

2026 PAHL PLAYOFFS 10U GUIDE



10U Playoff Format

- The format for the 10U playoffs is new this season but still varies slightly from the standard playoff format used for the other PAHL levels.
 - The postseason tournament is still open for all 10U teams to opt in, at their choosing.
 - There are no longer preliminary round-robin games, so teams are no longer guaranteed 2 games.
 - There is now a single-elimination playoff bracket, where only winning teams advance to the next round.
- The method for seeding teams into the bracket is loosely based on regular-season standings but not strictly by the exact position a team finished in those standings.
 - Briefly stated, teams that finished in the top-half of the standings (excluding teams that did not opt in) are placed into an upper pod and given a random seeding number within that group.
 - Teams that finished in the bottom-half of the division (excluding teams that did not opt in) get put into a lower pod and are given a random seeding number within that group.
 - The seeding numbers given to all teams in the upper pod are always better seeds than those given to the teams in the lower pod.
- A standard, single-elimination playoff bracket is filled for each division using the seeding numbers.
 - In most cases, results in a team from the upper pod playing a team from the lower pod in the first round.
 - Exception#1: situations in which a team(s) gets a bye (less than 8 teams in the bracket).
 - Exception #2: divisions in which there are more than 9 teams in the bracket, which first requires a preliminary round among the bottom seeds and technically gives many teams a bye past that round.
- The game schedule is arranged using the ice slots provided by the host.
 - All teams must have the proper 4-hour rest period scheduled to occur between games on the same day, including teams advancing into the next round.
 - The order of games generally gives preference to the higher seeds, but providing the prescribed rest period and maintaining fairness among the advancing teams takes priority.

10U Playoff Game Format

- All 10U playoff games consist of three, 12-minute periods.
 - Running-clock and Mercy rules apply to all games, just as in the regular season.
 - Curfew rules are not applied to a postseason game.
- Penalty lengths remain the same as the regular season.
 - All minor penalties are 1:00 in length for 10U.
- One timeout is granted to each team in all postseason games but can only be used in regulation time.
- Overtime and shootouts are used, as needed, in elimination games, for which those procedures are outlined in the PAHL Game Manual and the PAHL Playoffs Team Guide.
 - Overtime is 4-on-4 for 10 minutes, with the teams switching ends after the third period.
 - The shootout is based on 5 rounds, with 5 unique and eligible shooters used by each team; tiebreaker shootout rounds allow for any eligible shooter to be used (even if repeated).

10U Playoff Advancement

- The higher-seeded team is always the home team.
 - This is not always obvious from the bracket since GameSheet does not show the seeding numbers.
 - No other factor determines the home team, including regular season record and spots generically reserved in the online bracket (such as “QF1 winner”).
 - A team(s) that plays out of the host rink is never to be granted any treatment as a home team for a game when that team is listed to be the away team for the game, including locker room assignments, use of the home bench, choice of jersey color, etc.
- The GameSheet brackets show the home team on the bottom.
 - The home team for the games already in place are listed on the schedule and in the brackets.
 - The League Office will update the brackets throughout the weekend, and the hosts have the list of seeding numbers to help make any clarifications.
 - As always, the schedule (and brackets) on the PAHL website is the official playoff schedule.
- There is never any reseeding done within the bracket.
 - Winning teams will always know the game to which they advance, including the start time and the opponent (or potential opponent coming out of a specific game).
 - The game schedule is not changed based on what team advances or loses, regardless of which seeds are in the upcoming games.

10U Playoff Awards

- The tournament winner of each division shall be issued a banner at the conclusion of the championship game.
 - There is no banner for the first-place team in the regular season for PAHL 10U divisions.
 - The playoff championship banners will be delivered to the host sites prior to the weekend.
- The players and coaches of the winning teams will be given 2026 PAHL championship hats
 - There are no longer medals issued to the players of the winning team in the playoffs, nor to the finalists.
- The host association will arrange for a championship picture to be taken of the winning team on the ice after the conclusion championship game.
 - Parents are not to enter the ice surface for any reason, including pictures.