

Flathead Fusion General Practices

I. Organization and Affiliations

- a. Flathead Fusion teams are jointly managed by Flathead Valley Hockey Association (FVHA) and Glacier Hockey Association (GHA) and are therefore subject to the rules, policies, guidelines and procedures put in place by FVHA and GHA.
- b. Flathead Fusion hockey teams will be formed based on age groups designated by USA Hockey and Montana Amateur Hockey Association guidelines.
- c. Fusion teams will be comprised of any youth hockey player living in Flathead, Lincoln and Lake Counties according to policies set in place by USA Hockey and Montana Amateur Hockey Association.

II. Fees and Finances

- a. Fees for each player at each level will be calculated based upon each teams' actual total costs and responsibilities and the anticipated number of players for that team. Fees will be set by the joint FVHA-GHA Committee and approved by both Boards based upon estimated costs for the season.
- b. A budget for the season for each team will be created by the team manager and presented to the joint FVHA-GHA Committee and approved by both Boards before annual budget review.
- c. Team fees will include actual costs of the rental of ice for practice and games, referee expenses for all league games, MAHA State tournament fees, coach travel expense fees and stipend and incidentals and miscellaneous expenses as included in the annual budget.
- d. In the case of the Fusion High School and JV/16U teams, registration fees will be collected into a Fusion High School team account that is managed jointly by FVHA and GHA. Bank statements will be mailed from the bank to each Association monthly as well as to the team manager who will be a signer on the account. Annual registration will alternate between FVHA and GHA annually.
- e. Monthly payment plans will be available to all Fusion players starting July 1st of each year. Unless making arrangements in advance, every player will be paid in full by February 5th of every season. Fusion players will follow the same payment process and policy as all other FVHA players.
- f. Fusion High School and JV/16U players may apply for scholarship funds as needed through FVHA and/or GHA. Scholarship funds will be divided equally between all applicants or used in a way to benefit all players in the case of no applicants. In the case where need exceeds available scholarship funds, the manager is to consult the board for advice on how to distribute the available funds.
- g. The High School and JV/16U team will pay each organization for all ice used for practice and games that take place at the Woodland and Whitefish rinks rink at the regular hourly rate. Additionally, the Fusion High School team will reimburse all tournament fees paid and all referee fees paid on their behalf during the season. This bill will be paid in March or when provided an itemized invoice for all ice used.

- h. The High School and JV team will provide volunteers to zam the ice at Woodland for ice times used.
- i. The High School and JV Fusion team(s) will provide appropriate travel expenses for coaches of all Flathead Fusion teams. These funds will be placed in a separate expense account three times throughout the season, and a debit card will be supplied to the head coach for making hotel reservations, buying gas, and purchasing food during travel weekends. The account will be monitored by the team manager and the FVHA and GHA Boards to assure appropriate and prudent expenditures.
- j. The team(s) will provide a stipend to each Fusion coach as determined in the annual budget of each year the amount of which will reflect the roles, responsibilities and time commitment required from each coach at each age level. This amount will be approved by the joint FVHA-GHA Committee and approved by both Boards as part of the annual budget process.
- k. Unless otherwise stated in the annual budget, costs related to exhibition games and participation in other leagues will be a separate fee to players and will depend on the team decision to include additional games to the team's schedule. These fees will be collected by each team's manager who is solely responsible for their collection and payment.
- l. Other items covered by fees include an end of the year awards banquet. Jackets, team socks and jerseys will be paid for by the team sponsor or parents as arranged by the team manager.
- m. Senior night expenses will be covered by the parents of the senior involved in the event.

III. Schedule

- a. Each Flathead Fusion team will establish a practice schedule made up of ice rental at both Stumptown Ice Den and Woodland Ice Center in a way that meets the needs of the players and coaching staff. Practice schedules will be submitted to the FVHA-GHA Joint Committee and approved by each Board.
- b. Priority will be made to treat teams equitably when scheduling weekly practice schedules.
- c. MAHA games will be scheduled the first weekend of October according to MAHA policy.
- d. Should a team elect to participate in the EKL, those league games will be scheduled and administered by GHA, a sanctioned organization of the EKL, the last weekend of October according to EKL policy.
- e. Participation in MAHA and EKL for each Fusion team will be determined annually by the joint FVHA-GHA Committee and approved by both boards.
- f. Games may be scheduled at either rink in order to accommodate the many challenges created in building game schedules for multiple teams with various game times and mandatory rest times.
- g. Additional exhibition games may be scheduled. This will be coordinated between the team manager in consultation with coaches and each rink's scheduler.

IV. Coaching Philosophy

- a. The purpose of the creation of Fusion teams is to cultivate over the long term a program of hockey development for as many players as possible in the Flathead Valley. This is best done by creating a team of experienced and dedicated coaches who work together to create a hockey development program with clear expectations set at each age level. This philosophy allows the program to grow and constantly improve from one season to the next.
- b. Ideally, the head coach for each Fusion team will not be related to any player on the team. It is preferred that assistant coaches also not be related to players and that non-relative coaches be recruited and cultivated whenever possible. While this is preferable, it is recognized that this is not always possible.
- c. Coaches will be chosen through a coach recruitment and application process instigated and managed by the FVHA-GHA Joint Committee and each association's Coach Coordinator (FVHA) or Director (GHA) in accordance with the established FVHA and GHA policies.
- d. Coaches will meet all USA Hockey and MAHA requirements for training and rostering.
- e. Coaches will be chosen for their ability to raise the skill level of all players, their focus on team building and their willingness to invest in the improvement of each player's skill, understanding and appreciation of the game as well as their sportsmanship.

V. Selection of Teams

- a. At times, there may be more players wanting to play hockey in a given age division than can be rostered on one team (28 skaters and 2 goalies for High School and 18 skaters and 2 goalies for all other age divisions). In this case, coaches will be consulted and their playing policies and preferred method of managing the team will be given highest priority while at the same time providing all players the opportunity to play/practice hockey if possible.
- b. In the case where there are more players joining a Fusion team than can be rostered on one team, two teams with an equal number of players may be created. In the case of an odd number, one team may be larger by one player.
- c. In accordance with MAHA rules a JV or 16U team may be created to ensure that all players have an opportunity to play hockey that is age- and skill-appropriate. This team will be managed within the larger framework of the Fusion High School team with a focus on player development for all players.
- d. Coaches will provide personal feedback and individual conversation with each player at mid-season and again at the end of the season to provide all players with positive reinforcement as well as constructive criticism and suggestions for areas where the player can work to improve themselves.
- e. Equal practice time will be afforded teams in the same age division.

VI. Participation on other Teams

- a. Some Fusion Players may also participate on other hockey teams or in other activities. Players will communicate these potential conflicts to their coaches as soon as they are known.

- b. Coaches may establish a policy related to missed practice or missed games that meets the needs of the team as long as the policy applies to all players equally and the policy is clearly stated to all players and parents at the beginning of the season.
- c. No special financial consideration will be given to Fusion players should they choose to participate in more than one hockey team. All Fusion players will be responsible for paying full fees regardless of their participation on other hockey teams unless they apply for and are granted a scholarship from either FVHA, GHA, or the Fusion High School team.

VII. Team Management

- a. Each team will be managed by a Manager designated to manage all scheduling and coordinate team activities with MAHA and the FVHA and GHA Boards. All team managers and coaches will be recommended and must be approved by the FVHA-GHA Joint Committee and both boards.
- b. Team Managers will attend the scheduling session coordinated by MAHA during the first weekend of October or send a proxy in their place.
- c. Team Managers will be responsible for managing team finances as outlined in this Summary.
- d. A Parent/Coach/Player meeting will be organized in September each year in order for coaches to set appropriate expectations and parents to have questions answered/voice concerns before league scheduling.
- e. Team Managers will coordinate with coaches and parents as needed for exhibition games, purchase of jerseys or other necessary gear or items, end of the year awards ceremonies or other team activities.
- f. Team Managers will communicate with coaches as well as Board Members in any instance requiring team or individual discipline and follow the FVHA and GHA Discipline Policies.
- g. Team Managers will coordinate with Program Managers, Coach Coordinators and Registrars concerning all registration requirements for players and coaches.
- h. The Team Manager will create a team of parents to manage additional duties such as hotel blocks, team dinners, awards banquet, volunteer management, scorekeeping, etc.

VIII. Discipline and Policy

- a. Flathead Fusion Teams will follow the documented policies put in place by FVHA and GHA, which include guidelines for many situations and a graduated discipline policy procedure.

IX. Gear and Jerseys

- a. Each Fusion team will secure sponsors for their jerseys or collect the funds as needed through fundraising or other means.
- b. Each Fusion team will cover the cost of their own socks, jackets or other gear as needed.
- c. In the case where goalie gear or other player gear needs to be borrowed from the association, the manager will contact a board member and make arrangements for the rental of the needed gear in accordance with the Association's rental policy.

X. Volunteer Hours

- a. Each player will be responsible for contributing 20 hours of volunteer work to the support of the team or to either association's activities.
- b. Deposit checks for \$250 will be collected from each player at the beginning of the season.
- c. If documentation for the full 20 hours is not submitted by March 15th, the \$250 deposit check will be cashed by Fusion.

XI. Winter Classics

- a. Fusion teams may host a Winter Classic Tournament at Woodland Ice Center or Stumptown Ice Den.
- b. In hosting a Winter Classic, Fusion team(s) will play in the tournament for free.
- c. Fusion will manage tournament fees collected from other participating teams and the concession stand and these fees will be used to cover ice and referee expenses.
- d. Fusion Teams may keep funds collected from raffles, split-the-pot, and other fundraising activities during the tournament.

XII. Hosting State Tournaments

- a. Fusion teams will have the option of bidding to host State Tournaments in collaboration with the Stumptown Ice Den.
- b. Funds collected from state tournament activities that exceed the cost of the tournament's ice, referee and other basic expenses may be kept by the hosting team for future financial needs.

XIII. Other Fundraising

- a. Fusion teams may charge entrance fees for games.
- b. Fusion teams may run fundraisers during games to assist in covering team expenses. These include but are not limited to split-the-pot or other raffles.