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VERMONT HOCKEY STATE TOURNAMENT RULES & REGULATIONS



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1. General Overview

1.1 Penalties and Sanctions

Unless otherwise specified in these rules, violations of any of these rules and regulations shall be turned over to the VSAHA discipline committee for consideration and action, if necessary.

1.2 State Tournament Dates

1.2a Split Season Teams

Playdowns/Championship to be completed before the start of the Vermont High School season.

Girls 14U/16U/19U: State Championships November 2, 2025 Norwich University.

Youth 16U/18U: State Championships, November 23, 2025 Waterbury Ice Center

1.2b Youth/Girls Teams 14U - 10U

Weekend #1: February 13,14,15, 2026

All Youth 10U and Girls teams.

Weekend #2: February 20,21,22, 2026

All Youth 12U and 14U teams.

Championship Weekend: February 27, 28, March 1, 2026

1.3 Team Declarations

- a. All VSAHA Local Association or Allied member teams will declare their current teams to VSAHA prior to the start of the Fall Schedulers' Meeting. All split season 16U - 19U (T1 and T2) teams must declare teams by August 1.
- b. Each Association will pick a placement for their teams from the table below. Association Teams can place any number of teams in the available divisions listed. Some Local Associations will be required to place teams in specific Tiers based on a three year running average of registrations.
- c. VSAHA may eliminate divisions with an insufficient number of declared teams. Any affected teams will be given the opportunity to elect a new declaration.
- d. For Tiers eligible to advance beyond the State Tournament, VSAHA may establish alternative methods for advancing teams when there is an insufficient number of teams in the division.

- e. All VSAHA Local Association Member or Allied Member teams are expected to participate in their respective VSAHA State Tournament. Each Association or Allied Member must complete a playoff application that includes USA Hockey approved rosters for each team. Applications must be submitted by January 5, 2026.

Guide for VSAHA Local Associations and Allied Members:

Declarations & Tournament Level	Tier 1 Regionals	Tier 2 Regionals/Nationals	Tier 3 Regionals/No Advance	Tier 4/5 States/No Advance
Youth 10U				Yes
Youth 12U	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Youth 14U	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Youth 18U	Yes			Yes
Girls 10U				Yes
Girls 12U	Yes	Yes		Yes
Girls 14U	Yes	Yes		Yes
Girls 16U	Yes	Yes		
Girls 19U	Yes	Yes		

1.4 Roster Requirements

- a. Youth and girl hockey players and goalies must be rostered in accordance with all VSAHA and USAH Rules and Regulations.
- b. **Dual participation:** A player may compete with more than one team during the regular season. The first **VSAHA League game** played in the new calendar year must be for the team each player and goalie will be rostered and competing with for the State Tournament.

2. Team & Player Eligibility

2.1. Regular Season Games and Team Eligibility for the State Tournaments

- a. Each VSAHA Member youth team bound for the State Tournament must compete, as a team, in at least 20 regular season games and girl's teams must compete in at least 14 regular season games prior to the State Tournaments.
- b. Each VSAHA Member team can play any team in any division. If a division has more than 10 teams, VSAHA may divide it into pools to make the two-game requirement and playdowns easier to manage.
- c. VSAHA Member Teams
 - i. Required to play a minimum of two (2) games, Home and Home, against each team in their division. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis.
 - ii. Failure to meet Home and Home requirements against all other teams in a division may result in disqualification from the respective state tournament.
 - iii. Unless otherwise noted, the first Home and Home games within the division, played during the approved window, will be used to determine league standings for playdowns.
 - iv. Tier 4 & 5 team playoff seeding will be by random draw.
 - v. Teams will be awarded points for Home and Home division games played during the regular season approved window.
 1. Two (2) points will be awarded for winning the game.
 2. One (1) point will be awarded to each team for a tied game.
- d. During the regular season, standings will be updated on the VSAHA website.
- e. Ice resurfacing shall be at the discretion of the local rink.

Regular season & State Tournament games will be played consistent with the following table:

	STOP TIME PERIOD GUIDELINE			PENALTY MINUTE GUIDELINE		
	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Minor	Major	Misconduct
Youth & Girls 10U	12 Min	12 Min	12 Min	1 Min	3 Min	6 Min
Youth & Girls 12U	12 Min	12 Min	12 Min	1 Min	3 Min	6 Min
Youth 14U 16U & 18U Girls 14U 16U & 19U	15 Min	15 Min	15 Min	1.5 Min	4 Min	8 Min
There is no overtime during regular season **National Bound ages will be playing longer periods for qualifying games**						

2.2 Game Sheets

- a. Game sheets must list only the players and goalies actively playing in that game, along with their correct jersey number. Any rostered members not playing must be marked as “not playing” in GameSheet.
- b. Game sheets must be signed by a rostered coach for each team prior to the start of the game. Their signature is verification that the players and jersey numbers are the genuine participants in that game.
- c. Game sheets must have both on-ice officials sign the game sheet indicating that they have checked the validity of the scores, penalties, and the coaches’ signatures. The on-ice officials should not sign the game sheet if the coaches’ signatures are not present.
- d. Game sheets without signatures may not count toward game requirements for both teams involved.

2.3 Player Eligibility for State Tournaments

- a. Each player and goalie must compete in at least 10 games as a member of their rostered state tournament team.
 - i. For players that are double rostered on a HS team and a youth team, the minimum 10 games must be against opponents within their division.
- b. Meet residency requirements in accordance with VSAHA By-Laws.
- c. VSAHA State Tournament Director may grant a waiver for player eligibility. Waivers must be requested by email to the VSAHA State Tournament Director at least two (2) weeks prior to the start date of the respective State Tournament.

2.4 Division Petitions & Challenges for State Tournament

- a. All requests must be submitted by the Local Association's President or State Rep, with the Head Coach copied, to the VSAHA Tournament Director by December 1 through the petition form.
- b. The Tournament Committee will review requests, follow-up for more information as needed, and make a final decision prior to the January state meeting.
 - i. Petition for own team to play-up a tier
 - ii. Petition for own team to play-down a tier - must include game evidence and team analysis to support this request
 - iii. Petition to challenge-up another association a tier - must include game evidence and team analysis to support this request. The challenged team will be notified by the VSAHA Tournament Director and given an opportunity to provide additional information.
 - iv. All teams within an age group will be reviewed by the Tournament Committee and may be required to move up or down a tier depending on performance standards (i.e. games won, goals scored, goals against, etc.) within their current tier.

2.5 Credentials Books

- a. Each declared VSAHA Member team bound for the State Tournaments (all tiers) shall maintain a team Credentials Book throughout the regular and tournament seasons. It is the responsibility of the team and the Association to ensure the accuracy of each Credentials Book.
- b. **Each Credentials Books must contain the following information:**
 - i. Team rosters and/or supplemental rosters as outlined in these rules and regulations;
Note: NO COACH WILL BE ALLOWED ON THE BENCH DURING ANY STATE TOURNAMENT GAME UNLESS THEY ARE LISTED ON THE TEAM'S APPROVED OFFICIAL ROSTER(S), AND THEREFORE AUTHENTICATED BY THE VSAHA STATE REGISTRAR.
 - ii. Credential verification sheet, provided by your local registrar, as it relates to games played;
 - iii. Printed copies of GameSheets for each regular season game (at least 20 regular season games for youth teams and at least 14 regular season games for girl's teams prior to the State Tournaments);
 - iv. Only divisions with National bound status - books must also include consent to treat forms and birth certificate verifications.
- c. Credentials books must be presented to the State Tournament Site Director at each tournament venue before the start of each team's games and will remain available for inspection by that team's opponents until the book is released back to the team by that State Tournament Site Director.
- d. Failing to meet Credentials Book requirements:
 - i. Failure to meet any of these Credentials Book requirements will automatically result in the suspension of the respective team's head coach for the first game and every game thereafter until the requirements have been met. In addition, the team's head coach and the VSAHA Local Association Member or Allied Member may be subject to a hearing by the VSAHA Rules Committee.
 - ii. Double rostering of any player or goalie in the State Tournament games will automatically result in the forfeiture of any games the team played in the State Tournament and disqualification from the remainder of the State Tournament. In addition, the team's Head Coach will be suspended from participating in the remainder of the State Tournaments for any level they are rostered for within VSAHA. The team's Head Coach and the VSAHA Local Association Member or Allied Member will be subject to a hearing by the VSAHA Rules Committee.
 - iii. Failure to meet any of these requirements for two or more teams within a single VSAHA Local Association Member or Allied Member will require a discipline hearing by the VSAHA Rules Committee.
- e. Credentials Book challenges by an opposing team must be made to the State Tournament Site Director at least fifteen (15) minutes from the completion of that game and can only be presented by the **acting head coach** of the opposing team. The protesting head coach must provide the Site Director with the item(s) being protested and reasons for the protest consistent with the charge. Unsubstantiated protests or protests that should be administered by the on-ice officials will not be allowed. Team and/or their Association official(s) must make themselves available while the protest is being considered. The State Tournament Site Director will discuss the issue with the teams involved, apprise the State Tournament Director of the situation, and issue a ruling on the protest prior to the start of the protested team's next game. Appeals of the State Tournament Site Director's decision must be made to the State Tournament Director within thirty (30) minutes of the Site Director's issued decision. The State Tournament Director will conduct a hearing with the teams involved and the Site Director, and will render a decision, in consultation with the VSAHA Executive Board, as soon as possible. All time limits will be observed; actions beyond the specified time limits will not be allowed.

3. State Tournament Formats

3.1 For all State Tournament games:

- a. Each team can play a maximum of two (2) games per day.
- b. There must be four (4) hours scheduled between the end of the first game and the start of the second game that a team plays in on the same day. Exceptions can be made by The State Tournament Director for a shorter duration, but will never allow a period less than two (2) hours.
- c. There must be at least twelve (12) hours scheduled between games on consecutive days.
- d. Games cannot be scheduled to start prior to 8 AM or after 9 PM. Tournament Site Directors can schedule prior to 8 AM with the approval of the State Tournament Director.
- e. Games may start up to fifteen (15) minutes earlier than the scheduled game time at the discretion of the Tournament Site Director.
- f. Games will follow the Stop Time Period and Penalty Minute Guidelines outlined in these Rules and Regulations.
- g. The Tournament Site Director will set the ice resurfacing schedule following the host site's guideline
- h. A six (6) goal differential in the third period will result in a running clock for the remainder of the game, regardless of additional scoring. Referees may stop the clock for injuries or other reasons at their discretion.
- i. Seedings for the State Tournament will be based on points gained from qualifying games within the division. The VSAHA State tournament format is made up of pool play followed by a semifinal round, when necessary, then a final game at Championship weekend.

3.2 Tier 2 and Tier 3 Divisions

- a. Game format may be, but is not limited to: single elimination, double elimination or round robin formats depending on the number of teams and available ice.
- b. The Tournament may take place over the course of one or two weekends culminating with the final game at Championship Weekend. **Championship games are single elimination.**
- c. The top two (2) teams at the conclusion of each playdown tournament will play in Championship Weekend. Championship games will be a single game, with the winner determined by the team that scores the most goals.

3.2a For round robin or pool play in the Playdown Weekends:

- I. VSAHA shall establish the tournament format and publish the schedule at least 10 days prior to the start of the tournament.
- II. The top two (2) teams finishing with the highest value of game points (with tiebreakers if applicable) shall advance to Championship Weekend. The higher seeded team, as determined by regular season division standings, will be the home team in Championship Weekend.
- III. When a tournament has a total team count of six (6) or more teams, teams will be divided into two (2) brackets (pools) determined by regular season division standings. The top team from each bracket (pool), finishing with the highest value of game points (with tiebreakers if applicable), will advance to the Championship. The higher seeded team, as determined by regular season division standings, will be the home team in Championship Weekend.
- IV. Round robin games will have only one (1) timeout during regulation play.
- V. Total points after round robin play will determine standings.
 - A. Two (2) Points for a win
 - B. One (1) Point for a tie
 - C. When teams have the same number of Game Points, the VSAHA tiebreaker will be used to determine which team(s) advance.
- VI. VSAHA has adopted Steps 1 and 2 of the [USA Hockey National Championship Tournament Guidebook](#) for tiebreaker rules (specifically page 38, 2C). Abbreviated Version Below, click here for full explanation.

Step 1: The results of only the head-to-head games played between the tied teams in the following order:

- a. Most points earned.
- b. Most total wins.
- c. Most regulation wins.
- d. Differential
- e. Quotient
- f. Most periods won
- g. If after applying the formulas of 1 a, b, c, d, e or if the tie still exists, continue to Step 2.

Step 2: The results of all the games played by the teams tied in the following order.

- a. Most total wins
- b. Most regulation wins.
- c. Differential
- d. Quotient
- e. Most periods won
- f. Lowest number of penalty minutes
- g. Quickest first goal

Step 3: If the above procedure does not break the tie, a coinflip will be used.

3.2b For double elimination or single elimination Playdown Weekends and Championship Weekend games:

- I. Overtime(s) will be played when any of these games finish the third period (regulation) with a tied score. Overtime(s) should be administered in the following manner:
 1. There will be a two (2) minute rest period after the third period.
 2. Teams will play 5 on 5 (5 skaters plus a goalkeeper) for a five (5) minute stop time period without switching ends.
 3. The game will end immediately when a team scores a goal.

4. If no goal was scored during the period, there will either be:
 - a. An ice-resurfacing. ce resurfacing should occur following the first (1st) overtime and every three overtimes thereafter (4th, 7th, etc.); or
 - b. A two (2) minute rest period.
 5. When teams return to the ice, they will switch ends and play a 5 on 5 (5 skaters plus a goalkeeper) for a ten (10) minute overtime period.
 6. Jump to Step 4 above and repeat the following steps until a goal is scored.
- II. Each team will have one (1) timeout during the game (for use during regulation OR overtime).
 - III. Games points are not awarded, and tiebreakers will not be used; teams must win the game to advance to Championship Weekend.

3.3 Tier 4 & Tier 5 Divisions

The VSAHA Tier 4 & Tier 5 State Tournament is composed of a double elimination or round robin tournament taking place over the course of one or two weekends culminating with the final game at Championship Weekend. Championship games are single elimination.

3.3a For round robin or pool play in the Playdown Weekends

- I. VSAHA shall establish the tournament format and publish the schedule at least 10 days prior to the start of the tournament.
- II. The top two (2) teams finishing with the highest value of game points (with tiebreakers if applicable) shall advance to Championship Weekend. The higher seeded team, as determined by regular season division standings, will be the home team in Championship Weekend.
- III. When a tournament has a total team count of six (6) or more teams, teams will be divided into two (2) brackets (pools) determined by regular season division standings. The top team from each bracket (pool), finishing with the highest value of game points (with tiebreakers if applicable), will advance to the Championship. The higher seeded team, as determined by regular season division standings, will be the home team in Championship Weekend.
- IV. Round robin games will have only one (1) timeout during regulation play.
- V. Total points after round robin play will determine standings.
 - A. Two (2) Points for a win
 - B. One (1) Point for a tie
 - C. When teams have the same number of Game Points, the VSAHA tiebreaker will be used to determine which team(s) advance.
- VI. VSAHA has adopted Steps 1 and 2 of the [USA Hockey National Championship Tournament Guidebook](#) for tiebreaker rules (specifically page 38, 2C). Abbreviated Version Below, click here for full explanation.

Step 1: The results of only the head-to-head games played between the tied teams in the following order:

 - h. Most points earned.
 - i. Most total wins.
 - j. Most regulation wins.
 - k. Differential
 - l. Quotient
 - m. Most periods won
 - n. If after applying the formulas of 1 a, b, c, d, e or if the tie still exists, continue to Step 2.

Step 2: The results of all the games played by the teams tied in the following order.

- h. Most total wins
- i. Most regulation wins.
- j. Differential
- k. Quotient
- l. Most periods won
- m. Lowest number of penalty minutes
- n. Quickest first goal

Step 3: If the above procedure does not break the tie, a coinflip will be used.

3.3b For double elimination or single elimination Playdown Weekends and Championship Weekend games

- I. Overtime(s) will be played when any of these games finish the third period (regulation) with a tied score. Overtime(s) should be administered in the following manner:
 1. There will be a two (2) minute rest period after the third period.
 2. Teams will play 3 on 3 (3 skaters plus a goalkeeper) for a five (5) minute stop time period without switching ends.
 3. The game will end immediately when a team scores a goal.
 4. If no goal was scored during the period, there will either be:
 - a. An ice-resurfacing. ce resurfacing should occur following the first (1st) overtime and every three overtimes thereafter (4th, 7th, etc.); or
 - b. A two (2) minute rest period.
 5. When teams return to the ice, they will switch ends and play 3 on 3 (3 skaters plus a goalkeeper) for a ten (10) minute overtime period.
 6. Jump to Step 4 above and repeat the following steps until a goal is scored.
- II. Each team will have one (1) timeout during the game (for use during regulation OR overtime).

4. Additional Tournament Guidelines (Non-Rules or Regulations)

4.1 VSAHA commitment

- a. VSAHA will reimburse Tournament Sites for all State Tournament games ice costs.
- b. VSAHA will assist in scheduling Referees, will set fees and will reimburse Tournament Sites.
- c. VSAHA will purchase 1st and 2nd place team trophies and individual awards for players to be awarded at the Championship Weekend games.
- d. VSAHA will set the pricing for weekend and daily gate fees at State Tournament games. The hosting organization will keep the fees collected.
- e. VSAHA will provide access to GameSheets for electronic scoring.
- f. VSAHA will work with the Tournament Sites for the sale of State Tournament apparel.

4.2 State Tournament Hosts

- a. Each host association will provide the Tournament Site Director and off-Ice officials (clock/scoring/penalty boxes) for ALL games. There will be no goal judges. The Host Site is responsible for ensuring enough volunteers are available to perform these official duties and should be familiar with the requirements of the respective position.
- b. The Tournament Site Director, or an appropriately appointed designee, must be on site for all State Tournament games.
- c. A tournament program may be made available, at no cost, to attendees by the hosting site.
- d. EMT or other healthcare professionals are preferred to be onsite but are not required.
- e. An athletic trainer needs to be present at all Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 games.

5. Quick Guide

5.1 Team & Player Eligibility

- a. Each youth team shall compete in at least 20 regular season games prior to the State Tournaments.
- b. Girl's teams shall compete in at least 14 regular season games prior to the State Tournaments.
- c. Each player and goalie must compete in at least 10 games as a member of their rostered state tournament team.
- d. Double rostered players on a HS team and youth team must play in 10 games against opponents within that division.
- e. Credentials books shall be presented to the State Tournament Site Director at Playdowns and at Championship Weekend.
- f. Consent to treat forms and birth certificate verifications are ONLY needed for National bound divisions.

5.2 Tournament Game Formats

- a. Each team shall play a maximum of two (2) games per day.
- b. There shall be four (4) hours scheduled between the end of the first game and the start of the second game that a team plays on the same day. The State Tournament Director can grant a shorter duration on exception.
- c. Games should be scheduled to start between 8 AM and 9 PM.
- d. Games may start up to fifteen (15) minutes earlier than the scheduled game time at the discretion of the Tournament Site Director.
- e. A six (6) goal differential in the third period will cause the clock to run for the duration of the game, regardless of scoring. Referees may stop the clock for injuries or another reason at their discretion.
- f. Each team shall have one (1) timeout during the game (for use during regulation or overtime).

5.3 Overtime Tier 2 and Tier 3

Overtimes shall be administered in the following manner:

1. There shall be a two (2) minute rest period.
2. Teams shall play a 5 on 5 (5 skaters plus a goalkeeper), five (5) minute Stop Time Period without switching ends.
3. The game shall end immediately upon a team scoring a goal.
4. If no goal was scored during the period, there will be either:
 - a. An ice-resurfacing. Ice resurfacing shall occur following the first (1st) overtime and every three overtimes thereafter (4th, 7th, etc.); or

- b. A two (2) minute rest period.
5. Upon returning to the ice, teams shall switch ends and play a 5 on 5 (5 skaters plus a goalkeeper), ten (10) minute overtime period.
6. Jump to Step 4 above and repeat the following steps until a goal is scored.

Games Points are not awarded, and Tiebreakers shall not be used; teams must win the game to advance to Championship Weekend.

5.4 Overtime Tier 4 and Tier 5

Overtimes shall be administered in the following manner:

1. There shall be a two (2) minute rest period.
2. Teams shall play a 3 on 3 (3 skaters plus a goalkeeper), five (5) minute Stop Time Period without switching ends.
3. The game shall end immediately upon a team scoring a goal.
4. If no goal was scored during the period there will be either:
 - a. An ice-resurfacing. Ice resurfacing shall occur following the first (1st) overtime and every three overtimes thereafter (4th, 7th, etc.); or
 - b. A two (2) minute rest period.
5. Upon returning to the ice, teams shall switch ends and play a 3 on 3 (3 skaters plus a goalkeeper), ten (10) minute overtime period.
6. Jump to Step 4 above and repeat the following steps until a goal is scored.