



Carolina Amateur Hockey Association Championship Tournament 2026 Tournament Rules and Regulations REVISED October 1, 2025

1. Game Length, Curfew, Ice Resurfacing

All games are three (3) – 16-minute periods for 13U and 14 & Under. Three (3) – 17-minute periods for 15U, 16U, 18U (Tier II), 19U (Girls), and High School. Three (3) – 20-minute periods for 18U Tier I only. All preliminary, semi-final and championship games shall be continued to determine a winner.

Ice shall be resurfaced between the 2nd and 3rd periods of all preliminary, semi-final and championship games for Tier I and all championship games for Tier II. Ice resurfacing during overtime play of semi-final or championship games shall be at the Tournament Director's discretion.

2. Championship Games

All teams participating in a championship game are required to remain on the ice after the conclusion of the championship game for the award presentation. A \$500 fine will be assessed to the association of a participating team if a coach(es) or player(s) leaves the ice surface prior to the completion of the award presentation. This monetary fine shall not be subject to appeal. Additionally, the head coach of any offending team shall be referred to the CAHA Disciplinary Committee for additional discipline.

3. Tournament Format

3 Teams

Single Round Robin, Championship Game
Two teams with highest points advance to the Championship Game

4 Teams

Single Round Robin, Championship Game
Two teams with highest points advance to the Championship Game

5 Teams

Single Round Robin, Championship Game
Two teams with highest points advance to the Championship Game

6 Teams

Two divisions of three (3) teams each play cross division, Semi-Finals, Championship Game.
Four teams with the highest points overall will advance to the Semi-Final Games
Winners of Semi-Final Games advance to the Championship Game

7 Teams

Two divisions: one of three (3) teams (seeds 2-4-6) and one of four (4) teams (seeds 1-3-5-7). Teams each play within their division. Four team division 1v3, 1v5, 1v7, 3v5, 3v7, 5v7. Three team division 2v4, 2v6, 4v6).
Top two teams in each division with the highest points will advance to the Semi-Final Games
Winners of Semi-Final Games advance to the Championship Game

4. Seeding

All teams in Tier I, Tier II, High School, and Girls will be seeded based on My Hockey Rankings two weeks prior to the tournament start date.

The home team designation will be assigned to the highest seeded team for that game.

Seeding will be used to insert teams into the schedule and assign home/away designations. Seeding shall have no bearing on game start times.

Exception – Two-team format, each team will have one game with home team designation. Should a third game be necessary, the home team designation will be assigned to the highest seeded team.

5. Tournament Scoring System

The point system of three (3) points for a win in regulation, two (2) points for a win in overtime or shootout, one (1) point for a loss in overtime or shootout, and zero (0) points for a loss in regulation will be used.

To qualify for semi-final or championship games, the team ranking will be based on each team's total game points as outlined above. If teams are tied for a ranked position, the tiebreaker rules will apply.

Best 2 of 3 Game Series: The team that wins two games will be the tournament champion. If one team wins the first two games of the tournament, the third game will not be played.

6. Tie Breaking Rules to Determine Standings Position

If two or more teams have an equal number of points, their position in the standings shall be determined by the following tie-breaking rules listed below. If at any point during the application of the tie-breaking rules, any or all the teams can be seeded higher or lower than the other teams, the seeded teams will be placed in their position in the standings and the tie-breaking process will begin at Step 1 for any teams that remain tied.

Note: If all tied teams have not played each other, the tie-breaking process will begin at Step 2.

The tie-breaker rules are as follows:

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

- a. Most points earned.
- b. Most total wins (whether in regulation, overtime, and shootout).
- c. Most regulation wins.
- d. Differential — Subtracting goals scored against from goals scored in these games, the positions being determined in order of the greatest surplus. A maximum goal differential of plus or minus eight (8) per game will be used in tie-breaking rules.
- e. Quotient — Dividing the goals scored in these games by the goals scored against, the positions being determined in order of the greatest quotient. A quotient involving dividing by zero (0) has higher standing than a quotient from dividing by any number other than zero. Where two or more teams have no goals against and the quotient tie breaker is required, the teams shall be ranked high to low in descending order of "goals for." If a game has a goal differential of more than eight (8) goals, the goals for will be decreased until there is a maximum of eight (8) more than goals against in each game prior to dividing (example: 10-1 game would use 9-1 for purposes of quotient).
- f. Most periods won — In the games played by each tied team, points are awarded for each regulation period won (2 points) and for each regulation period tied (1 point). Positions shall be in order of highest point total.

STEP 2: If after applying the formulas of 1 a, b, c, d, e or f the tie still exists, the results of all the games played by the teams tied in the following order:

- g. Most total wins (whether in regulation, overtime, and shootout).
- h. Most regulation wins.
- i. Differential — Subtracting goals scored against from goals scored in these games, the positions being determined in order of the greatest surplus. A maximum goal differential of plus or minus eight (8) per game will be used in tie-breaking rules.
- j. Quotient — Dividing the goals scored in these games by the goals scored against, the positions being determined in order of the greatest quotient. A quotient involving dividing by zero (0) has higher standing than a quotient from dividing by any number other than zero. Where two or more teams have no goals against and the quotient tie breaker is required, the teams shall be ranked high to low in descending order of "goals for." If a game has a goal differential of more than eight (8) goals, the goals for will be decreased until there is a maximum of eight (8) more than goals against in each game prior to dividing (i.e., 10-1 game would use 9-1 for purposes of quotient).
- k. Most periods won — In the games played by each tied team, points will be awarded for each regulation period won (2 points) and for each regulation period tied (1 point). Positions shall be in the order of highest point total.
- l. Lowest number of penalty minutes — Calculate the number of penalty minutes accrued during all preliminary round games. The teams shall be ranked low to high in ascending order of "penalty minutes for."
- m. Quickest first goal — The team that scored the quickest goal in their preliminary round games shall be ranked highest.

Note: If the above procedure does not break the tie, the teams shall use a shootout procedure as described in Overtime.

Note: If a team forfeits any of its games, and becomes involved in any tie breaking formula, the team that forfeited will not advance and all games played against the forfeiting team shall be recorded as 1-0 victories for all opposing teams.

Note: A team may go into the tie-breaking process having defeated another of the tied teams and still not advance.

7. Overtime

Preliminary Round Games & Semi-Final

If the game is tied following regulation play, one five (5) minute sudden-death overtime period shall be played. At the completion of the third period, the tied teams shall receive a two (2) minute rest period. The teams will remain on the ice. The teams shall change ends. Overtime shall be played 3-on-3 (three skaters plus a goalkeeper). If the score is tied at the end of the five (5) minute sudden-death overtime period, there shall be a shootout. The winner of the shootout will be credited with one additional goal in the final score.

Championship Games

If the game is tied following regulation play, one sudden-death overtime period shall be played that is equal to a full period. At the completion of the third period, the tied teams shall receive a two (2) minute rest period. The teams will remain on the ice. The teams shall change ends. Overtime shall be played 5-on-5 (five skaters plus a goalkeeper). If the score is tied at the end of the sudden-death overtime period, there shall be a shootout. The winner of the shootout will be credited with one additional goal in the final score. NOTE: Best of 3 format: Game 3 (only) will be treated as a Championship Game.

The **Shootout** will be conducted as follows:

- A shootout is defined as a player attempting to score a goal and the opposing goalkeeper attempting to stop the shooter from scoring the goal.
- A dry cut/scrape of the middle of the ice shall occur prior to the shootout in quarterfinal, semifinal and championship games only.
- A shootout is defined as a player attempting to score a goal and the opposing goalkeeper attempting to stop the shooter from scoring the goal.
- The home team shall have the choice whether his/her team will shoot first or second.

- All goalkeepers and all players from both teams listed on the official game sheet shall be eligible to participate in the shootout.
- No goalkeepers may shoot in the shootout.
- The goalkeepers will defend the net they were defending in the 3rd period.
- Any penalized player whose penalty had not been completed when the overtime period ended or who receives a penalty during a shootout procedure is not eligible to participate in any portion of the shootout procedure(s) and must remain in the penalty box.
- The shootout procedure shall begin with three (3) different individual shooters from each team taking alternate shots. The players do not need to be named beforehand.
- The goalkeepers from each team may be changed after each shot.
- The players of both teams will take the shots alternately until a decisive goal is scored. The remaining shots will not be taken.

If after the shootout, the shootout score is still tied, there will be a sudden death shootout. The **Sudden Death Shootout** will be conducted as follows:

- A sudden-death shootout is defined as each team attempting a shot. Should one team be successful and the other team not, the successful team shall win the shootout.
- The teams will shoot in the same order during the sudden-death shootout as they did during the original previous round shootout.
- Teams will select their shooters to participate in any order in the sudden death shootout, whether they shot in the previous round. The last player in the first round of the shootout may be the first player in the sudden death shootout.
- Players in a sudden death shootout shall not be allowed to take another shot until two different individual teammates have completed their attempts.
- All goalkeepers and all players from both teams listed on the official game sheet shall be eligible to participate in the shootout.
- Any penalized player whose penalty had not been completed when the overtime period ended or who receives a penalty during a shootout procedure is not eligible to participate in any portion of the shootout procedure(s) and must remain in the penalty box.
- The goalkeepers from each team may be changed after each shot.
- The official scorekeeper shall record all shots taken, indicating the players, goalkeepers and goals scored.

8. Playing Rules

The official USA Hockey Playing Rules shall be used. No protests shall be permitted on the playing rules.

9. Clock Operation

All preliminary, semi-final and championship games shall be continued to determine a winner. Run Time will only be used in the 3rd period of all preliminary games (see 19 Run Time)

10. Tournament Officials

Officials: The Supervisor of Officials shall appoint referees and linespersons. The four-person system shall be used for all age groups: Youth 14U, Youth 15U, Youth 16U Youth 18U, Girls 14U, Girls 16U, Girls 19U, and High School age classifications.

Minor Officials: The Tournament Committee will provide minor (off-ice) officials for the tournament including clock operators and scorers. It is the team's responsibility to provide penalty box personnel. Teams are limited to one (1) penalty box attendant.

11. Penalty Box Attendants: each team will provide a penalty box attendant for each game. This person is a game official and as such cannot be coaching players or getting involved with game play.

12. Discipline

1. **Game Misconducts** - any player or coach who receives a Game Misconduct(s) shall be suspended for the next tournament game(s) as per USA Hockey Playing Rules. The CAHA Tournament Committee will not overturn Game Misconduct penalties.

2. **Match Penalties** - any player or coach who receives a Match Penalty shall be suspended for the balance of the tournament. All Match Penalties will be referred to the Proper Authorities, as defined under Playing Rule 508, for resolution. The CAHA Tournament Committee will not overturn Match Penalties.
3. **Fighting is a serious offence and will not be tolerated.** Players receiving penalties under Rule 615 - Fighting shall be suspended for the balance of the tournament. The CAHA Tournament Committee will not overturn Fighting penalties.
4. **Suspensions** - All suspensions in effect prior to the tournament will be carried over until completed. Suspensions not served to completion during the CAHA State Championship Tournaments will be carried over to the USA Hockey National Championship Tournament for advancing teams.

Note: For teams not advancing to the USA Hockey National Championship Tournament, a suspended player/coach must serve the game suspension(s) in the next game(s) for that player/coach. If there are no remaining scheduled games in the current season for that team, the player/coach must serve the suspension in their first game of the subsequent season.

Upon receipt of a game misconduct, the player must immediately proceed to the locker room and either:
a) remain in the locker room for the balance of the game, or b) dress prior to leaving the locker room. Ejected players may not leave the locker room in full or partial equipment to view the balance of the game from any area within the ice facility. The CAHA Tournament Committee reserves the right to revoke spectator privileges for an ejected player or coach and instruct the ejected player or coach to immediately leave the premises.

13. Tournament Awards

Banners shall be awarded to the first-place team in each age classification.

14. Uniform Colors

All teams must be properly uniformed. All teams must arrive with two (2) sets of jerseys: a home (light) and a visitor (dark) jersey. No additional jersey will be allowed. Unless otherwise approved by the on-site Tournament Director, the home team shall wear light jerseys and the visiting team shall wear dark jerseys in all games.

15. Warm-ups

All teams should be ready to take the ice and begin play 15 minutes prior to the scheduled game time. Warm-up time will be limited to three (3) minutes. The warmup clock will start as soon as the referees have completed their safety checks, put nets in place and the Zamboni gates are closed.

16. Bench Management

Only players in uniform and coaches (maximum of four) listed on the certified team roster will be allowed on the bench. All coaches must have the USA Hockey required CEP certification level, age-specific module, SafeSport verification and current background screening to participate in the tournament. Suspended players or coaches may not be within the immediate vicinity of the player's bench.

17. Timeouts

Each team is permitted one time-out of 60 seconds, whether in regulation or overtime, per the USA Hockey Playing Rules.

18. Start Times

Games will not start early. Teams are requested to be at the rink **60 minutes** prior to their game time and ready to play prior to the scheduled start time.

19. Run Time

For preliminary games only, Run Time will be used in the third period when one team is ahead by 5 or more

goals. When the differential goes to 4 or fewer goals, Stop Time will resume. The on-ice officials, at their discretion, may call for the clock to be stopped in the event of an injury, or an attempt by a team or coach to intentionally stall the game while keeping the clock running.

20. Ice Cuts

There will be an ice cut after the 2nd period for all Tier I games. There will be an ice cut after the 2nd period for Tier II and High School Championship Games only.

21. Injury/Concussion Return to Play Policy

Each host site is required by USA Hockey to have medical personnel on site during the entire State/Affiliate and/or District and National Championship Tournaments. The on-site medical staff may consist of a combination of Doctors, Nurses, EMTs or Certified Athletic Trainers.

The on-site medical staff will have the overriding authority to determine if a player's injury warrants removal from the game and/or referral to the local medical facility.

If a player is referred to the local medical facility, and intends to return to play, the player must provide the on-site medical staff with a written release from the doctor who examined him/her and determined that the player was able to return to play.

No coach, team doctor, team trainer, parent or guardian may take responsibility for the player returning to the ice without the approval of the Tournament host's on-site medical staff. There will be no exceptions, even if a player's parents happen to be a doctor or other medical professional. Only the on-site medical staff can approve the players return to the ice.

Any medical treatment shall comply with USA Hockey's SafeSport.

22. Locker Rooms

Locker room assignments will be posted at the main rink entrance. A team manager or coach will be responsible for obtaining the key for their appointed locker room. Locker rooms will be checked after each game. It is the coach's, team manager's or locker room monitor's responsibility to make sure the locker rooms are cleaned and report any damage before or after each game. Locker rooms must be vacated within 30 minutes after the game.

Only rostered players, coaches, managers, or locker room monitors will be allowed in the locker room area. Prior to the start of each game, the team must designate an escort who will be in possession of the locker room key during the game and will be responsible for escorting any ejected player(s) into the locker room.

USA Hockey's Locker Room Supervision Policy shall be strictly enforced. See Section 25 for more details on Locker Room Monitors.

23. Tournament Committee

The CAHA Tournament Committee shall be in complete charge of all matters pertaining to the operation of the tournament. It shall consist of at least three (3) members, including the Tournament Director.

24. Disputes / Operation of Tournament

After the commencement of the first game, the tournament Supervisor of Officials or their appointee shall act as final arbitrator in all disputes involving the interpretation of the playing rules.

For any other decision other than playing rules interpretation, regarding the operation of the tournament (including zero tolerance, tournament play or conduct not in the best interest of hockey), the Tournament Director shall have the final authority to make the appropriate decision.

The on-site medical staff will have the over-riding authority to determine if a player's injury warrants removal from the game and/or referral to the local hospital as outlined in Section 20.

All artificial noise-making devices are prohibited.

25. Mandatory Head Coach Meeting

An opening meeting for all teams participating in the tournament **shall be held** prior to the start of play at a time and place to be set by the Tournament Committee. **All participating teams are required to have the head coach attend.** It is recommended that the team manager also attend. No one person may represent more than one team at this meeting unless prior approval is granted by the Tournament Director. **Failure to have the head coach present at the meeting shall result in the suspension of the head coach, as listed on the team's official roster, from that team's first game of the CAHA championship tournament.**

26. Check-in: Head Coach/Team Manager and Locker Room Monitors

Head Coach or Team Manager *must* check-in with the on-site Tournament Director prior to their team's first game at the rink in which the game is being played. Head coaches must verify their team's roster and sign the game scoresheet (paper or Game Sheet) in the tournament office or with the scorekeeper at least **15 minutes prior to every game.**

Locker Room Monitors must sign-in at the Tournament office **prior to each game** to receive a Locker Room Monitor credential/badge and must comply with USA Hockey's Locker Room SafeSport certification policy. Failure for a team to use Locker Room Monitors will result in Automatic Discipline via the CAHA Locker Room Monitor Policy and CAHA Disciplinary Committee:

- a. First Offence: Automatic \$500 fine payable by the Association to CAHA and automatic 2-game suspension of head coach.
- b. Second Offence within the same season: Automatic \$1000 fine payable by the Association to CAHA and a mandatory discipline hearing that may include discipline up to and including permanent suspension from all USA Hockey events for the Head Coach and the President of the Association.

27. Zero Tolerance & Spectator Code of Conduct

Please advise all players, coaches, managers, and parents that the USA Hockey **Zero Tolerance Policy** will be in effect. In the event a spectator is removed from the facility during a game for a Zero Tolerance violation, that spectator is not allowed back in the facility for the remainder of that day.

Abuse of on-ice officials or minor officials by anyone, including but not limited to coaches, players, parents, and spectators **WILL NOT BE TOLERATED**, and will be dealt with immediately by the CAHA Tournament Committee. All participants are expected to abide by the respective USA Hockey **Zero Tolerance Policy and Codes of Conduct.**

Spectators must follow the Spectator Code of Conduct in USA Hockey's Annual Guide, or they will be subject to removal from the State/Affiliate and/or District or National Championship Tournament by the host, tournament directors, USA Hockey, or other tournament volunteers. The code of conduct requirements includes (but are not restricted to):

- Always respect players, coaches, and officials.
- Act appropriately.
- Do not taunt or disturb other opposing fans before, during or after the game.
- Cheer good plays of all participants and do not boo opponents.
- Cheer in a positive manner and encourage fair play.
- No profanity, objectionable cheers or gestures that are offensive.
- Provide a safe and fun environment.
- Show respect for host facilities.
- Do not throw any items on the ice surface can cause injury to players and officials.
- Do not lean over or pound on the glass.
- Support the referees and coaches by trusting their judgment and integrity.
- Be responsible for your own and others' safety. Be alerted to prevent accidents from flying pucks and other avoidable situations
- Respect locker rooms as private areas for players, coaches, and officials.
- Be supportive after the game – win or lose.
- Recognize good effort, teamwork, and sportsmanship.