



AWHL TOURNAMENT RULES

Last updated: 3/6/2026

- 1) **Have fun!**
- 2) **AWHL Playing Rules:** The following tournament rules are meant to ensure fair play and minimize issues during the tournament; they are not an exhaustive list of all issues that may arise. Interpretation of the rules will be made at the discretion of the AWHL Board with the intent to promote spirit of the game and sportsmanship.
 - a) All sanctioned tournaments will be conducted under the rules, regulations, and codes of AWHL, USA Hockey and ASHA.
 - b) Tournament rules take precedence over any differing regular season rules.
 - c) USA Hockey stresses respect for all players, referees, and coaches.
- 3) **Inclusion Statement and Zero Tolerance Policy:** Ahead of the tournament, the AWHL Board would like to remind all players, coaches, and spectators of our inclusion statement, written below, and reiterate that all women are welcome to play in AWHL. The AWHL has a zero-tolerance policy against behavior that is abusive, including, but not limited to, racism, homophobia or behavior that goes against AWHL's inclusion statement or USA Hockey's transgender athlete eligibility policy.
 - a) USA Hockey's transgender athlete eligibility policy, adopted in 2019, states that "a transgender athlete shall be permitted to participate according to the gender with which the athlete identifies, based on the gender shown in their USA Hockey Registration."
 - b) As a USA Hockey member organization, we published our league's inclusion statement last season, based on the above policy and informed by our league's mission: to bring women of all skill levels together to play hockey in a fun, organized and supportive atmosphere.
 - c) AWHL Inclusion Statement: Anchorage Women's Hockey League (AWHL) exists to offer women from all walks of life the opportunity to play hockey in a positive and supportive environment. As a recreational league, we believe that fun should matter above all. All women are welcome, and AWHL does not require women to confirm their gender identity when registering. We trust all of our members play with the league to have fun, and not to gain a competitive advantage they might not have in other leagues or settings.
 - d) Should any skater, referee, official or spectator be found in violation of section 3; they will be removed from all games for the remainder of the tournament. Violations should be reported by team representatives directly via email to the AWHL Board for review and action. anchoragewomenshockey@gmail.com

4) Tournament Divisions: There are two divisions of play - Intermediate and Recreational ("Rec").

a) Rec is geared toward members who seek a more relaxed, recreational style of play. This level is open to players of all skill levels from beginner to advanced. All players are expected to exemplify the highest level of good sportsmanship and moderation in playing with opponents and teammates who may not be evenly matched. Slapshots are not permitted at the recreational level. **Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated.**

b) Intermediate includes players who have skated on collegiate or competitive teams as well as other players with intermediate or advanced skills. All players are expected to exemplify the highest level of good sportsmanship. Slapshots are not permitted at the intermediate level. **Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated.**

5) Tournament Format: Below is the tournament format for both divisions. The AWHL Manager has made the following recommendations based on their years of experience conducting tournaments and the number of teams in each division. The AWHL Board has decided to move forward with them.

Round robin pools will be chosen by each division's regular season standings. Discretion may be used for the Valley team(s) to accommodate their schedule.

The following point system will be used to determine team standings during round robin pool play to determine which teams move onto semi-finals:

Win = 2 points • Tie = 1 point • Loss/Forfeit = 0 points

The semi-finals are 1st Place Division 1 vs 2nd Place Division 2 and 1st Place Division 2 vs 2nd Place Division 1.

a) Rec Division Format: The Rec League has seven (7) teams.

- i)** Division 1 will have three (3) teams and plays a double round-robin (plays the other two teams twice) with the top two teams advancing to the semi-finals.
- ii)** Division 2 will have 4 teams, and each team plays the other three (3) teams in a round robin format with the top two (2) teams advancing to the semi-finals.
- iii)** The teams in Division 2 play three (3) games prior to the semi-finals and the teams in Division 1 play four (4) games. The winners of the semi-finals play for the championship.
- iv)** The two teams from Division 2 that are eliminated at the end of round robin play will play a consolation game, so that all skaters play a minimum of four (4) tournament games.

b) Intermediate Division Format: The Intermediate League has nine (9) teams.

- i) Division 1 will have four (4) teams and play each of the other three teams once with the top two teams advancing to the semi-finals.
 - ii) Division 2 will have five (5) teams with each team playing each of the other four (4) teams once. The top two (2) teams will advance to the semi-finals. The winners of the semi-finals will play for the championship.
 - iii) The two teams from Division 1 that are eliminated at the end of round robin play will play a consolation game so that all skaters play a minimum of four (4) tournament games.
- c) **Round Robin Tiebreakers:** In the event that two or more teams are tied in the standings for advancement at the end of ROUND ROBIN play, the following tiebreakers will be applied in this order:
- i) Head-to-Head: Direct comparison between two opponents in their previous game with the winner advancing.
 - ii) Goal Differential: Total GOALS FOR minus GOALS AGAINST in equal number of games played. There is a 5-goal maximum in the differential for any one game.
 - iii) Quotient: Dividing the goals scored by the goals scored against. There is a five (5) goal maximum in the differential for any one game.
 - iv) Least penalty minutes total in all games played.
 - v) Highest number of individual scorers in all games played.
 - vi) Highest number of assisted goals in all games played.
 - vii) Team with the earliest first goal in all games played.
 - viii) Coin flip (2-team tie): HOME team is HEADS. AWAY team is TAILS.
 - ix) In the event of a multiple team tie where tiebreakers cannot determine which teams advance, the board will draw team names.
- d) **Overtime in Semi-Finals and Championship Games:** If the score is tied after regulation play, a five (5) minute running clock sudden death overtime will be played.
- i) If the game is still tied after the overtime period, a three (3) person shootout will take place. The HOME team decides who shoots first. The teams will alternate shooting on goal until one team is mathematically eliminated from winning the shootout.
 - ii) If the tie is not broken after the first shootout, a sudden death shootout will take place. Each team will alternate shooters until one team scores and the other does not.
- All players on the bench are required to shoot before an individual can shoot another time.

iii) If the scheduled rink time runs out before there is a winner, AWHL will apply tiebreakers listed in Section 5 to decide the championship.

6) **Player Eligibility/Minimums/Substitutions:** Team representatives or coaches must confirm team roster with the scorekeeper prior to each game. All players must be registered members of AWHL in good standing.

a) **Protective Equipment:** Players who fail to wear proper protective equipment will not be allowed to play on the ice but can return to the ice once they have all the proper equipment. A player may be suspended for part or all of the tournament if the Board determines the player is intentionally ignoring the league equipment rules on a regular basis. Below is the complete list of all required equipment.

| PLAYERS | GOALIES |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Helmet with full face shield | Helmet with full face shield |
| Pelvic Protector | Pelvic Protector |
| Hip pads or padded hockey pants | Padded hockey pants |
| Hockey Stick (not cracked or broken) | Goalie Stick (not cracked or broken) |
| Shin Pads | Neck Protector |
| Shoulder Pads | Shoulder and arm pads |
| Elbow Pads | Chest Protector |
| Hockey Gloves | Blocker and catcher gloves |
| Hockey Skates | Leg Pads |
| Jersey | Goalie or Hockey Skates |
| Internal Mouthguard and Neck Guard <i>(optional but recommended)</i> | Jersey |

b) **Player Eligibility:** All players must be registered with AWHL and with USA Hockey for the 2025-2026 season. No one may be on a team bench if they are not a member of AWHL.

All rostered skaters must have played a minimum of three (3) games with their rostered team.

All skaters/teams must be in good financial standing with the league to participate in the tournament.

c) **Ineligible Players:** The score of a forfeited game is 1-0 if one team with the minimum number of players is on the ice. Teams may elect to still play the game even if it is officially forfeited. **If any ineligible player is used, the offending team will forfeit the game. The infraction will be brought before the AWHL Board for further assessment.**

d) **Goalies:** Individuals that are rostered in the league only as a GOALIE may not skate out as a skater or substitute as a skater for any team. This will be viewed as an ineligible player and the offending team will forfeit the game.

Goalies that are dual registered as both a skater and goalie must play as a GOALIE for their goalie designated team. No team may use their goalie as a bench player and then acquire a goalie sub. The dual rostered goalie/skater may however sub as a goalie for any team and may follow the skater substitution rules laid out below.

i) Example: Goalie X is only registered and rostered as a goalie in the AWHL. This goalie can sub in any AWHL tournament game should a team need a goalie.

ii) Example: Goalie X is registered and rostered as a goalie in the Intermediate League and as a skater in the Rec League. This person may substitute goalie in any tournament level game, but they may only play as a skater in the Rec League for their team and as a sub per the substitute rules. They may **not** play as a skater in any Intermediate League game.

iii) Example: Goalie X is registered and rostered as a goalie in the Rec League and as a skater in the Intermediate League. This person may substitute goalie in any tournament level game, but they may only play as a skater in the Intermediate League for their team and as a sub per the substitute rules. They may **not** play as a skater in any Rec League game.

e) **Dual Rostered Players:** Fully eligible players rostered on more than one team in a division may play on both teams throughout the tournament; however, these players assume the risk of scheduling conflicts.

f) **Minimum Players:** Teams must have a minimum of six (6) rostered members, or the game is a forfeit. Game time plus five (5) minutes is forfeit time.

i) The referee association does not permit their referees to stay and officiate forfeited games, even if enough players stay for a "pick-up" game.

7) **Substitutions:** A team may add a maximum of four (4) substitute players (**NOT including goalie**) to bring its **bench to no more than 10 skaters.**

a) Only players registered in the REC division can substitute on REC teams. Only dual rostered or INTERMEDIATE players can sub on INTERMEDIATE teams. **Dual rostered players who are registered on both an Intermediate and a Rec team may only play on their registered Rec team, they may not sub on any other Rec team.**

i) Example: Player X is only registered and rostered in Rec League. This player can only sub in Rec League games and can sub for any Rec team.

- ii) Example: Player X is registered and rostered on **both** a Rec and Intermediate Team. This player may only play for their rostered Rec team(s), they cannot sub for any other Rec team in the tournament. This player may sub in any Intermediate game.
 - iii) Example: Player X is only registered and rostered in Intermediate League. This player may only sub in Intermediate games.
- b) Subs are not allowed to score and must be clearly marked on the score sheet as a **“NO GOAL SUB.”**
- c) **Exception:** In extenuating circumstances (e.g. unforeseen player shortages, injury), a team may request an exception to the substitution rule. Any exception must be reviewed and approved by the AWHL Board prior to the game. The requesting team must notify a Board Member immediately and Board Members must notify the AWHL Board. The Board will review and approve exceptions at its discretion. The substitute player must be clearly identified on the score sheet. Failure to notify a Board Member may result in forfeiture at the discretion of the Board. Exceptions will only be considered if the substitute player is dual rostered.
- d) **Substitute Goalies:** If a goaltender is ill or otherwise unavailable to play a scheduled game, then a team may use another AWHL registered goaltender, provided that this rule is not abused to give the team an unfair advantage. Teams are expected to make a good faith effort to recruit a sub goalie using the goalie Sport Engine chat and not directly seek out the top goalies in the league. If a team is found by the AWHL Board to have abused this rule to gain an advantage in play, then the team will automatically forfeit any games played with the substitute goaltender.
- i) If a substitute goaltender is unavailable, then the team may put a sixth player on the ice. To have goaltender privileges, a player must be wearing all required goaltender equipment.
 - ii) If a team is playing with a sixth player on the ice because a substitute goaltender was unavailable; this team may add an additional substitute to their roster for a maximum of five (5) substitute players and a bench total of eleven (11) skaters.
 - iii) If a sixth skater is used instead of a goalie, that sixth skater must remain behind the blue line in the defensive zone and out of the goal crease.
- 8) **Rule Infraction or Rules Challenge Process:** In-game infractions should be brought to the attention of the team reps, then documented with the scorekeeper on the official scoresheet. After the game, a team rep may make the AWHL Board aware and request further action. **No team rep, skater, goalie or coach shall directly send a text, call, or speak to one board member.** All objections must be sent to the AWHL Board email for board members to deliberate on as a group. Conflict of interest issues will be determined by the board should they arise. After deliberation, team reps will be notified by the board via email. AWHL Board email: anchoragewomenshockey@gmail.com

- a) **Disciplinary Action:** Disciplinary actions apply to coaches and players. All major penalties will result in an automatic one (1) game suspension to be enforced during the player's next scheduled game.
 - i) Three or more (2-minute) minor penalties in one game is an automatic one game suspension (for the duration of that game). If the third penalty is received any time in the third period, an automatic next game suspension will be enforced. Suspension requires leaving the bench.
 - ii) If a player or coach receives a game misconduct, the Board will convene to discuss the incident and whether any further disciplinary actions are necessary. The Board may also discipline any player or coach for any violation of league rules regardless of penalties assessed by referees. Disciplinary action may include suspension of an unlimited number of games and/or for the season.
 - iii) The Board will send a written notification of its disciplinary action to the person being disciplined.
 - (1) A player or coach has the right to appeal any disciplinary action taken by the Board. Appeals should be in writing and submitted to the AWWHL Board email within the time frame specified in the notification of the disciplinary action.
 - (2) If the player or coach does not agree with the Board's final decision, an appeal may be submitted to the ASHA.

9) **Tournament Scoring Limits:**

- a) A Rec player is limited to no more than one (1) hat-trick for the duration of all preliminary and semi-final tournament games and no more than ONE hat-trick in a championship game. Team reps are expected to enforce these rules in the spirit of play; violation concerns should follow the procedures lined out in Section 8.
- b) An Intermediate player is limited to one (1) hat-trick per game. Team reps are expected to enforce these rules in the spirit of play; violation concerns should follow the procedures lined out in Section 8.
- c) During the tournament, all intermediate teams will be considered of equal standing; there will not be an A/B designation.
- d) If one team is playing without a goalie, the opposing team shall be limited to one goal per person, restarting after all players on the team have scored. If someone has scored a 2nd goal before the entire bench roster has scored, that goal will not be recorded, and players will reset at the center face-off. The team without a goalie will play by the scoring limits stated above. This is applicable to both Rec and Intermediate levels.

- 10) **Game Clock:** Teams are permitted a five (5) minute warm-up time. Games shall consist of two (2) periods with a maximum seventeen (17) minute running clock and a third period with a maximum fifteen (15) minute running clock, with the last two (2) minutes of the third period STOP CLOCK.

- a) The timekeeper will stop the clock at two (2) minutes remaining in the third period if the play has been stopped by an on-ice official and has not yet resumed by the dropping of a puck at the time that the clock runs down to two (2) minutes remaining.
- b) A running-clock will be used in the final two minutes if there is a score differential of four (4) or more points.
- c) Officiating referees, AWHL Board Members or rink personnel may determine if shorter periods are required because of scheduling constraints.
- d) The referee may designate run-clock due to time constraints. The referee will notify the on-bench coach or team rep of each team when run clock is in effect. ONLY the referee has the authority to have the clock stopped during a run-clock situation. In regular tournament play, if play has been cut short by delays, the referee will reduce the time of the final period to allow the game to be completed at its scheduled time.

11) **Time Outs:** Each team is permitted a single one (1) minute time out per game. Time out may only be called during the stoppage of play.

In regulation tournament play, time outs may be removed or not permitted in the third period if it is determined that play cannot be completed at its scheduled time. This does not apply to semi-final and championship games unless there has been a substantial delay in the game.

12) **NOISEMAKERS:** No noisemakers are permitted during any tournament games. These include, but are not limited to, cow bells, air horns, and other noisemakers.

13) **USA Hockey Policies to Note:**

Alcoholic beverages will not be allowed during games, or other AWHL on ice sponsored events. No coach or player may smoke or drink while engaged in a game. Players/coaches that come to an AWHL sanctioned event under the influence of mind-altering substances, e.g. alcohol, may be removed from the ice or game at the referee's discretion. If the player/coach refuses to leave the ice at the referee's request, the team will forfeit the game and will be required to leave the ice. Violation of these rules will result in forfeiture of the game and/or suspension of the offending player or coach as determined by AWHL rules.