

DL #1 – Proposed Amendments for January 2026 Meeting -- (1-9-26)

SPECIFIC WORDING OF PROPOSAL:

D. PLAYER DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

The objective of USA Hockey's Player Development Program is to select and train the most competitive men's and women's ice hockey and sled hockey teams to represent the United States at the Olympic, Paralympic, National, and Select levels of international competition.

The attainment of that goal begins each summer as USA Hockey hosts a series of national and/or regional Player Development Camps for able-bodied boys and girls ages 14, 15, 16 and 17 as well as a camp for sled hockey players. Nearly 1,300 athletes representing each of USA Hockey's 12 districts participate in the week-long events, which attract scouts and evaluators from every level of hockey. Participants receive on- and off-ice training under the direction of leading USA Hockey coaches, along with current and former National Hockey League, Women's National Team and National Sled Team players. Participants are chosen through an evaluation process conducted at the local and district levels.

Starting with the ~~2026/27~~ 2027/28 Season, USA Hockey will initiate play within the USA Hockey Development League (DL). The DL will focus on 15U (14 & 15) and 17U (15, 16 & 17) age levels in order to provide a more focused plan for high performance player development. The DL is being established under USA Hockey's authority as a National Governing Body as part of a high-performance national player development program to train and develop USA Hockey players from across the country to advance to high level Junior programs, College Hockey programs and also to increase the pool of players eligible to play for the United States in international competition.

USA Hockey's National Team Development Program is an important part of player development efforts for select 16 and 17-year-old boys. The full-time residency program was formed to help influence increased success at all levels of international competition and also prepare players for professional hockey. In addition, USA Hockey's junior leagues, including the Tier I United States Hockey League and Tier II North American Hockey League, also play a significant role in USA Hockey's player development strategy.

INTENTION OF PROPOSAL: Part of proposed legislation to establish the USA Hockey Development League. This specific proposal identifies the Development League as a part of the USA Hockey Player Development Program under USA Hockey's authority as an NGB.

Submitter: Development League Working Group

DL #2

SPECIFIC WORDING OF PROPOSAL: - no January 2026 amendments – (1-9-26)

1. MEMBERSHIP IN USA HOCKEY

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D. Registration Fees

An annual registration fee for Registered Participant Membership and/or Allied Membership shall be approved by the Board of Directors, following a recommendation by the USA Hockey Congress, at the Winter Meeting of USA Hockey, to take effect for the following membership season; provided, however, if the annual registration fee approved by the Board of Directors was not recommended by the USA Hockey Congress, then any increase in

the registration fee must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors. The amount of the fee shall be paid or forwarded by the applicant through USA Hockey's online registration system along with the annual membership application.

USA Hockey Development League (DL) teams shall pay an annual team assessment as determined each season by the voting members of the Development League joint sub-committee. The A Development League annual team assessment shall be set forth each season in the USA Hockey Development League Guidebook.

(No further changes)

INTENTION OF PROPOSAL: Part of proposed legislation to establish the USA Hockey Development League. This specific proposal would establish a team membership assessment to cover possible costs to USA Hockey in connection with the Development League.

Submitter: Development League Working Group

DL #3

SPECIFIC WORDING OF PROPOSAL: - no January 2026 amendments – (1-9-26)

(10) Player Development Committee

(b) Duties and Responsibilities

The Player Development Committee will oversee the coordination of USA Hockey Player Development initiatives and programs. This will include, but is not limited to, District and National Player Selection Camps, District and National Player Development Camps and American Development Model initiatives. In this regard the Player Development Committee will review the direction of all related Player Development Programming. **The Joint sub-committee of the Player Development Committee and the Youth Council will also oversee the USA Hockey Development League.**

INTENTION OF PROPOSAL: Part of proposed legislation to establish the USA Hockey Development League. This specific proposal would establish that the **oversight of the Development League will be the responsibility of a Joint sub-committee of the Player Development Committee and the Youth Council.**

Submitter: Development League Working Group

DL #4 – Proposed Amendments for January 2026 Meeting – (1-9-26)

SPECIFIC WORDING OF PROPOSAL:

II. CLASSIFICATIONS

The following are the official ice hockey player and team classifications of USA Hockey. The classifications of a player shall be determined by his/her age at midnight on December 31 prior to or during the current playing season.

Player and team classifications for Junior hockey are as provided in Section XI: Junior Hockey.

B. Youth, Girls, High School

(1) Age/Team Classifications

YOUTH

Seventeen (17) and Eighteen (18) (18U)

Fifteen (15), Sixteen (16) and Seventeen (17) (17U DL) - Development League teams only

Fifteen (15) and Sixteen (16) (16U)

Fifteen (15) (Tier I National Bound Teams only) (15O)

Fourteen (14) and Fifteen (15) (15U DL) – Development League teams only

Thirteen (13) and Fourteen (14) (14U)

Thirteen (13) (Tier I National Bound Teams only) (13O)

Eleven (11) and Twelve (12) (12U)

Nine (9) and Ten (10) (10U)

Seven (7) & Eight (8) (8U)

Six (6) & Under (6U)

Classifications for players and teams participating in the USA Hockey Development League (DL) shall be as provided in RULES & REGULATIONS Section III. I.

(2) Citizenship Eligibility

- (a) Only U.S. citizens are eligible to participate in the National Player Development Program. **A Development League team may roster and play up to two (2) non-US citizens on that Development League team (excluding goalies, who must be US citizens) provided that the non-citizen player(s) must have previously been registered with USA Hockey and have played on a USA Hockey team during a previous season.**

INTENTION OF PROPOSAL: Part of proposed legislation to establish the USA Hockey Development League. This specific proposal sets out the age classifications **and citizenship requirements** for **players in** the Development League.

Submitter: Development League Working Group

DL #5

SPECIFIC WORDING OF PROPOSAL: no January 2026 amendments – (1-9-26)

III. TEAM MEMBERSHIP AND REGISTRATION

A. Membership

Except for Juniors, **and teams participating in the USA Hockey Development League (DL)**, all teams of USA Hockey member programs must register with USA Hockey in a manner prescribed by the appropriate district registrar. All youth, girls, high school, **Development League**, and disabled teams shall be required to use the official USA Hockey roster registration form (1-T). Affiliates and leagues may also require the USA Hockey roster registration form (1-T) for other specified teams. All applicants for team membership must be members in good standing of an Affiliate.

Junior registration for players, coaches, teams, leagues and referees shall be as provided in Section XI: Junior Hockey.

Registration of players and teams participating in the USA Hockey Development League (DL) shall be as provided for in RULES & REGULATIONS Section III. I.

All players seventeen (17) years of age or older on or before December 31 of that playing season, and that play on a team in a classification that allows minor age players, shall be required to complete U.S. Center for SafeSport online training before being added to such team and prior to participation (on-ice or off-ice). This requirement shall apply to all teams in the Youth, Girls, High School, Junior Hockey, Flex Hockey and Disabled Hockey program classifications that allow both minor age and adult age players. Players required to complete the training shall complete the Core Center for SafeSport Training prior to being added to a team and shall complete the Refresher Course on an annual basis in accordance with SafeSport Program Policies in each subsequent season in which they are on a team in the above classifications.

INTENTION OF PROPOSAL: Part of proposed legislation to establish the **USA Hockey Development League**. This specific proposal provides that registration of players, teams and programs participating in the DL would be governed by a new Rules and Regulations section III. I.

Submitter: Development League Working Group

DL #6 – Proposed Amendments for January 2026 Meeting as of (1-9-26)

SPECIFIC WORDING OF PROPOSAL:

SECTION III TEAM MEMBERSHIP AND REGISTRATION

i) NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEAGUE (NDL)

Starting with the ~~2026/27~~ **2027/28** Season, USA Hockey will initiate play within the USA Hockey Development League (DL). The DL is being established under USA Hockey's authority as a National Governing Body (NGB) as part of a high-performance national player development program to train and develop USA Hockey players from across the country to advance to high level Junior Hockey programs, College Hockey programs and also to increase the pool of players eligible to play for the United States in International competition. Oversight of the Development League will be under a Joint sub-committee of the Player Development Committee and the Youth Council. The DL Joint Sub-committee will consist of ~~nine (9) seven-(7)~~ **nine (9)** sub-committee members. The membership of the DL Joint sub-committee will be the Chair of the Player Development Committee, the Chair of the Youth Council, the Chair of the Registrar's Section, a voting member of the Player Development Committee appointed by the Chair of the Player Development Committee, a voting member of the Youth Council appointed by the Chair of the Youth Council, **an Affiliate President Representative appointed by the Chair of the Youth Council**, and ~~three (3) two-(2)~~ **three (3)** athlete representatives with ~~two (2) one~~ **two (2)** appointed by the Chair of the Player Development Committee and ~~one (1) the-other~~ **one (1)** appointed by the Chair of the Youth Council. The Chair of the Youth Council shall serve as the Chair of the DL Joint sub-committee. A staff liaison will also serve as a non-voting member of the DL joint sub-committee.

The voting members of the DL Joint **oversight** sub-committee shall approve a USA Hockey Development League Guidebook, which shall be published and available on the USA Hockey website on or before January 1 prior to the start of DL team formation for the following year. Except as set forth and contrary to any information contained in the USA Hockey Annual Guide, the Development League Guidebook shall be the binding authority for the selection and application process for participation of teams and programs within the DL, the recruitment, tryout, selection and player agreement of any player participating in the DL, operating requirements for teams participating in the DL, game requirements and any end of season league playoffs.

1. Player, Coach and Team Registration

- a) All participants (players and coaches) must complete the USA Hockey registration process and register using the USA Hockey website at usahockey.com. Each participant (players and coaches) will pay the USA Hockey individual membership fee and any applicable Affiliate individual membership fee at the time of the online registration.
- b) All teams registering to participate in the DL must submit their official USA Hockey roster registration form (1-T) to the designated DL Registrar on or before October 15th of the season. A team roster registration form (1-T) shall not be effective until the date it is approved by the DL Registrar through the USA Hockey portal.
- c) All programs with DL teams must also be members of their applicable Affiliate. Programs with DL teams must register those teams in the

- Affiliate where the DL teams play home games and hold team practices.
- d) All teams registering with the DL must be full season teams with games and practices during the period September-February of the season.
 - e) A Development League team may roster and play up to two (2) non-US citizens on that Development League team (excluding goalies, who must be US citizens) provided that the **non-citizen** player(s) have previously been registered with USA Hockey and played on a USA Hockey team.
 - f) The DL will operate as a national league. Teams participating in the DL will be open residency teams with no residency restrictions for players rostered on any DL teams.
 - g) Players participating in the DL may not **participate with or** be rostered or registered on any other hockey team during the same season, with the exception that such players may (i) participate in Tier I and Tier II Junior Hockey games as permitted in the USA Hockey Youth/Junior Player Policy and (ii) **play in DL organization games under the DL vertical integration policy.**
 - h) All DL teams are required to have a team manager, and, at minimum one locker room monitor listed on the DL team roster (1-T). Team managers and locker room monitors listed on the DL team roster must have current background screening and current SafeSport training.
 - i) No players may be added to a DL team roster (1-T) after December 31st of the season **[subject to change in date in Registrars #2].**

2. Roster Size

A limit of twenty-two (22) players (not more than twenty (20) skaters) may be rostered and participate in Development League games. All DL teams must roster two (2) Goaltenders and ~~no fifteen (15) year old player may be rostered as a Goaltender~~ on **each** a DL team.

3. Team Age Classifications

~~Teams participating in the Development League must register teams in the 17U DL (Fifteen (15), Sixteen (16) and Seventeen (17) year old players) USA Hockey age classification.~~

Each approved DL organization must field one (1) 15U DL team and one (1) 17U DL team. DL organizations that also have Tier I teams may not field 150 and 16U Tier I teams.

15U DL Teams

- a) **15U DL – Fourteen (14) and fifteen (15) year-old players. No thirteen (13) year-old players may be rostered or play on a 15U DL team.**
- b) **No more than four (4) fourteen (14) year-old players may be rostered on a 15U DL team.**
- c) **No more than one (1) fourteen (14) year-old goaltender may be rostered on a 15U DL team. If a DL organization does roster a 14-year-old goaltender on their 15U DL team, that player counts against the four (4) fourteen year old player roster limitation for 15U DL teams.**
- d) **A 15U DL team may roster and play up to two (2) non-US citizens on that DL team (excluding goaltenders who must be US citizens), provided that the non-US citizen player(s) must have previously been registered with**

USA Hockey and played on a USA Hockey team during a previous season.

17U DL Teams

- a) **Fifteen (15), sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) year-old players. No fourteen (14) year-old or younger players may be rostered or play on a 17U DL team.**
- b) **No more than two (2) fifteen (15) year-old players may be rostered on a 17U DL team.**
- c) **No more than one (1) fifteen (15) year-old goaltender may be rostered on a 17U DL team. If a DL organization does roster a 15-year-old goaltender on their 17U DL team, that player counts against the two (2) fourteen year old player roster limitation for 17U DL teams.**
- d) **A 17U DL team may roster and play up to two (2) non-US citizens on that DL team (excluding goaltenders who must be US citizens), provided that the non-US citizen players must have previously been registered with USA Hockey and played on a USA Hockey team during a previous season.**

~~**Programs participating in the DL that also field Tier I teams may not field 16U Tier I teams in addition to their 17U DL teams during the same season.**~~

4. VERTICAL ROSTER INTEGRATION FOR DL TEAMS

Age-appropriate vertical roster movement between a DL organization's DL teams and that organization's Tier I teams is allowed between September 1 and February 1 of the season, subject to the following restrictions and conditions:

- a) **No thirteen (13) year-old players may play in any 15U DL or 17U DL game.**
- b) **Fourteen (14) year-old players on a DL organization's Tier I 14U team may be vertically integrated during the season on the organization's 15U DL team.**
- c) **Fifteen (15) year-old players on a 15U DL team may be vertically integrated during the season on the organization's 17U DL team.**
- d) **Sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) year-old players on a DL organization's Tier I 18U team may be vertically integrated during the season on the organization's 17U DL team.**
- e) **Any DL organization player participating in a game under the DL vertical integration policy may only play one (1) game per day.**
- f) **Notwithstanding (a) – (e) above, in games played by any DL team against a Tier I team, the teams must follow the Tier I Vertical Integration Rules as set forth in the USA Hockey Annual Guide.**

5. Post Season Play

Development League teams are not eligible to participate in any USA Hockey National Championships. Team and player eligibility to participate in any DL playoff or championship will be governed by the USA Hockey Development League Guidebook rather than Section IX of the USA Hockey Rules and Regulations. The League Commissioner will decide on any question on the eligibility of a player, team or coach to participate in any DL playoff or championship based on the Development League Guidebook. Should a player, team or coach be declared ineligible to compete in any DL **Regional Playoff or **League C**hampionship by a final decision of the League Commissioner, the player, team or coach may appeal its ineligibility to the DL Joint sub-**

committee. Upon receipt of any such appeal the DL Joint sub-committee shall render a decision as soon as possible. Notwithstanding Bylaw 10.E.(1)(b), the decision of the DL Joint sub-committee shall be final.

6. Player Recruitment, Player Agreements and Tryouts.

Development League teams may recruit and sign players to Player Agreements according to the following timeline:

- a) ~~January 15th-January 31st: Year 1 DL Only— Early Signing Period for any player.~~
- b) January 15th-January 31st: ~~Subsequent Years—~~ Early Signing Period for DL teams to sign their **organization's** returning players.
- c) February 1st – End of February: DL Open Signing Period.
- d) March 1st – End of National Championships: Blackout Period (no **tryouts or** signing of players).
- e) End of National Championships – 48 hours after National Championships – DL Open Signing Period resumes
 - i. Players participating in the USA Hockey National Championships may be signed to a DL player agreement once that player's team has been eliminated from National Championship medal games.
 - ii. DL teams (as well as Tier I teams) may begin player tryouts and signing of players 48 hours after the last game of the National Championships.
- f) DL teams are required to release any DL team player from his Player Agreement without any financial penalty if the player is signing with the NDTP or a USHL team prior to that DL team's first game. If a player seeks to leave a DL team after that team's first game to play with the NDTP or a USHL team the player must satisfy any financial obligation to the **N**DL team or the player and DL team may reach a mutual agreement on any financial obligation of the player to the DL team.
- g) Player Agreements must be executed for all DL players before they can be rostered on a DL team. DL teams may offer Player Agreements and sign a maximum of **twenty-two (2220)** players to a DL team.
- h) A DL team/program must notify the DL League Registrar of the name of any players signed to a Player Agreement and the specific team that the player committed to playing on within 24 hours after the signing of a Player Agreement.
- i) Player Agreements offered by DL teams/programs must provide information as required in the Development League Guidebook.
- j) The execution of a Player Agreement by a player and parent binds and commits the player to that DL team for the entirety of the team's playing season. Likewise, the execution of a Player Agreement by a DL team binds and commits that team to the player and secures a roster position for that player on the signing team for the entire applicable season. Any disputes between the player and the DL team on the application of a Player Agreement may be resolved in the sole discretion of the DL Commissioner as he/she deems proper under the circumstances, with the right to appeal to the National Appeals Committee pursuant to Bylaw 10.E.

7. Selection of Teams/Programs to Participate in the USA Hockey

Development League: The specific criteria for team participation in the

Development League, the application and selection process, the annual team assessment due to the league, the number of teams in the League, the team operating requirements, the periodic review of team/program performance, and the withdrawal and continuation of teams within the League will be set out each season in the Development League Guidebook on or before January 1 of each year.

8. Development League Discipline Actions or Administrative Actions/Decisions:

- a) For any necessary disciplinary hearings involving a DL team, player, coach or representative, the DL Commissioner shall appoint a three (3) person disciplinary hearing panel to conduct a hearing pursuant to USA Hockey Bylaw 10. C. The discipline hearing panel shall consist of one (1) Affiliate President, one (1) Youth Council member, and one (1) Player Development Committee member.**
- b) Any appeal of a DL discipline hearing panel must be submitted in writing to the National Appeals Committee within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the decision appealed from, and the appeal shall be decided in accordance with the procedures in USA Hockey Bylaw 10. E. The decision of the National Appeals Committee on the appeal is final.**
- c) Notwithstanding (a) and (b) above, in discipline arising from games played between a DL team and a Tier I team, the discipline of the DL team or individual shall be addressed as described in (a) and (b), and the discipline of the Tier I team or individual shall be referred to the applicable Affiliate.**
- d) The DL Commissioner will hear all Administrative Actions other than Administrative Actions taken by an Affiliate, which shall be determined by the Affiliate. Any appeals of administrative decisions made by the DL Commissioner must be submitted to the DL Joint sub-committee within fourteen (14) days of the decision or action by the DL Commissioner.**

Except as specifically set forth in this Section III.I of the USA Hockey RULES & REGULATIONS the applicable Affiliate shall retain discipline authority over DL teams and players.

INTENTION OF PROPOSAL:

This legislation allows for the establishment of the USA Hockey Development League. The USA Hockey Board of Directors approved a Resolution dated January 19, 2025 - Resolved that "USA Hockey confirms its commitment to the development of American hockey players throughout its programs and development routes,and emphasizes the opportunities available to American players to play hockey at the highest level of junior hockey in programs under the jurisdiction of USA Hockey." The stated purpose of the DL (Proposal #6) is to establish the DL as part of USA Hockey's high-performance national player development program to train and develop American players from across the country to advance to high level Junior Hockey programs, College Hockey programs and also to increase the pool of players eligible to play for the United States in International competition. The establishment of the DL is consistent with the commitment expressed by the USA Hockey Board in its recent Resolution.

Submitter: Development League Working Group