

# TORNADO YOUTH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

PARENT HANDBOOK – January 2024



<https://www.tornadoyouthhockey.org/home>

## MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide an environment of fun and growth that develops strong relationships between those within our program and guests we come across. We value respect, teamwork, and safe development above all else. TYH firmly believes in continued personal growth of our children to ensure they have positive sporting experiences that they will always remember.

Run by volunteers and the largest youth organization in our local area, TYH provides the opportunity to learn to love the game of hockey for over 200 local youth hockey players. Our home rink is the Onalaska Omni Center, located at 255 Riders Club Road. This is a municipal convention center and indoor sports arena in Onalaska, Wisconsin, which serves greater La Crosse County. It was the home of the Coulee Region Chill of the North American Hockey League from the fall of 2010 until August 2014. This facility has two indoor ice surfaces and provides us ample ice time to accommodate developmental hockey programs and open public skating, as well as hosting team practices, games and regional tournaments.

## LEVELS OF PLAY

Playing Level	General Age
<p><b>Mini Mites (cross-ice without goalies):</b> Skating and hockey skill development through two practice sessions each week; practicing opposite beginner mites. No games/jamborees. 2 sessions annually with a shorter season and reduced cost compared to mites. For skaters aged 7 and under. Helmet, skates, hockey gloves are required. Full gear is encouraged.</p>	4-7
<p><b>Mite (cross-ice, some goalie experience):</b> Similar to Mini Mites, but for hockey players up to age 8 working on the fundamentals of hockey. Two practice sessions per week, about 8 jamborees per season (at least 3 games each time). Full gear required. Split into beginner, intermediate, and advanced. Final year mites have an end of season overnight jamboree. Rotating goalies week to week for final year mites.</p>	4-8
<p><b>Squirt (10U-full ice):</b> No checking. Approximately 2 practices per week and 1-4 games (12-minute periods) per weekend. 1-3 tournaments each season. Total games per season will range from 20-25 games.</p>	9-10
<p><b>Peewee (12U-full ice):</b> No checking. Approximately 2 practices per week and 2-4 games (15-minute periods) per weekend. 1-3 tournaments each season. Total games per season will range from 30-35 games.</p>	11-12
<p><b>Bantam (14U-full ice) :</b> Checking. Generally will have a checking clinic pre-season. Approximately 3 practices per week and 2-4 games (15-minute periods) per weekend. 1-3 tournaments each season. Total games per season will range from 40-45 games</p>	13-14

# TYH PROTOCOLS

## **Skater Evaluation and Team Placement Process**

TYH will conduct formal team placement evaluations each year at the beginning of the season for the levels of Bantam (14U), Peewee (12U), and Squirt (10U). For the levels of Mites and Mini-Mites, skaters will be grouped primarily based on ability into beginner, intermediate, and advanced teams and may shift through the year at coaches discretion; mites and mini-mites do not go through the evaluation process. See [Evaluation Policy](#) for more information.

## **Registration / Fees**

TYH will publish a fee schedule prior to each season. This will be available from the website and within registration. All skaters are required to register with USA Hockey and pay skater fees to TYH. Please refer to the [Registration Policy](#) for detailed information. Players must reside within the TYH Boundaries of Holmen, Onalaska, Trempealeau, Galesville and nearby small communities as set forth by WAHA. Our programs serve all levels of skaters ages 4 through 14. Skaters must be 4 years old before December 31st to register and must be under the max age listed as of December 31st as well.

At registration, you have the option to pay your account in full or set up an automatic payment plan. Payment plan dates will process on the day of registration and November 15th annually. Alternate payment plans and financial assistance are available; please see the [Financial Assistance Policy](#) for more information.

## **Multiple Skater Discount**

TYH does not have a multiple-skater discount. However, families are only required to provide 10 service hours per family for first year families, and 20 service hours per family (max) for returning families. The oldest skater will determine the number of hours needed.

## **Goalie Rebate Program**

TYH realizes the importance of developing and maintaining goalies. In an effort to grow interest in playing the position and to cultivate a consistent roster of goalies, TYH would like to recognize and reward goalies who are committed to playing the position. Therefore, TYH will provide a \$200 discount on registration to those who provide proof of attending a goalie development camp. TYH will continue to strive to bring goalie development close to home. Camp and receipts are subject to TYH Board review and approval.

## **Game Jersey & Number Assignment**

Jersey number assignment is managed by the apparel director(s). Here are the rules or guidelines they follow:

To keep this process simpler, we generally follow this for jersey number assignment:

- Even birth year must have an even game jersey number
- Odd birth year must have an odd game jersey number

Skaters new to the program will be given a jersey number from a predefined list of available

numbers. Individual number requests are generally not accepted but can be reviewed on a case by case basis granted the request is received prior to jersey ordering. All mites and mini-mites will be provided jerseys at the beginning of the year. Jerseys are expected to last until a skater grows out of it at this time. First year squirts receive a discount on their first set of jerseys. Each year at registration, you are able to choose to purchase a new jersey if needed. If jerseys are not needed, there will be an option to decline; however, please ensure your jersey still fits and is in great condition.

### **Skater Transfers/Player Movement**

All transfers into and out of the Tornado Youth Hockey Association will be reviewed by the TYH Executive Board. Please see the [Policy for Player Movement](#) for more information. Transfer requests for the next season should be made between July 1 and the start of evaluations annually. Requests for transfer must be submitted to the TYH Board President in writing, and the family may be required to appear before the executive board in person to discuss the transfer.

Player movement such as playing up to a higher level is generally discouraged, however please see the [Policy for Player Movement](#) for further information. Playing down is not allowed per WAHA unless a USA Hockey approved disability. Coaches may advise on player movement once the season has started if the current placement is felt to be a detriment to the player. These discussions will be driven by the Head Coach and Coaches Director, presented to the Executive Board for full review.

### **Team Rosters / Final Rosters**

Preliminary TYH Team Rosters will be established by Nov. 15. Rosters may be amended up until Dec. 31, at which point final WAHA/USA Hockey rosters must be set. The Registrar will provide each team with a link to the final roster signed by WAHA. Only players and coaches on the official TYH and WAHA team roster may practice or play with a team. TYH teams are made using only TYH players for the playing season (September-March).

### **Cross Roster Skaters**

Female players may choose to join a girls-only Co-Op with La Crosse, TYH, and West Salem, called Coulee Region Stars, or are welcome to join an all-girls team in another organization if TYH does not provide an all-girl team at their level. We will review yearly whether cross-rostering requests are accepted. We are not accepting Cross Roster requests at this time. We will always consider Cross Roster goalie requests if there is a need. These players would need to follow all WAHA rules regarding Cross Rostering, pay fees for both teams, and must select a primary team.

### **Fee Reduction for Injured Players**

A player who is significantly injured or ill in which the injury or illness results in a loss of play for six weeks or greater could be given a prorated credit on their skater fees based upon the number of weeks they were out (must equal six weeks or greater). A family wishing to apply for the fee reduction must submit a request in writing to the TYH Board of Directors for consideration. Any skater who is injured for at least six weeks must provide a signed doctor's

note to return to play.

### **Fee Reduction for High School-Eligible Players**

Some 14U/Bantam players may be eligible for both high school hockey and TYH. Those who make a high school team after registering for TYH may receive a prorated refund for payments made to TYH. A family wishing to apply for the refund must submit a request in writing to the TYH Board of Directors for consideration.

### **Return To Play After Injury (Non-Concussion Related)**

It is the policy of TYH that any injury requiring the medical attention of a physician that prohibits the player from playing the game or practice of any duration will require the physician to sign a return to play release allowing the injured player to return to the ice to play or practice the game of hockey. The release will give the date at which they are allowed to return and must be signed by the treating physician. Any guidelines or limitations that the physician requires regarding the return of the player must be outlined on the signed release form. Please note: The TYH Board is committed to preserving all players', as well as their families', personal medical information. TYH will adhere to all HIPAA requirements in effect at the time of the injury. All injuries must be reported to the TYH Safety Coordinator.

### **Concussion Management Program**

TYH takes concussions very seriously and has adopted USA Hockey's "Concussion Management Program" in an effort to comply with both national and state regulations regarding concussion management. Parents should understand both the USAH Concussion Management Program and the 2011 Wisconsin Act 172 pertaining to concussions. During registration, parents are required to acknowledge their understanding of the concussion rules and the steps TYH, its coaches, and the parents/guardians must take if a concussion is suspected. In the case of a suspected concussion by a coach, or one diagnosed by a physician, the player will not be allowed to return to the ice per Wisconsin law until medically cleared. The skater is required to seek medical attention and will not be allowed to play or practice with the team until medical clearance is obtained. All concussions must be reported to the TYH Safety Coordinator. The form to report to WAHA is on our website under Policies and Documents.

### ***What is a Concussion?***

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal functioning of the brain (changes how the cells in the brain normally work). A concussion can be caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body. Basically, any force that is transmitted to the head causing the brain to literally bounce around or twist within the skull can result in a concussion. Over 90% of concussions do not involve loss of consciousness. It is important to note that a concussion can happen to anyone in any sport or athletic activity.

Concussions affect people in four areas of function:

- Physical – This describes how a person may feel: headache, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, etc. Children might describe this as seeing stars or having sensitivity to light and noise.
- Thinking – Poor memory and concentration, responds to questions more slowly, asks repetitive questions. Concussion can cause an altered state of awareness. Children might

say they're having brain fog or feeling spacey and slow.

- Emotions – A concussion can make a person more irritable and cause mood swings.
- Sleep – Concussions frequently cause changes in sleeping patterns, which can increase fatigue.

### **Return to Play After a Concussion**

Per USA Hockey's Concussion Management Program, written clearance from a qualified healthcare provider is required for an athlete to return to play without restriction (training, practice, and competition). The USA Hockey Return to Play Form is the only acceptable form of written clearance. This form must be presented to the Safety Coordinator and head coach for the skater's level.

A qualified health care provider under Wisconsin law is defined as a person to whom all of the following apply:

1. He or she holds a credential that authorizes the person to provide health care.
2. He or she is trained and has experience in evaluating and managing pediatric concussions and head injuries.
3. He or she is practicing within the scope of his or her credential.

### **Equipment**

Protective hockey equipment is important to the safety and well-being of all skaters participating in the sport of hockey. Equipment is available to rent for certain ages, more information is found in our [Equipment Rental Policy](#). Skaters must wear protective equipment. All TYH or WAHA Skaters above Learn to Skate level must wear the following properly fitted and well-maintained USA Hockey approved equipment for all regularly scheduled games and practices:

- Helmet with face mask and securing straps (HECC approved with a valid expiration date)
- Mouth guard
- Neck laceration protector
- Shoulder pads
- Elbow pads
- Gloves
- Breezers with hip pads and thigh and tailbone protection
- Protective cup for boys/pelvic protector for girls
- Knee and shin pads
- Hockey skates
- TYH strongly recommends the use of a neck guard
- Anyone under 18 must wear a helmet when on the bench

### **Coaches**

It is TYH's intention to use qualified and certified parent and nonparent coaches for its teams. TYH will pay a stipend to a nonparent coach approved by the Board of Directors of TYH. These coaches must meet all coaching and SafeSport certification criteria. TYH will require background checks on all coaches in compliance with USA Hockey rules and guidelines.

### **Off-Ice Officials**

The Penalty Box Operator, Game Timekeeper, and Official Scorer are official USAH off-ice duties. These off-ice officials are considered an extension of the on-ice officiating team. Every family is expected to contribute time serving in off-ice roles. The hours served for your own team's games will NOT count towards volunteer hours, however you may receive volunteer hours for service provided to other teams. Off-ice officials are expected to familiarize themselves with their duties before the game. Team managers will provide training to those who are learning their responsibilities. Some training videos are on our website. Off-ice officials are held to a higher standard than the fans in the stands and shall not dispute the rulings of the on-ice officials, disrupt the game or criticize players, coaches, or on-ice officials. They also may not coach players from the scorer's bench or the penalty box. The minimum age for an off-ice official is 18 years old. With the exception of an adult announcer/DJ, only off-ice officials shall be in the vicinity of the scorer's bench or in the penalty boxes.

### **Referee Clinics**

The members of the Association are encouraged to participate and serve as referees. To further referee education the association will reimburse any USA/WHOA Referee Clinic fees incurred at the season's end providing the referee serves the Association.

### **SafeSport Requirements**

Comprehensive information on SafeSport can be found at [SafeSport](#). TYH coaches, managers, locker room representatives and board members are required to complete SafeSport training. The Registrar is the SafeSport Coordinator for TYH.

TYH prohibits all types of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, threats, harassment, and hazing, all as described in the USA Hockey SafeSport Handbook. TYH members may be subject to disciplinary action for violation of locker room policies or for engaging in any misconduct or abuse or that violates the USA Hockey SafeSport Policies. Reports of any actual or suspected violations, you may email USA Hockey at [SafeSport@usahockey.org](mailto:SafeSport@usahockey.org) or call 1-800-888-4656.

### **Safety and Culture Training - Parents/Guardians and Players**

WAHA has partnered with the Positive Coaching Alliance and TYH has started to align with these standards. TYH promotes a positive and safe club culture aimed at providing our skaters with a fun and rewarding hockey experience that promotes their development as athletes and people. To foster this culture, all players and parents/guardians will review PCA documents throughout the season. There may be webinar type events shared throughout the year as well for any parent/guardian to attend. All members of TYH must abide by the USA Hockey Code of Conduct and [TYH Codes of Conduct](#).

### **TYH Locker Room Monitors, Anti-Bullying, and Electronics Communication**

TYH follows WAHA requirements for locker room supervision. See [Locker Room Policy](#) for more information. We also have a zero-tolerance policy for bullying, as noted in our [Anti-Bullying Policy](#). Electronic communications must also follow the rules set forth in our [Electronics Communication](#)

## [Policy.](#)

### **Inclement Weather**

TYH inclement weather policy is that each family should use their discretion when traveling to the rink for practice or a game during inclement weather. While the rink usually does not close due to weather, we do have to consider the safety of our families and anyone who has concerns about traveling to the rink any evening where weather is not favorable to driving should please stay home. While some families can make a short trip across town and not be impacted by the weather, many have several miles and/or country roads to travel. TYH does not want to put any coach, player, or parent in a situation where they do not feel safe driving to a game or practice. If you have concerns about travel, stay home, stay warm, and stay safe. We support your decision. Any closure of the Omni Center will be shared as soon as the organization is made aware.

A head coach can use his/her discretion to cancel practice or a game due to weather. If they do decide to cancel, they will work with their team manager to do so and communicate it to the team. If you don't hear from your coach that a practice or game is canceled, then assume it is a go and use your discretion about travel.

For games, the final decision to play during inclement weather lies with the head coach and team manager of each team. Team Managers should contact the facility directly if they have questions about their operating status of a rink. Referees must be contacted immediately when the decision is made to cancel a game due to weather.

### **Scholarship Assistance Program**

It is TYH policy to assist in making hockey affordable for local youth. In keeping with this, each season TYH offers a limited number of scholarships based upon financial need. These scholarships will be offered on a first-come, first-serve basis. Scholarship application, approval, or denial is kept confidential. See [Financial Assistance Policy](#) for more information.

### **TYH Volunteer Hours**

#### **General Requirements**

TYH is a parent-run organization and depends solely on member participation to run a very large and complex operation. Each family with a skater Mite age through 14U/Bantam is required to work 10 service hours their first year with TYH and 20 service hours every year after that. Coaches are excluded from off-ice officiating requirements, however families of coaches are not.

It is the member family's responsibility to read TYH association emails where most volunteer opportunities will be housed. You may find these online and can also ask your team manager for opportunities as soon as the season starts. Any questions you have in regard to volunteer hours can be directed to your team manager.

For liability purposes, family members under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent to volunteer. Some opportunities may be set at an 18-year-old limit. Families must sign in and out of their shift for credits to be applied. Volunteer hours cannot be shared or transferred

from one family to another unless approval has been given by the Executive Board for extenuating circumstances. Requests for this may be sent to the Executive Board.

Volunteer hours worked will be credited at \$25 per hour. Any unworked hours will be billed to families at \$25 per hour on April 1 annually. Please ensure your DIBS account shows full hours worked for your family before the end of the season.

### **Buying Out Volunteer Hours:**

If a family desires to buy out their volunteer hours instead of working them, they will be charged at \$25 per hour at the time of registration. If you would like to add this option after registering, please contact the treasurer by Nov. 1 to update your account.

### **Examples of Volunteer Opportunities:**

- Head Coach – Rostered and approved coaches at or above mini-mite level
- Assistant Coaches – Rostered and approved assistant coach of an individual team
- Team Managers 10U/Squirt and Above and Mite Rep – Will earn their full hours.
- Specific Fundraiser or Event Chairperson – Full service hours generally earned here. The board has the discretion to award the volunteer hours based on time served.
- Volunteer opportunities sent out by the TYH board routinely, such as event coordinator, raffle card handout, and many more.
- Other special cases approved by the Board of Directors including special events, tasks, or hardships.
- On-ice help by parents not rostered as an official coach.
- Locker room monitor for practice and games.

Each home game and home tournament game must provide a scorekeeper, time clock person, and two penalty box workers. Hours worked for each skater's home tournament and home games are NOT counted towards the fulfillment of the service hour requirement. This does not apply to the Mite Jamboree. The home tournament coordinator is responsible for assigning individuals to work at each age level game in the home tournament. This includes all games in the home tournament, not only TYH games. Board Members, Committee Chairpersons, Team Managers, and Coaches roles fulfill all service hours but are still expected to help at their home tournaments/jamborees.

### **Individual Fundraisers**

TYH may provide families opportunities to reduce their skater fees via one or two individual fundraising programs per year.

### **Code of Conduct**

TYH supports the USA Hockey Zero Tolerance policy as it relates to conduct by coaches, players, parents, and fans in the sport of youth hockey. It is our hope that by enforcing this policy, everyone has a pleasant youth athletic experience. Parents, Skaters and Coaches will review and sign the codes of conduct in the team and coaches' meetings at the start of each season and turn into the Culture Education Liaison. Parents, players, and fans can and will be removed from TYH events and will be asked to appear in front of the Discipline Committee if they should break

the USA Hockey Zero Tolerance policy.

### **24-Hour Rule**

TYH has adopted a “24-hour rule” in that coaches or board members will not discuss comments regarding a game or situation until at least 24 hours after it occurs. This important rule does two things. First, it moves the discussion away from the presence of the players. Second, it allows all parties to have time to put things into perspective and “cool off” if necessary.

### **Discipline / Appeal Committee**

The Discipline Committee will consist of the Vice President (who will chair the committee for a particular matter) and at least two of the following: Coaches Representative, President, Vice President, Past President, President-Elect, Treasurer, or Secretary. The team manager, manager’s director, and CEL may be asked to participate as well. No committee member involved in the complaint or with a child on a team from which the complaint originated shall serve on the committee. An alternate chair will be appointed as needed by the Executive Board.

### **TYH Procedure for Conflicts/Issues (including Appeal Procedure)**

Identifying and addressing a problem or concern is not always easy. Therefore, we have established this procedure in order to resolve conflicts/issues as well as to appeal disciplinary decisions.

#### ***Conflict/Issue Resolution***

1. TYH requires that parents take initiative in resolving conflicts that they or their player may have with other team members, parents, and/or coaches via respectful communication directly with those involved. Any conflicts or violations of the code of conduct may also be reported to the Culture Education Liaison at [tornadoyouthboard@gmail.com](mailto:tornadoyouthboard@gmail.com).
2. If the issue cannot be resolved between coaches and parents, the team manager is the first line of official communication for all parents and players. The concern must be presented to the team manager, who should notify the Manager’s Director as a formality.
3. If the problem is such that the team manager is unable to resolve the conflict, it should be escalated to the Manager’s Director. The Manager’s Director may seek advice from appropriate TYH officers for assistance with coming to a proposed resolution and refer the issue to the Vice President for formal Discipline Committee review as a last resort.
4. The matter may be brought to a formal Discipline Committee only under the following circumstances:
  - a. As a last resort in resolving an issue, the Manager’s Director may formally bring the matter to the Discipline Committee.
  - b. The individual(s) against whom the complaint has been filed may appeal the decision to a formal Discipline Committee. The appeal complaint must be submitted to the Executive Board in writing.
  - c. When TYH receives a letter from WAHA requesting a response to a zero-tolerance violation by a coach, player, parent, or fan.

- d. The TYH Executive Board reserves the right to involve itself earlier in the process at its discretion.
5. The Discipline Committee will review the matter in a reasonable time frame (usually within 48-72 hours after notification) and provide next steps for the parties involved.
6. If requested, the individual(s) against whom the complaint has been filed shall appear before the Discipline Committee and be asked to respond to the matter.
7. The Discipline Committee, acting in the best interest of TYH, will further investigate the complaint as deemed appropriate and is authorized to enforce disciplinary actions as appropriate. These actions may include written warnings and/or temporary and/or permanent suspension from the program.
8. All actions taken by the Discipline Committee will be communicated only to the individuals involved during a closed session or by an official letter or email.

### ***Matters of Coaching Discipline***

All matters pertaining to coaches' misconduct are to be reported immediately to the Coaches' Representative. The Coaches' Representative will investigate the matter and gather information from all sides. He or she may also consult with the Discipline Committee and has the authority to issue warnings and temporary suspensions. If it is determined that the matter involves a severe violation of the USA Hockey Coaches' Code of Conduct or the Association's rules, the Coaches' Representative will refer the matter to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will convene to resolve the matter. Disciplinary decisions are final.

### **Background Screening - TYH/USA Hockey**

Per WAHA and USA Hockey guidelines, TYH will require background screens for coaches, team managers, association board members, and adults (18 and older) skating on youth teams through a national criminal background search service. The screen will consist of a National Criminal Database and National Sex Offender Search. TYH will cover the screening cost. Each individual will be responsible for completing the proper background screen via USA Hockey. The Registrar shall serve as point person for any questions and to verify all members have these completed prior to working with our skaters. Coaches and parents will not be allowed on the ice or in locker rooms without completion of all requirements.

### **TYH Board of Directors Election Procedure**

1. Voting procedure is outlined in our [TYH Bylaws](#).
2. Voting membership in TYH shall be each parent or legal guardian of any participant in TYH with a limit of two voting members per participant regardless of the number of participants per family.
3. Open elected positions will be communicated to the general membership in early February.
4. All candidates must submit in writing a desire to run for a position before March 1.
  - a. A short 3-4 sentence bio needs to be submitted by the candidate explaining why they are running and what would make them a good candidate. No candidate will be accepted without the short bio.
  - b. All bios will be sent out to the general membership by April 1 annually.
5. Voting takes place during or shortly after the Annual Meeting, held every April.
6. Voting can be conducted via a paper ballot and/or online form and instructions will

be included with the ballot.

7. Winners will be announced no later than 1 week post completion of the Annual Meeting.
8. New board members are expected to begin meeting in May of each year.

### **TYH Board Meetings**

Board meetings are open to all members in good standing. The Board meetings are set by the TYH President and are held at the Omni Center. Requests to appear on the agenda along with the subject matter must be submitted to the Secretary of Tornado Youth Hockey at least two weeks prior to the meeting. The President reserves the right to waive the notice if the issue is more urgent. To ensure efficiency and handling at the most appropriate level, certain matters may be referred for resolution to a specific board member or a committee rather than be heard at a Board meeting. Periodically, there may be sensitive and confidential issues discussed at Board meetings. A parent may wish to air a complaint in private or there may be a disciplinary matter. Therefore, children are not permitted at Board meetings unless requested to appear. Depending on the sensitivity of the issue, the matter may also be moved to closed session. All matters of player or specific individuals will be discussed in a closed Executive Board Meeting or at Disciplinary meetings.