

LEAGUE RULES

Northland Hockey League Kansas City

Last updated August 8, 2026



These rules supplement USA Hockey rules and regulations. League rules may be changed for the betterment of the league after notice. A suspension already in progress remains governed by the policy in effect when it was issued.

1. League Standards and Player Responsibilities

Non-Checking League and Equipment

NHLKC is a non-checking league, although incidental contact will occur. Helmets, gloves, skates, elbow pads, and shin pads are mandatory. Full protective equipment is strongly recommended. Unsafe equipment must be corrected before participation.

USA Hockey Registration and Waiver

- Every player must have a current USA Hockey membership and sign the league waiver before stepping on the ice. Captains must request a waiver form for every new player. Waivers are available at the kiosk at Line Creek Ice Arena. No exceptions.

Participant Conduct and Responsibilities

- Participants must be at least 18 years old. No one under 18 may be on a bench because of SafeSport requirements.
- Players must know and follow NHLKC rules, USA Hockey rules, and all facility regulations.
- Treat league staff, rink staff, officials, teammates, and opponents courteously and respectfully.
- Only properly registered, active participants may be on a team bench.
- Each team must keep its bench and locker room clean.

2. Discipline and Suspensions

Fighting and Major Misconduct

Fighting is prohibited. USA Hockey Rule 615 applies, and instigator penalties will be strongly enforced.

1. First offense: No league sanction beyond the game officials' assessment, unless the severity warrants additional action.
 2. Second offense: Two-game suspension in addition to the officials' assessment; possible removal from the league.
 3. Third offense: Further league sanctions, including possible removal from the league.
- Threatening remarks during game activity may result in immediate removal and further sanctions.
 - Do not enter another team's locker room or penalty box with harmful intent. Such off-ice conduct carries a 10-game suspension and possible removal from the league.

- Do not join or attempt to break up a scuffle or fight; doing so may result in a penalty.
- Five or more penalties in one game results in a one-game suspension.
- A spitting offense results in immediate removal from the league.

Suspension Rules

- KCOA suspensions are not subject to debate. NHLKC may add sanctions based on the severity of the conduct and may remove any participant whose conduct is detrimental to a team or the league.
- A suspended player may not play or substitute for another NHLKC team in that division until the suspension is served in the division where it was issued.
- Suspended players may attend games but may not enter benches or locker rooms. Inappropriate conduct while attending may result in additional suspension.
- No individual refund will be issued because of a suspension.

Abuse of Officials or Staff

Verbal or physical abuse of officials, league staff, or arena personnel will not be tolerated. Players may not approach officials or rink staff with complaints during or immediately after a game. A violation results in an automatic one-game misconduct and may lead to additional discipline or removal.

The league reviews incidents case by case using information from teams, referees, scorekeepers, and arena personnel. NHLKC may deny a player's participation in any division.

3. League Fees

The league fee is a team obligation. The team remains responsible for the full amount regardless of an individual player's injury, departure, or failure to pay.

Required

- Each captain must collect all individual player payments.
- The team fee must be paid in full, with no outstanding balance.
- The league will not issue refunds or credits directly to individual players.
- If a player leaves the team, becomes injured, or fails to pay, the team is immediately responsible for that player's portion.
- No unpaid balance may be carried into the next session.
- Each team must decide internally how to collect player payments, address refunds, replace players, and handle unpaid individual balances. Captains may be required to provide a credit card upon request.
- Lack of compliance may impact offending team games. Forfeiture of game and hard costs of game removed from unpaid balance. Opposing team will be credited back hard costs of game.

Payment Terms

- Captains may pay by cash, check, Venmo, or debit/credit card; cash or check is preferred.
- A \$1,000 deposit, or another amount announced for the session, is due before the session begins. The remaining balance is due by the fifth game. This will be addressed by division.
- If the team balance is not paid by the fifth game, the captain is responsible for immediate payment. The league may suspend games until the account is paid and may charge late fees.
- By participating, each team and player accepts these payment terms.

4. Game Operations

Game Format

- Warm-up: Three minutes, beginning when the Zamboni doors close. Players should help collect warm-up pucks for the scorekeeper.
- A League: Three 14-minute stop-time periods; minor penalties are two minutes.

- B, C, and D Leagues: Three 12-minute stop-time periods; minor penalties are 1:30.
- The rink may use a running clock in the third period when needed to remain on schedule.
- Six goal lead requires running clock in third period.
- Each team receives one timeout per game.
- Regular-season tie: Three-player shootout, continuing until a winner is determined.
- Standings: Win = 2 points; shootout loss = 1 point; regulation loss = 0 points.
- Championship-game overtime only: Five minutes of 3-on-3, followed by a three-player shootout if still tied.

Scheduling and Communication

- Game dates and times are subject to change, although schedule changes will generally be limited to weather or rink issues.
- Captains must provide an email address and cell number and use GroupMe for league communications.

5. Rosters and Substitutions

Team Rosters

- A valid division roster must be established before league play. The maximum active roster is 15 skaters and one goalie, each with a valid USA Hockey number.
- No more than 15 skaters may be on the bench, including during playoffs.
- Captains are responsible for confirming player registration, waivers, eligibility, and roster compliance.
- Substitutes normally need not appear on the team roster if they are properly eligible under the rules below. Outside-rink substitute candidates must be identified on the preseason substitute list.

Substitution Rules

- A team may not use substitutes when 10 or more of its rostered players are present.
- A team may not dress more players than its opponent. If rostered players arrive after the game begins, substitutes must leave the bench as necessary to remain compliant.
- A substitute must be rostered on another NHLKC team, preferably in the same league, and may play in the same or a lower division. The substitute should be approximately equal in ability to the player being replaced.
- A player rostered at another rink, including KCIC, IEC, or Bluehawk, may substitute only if included on the preseason substitute list.
- A same-league player whose team plays immediately before or after the game may substitute as an exception to the comparable-skill guideline.
- Every substitute must have current USA Hockey registration and a signed waiver. Compliance is the captain's responsibility.

6. Playoffs

- No substitutions are allowed during the playoffs.
- A playoff player must be in the league's USA Hockey database and listed on the scoresheet.
- A player must have participated in at least 50% of the regular-season games to be playoff eligible. A player joining for the winter session must play at least half of that session.
- The league will provide captains an opportunity to review their own and opposing rosters before the playoffs. Captains are responsible for proving eligibility and lodging any protest before the game starts.
- Officials must be notified of a roster protest before the game so an ineligible player can be removed before play begins. If the player refuses to leave, the game will be played, but the violating team will forfeit and be eliminated from the playoffs.
- A player rostered and paid on two teams that meet in the playoffs must declare for one team. If that team is eliminated, the player is eliminated from the remainder of the playoffs.

- The champion receives a \$200 credit to design and produce its own shirts. NHLKC must appear on the shirt.

7. League Divisions

The league prefers an even number of teams to avoid byes. A new team must submit the roster form, including each player's highest level played. Rosters will be vetted, especially in D League, and the league may reassign or remove players who are not appropriately placed.

A League

Open participation. Players may include professionals, junior or travel players, and accomplished house-level players.

B League

A highly competitive division with a broad skill range, generally including older A-level players, experienced organized-youth or house players, and advanced C-level players. A limited number of A-level players may be rostered to support competitive balance.

C League

The league's primary adult division, typically for players who began as adults or are well removed from organized youth hockey. Skill ranges from advancing D-level players to high C-level players who may also compete in B League.

Participation: Youth A or high-school players and B League players require approval from all C League captains. Youth House, C League, and D League players are otherwise eligible.

D League

A developmental division for beginners and newer skaters. Captain cooperation is essential, and players should advance when ready and space is available.

Participation: C League players require approval from all D League captains. Beginners and D League players are eligible. A player rostered in C League for at least two sessions is not eligible for D League playoffs.