



GIRLS YOUTH HOCKEY CO-OP GUIDELINES

AN ADDENDUM TO THE RIVER FALLS YOUTH AND BLACKHAWK HOCKEY POLICY HANDBOOKS

Welcome to the River Falls/Blackhawk Youth Hockey Girls Program!

Years ago, River Falls Youth Hockey Association (RFYHA) and Blackhawk Hockey Association (BHA) have formed a valuable partnership for the development of female hockey players. Though each program has policies and guidelines independent of the other, the below outlines the components that apply specifically to the girl's program and participants.

Origin of "Blackcats"

In honor of the partnership with the River Falls Wildcats and the Baldwin-Woodville Blackhawks, the co-op leaders combined pieces of both to form the team name *Blackcats*.

Presiding Board of Directors

The *Blackcats* originated as a co-op between RFYHA and Blackhawk Youth Hockey with RFYHA as the lead of the co-op. Both associations have combined efforts to develop open lines of communication, including a girls' cooperation and communication committee comprised of individuals from both association boards and membership.

Ice Assignments

Practice and game times will be split between the Wildcat Arena in River Falls and the United Civic Center in Baldwin. Typically, early season practices start in Baldwin due to Baldwin having their ice in earlier than River Falls. An exact or even split of ice time cannot be promised to any team and is not guaranteed. There are many other criteria that comes into play when scheduling ice and both associations will make their best effort to evenly distribute those times while taking those other criteria and other youth teams into consideration.

Note, both RFYHA and BHA will make their best attempts to maintain accuracy within their webpage calendars related to practice and game times, but we will always recommend consistently referencing both calendars – do not hesitate to bring forward discrepancies to your respective ice schedulers.

Game and Tournament Limits

Both associations have defined limits as it relates to the number of games and number of tournaments that each youth team can participate in. In the event that those limits differ between the two group's policies, the *Blackcats* program will be allowed to abide by the higher limit between the two.

Jerseys/Socks

Jerseys for the *Blackcats* program will be provided by the program and must be returned at the end of each season. Players will be responsible for the purchase of approved game socks.

Move-Up Policy

In some cases, *Blackcats* players may be eligible to participate at higher age level than actual birth date dictates. If a player is selected to play at a higher age bracket, that player will be required to pay the registration fees equal to the age level in which they play. There are two approved scenarios in which this occurs:

- Parent Request – Should a parent desire that their girl player qualifies to play at a higher age bracket, they can make a request to their respective association Board of Directors no later than June 1st prior to the season. All requests will be reviewed by the *Blackcats* program ACE Coordinator and coaching committee who will make a recommendation to the Association's Board of Directors.
- Coaching Committee/Board Request – In certain circumstances, the Girls Coaching Committee will request that a player participate at a higher age bracket than they qualify for. In this case, should the player and parents agree, the player will be moved to the recommended level and participate in try-outs at that level.

*For more detail about move-up policies, refer to your respective home association's member handbook.

League Memberships

Both RFYHA and BHA are members of the Wisconsin Amateur Hockey Association (WAHA), who is an affiliate of USA Hockey and adheres to its regulations. As members of WAHA, both RFYHA and BHA, and therefore the girls program, adheres to their program guidance and participates in WAHA regional playoff games and state tournaments.

In an effort to diversify opportunities for competition, both RFYHA and BHA are members of the Minnesota Hockey District 2 league (MN D2) and adhere to MN D2 governing rules for games played within that league schedule. MN D2 schedules a set number of games with other MN/WI teams that are league members. RFYHA and BHA teams do not participate in MN D2 year-end playoffs.

Note, players and spectators may notice variance in game criteria due to inconsistencies between WAHA regulations and MN D2 governing rules.

Team Determinations

In some circumstances, a specific level of the *Blackcats* program may have enough participants to comprise two full teams. In these cases, and in order to provide the players the most opportunity for skill development, two teams will be formed.

In some cases, based on various factors including WAHA rule and team classifications, teams may be split via coaching staff recommendation or the assignments may be made via skill-based tryouts. Both associations will make their best effort to notify parents of the path that will be taken at each level, but such decisions can be influenced by many things, including player registration counts and release of WAHA guidelines, which could be unpredictable.

Volunteer Hours

It is important that members report all work hours to their home association. Be sure that you are reviewing the appropriate work hours opportunities through your home association's webpage. Each association, BHA and RFYHA, has adopted their own policies related to work hours - how they are completed, what qualifies and how to report them - so please refer to your home association's member handbook for the most accurate information.

Disciplinary Action

As with other policies, each association has their own guidelines related to disciplinary reporting and action. Please refer to your home association's member handbook for details on policy and protocol.