggan on the ice with Player Development Camp Players

If I am a U.S. citizen but live in another country, am I eligible to attend a District Tryout?

Yes. If this situation applies, the player should contact USA Hockey's National Office immediately to determine which District she should register in for player development opportunities.

If my family owns more than one home, can I choose which District I register in for player development opportunities?

No. A player must register for player development opportunities in the District where her family's primary residence is. If you have questions about what constitutes "primary residence," please contact USA Hockey's National Office.

If I billet, live at school, or attend school in another District, can I choose which District I register in for player development opportunities?

No. A player must register for player development opportunities in her "Home District" (ie. where her family's primary residence is). If you have questions about what constitutes "primary residence," please contact USA Hockey's National Office.

What if I am unable to tryout in the District where my family holds primary residence?

The best opportunity for a player to be evaluated for potential advancement to one of USA Hockey's Girls National Player Development Camps is by attending the tryout in the District where her family holds primary residence. However, USA Hockey acknowledges that certain circumstances may preclude a player from trying out in her "Home District." When that scenario arises, players are required to complete the 2026 Girls District Tryout Waiver Request Form as soon as possible but no later than the conclusion of the player's home affiliate or district tryout. The 2026 Girls District Tryout Waiver Request Form is available at:

<https://teamusa.usahockey.com/girlsplayerdevelopmentprogram>

If I have an extenuating circumstance (emergency, injury, sickness, etc.) that prohibits me from attending my District tryout, can I still be considered for District, Regional and National opportunities?

Yes. If this situation arises, the player should immediately contact her District Girls Council Representative to relay the circumstances.

I am currently 14-years-old, but turn 15 this calendar year. Am I eligible for the Girls 15 National Player Development Camp?

Eligibility for opportunities at the District, Regional, and National levels are based on a player's birth year, not her current age. For National opportunities during 2026, the 2011 birth year is eligible for the Girls 15 National Player Development Camp, and the 2009 and 2010 birth years are eligible for the Girls 16/17 National Player Development Camp. All three birth years (2009, 2010, and 2011) are eligible for the U18 WNT Festival. 2009s are eligible for the 2009 National Training Camp. At the District and Regional level, the above birth years and additional birth years (2012, 2013, etc.) may be eligible for District and Regional opportunities.

After I attend my District Tryout, how will I know if I am selected to attend one of USA Hockey's Girls National Player Development Camps? USA Hockey will post selected players on the <https://teamusa.usahockey.com/playerdevelopment> website on the notification dates listed in the National Notification Timeline in this Guide. The District will also notify selected players and may do so by phone call, email, or by posting the list of the selected players on their District website. USA Hockey's National Office Staff will send your official camp invitation via email. That invitation will contain details about the camp the player has been selected to attend, will outline all information USA Hockey will need from the player and parent/guardian prior to camp, including registration information.

If selected for the Girls 16/17 Camp, would I also be eligible to attend the U18 WNT Festival? Yes. A partial roster will be announced for the U18 WNT Festival; however, all players participating at the Girls 16/17 Camp will be competing for the remaining spots at the U18 WNT Festival. 16/17 Camp players selected for the U18 WNT Festival will be named on the final day of Girls 16/17 Camp. Players selected to attend the Girls 15 Camp are now eligible for advancement to the U18 WNT Festival and will be named on the final day of the Girls 15 Camp.

If I have been selected or named as an alternate for one of the Girls National Player Development Camps, but I have an extenuating circumstance (emergency, injury, sickness, etc.) that prohibits or may prohibit me from attending the camp, who should I contact? A player who has been selected or named as an alternate, but has an extenuating circumstance that prohibits or may prohibit (i.e. unsure if player will be cleared from an injury), the player should notify USA Hockey's National Office and her District Girls Council Representative of the circumstances immediately.

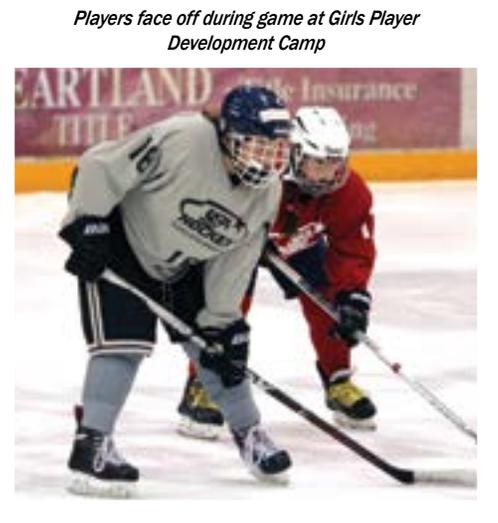


Girls participate in team building competition

How are the player status terms defined?

- A player who is **"invited"** has been selected to attend one of the Girls National Player Development Camps as indicated by the National Office and District Representatives.
- **"At-larges"** are extra spots at the Girls 16/17 Camp and Girls 15 Camp which can be awarded to any player in any district outside of each District's set allocations.
- A player who is named as an **"Alternate"** for one of the Girls National Player Development Camps may be invited to camp by the National Office if a selected player in the same position and same birth year is unable to attend the camp for any reason, an alternate may be invited to camp as late as the start (or even a few days into) the camp. Players named as "Alternates" will not be listed on the website and will receive a detailed email from USA Hockey within 3 days of the notification dates in the National Notification Timeline

If I am not selected to attend one of the National Player Development Camps, should I attend my District Tryouts next year? Yes. USA Hockey encourages players to continue to attend District Tryouts and Player Development Camps to obtain valuable resources that she can apply to her future development and improvement as a hockey player. Recognizing the importance of long-term athlete development is a critical component to players putting themselves in the best position to reach their goals.



Players face off during game at Girls Player Development Camp