

**USA HOCKEY, INC.
2024 WINTER MEETING:
LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FORM**

PROPOSAL NUMBER: 2024 – WM – Affiliate Presidents #1

NAME OF PUBLICATION:

MAIN HEADING: Rules & Regs

REGULATION (Heading):

BY-LAW (Heading):

Section: III Team Membership and Registration

Reference (sub-section):

Paragraph / Page no(s):

CURRENT WORDING: (please type in Tahoma/Pitch 11)

No Current Rule

SPECIFIC WORDING OF PROPOSAL: (please type in Tahoma/Pitch 11)

(as it should appear with new wording-**bold**, Deletions-~~striketrough~~)

See attached amended Tier I Tryout Task Force Timeline

INTENTION OF PROPOSAL: To create a player card system to address tampering issues and set rules for Tier I tryouts.

Submitter: Affiliate Presidents Task Force

Proposal directed also to (Board, Council, Committee, Section): Board of Directors, Legal Council and Affiliate Presidents, Youth and Girls Councils

~~Task Force version on 3-1-23~~

This Tier I Player Card Policy (this "Policy") applies throughout USA Hockey to all Youth and Girls Tier I players/teams only.

Under this Policy, the following definitions shall apply:

~~"Player Card" shall mean a card in a form approved by USA Hockey that binds a player to a Tier I team and the Tier I team to that player, for the full Playing Season, and which Player Card must meet all requirements of this Policy.~~

~~"Playing Season" shall mean the period beginning September 1 of each year (or the first game of the team's regular season, if earlier) through forty eight (48) hours after the Tier I National Championships.~~

~~"Off Season" shall mean the period beginning with the end of the prior Playing Season and September 1 (or earlier if player is signed with a team and plays in a game before September 1).~~

~~"Parents" or "parents" shall mean and refer to the player's parents or legal guardians, if applicable.~~

~~"Signing Team" shall mean the Tier I team that has signed a player to a Player Card for a Playing Season.~~

~~"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 as set forth below.~~

~~"Early Signing Period" shall mean the time between January 1 and the last day of February of each Playing Season.~~

~~I. Player Card between Player/Parent and the Team~~

USA Hockey will create a Player Card system under which any USA Hockey Youth or Girls Tier I team will be required to have all players (and parents) on its roster sign a Player Card, and each player and parent agreeing to be on a Tier I roster will be required to sign a Player Card, all according to and as set forth herein:

- ~~a. Upon execution by the Signing Team, player and parents, the Player Card will commit and bind the player to the Signing Team for the entirety of the Playing Season, and the player will not be permitted to be rostered or to participate in any way with another USA Hockey Tier I team during the Playing Season except as set forth herein.~~
- ~~b. The Player Card will also bind the Signing Team to that player and secures a roster spot for that player on the Signing Team for the entire Playing Season. The Signing Team cannot cut, release or dismiss a player from the team except as set forth herein.~~
- ~~c. The Player Card will indicate that the player may not participate in any Tryout for another Tier I team/program during the term of the Player Card; a violation of this provision will subject the player to not less than a five game suspension. In the event a player who has signed a Player Card has been found to have participated in any Tryout for another Tier I team/program, then the player will be ineligible to sign a Player Card with that program for a period of 18 months from the last date of the Tryout. The Player Card will not restrict a player from moving to or participating with another team in the following circumstances:~~

- ~~i. the Player Card would not restrict a player from leaving a Signing Team and playing on or participating with a USA Hockey Tier II (youth or girls), High School, Junior hockey or college hockey team, provided that if the player returns to play Tier I in the same Playing Season, they must return to the original Signing Team unless released by the Signing Team;~~
 - ~~ii. the Player Card would not restrict a player from playing with any other team, including a Tier I team, if the Signing Team and player mutually agree for the player to be released by the Signing Team.~~
 - ~~iii. If the player were released by the Signing Team for violation of the Player Card requirements or other violation by the player of the Signing Team's or its program's written Code of Conduct, and is released following any required hearing and appeal process required under USA Hockey or Affiliate bylaws or rules, then the Player Card would not restrict the player from joining another team that season;~~
 - ~~iv. the Player Card would not restrict a player from playing with another team, including a Tier I team, if the player files a grievance with the applicable Affiliate and a hearing is held or overseen by the Affiliate (and not the Signing Team or Local Program) where it is determined that the Signing Team, its coach(es) or other participants have violated USA Hockey Safe Sport Policies or other USA Hockey, Affiliate or Signing Team policies and which violation(s) justify the player's release from the Player Card and eligibility to sign with another Tier I team (but still subject to any other rostering rules and timelines). Affiliates shall endeavor to hold hearings on such grievances on an expedited basis when appropriate. The Affiliate's determination shall be final and is not subject to appeal.~~
- ~~d. Prior to signing the Player Card, an authorized program or team representative from the Signing Team must present and review a Team Fact Sheet with the player and their parent, which must include all the information, provisions and requirements the player and family will be committing to by signing the Player Card and becoming as a member of the Signing Team. The Team Fact Sheet must be referenced in the signed Player Card, must be signed by the team and parents, and must be provided to the player's parents. The required elements of the Team Fact Sheet must include at least the following information:~~
 - ~~i. The specific team upon which player will be rostered;~~
 - ~~ii. The Signing Team's anticipated budget and fees for the season, which includes team fees to participate on the Signing Team for the season, uniform or equipment fees, and anticipated travel fees (to the extent known or planned) for the player and any required travel for parents, and any other anticipated fees that are required to be paid as a condition of participation on the team;~~
 - ~~iii. The required payment schedule or payment options for the fees in (ii) above;~~
 - ~~iv. The anticipated or planned number and average per week of practices, games, off-ice sessions, etc.~~
 - ~~v. Any player code of conduct or parent code of conduct required for participation on the Signing Team; and~~
 - ~~vi. Players and families and the Signing Team acknowledge and agree to be bound by the terms of the Team Fact Sheet and Player Card.~~
- ~~e. Teams are only allowed to offer and sign the number of Player Cards equal to the maximum number of roster spots permitted on a USA Hockey Roster at any one time for the Signing Team's rostered age level. For example, a team that is permitted to~~

have 20 players on a USA Hockey roster may not sign more than 20 players to Player Cards and then move players on and off the roster. A team may only sign additional players to Player Cards if another player on the roster has been released from their Player Card pursuant to Section 1.c. above.

- f. ~~The Player Card will be immediately binding on the Signing Team upon the signature of the team, player and parents. The Signing Team must file the Player Card with the applicable Local Program Registrar, at which time the Registrar will add the player to the Signing Team's Tier I roster for the following season. The player will also be immediately bound to the Player Card upon signature by the Signing Team, player and parents, provided that if the Local Program Registrar does not add the player to the applicable roster within seven (7) days of execution by the Signing Team, player and parents, then at any time thereafter that is prior to the player being added to the roster, the player may notify the Signing Team in writing that the Player is voiding the Player Card, at which time the Player shall not be bound by the Player Card (and is free to sign a Player Card with any other team).~~
- g. ~~During any time a Player Card is in effect as set forth above, any Player Card signed with a different team shall not be enforceable.~~
- h. ~~The binding nature of the Player Card addresses only the player's commitment to the Signing Team, the Signing team's commitment to the player, and the enforceability of the rules and requirements set forth in this Policy. USA Hockey and the applicable Affiliate(s) are not responsible for enforcing the contractual terms of the Fact Sheet.~~

II. ~~Signing Players~~

~~Subject to the provisions below, teams may sign players to a Player Card either during (a) the Early Signing Period, (b) during the Off Season, or (c) during the Playing Season, all as described below:~~

- a. ~~Early Signing Period Player Cards: Tier I teams/programs are allowed to sign any player not already bound to a different Tier I team to a Player Card for that team for the following Playing Season during the Early Signing Period. The offering or signing of Player Cards during the Early Signing Period is only available for players at the 13O, 14U, 15O, 16U, and 18U boys teams and 14U, 16U, and 19U girls teams and are only valid for the immediately following Playing Season. This does not require a program to sign any players during the Early Signing Period, but it is available for programs that choose to use it. The decision to sign Player Card offer during the Early Signing Period is ultimately upon the player and his or her family.~~
- b. ~~Off Season Player Cards: After the Early Signing Period, a Tier I team cannot offer or sign players to Player Cards until the beginning of the Off Season. Beginning with the Off Season, a Tier I team may sign players that are not already bound to a different Tier I team (by a Player Card signed with such team) to fill up to the maximum allowed roster spots.~~
- c. ~~Player Cards During Playing Season: A Tier I team may offer or sign players that are not already signed to a Player Card with another Tier I team at any time prior to December 31 of that Playing Season, provided that at no time may the Tier I team have more signed Player Cards than roster spots on its team.~~

~~Under no circumstances will a Player Card be signed or enforceable for any future seasons except as set forth in the Early Signing Period provisions above.~~

III. ~~Recruiting, Tampering and Tryouts~~

Commented [C31]: It is anticipated that the current season's rostering tool can be used but it would include a designation to reference that it is a roster for the following season — perhaps it could have a "Z" at the beginning, or could include a reference to the following year.

We also need to confirm that for these following year rosters, the other roster restrictions would not be obstacles — for instance, a 14 year old could be added to the 15O roster for the following season, and a player that would need SafeSport but does not yet have it would be permitted on the roster.

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."~~

~~Coaches (or "persons affiliated with the team" as defined below) who make contact with a player (or the player's agent, advisor or parents/family members) who is bound to another Signing Team through a Player Card, for the purpose of inviting, enticing, or convincing them to play for a specific team/program other than the Signing Team during the current Playing Season, shall be considered Tampering and shall subject the responsible Party(ies) to sanctions according to this Policy and applicable USA Hockey or Affiliate rules or bylaws. For the purposes of this paragraph, "persons affiliated with the team" shall include any member of the team or program and includes without limitation general managers, player development personnel, coaches, current or past team players, or their parents.~~

~~Player recruitment, which may not include an on-ice skate of any kind, may occur (i) for a player NOT signed to a Player Card for the upcoming or current Playing Season, at any time during the Off Season or Playing Season, up until December 31, (ii) for a player signed to a Player Card for the upcoming or current Playing Season, at any time during the Off Season or Early Signing Period. Players are prohibited from having any type of on-ice skate or Tryout with a recruiting program/school during the Playing Season.~~

~~IV. Coach Awareness~~

~~Coaches/programs will be made aware by their Affiliates that attempting to recruit a player in any way during the Playing Season for that current Playing Season will be a violation of the Code of Conduct/tampering. Reported Code of Conduct/tampering violations will be investigated by the Affiliates involved and sanctions issued if it is determined a violation occurred.~~

~~V. Enforcement~~

- ~~a. **Enforcement against Players.** Players violating the Tryout rule shall be subject to disciplinary action by their Signing Team or applicable Affiliate according to the provisions of paragraph I.c. above. If a player leaves their Signing Team and attempts to play for another Tier I team during that Playing Season (other than as permitted above), the player will not be permitted to be rostered on the new team for the remainder of current Playing Season and the following Playing Season. Affiliate registrars will be instructed by the affiliate to not roster the player on the new team's roster for the remainder for such period.~~
- ~~b. **Enforcement against Coaches:** Incidents in which coaches or others involved in a program are alleged to have tampered with players who have signed a Player Card in violation of Tampering as defined above, will be referred to the Applicable Affiliate for investigation and disciplinary action. **Any coach determined by the Affiliate or USAH to have tampered with another player will face a minimum suspension of one calendar year and minimum probationary period of two calendar years for the first offense.**~~
- ~~c. **Enforcement against Programs.** A Tier I program that is involved in tampering with a player who is signed to a Player Card with another Tier I team, in violation of Tampering as defined above, will be referred to the applicable Affiliate for investigation and disciplinary action. A Tier I program shall be deemed to be involved if a member of the program is involved in a tampering violation. Tier I programs assume responsibility for all actions of all personnel involved in their program; if there is a finding of tampering, the organization is also held accountable for the violation. An organization who has been deemed as involved in a tampering~~

~~violation are subject to sanctions that could include, monetary fines, exclusion from participating in Affiliate, District or National Tournament play and/or loss of ability to field USA Hockey sanctioned teams at a/all playing levels. Any sanction shall be determined and enforced by the USA Hockey Affiliate in whose jurisdiction the organization resides and shall be recognized by all Affiliates of USA Hockey.~~

~~VI. Roster Change Date~~

~~The deadline for changing hockey rosters will remain December 31.~~

Tier I Tryout Task Force Timeline

KEY LEGISLATION (As put forward from Tryout Committee)

- Nationally Governed Tier I Rules Package (Effective Date Proposed as 24/25 season)
 - One Season/One Team
 - Once team commits, they are committed to that player for the year.
 - Once player commits, they are committed to that player for the year.
 - There will be a process for release approval (national review) under exceptional circumstances.
 - No Out of Affiliate/District Requirements – 15O, 16U, 18U & 19U
 - International Import Rules remain as is
 - Season long open recruiting period for next season
 - Recruiting Blackout Period: March 1 through the last game of the National Championships
 - No tryouts or skating with another team or representatives of another team.
 - Recruiting for current season is still considered tampering. Coaches found guilty of tampering will be suspended for 1 year.
 - January 1 signing period commences for following season only.
 - Teams can sign any players to a contract/agreement/player card.
 - Any disagreement by clubs would be reviewed by national review committee.
 - 10/20 and all other USA Hockey Rules stay in place.

Note: Districts and Affiliates are asked to remove all Tier I rules that are in conflict with the above guidelines

November 2023 – Final document completed and distributed.

January 2024 – Approval from Congress

- If approved this would go into effect immediately for the 24/25 season