



Midwest Amateur Hockey Association

MWAHA at the USA Hockey Winter Meeting

Earlier this January, the MWAHA Executive Board, along with our Registrar and Past President, attended the USA Hockey Winter Meeting in Nashville. Our very own President, Shawn Spencer, represented the Central District, dedicating several days to reviewing proposals, attending committee meetings, and participating in the Board of Directors sessions. Between meetings, the MWAHA team held multiple strategy discussions to determine how these insights could be applied to our affiliate and local associations.

The four-day event brought together over 350 hockey leaders from across the country for wide-ranging conversations focused on growing and improving the sport. Pat Kelleher, USA Hockey Executive Director, remarked, "While the general feeling was that our game is in a good place, we also know we must be actively engaged in adapting as our environment continues to change."

Key Highlights from USA Hockey:

- **Development League Approved:** The USA Hockey Congress approved the USA Hockey Development League (DL), a collection of Tier I youth programs across the country focused on high-performance player development for 15U and 17U age groups. The DL will follow American Development Model (ADM) guidelines and is set to launch in the 2027-28 season.
- **Growing Participation:** USA Hockey reported continued year-over-year growth in players, coaches, and officials. Female participation is expected to exceed 100,000 this season. New analytics tools, including AI-assisted data, will help affiliates better understand trends and attract new families to the game.
- **Residency Policy:** One significant legislative update involved revisions to the residency policy. This change provides clearer structure for player participation across affiliate boundaries, promoting consistency, transparency, and collaboration while maintaining competitive balance. MWAHA leadership is reviewing how this update may impact our associations and will provide guidance as needed.
- **Membership Fees Set:** Membership fees for the 2026-27 season were approved, following adjustments guided by the consumer price index.

The MWAHA team returned energized, with new ideas and strategies to continue strengthening our local hockey community.

HIGHLIGHT

MWAHA at USA Hockey

Team Midwest Spotlight

Association Updates

Open Forum Update

Hockey Development

Fun Corner

NEWSLETTER

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Midwest Amateur Hockey Association

Team Midwest Spotlight: U18 Tier II

2025-2026 Team Midwest Roster

#1 Wes Carl	#21 Carter Buchan
#2 Kale Jermier	#22 Andy Schell
#3 Xander Sheehy	#24 Cole Crawford
#4 Cale Buchan	#25 Brady Szyzewski
#7 Alexander Heinkel	#32 Bennett Lembke
#8 Alec Servantez	#33 Caden Lai
#12 Brayden Garvin	#34 Cian Baumgard
#14 Shadin Brenneman	#38 Jackson Heacock
#15 Callen Donovan	#42 Dayne Kauffmann
#16 Mason Harn	#44 Weston Borrett
#18 Aiden Paulsen	

EBUG: Jacob Barr



Team Midwest traveled to Sarnia to compete in the U18AA Silver Stick Finals, facing strong international competition throughout the weekend.

In their opening game, Team Midwest faced the Milton Jr. Menace, falling 2-7. Goals were scored by Aiden Paulsen and Cale Buchan, with assists credited to Cale and Carter Buchan, Alexander Heinkel, and Mason Harn.

Game two brought a matchup against the Brantford 99ers. Team Midwest battled hard but came up short, 1-4, with the final goal coming on an empty net. Aiden Paulsen scored, assisted by Andy Schell and Cole Crawford.

In game three, Team Midwest earned a hard-fought 2-1 victory over the Duffield Devils. Bennett Lembke and Cian Baumgard found the back of the net, with assists from Cole Crawford and Weston Borrett.

The final game of the weekend was against the London Jr. Knights, where Team Midwest fell 0-2 in a competitive contest.

Players of the Game for the weekend were Bennett Lembke, Andy Schell, Wes Carl, and Carter Buchan for their leadership and performance on the ice.

Following the conclusion of the regular season, Team Midwest will travel to USA Hockey Tier II Nationals in West Chester beginning March 23. Be sure to follow the team's journey on Facebook at Team Midwest Hockey-MWAHA.



Save the Date - July 11-12, 2026

Mark your calendars! The Midwest Affiliate's Tier II U18AA teams will be hosting the 2026 tryouts July 11-12, 2026.

More details regarding location, registration, and schedule will be announced soon. We encourage players and families to watch for additional information in the coming months.

Stay tuned — we look forward to an exciting weekend as we prepare for the 2026 season!



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Affiliate Spotlight: Lakes Area Hockey Association (LAHA)

Over the past year, the Lakes Area Hockey Association (LAHA) in Spirit Lake has made significant strides in expanding both its programming and its facilities. LAHA is unique in that it not only manages its youth hockey program, but also owns, maintains, and operates its ice arena.

This summer brought several meaningful facility upgrades, including the addition of a JV locker room, an enclosed scorekeeper's box with media perch, a dedicated player entrance, and improvements to the mezzanine viewing area. The skate rental area was also enhanced with the purchase of more than 100 new pairs of rental skates to better serve the community. In addition, the youth program was rebranded from the Boji Blizzard to the Boji Mammoths, creating stronger alignment with the high school program and establishing a more unified and recognizable presence within the community.

Participation at the rink has grown substantially. LAHA introduced a new Learn to Skate program that registered more than 200 skaters across two sessions. Following the first session, nearly 20% of participants transitioned into the newly created Learn to Play program, designed to introduce young skaters to the game of hockey.

During the 2024–2025 season, LAHA also launched its first-ever House Hockey program, which currently includes 18 registered players. For the first time in many years, LAHA fielded an all-girls 8U team that competed in tournament play. The team was very successful, but even more importantly, the experience was transformative. Watching the confidence bloom in these young athletes was truly awe-striking. LAHA hopes to continue fielding this team, creating opportunities for friendly games and tournament play as schedules allow, and further growing girls hockey in the Iowa Great Lakes region.

Additionally, LAHA helped spearhead the creation of Lakes Area Figure Skating, which has registered 42 skaters this year.

At its core, LAHA believes that what benefits the rink benefits the growth of hockey throughout the Iowa Great Lakes region. With continued investment in facilities, expanded community access, new programming, and collaborative efforts such as figure skating, LAHA is excited about the future growth of youth hockey in the community.





Midwest Amateur Hockey Association

Kansas City Storm 8U - Tournament Success!

The Kansas City Storm 8U team competed in their first tournament of the season this weekend at the Old Kinderhook Pond Hockey Showdown.

Facing tough competition, the Storm battled hard throughout the weekend and earned an impressive 3rd place finish. The team showed tremendous effort, teamwork, and growth in their first tournament appearance of the season.

Congratulations to the players and coaches on a strong start — we look forward to seeing what the rest of the season holds for KC Storm 8U!



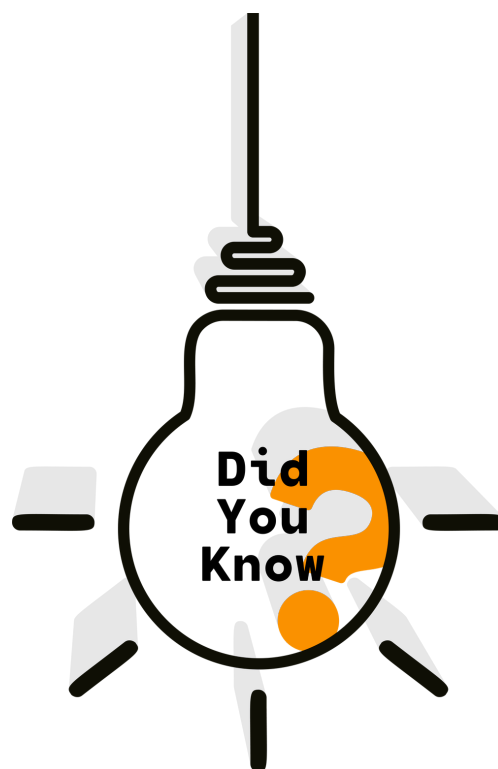
The fastest recorded slapshot in NHL history was 108.8 mph, fired by Zdeno Chara at the NHL All-Star Skills Competition.

That's faster than most cars travel on the highway!

Hockey Trivia

What percentage of youth hockey players in the U.S. are girls today?

(Keep reading to find the answer!)





Midwest Amateur Hockey Association



Affiliate Updates: Ames Cyclones

December 19 – Cyclones & Oaks Food Drive for Veterans

The Ames Cyclones teamed up with the Des Moines Oaks for a meaningful community initiative, hosting a food drive to support local veterans. Team captains from both organizations helped lead the collection efforts, and several teammates delivered the donated items to the local VFW. It was a great example of players coming together off the ice to make a positive impact in the community.

December 22 – 2nd Annual Toilet Bowl Game

The Cyclones hosted their 2nd Annual "Toilet Bowl" game — a fan-favorite tradition filled with fun and plenty of shenanigans! This lighthearted scrimmage flips the script as coaches become players, referees, and announcers; skaters try their hand at goalie (and even coaching); and goalies hit the ice as skaters. A few alumni even returned to join the fun. The night concluded with the presentation of the coveted Toilet Bowl Trophy to the winning team.

January 24 – Senior Night Celebration

On January 24, the Cyclones honored and celebrated 11 outstanding seniors. It was a special evening recognizing a remarkable group of student-athletes for their dedication, leadership, and contributions to the program. Family, friends, and teammates gathered to celebrate their achievements and lasting impact on Ames hockey.



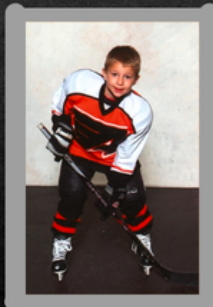
February 21: 15th Annual Quinn's Quest Game

On February 21, the Ames Cyclones hosted the 15th Annual Quinn's Quest game in memory of former AMHA player Quinn Boylston. This meaningful event raises funds for the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital. Donations are accepted at any time via Venmo. The Cyclones community looks forward to continuing this powerful tradition of honoring Quinn's memory while supporting children and families in need.




Join us for the 15th Annual
QUINN'S QUEST BENEFIT

SATURDAY,
FEBRUARY 21ST
JV @ 6:00PM
VARSITY @ 8:00PM
AMES/ISU ICE ARENA



Free Will Donations Accepted at the entrance or through Venmo:
@Ames-Hockey (reference Quinn's Quest)



All donations will go toward ISU Dance Marathon & Ames High Dance Marathon which benefits U of I Stead Family Children's Hospital



Midwest Amateur Hockey Association

Hockey Development: Olathe, KS

Our peers at the Kansas City Youth Hockey Association have been instrumental in supporting the new Halo Ridge facility in Olathe, which officially broke ground this month.

This \$320 million development will transform 64 acres into a fully accessible, family-focused destination featuring an amusement park, a state-of-the-art sports arena, and a 150-bed hotel, along with dining, retail, and recreational spaces.

Designed with accessibility at its core — inspired by personal experiences within the developers' families — Halo Ridge aims to be a place where all families feel welcome. The sports arena, capable of hosting sled hockey and youth hockey tournaments, is a cornerstone of the project and reflects the important role hockey played in bringing this vision to life.

Michael's WonderWorld, a specially designed inclusive amusement park, will complement the arena and provide safe, accessible fun for children of all abilities. The development will also include the Halo Care Collective, a medical and support hub offering therapy, behavioral health, dental, and vision services for families with special needs — ensuring the facility serves the broader community beyond sports and recreation.

Three-time world champion sled hockey athlete Chloe Kirkpatrick joined community leaders at the groundbreaking ceremony, highlighting the growing impact of adaptive hockey in our region and the importance of facilities designed to welcome athletes of all abilities.

This project is a shining example of how hockey can serve as a catalyst for inclusive community development and create a vibrant gathering place for families across the Midwest.





Midwest Amateur Hockey Association

Have Questions About Hockey?

Wondering about your team, your tier, or MWAHA in general? President Shawn Spencer, along with the entire Executive Committee, is opening the floor to you—our players, parents, and community members—for a friendly, open discussion.

This is your chance to ask anything at all—association questions, team questions, affiliate questions, or just curious about hockey—and get insight, guidance, and clarity from the people who help run the organization.

When: Third Sunday of each month at 8:00 PM

Where: Zoom (link on our Facebook page: “MWAHA – Midwest Amateur Hockey Association”)

Come with questions—or just listen and learn. Everyone is welcome, and no topic is off limits!

Submissions & Feedback

We want this newsletter to reflect all of our associations. Please send accomplishments, events, photos, or ideas for future issues to: paigelmeyers@gmail.com

Your feedback and participation will help determine the frequency and format of future newsletters.

Thank you for all you do to support hockey across the Midwest!

Paige Meyers

Secretary, Midwest Amateur Hockey Association

Hockey Trivia Answer: Nearly 30% — and growing every year.

Girls' participation in hockey has more than doubled in the past two decades, making it one of the fastest-growing segments of the sport.