

WHATCOM COUNTY AMATEUR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION



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Message from the WCAHA Board of Directors:

This Whatcom County Amateur Hockey Association Handbook is meant to be a resource for the Whatcom hockey community. The handbook reflects the philosophies, rules and policies of the Board of Directors of our Association, and our affiliate organizations, USA Hockey, PNAHA and PCAHA.

The handbook will provide you with information about what the WCAHA does and how we do it. We hope that it also will encourage you to become more involved in the Association. As you will see, there is much to do. Our Association could not survive without the hundreds of hours of volunteer work that begins long before Registration Day and sustains our teams and players through the winter ice hockey season.

We are pleased to have the privilege to work with our dedicated families and coaches. Our partnership with The Sportsplex (Marc Ronney, General Manager and Alana BreMiller, Hockey Director) and the Whatcom Sports Commission (under the direction of Lance Calloway) guides and supports the WCAHA in providing a quality youth hockey program.

We look forward to the season ahead and to the continued growth of our program and our children.

Sincerely,

The Whatcom County Amateur Hockey Association Board of Directors
2009-2010

President: Doug MacLean

Vice President: Mark Smith

Treasurer: Julia K Parker

Secretary: Victoria Reeb

Registrar: Tabatha Thorpe

Directors-at-Large:

David Bruce

Terry McNabb

Jeff Rich

Paul Rich

Ben Sutton

Shammah Wagner

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GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a positive and productive forum for parents/guardians to express a grievance without inhibiting a coach from fulfilling his coaching responsibilities. Parents/guardians wishing to meet with a coach and discuss a grievance must follow the below guidelines.

1. Parents/guardians will not approach coaches immediately after a game to air a grievance. To prevent further escalation and poor communication, parents must observe a 48-hour "cooling off" period.
2. Contact the team manager to arrange a meeting with the coach to discuss your grievance.

DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

Coaches: Policy violation will first be reviewed by the Hockey Director.

Players: Games violations subject to USA, PCAHA, & PNAHA Rule Books
Non-game violations are subject to review by the WCAHA Board of Directors

Parents: Policy violation will be reviewed by WCAHA Board of Directors

APPEAL PROCESS

Any parent or guardian of a WCAHA player may appeal any decision regarding discipline or suspension of their child or themselves. The grievance or notice of appeal should be placed in writing and presented to the WCAHA Board of Directors. Please do not contact PCAHA, PNAHA or Fraser Valley West without a WCAHA board member advocate.

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LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO HAVE A GREAT SEASON!

THE WCAHA MISSION STATEMENT

*To develop and encourage the sport of youth hockey in Whatcom County,
with a focus on fun, physical activity and social well being;
and to teach sportsmanship through wholesome competition.*

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of parents/legal guardians in the WCAHA is automatic with the registration of a player. One parent or legal guardian of each registered player can be a "voting member" of WCAHA. All Officers, League Directors, Managers, Coaches, and Officials appointed by the Board also become voting members of the WCAHA Membership.

The WCAHA membership terminates automatically upon withdrawal from the program, failure to ~~re~~-register or failure to be re-appointed. Association members have the opportunity to nominate and elect people to the Board of Directors online at our website www.whatcomhockey.com during the spring.

Voting on proposed amendments to the bylaws of the association may also take place at a predetermined meeting of the Board of Directors. Board meetings are held monthly at a place determined by the board. All members are welcome to attend board meetings. If you have an idea or suggestion, please put it in writing and submit it to a board member. It will be added to the agenda and addressed at a board meeting. Or, at the beginning of each meeting anyone

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WEBSITES

The WCAHA website address is www.whatcomhockey.com and all pertinent WCAHA information can be found there. As we are part of the Pacific Coast Amateur Hockey Association (PCAHA), please check out their rules and regulations at www.pcaha.com. The site is very valuable to help you understand the guidelines that govern everything from the scheduling to suspensions. USA Hockey at www.usahockey.com is also very helpful, as we are members of that organization as well.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

Registration begins April 1st of each year.

Current WCAHA Players

- a. PLEASE FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS ON WCAHA Registration Process page at www.whatcomhockey.com or at the Sportsplex office.

New to WCAHA

- a. **Beginners ages 5-8-** WCAHA requires a copy of each player's birth certificate. Please have this document along with all registration forms. Available online at www.whatcomhockey.com
- b. **Transfers** from another association either **local** or **moving in** from another state please bring release, birth certificate, and USA Hockey registration and completed WCAHA registration forms. Also a Player Movement Form is required by PCAHA and a fee is charged by PCAHA. If a player was born outside of the United States, please provide proof of legal residency. Go to www.pcaha.com to find Declaration of Residence Form.

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If space is limited, WCAHA takes experience into consideration in prioritizing the acceptance of players at the Pee Wee, Bantam and Midget levels of play.

Parent Conduct

All parents must display good sportsmanship at all games and practices, regardless of whether a contest is won or lost, and regardless of how a game is officiated. As parents or guardians we must be positive in our attitude toward the game. Any incident between a parent/guardian and coach or league official should be documented and recorded immediately on the "complaint resolution" form available on the WCAHA website.

HOW FEES ARE ESTABLISHED

Membership fees are determined and voted on by the WCAHA Board of Directors and are based on actual ice costs (practices and games) as determined by the Bellingham Sportsplex and referee fees. A business contract between the WCAHA and the Bellingham Sportsplex is signed during the month of August for the next year. No direct confrontation should occur between parents/guardians and coaches/league officials.

REMEMBER THAT EVERY PARENT, COACH, AND PLAYER REPRESENTS THE WHATCOM YOUTH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION AND MUST ACT ACCORDINGLY.

Helpful Hints for parents of hockey players:

- 4 ■ Support your child and their team. Mistakes are part of learning. Always be positive and provide guidance.
- Be completely honest with yourself about your child's athletic capability, level of skill, competitive attitude and sportsmanship.
- Do not compare your child to other players on the team. Compare them only to their own potential and what they want from the game.
- Help teach your child to enjoy the thrill of competition and sportsmanship. Help them develop a healthy, competitive attitude towards striving to be at their best and proud of their accomplishments.

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CODE OF CONDUCT

Player Behavior and Conduct

The information in this packet is designed to establish guidelines to support young people who participate in the WCAHA. Many of the rules are those enacted by USA Hockey, Inc., which governs youth hockey. WCAHA is committed to ensuring that they are observed. The WCAHA Board of Directors and its coaches, team managers and volunteer parents all have a vested interest in providing a safe, fun-filled environment for each player. In return, each skater must understand that coaches, assistant coaches and parent helpers are to be treated with respect and consideration. WCAHA skaters are expected to adhere to these rules:

- **Punctuality:** Ice time is valuable and should not be wasted. All participants should arrive at games no less than 45 minutes before scheduled games and practices. Unless your coach has told you differently, it is recommended that you be ready to "take the ice" at least 15 minutes before the scheduled starting time.
- **Attendance:** Reliable attendance is essential to personal skill development AND the development of team continuity.
- **Conduct:**
 1. **Play for fun.**
 2. **Respect your coach, your teammates and your opponents.**
 3. **Do not argue on officials' decisions.**
 4. **Play by the rules.**
 5. **Fighting will not be tolerated and will result in an appearance before the Board of Directors.**
 6. **No drinking, smoking, chewing tobacco or use of illegal substances at any team function.**
 7. **All players must display good sportsmanship both on and off the ice, at all games and practices, regardless of whether a contest is won or lost, and regardless of how a game is officiated. Damaging or defacing property and the general display of poor sportsmanship reflects poorly on the individual, the team and the Association. Such behavior is unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately by team coaches and/or the WCAHA Board of Directors.**

REGISTRATION PAYMENT POLICY AND LATE FEES
Payment for registration fees can be made at the Sportsplex. Cash, check or credit card (Visa/MasterCard) accepted. Credit card payments will be charged an extra 3% processing fee. Please refer to Fee Structure and Payment Form for schedule of payments. No player will be allowed to register until any outstanding balance from the previous season is paid in full. A \$25 late fee will be charged to all accounts 30 days overdue from the scheduled payment plan. Repeated or severe incidents of bad sportsmanship or other inappropriate or unacceptable conduct will result in disciplinary action by the Board of Directors. Any participant persistently violating WCAHA rules shall be dismissed from the program without refund. Coaches have the right to discipline, by way of "sit outs" and other means, any behavior not consistent with the philosophy of WCAHA.

REFUND POLICY
All or a portion of the initial \$125.00 deposit required at the time of player evaluations is refundable only under the following circumstances:
Any offender will not be allowed to participate in practice or games until a Board decision on disciplinary action has been made. This policy is consistent with the policies of USA Hockey.

1. A player disability that is expected to last for the remainder of the season.
2. Sudden change in family circumstances that results in an extended hardship for the family.
- 12 3. A player who pays the \$125 registration fee and participates in evaluations, but chooses not to play for WCAHA. \$50 of the \$125 will be retained by the Association to cover the cost of the evaluation.

Refund requests made outside these guidelines will not be considered unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances. All refund requests must be made in writing (or email) to the WCAHA Treasurer prior to the start of the season (September 1st).

The WCAHA Treasurer will present the refund request at the next WCAHA Board meeting, which

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PLAYER AND TEAM CLASSIFICATION

Player Classification

Groups are determined on the basis of the participant's birth year. There are two classifications, one for USA Hockey and one for PCAHA. Age group names and classifications for are as follows:

USA HOCKEY	PCAHA DIVISION
Mite 8 and under	Novice (H1,2,3,4) 8 and under
Squirt 10 and under	Atom 10 and under
Peewee 12 and under	Peewee 12 and under
Bantam 14 and under	Bantam 14 and under
Midget U16 16 and under	Midget 17 and under
Midget U18 18 and under	Midget 17 and under
	Juvenile 20 and under

Team Classification

WCAHA Inc. is a registered Tier II (sometimes called B level) member of USA Hockey, Inc. Depending on enrollment for the year, WCAHA also has a registered "C" level team and abides by all of USA Hockey's regulations governing amateur hockey. Classification is determined by the size of the community from which an organization draws.

WCAHA is unique, as we are also a part of the Fraser Valley West division of the Pacific Coast Amateur Hockey Association (PCAHA) and abide by Canadian rules governing hockey.

State Tournaments

Peewee, Bantam, and Midget teams are allowed to compete in the State tournament. They may have to qualify for competition level by playing other teams in the same tier. Placing first or second at the State tournament, (depending on the teams qualifying tier), will advance the team to the District tournament. If the team is successful in District finals, they will be invited to the National Tournament. Fundraising is an integral part of the WCAHA budget process. There are two major fundraisers and each family is required to participate in the fundraising program.

1. Golf Tournament (fall)
2. Auction (winter/spring)

PLAYER SELECTION GUIDELINES

Each team will be responsible for a fundraising activity. It is the responsibility of the Fundraising Coordinator to acquire approval from the WCAHA Board before proceeding with an activity. These may be, and are not limited to, cookouts, wine or beer sales, car washes, etc. The WCAHA evaluators are committed to organizing a fair try out process. The teams will be chosen by using all the information that is available to select the most competitive teams possible. The WCAHA Vice President oversees the evaluation process and the placement of players.

TRAVEL

WCAHA highly recommends that families apply for Nexus passes for all vehicle passengers who regularly travel over the Canadian border. Also, players traveling to Canada with one parent/guardian, or with other teammates' parents/guardians, must have written permission to do so from the parent(s)/guardian(s) not traveling.

Personal expenses, including gas, mileage, meals and lodging, incurred traveling to away games and tournaments, are not reimbursable by WCAHA.

OPPORTUNITIES OUTSIDE WCAHA

Skating skills programs are available at facilities throughout western Washington and British Columbia. Excellent Ice in Surrey, B.C. is a conveniently located rink that offers various programs for youth hockey players. For information, visit <http://www.excellentice.com/>

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HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE (Continued) WCAHA Volunteer Program

MANAGER

Every WCAHA team must have a manager. Managers provide a vital link between the coach and parents and have administrative responsibilities as well, including:

- filling out team rosters and ensuring that such rosters are current for the Registrar
- scheduling games
- obtaining minor (off-ice) officials
- notifying parents of schedule changes
- reserving hotel rooms for away games and tournaments as necessary
- completing travel game score sheet rosters
- updating the team website including stats
- distributing and collecting "Whatcom Warriors" jerseys
- coordinating ice time with master ice scheduler
- facilitating communication between coaches and parents throughout the hockey season
- ensuring that a parent from his/her team coordinates the team's fundraising obligations

SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE

Team Safety Representatives must be carded (certified) by attending a Risk Management class. The fee for these classes will be reimbursed by WCAHA. If there is an injury during a practice or game, the Safety Rep must assess the situation and take charge. The Safety Rep is responsible to bring the team's first aid kit to each game and restock supplies as needed. Each injury, regardless of how minor, must be logged in the Incident Book and reported to the Risk Manager of WCAHA.

MINOR OFFICIALS

SCOREKEEPER, TIMEKEEPER, PENALTY BOX OFFICIAL

Each player is responsible for providing a Scorekeeper, Timekeeper, and Penalty Box Official at their "home" games. These are relatively easy tasks to perform once you become familiar with the procedure. These responsibilities also offer a new perspective to the game. Off-ice officials

are not paid, but are listed in the WCAHA Yearbook after tryouts. The selection is based on players' skills, attitude, sportsmanship and age-appropriate division. Questions about tryouts should be directed to the WCAHA Vice President. A player unable to attend tryouts may be given an opportunity to apply later. Fundraising/Coordinator of the WCAHA Vice President, organizing and fundraising activities to offset ice costs and/or tournament fees; serving as liaison between team and WCAHA Treasurer and Fundraising Manager; organizing end-of-season party and/or gifts for players and coaches.

FUNDRAISING COORDINATOR

Planning meetings for the Association's main fundraisers. The WCAHA philosophy of player development is that it is best for all players to play within their respective age group. In saying that, we know we are a very small association and there will be times when it is in the best interest of the player/team to move players up or down depending on the circumstances. All requests for player movement must be made in writing to the board and are subject to board approval. For divisions that have a full team roster, the last registered player(s) will be added to the WCAHA waiting list.

Player Movement within WCAHA

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Player Movement outside of WCAHA

Individual players from our association are not allowed to play for Canadian teams. PCAHA has very strict rules regarding members participating in organized ice hockey outside of their association boundaries. However, USA Hockey views player movement differently. A player may move to another association as long as he is in good standing with WCAHA and requests a "release" letter from the President.

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ICE HOCKEY EQUIPMENT

MANDATORY EQUIPMENT NEEDED BY ALL PLAYERS – USA and Canada Rules

USA Hockey will deny any insurance claim submitted by a player not wearing proper equipment.

- Hockey skates
- Black helmet and full facial protection (CSA/HECC approved)
- Black hockey gloves
- Black hockey pants with pads
- Practice jersey
- Two loaned WCAHA jerseys (home/away)
- Shoulder pads
- Elbow pads
- Shin guards
- Red, white and black hockey socks (association colors; usually available for purchase from Team Manager)
- Athletic supporter for boys and girls – They are built into the shorts and have Velcro to keep socks up
- Colored mouth guard or Ortho-Fit attached to the facemask
- Full coverage neck guard (bib style)
- Goalies must wear an approved, fully-protective, facemask and helmet with throat shield
- Protective safety lens when needed
- Sticks must have the butt-end of the handle covered properly with tape or rubber end cap

Parents have the obligation to ensure that all of their player's equipment is in satisfactory condition. It should be of the correct size and good condition as to provide the intended protection and function.

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The Bellingham Sportsplex has a dedicated girls' change room for all female hockey players.

HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE

WCAHA Volunteer Program
The WCAHA owns two (2) complete sets of Novice level goalie equipment that may be borrowed for one season. Each registered team player will receive two (2) national jerseys and can have one jersey deposited in their locker. Our Association could not survive without the hundreds of hours of volunteer work that begins long before registration day and sustains our teams and players through the winter ice hockey season. Your help is vital to our organization. As you read through this information, think about how your particular talents, interests and skills might help the Association. A check will be held in good faith by the WCAHA to ensure the return of both jerseys. Once the jerseys are returned to the Equipment Manager, the Treasurer will destroy your deposit check. All volunteers must fill out a volunteer application form available online at the Sportsplex. All jerseys deposited may also be made available from the Sportsplex office. Volunteers who have direct contact with players must undergo a State and Federal background check. Hockey Canada also requires volunteers to receive SPEAK OUT training, which outlines behavior to keep our kids safe.

Each team needs the following – coach, manager, safety representative, minor officials, and a fundraising coordinator.

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COACH/ASSISTANT COACH

All coaches and assistant coaches are volunteers and must abide by the rules of WCAHA, PCAHA, and USA Hockey. And hold current coaching certification as required by USA Hockey for their division. USA Hockey provides training and certification to individuals who wish to coach through their Coaching Achievement Program. Certification at the Associate Level or above must be obtained before December 31. No exceptions will be allowed. Acquiring or maintaining coaching certification by attending required courses will be reimbursed by WCAHA.