

PRESQUE ISLE



YOUTH HOCKEY

*Presque Isle Amateur Hockey Association
Policies & Procedures Manual
May 18, 2023*

Introduction

The Tier III and Tier IV teams for the Presque Isle Amateur Hockey Association (PIYH) are founded under the rules of the Maine Amateur Hockey Association (“MEAHA”) to provide competitive youth hockey. The rules of USA Hockey shall apply to all PIYH Tiered teams unless teams compete in Canada or another venue where local or tournament rules may apply. This includes without limitation rules regarding protective equipment, e.g., including but limited to mouth guards and helmet certification.

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I. PRESQUE ISLE AMATURE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION MISSION STATEMENT

“Our mission is to provide all the youth of our organization with the best opportunity for individual and team acquisition of hockey skills, knowledge, team play, and sportsmanship.”

II. AGE CLASSIFICATIONS

PIYH follows the age classifications as determined by USA Hockey. Age is determined by the child's age as of December 31st of the year in which the season begins.

IP	Age 6 and under
Novice	Ages 7-8
Atom	Ages 9 - 10
Peewee	Ages 11 - 12
Bantam	Ages 13 - 14

III. AGE CLASSIFICATION EXCEPTIONS (SKATE-UP POLICY)

PIYH follows the age classifications established by USA Hockey but does grant exceptions to the age classifications for special circumstances (NOTE: PIYH does not allow players to skate out of age classification without prior approval of the Board). PIYH will not consider requests to skate up to a level more than one year above the appropriate age classification. Requests for exceptions should be based on talent alone; PIYH will not consider "hardship" issues, including scheduling or transportation concerns, to be an adequate basis for an exception.

Parents seeking an exception for their child must submit their request in writing (e-mail is acceptable) to the PIYH Board of Directors prior to the regularly scheduled meeting in August. The Board will grant permission to try out for an older level of play if it determines that the player has a reasonable chance of making a team at that level based on the following criteria: The player's skills and abilities must be above those of the average player at that level, according to on-ice evaluations. Other relevant considerations may include whether the player is of sufficient size, strength, and maturity to be safe, and the roster size of the requested level as well as that of the age-appropriate level. In evaluating a request for an exception, the Board may consult with a player's prior coaches, as well as the coaches at the requested older level.

The Board reserves the right to reconsider and reverse its original decision with respect to any exceptions at any point during the season.

IV: PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Introductory Program (IP, generally 6 and under):

The Introductory Program is for children ages 6 and under or older children who are new to competitive hockey. IP coaches work with players to develop the basics of hockey skating techniques. As the season progresses and players meet benchmarks, they are introduced to the basics of puck handling, passing, and shooting.

Novice Program (8u)

The Novice program is for 7 and 8-year-olds who have developed at least basic skating skills. Six-year-old players may be considered according to the number of players qualified to play and the experience level of the player in question. Players are not required to have prior hockey experience, but prior participation in the IP program is encouraged. Novice players will have the opportunity to play in non-competitive 3-on-3 cross-ice games against other children of similar size and skill level.

Extended Play for 8-year-old Novice players:

The following is taken from MEAHA Annual Guide 2023 page 15 section 2 Rules, under the 8 and is re-printed here for clarity and convenience:

a. General:

- i. Blue pucks will be used for all 8U on-ice and/or off-ice events
- ii. USA Hockey referees are required to be used in accordance with USA Hockey guidelines.
- iii. No “full-time” goaltenders shall be used for cross-ice teams.
- iv. Cross-ice games shall NOT use a scoreboard or scorekeeper.

b. Teams:

- i. NO 8U travel teams will be permitted within MEAHA Associate or Allied Members.
- ii. NO 8U full-ice teams will be permitted within MEAHA Associate or Allied Members.

c. Tournaments:

- i. All Mite tournaments sponsored by MEAHA Associate or Allied Members shall use the cross-ice format.

d. MEAHA Associate or Allied Members not following these rules for ALL 8U teams, will NOT be eligible to participate in any MEAHA State Tournaments at ANY age group and will NOT be eligible to receive MEAHA grant funding of any kind.

Atoms (9 & 10) Pee Wees (11 & 12) and Bantams (13 & 14):

Within these older age groups, lies the core of our youth hockey program and is the basic structure for Tier(s) III and IV teams.

V. LEVELS OF PLAY

Tier IV Hockey (House)

PIYH Tier IV players play at the “House” or recreational level. The goal of recreational-level hockey is to provide players with an opportunity to develop skills and play games at a recreational level. House games are generally scheduled from late October through February, with tournaments carrying the season into March or early April.

PIYH plays a minimum number of league games against teams in our region of the state. The winner of league play will represent our region at the State Tier IV Tournaments.

Because Tier IV hockey is intended to be recreational in nature, PIYH has an “equal play” policy. Players can expect that, with limited exceptions, they will play as often as their teammates. Coaches are not permitted to regularly allow certain players a disproportionate amount of ice time during games. Coaches are given the discretion to make exceptions to the “equal play” policy during the final two minutes of games.

Tier III Hockey (Travel)

Parents and players should be aware that Tier III (Travel) is a more competitive level of hockey than Tier IV. This level of hockey involves more practices and games, as well as more travel and expense. PIYH is committed to the development of all of its players and expects coaches to provide reasonably balanced ice time among players over the course of the season, though not necessarily exact equality. As a competitive hockey program we recognize that coaches may make exceptions to normal playing times, especially in tournaments and at critical junctures in games. Parents should expect the PIYH travel program fees to cost more than a Tier IV program. Parents should also factor in the additional costs of travel to tournaments, including overnight hotel stays.

Tier III - as defined by USA Hockey, is the second highest level of competitive hockey in our region. PIYH provides one team at the Tier III level in each age group (when numbers allow). Tier III teams play in a MeAHA league consisting of teams approved by MeAHA from around the state. The Tier III state champions represent Maine at the New England Tier III sectional. Attendance at the sectional tournament can involve extra expense, for which some additional team fundraising may be done.

VI. TEAM SELECTION

Tier IV

Players enrolled in PIYH programs should expect the season to formally commence in mid-October with several general warm-up practices. Within the first few weeks of practice, the coaches will conduct one or more evaluation sessions. The goal of these sessions is to allow the coaches insight into the players' respective skills and abilities. At the conclusion of the evaluation sessions, the PIYH coaches will divide the players into respective teams via a PIYH Board of Directors supervised draft. It is the policy of PIYH that coaches will divide the players in such a manner as to generate teams of equal ability to the maximum extent practicable.

Tier III

Tryouts are normally held in late February or early March for the following season's team selections. The PIYH board shall broadly publicize the tryout dates and times at least two weeks in advance of the first tryout session in places such as the PIYH website, social media, and email.

Players wishing to try out for the PIYH Tier III teams must not be under suspension from any other organization, MeAHA, or USA Hockey. In order for a player to be eligible to register for tryouts, the player's family must not have an outstanding balance with PIYH or any other youth hockey organization for that player or their siblings.

All players and coaches participating in any on-ice event sponsored by PIYH, including tryouts, must be appropriately registered under USA Hockey.

Players are assigned numbered jerseys to wear during the tryouts. Players may not wear any identifying apparel, such as nameplates, team-related jerseys, or helmets with names on them. This policy is intended to make the evaluations as fair and anonymous as possible.

Independent Evaluators

All tryout sessions shall be evaluated by at least three independent evaluators. Whenever possible, the same evaluators should be used for all tryout sessions within an age group. Evaluators should be individuals with substantial experience in evaluating hockey ability. Evaluators cannot have a meaningful relationship with any player trying out at that level that may reasonably constitute a conflict of interest. The evaluators will watch the tryouts from a location that is separate from spectators and parents, such as the press box or designated area in the stands.

The role of the evaluators is to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the players, including skills, effort, game sense, and positional play. Their evaluations are considered advisory to the selection process. It is not the role of the evaluators to choose the teams. In assessing the overall hockey ability of a player, the evaluators should indicate whether a player falls in the top, middle, or bottom third of all players trying out at that level. In the comments area of the evaluation form, evaluators should specify any notable strengths and weaknesses that were observed.

Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches

Prior to the start of the tryouts, the PIYH board will designate the head coaches or a pool of coaches at each age level. After the initial tryout session(s) the board will meet to determine if a head coach will be able to be determined or if the coaching of the team is contingent on their child's ability to be selected for the team based on the indicators discussed below. The board may also need to make adjustments to the head coaching assignments in the event that the children of all head coaches at an age level are to be selected for the same team.

The PIYH board may also adjust the timeline for the selection of the head coaches depending upon the unique factors associated with the coaching personnel under consideration.

All head coaches/coaching pools shall evaluate the players during the tryouts. During the tryouts, head coach/coaching pool should either be a) on the ice, or b) watching from a location that is separate from spectators and parents, such as a press box, bench area, or designated area in the stands.

With the exception of the head coaches/coaching pool, no person who has a relative trying out for a team is permitted to be on the ice during the tryout sessions for that age group.

Tryout Supervisor

The PIYH board will designate a tryout supervisor to supervise the evaluation process at each age level. The same individual may be assigned to supervise more than one age level. A tryout supervisor does not need to be a member of the PIYH board. A tryout supervisor cannot have a meaningful relationship with any player trying out at that level that may reasonably constitute a conflict of interest.

At the start of each tryout session, the tryout supervisor will provide the evaluators, head coaches, and alternates with the official evaluation forms. The tryout supervisor shall watch all tryout sessions in the immediate presence of the evaluators in order to make sure proper procedures are being followed. At the conclusion of each tryout session, the tryout supervisor will take sole possession of all evaluation forms from the evaluators. A copy of those evaluations

shall be provided to the head coaches following the final tryout session. The only people permitted access to the evaluations are the evaluators, head coaches, and tryout supervisors at that age level. It is a violation of PIYH board policy to share or discuss any information about the player evaluations with any other individual unless the PIYH board grants specific permission to do so.

Selection Process

The head coach has the primary responsibility for choosing the team's roster, subject to PIYH board policies and supervision. All rosters must include at least 15 skaters and 1 or 2 goalies, unless the PIYH board grants specific permission to do otherwise or numbers for that age group do not meet the requirement. Goalies are not allowed to also be counted as skaters. For a goalie to be considered as a skater they must try out for a position other than goalie and meet the criteria for that position. At the end of the tryout, the player may be offered a position as either goalie or skater, but not both.

Roster selections MUST be based on the following indicators of each player's hockey ability:

Primary indicator:

- The tryout evaluations were completed by the evaluators.

Secondary indicators may include:

- The tryout evaluations completed by the head coaches.
- A player's performance in past seasons, especially the most recent one, as assessed by team statistics, the personal observations of the head coach, and input from a player's former coaches.
- A player's coachability, attitude, and work ethic, as assessed by the personal observation of the head coach and input from a player's former coaches.
- A player's experience at playing particular positions.

Within 24 hours of the final tryout session, the Tier III head coach will provide a proposed Tier III roster to the tryout supervisor. The tryout supervisor will carefully examine the proposed Tier III roster along with the evaluations from the evaluators and make note of any instances where there may be a significant discrepancy between the evaluations and players appearing on the proposed roster.

The Tier III head coach and tryout supervisor will then meet with the PIYH executive board to discuss the proposed roster. Members of the PIYH board are not permitted to take part in any portion of the selection process, including the team selection meeting, for an age at which they have a child trying out, or in any other case when they may reasonably have a conflict of interest.

At this meeting, the tryout supervisor shall ask the head coach to explain to the board any significant discrepancies that were noted. All rosters must be approved by the PIYH board before they are finalized and posted. During this meeting, board members shall have access to the evaluations for that age group. Only the head coach and board president/vice president are authorized to keep copies of the evaluation forms after the meeting. The evaluations shall be retained by the board president for at least one year.

The Tier III head coach shall identify to the board at least two alternate forwards, two alternate defensemen, and one alternate goalie to be chosen in the event roster vacancies develop prior to September 1st. The head coach shall rank-order the alternates by position. The identities of the alternates may only be publicly identified according to the specific instructions of the board.

This policy is intended to allow any team vacancies occurring prior to September 1st to be filled with minimal additional work.

Following the approval of the Tier III rosters, the PIYH board will post the preliminary rosters on the PIYH website and social media in a timely manner, with the player names listed in alphabetical order. Following the posting of the rosters, players/parents shall have 24 hours to accept a position on the team. A player will be deemed to have declined a spot on the team in the absence of a specific acceptance. Any player declining a position on the Tier III team will revert to Tier IV for that season. After this 24-hour period, the head coach, with board approval, will fill any vacancies that result according to the list of rank-ordered alternates.

Any parent or player with questions or concerns about the team selections shall contact the board president. The board chair may ask the head coach to contact the parent or player. The head coach should be prepared to explain the basis for their decision and should reference the evaluations in explaining their selection decisions, but in doing so should not refer specifically to any other players that tried out for the team.

Tryout Waivers

In exceptional cases, such as serious injury or illness, the board may grant a tryout waiver to a player unable to attend the tryout sessions. In the event a player is granted a waiver, the board will arrange for an alternative method of evaluation of a player's hockey ability.

A player granted a tryout waiver can only be placed on a team's roster if they are of such hockey ability that, in the judgment of the head coach and board, they are clearly among the players who should be selected for the team based on the selection criteria specified above.

Team Vacancies

In the event any vacancies occur on a team after the selection process but prior to September 1st, the head coach may fill any vacancies, with board approval, according to the list of rank-ordered alternates.

After September 1st, the head coach may fill any vacancies, with board approval, based on their evaluation of the most suitable player for that spot. Vacancies on teams cannot be filled in such a way that would make teams or players ineligible to play in the MeAHA state tournament. Once a player has registered at the Tier IV level, he/she cannot be added to a Tier II or Tier III roster without the specific approval of that player's association.

VII. COACH SELECTION

The Coaching Committee shall meet on a regular basis as directed by the Chair of the Committee to review and consider applicants and/or candidates for coaching positions. The committee shall select and recommend to the Board of Directors a head coach for each team. A call for coaching applications shall be broadly publicized in places such as the MJBB website, local newspapers, and email lists.

Head coaches:

The board shall interview at least 2 candidates for each head coaching position (provided enough applications are received). Past or current head coaches shall be reevaluated with other candidates applying for the position. No guarantees are made for coaching positions from one year to the next. Head coaches must meet the certification requirements of USA Hockey for that season at the time of application or outline a plan to acquire them no later than December 31st. When making head coaching selections, the PIYH board will consider the following factors, not necessarily in order of importance:

- Prior Coaching Experience with PIYH:
- Prior coaching experience from other organizations
- Commitment & Scheduling availability
- Consideration of parent survey results
- Demonstrated ability/capacity to communicate and teach successfully
- Demonstrated ability in working successfully with children, parents, and administrators
- Coaching Philosophy
- General hockey background & knowledge
- References
- Personal background check supported by the signed release of information

- Any other reliable information is known by or available to the members of the Committee and the Board

Consideration of prior coaching experience within PIYH is but one factor and should not alone cause the Committee or Board to select or recommend an applicant or candidate as the Committee and Board are encouraged to consider all the above factors but not one factor alone.

The Committee should undertake at least one mid-season review of those coaches approved by the Board to measure the progress and suitability of the coach. This mid-season review may occur at any time and is intended as an opportunity for feedback and input for and from the coach considering such items as:

Accountability: Commitment & availability

Ability/Capacity to communicate and teach Coaching Philosophy

Personal Background information Discipline issues

USA Hockey and PIYH's Coach's Code of Conduct

Any other pertinent information available to the Committee

Should circumstances arise whereby a coach indicates that they can no longer continue to fulfill their role as coach or where the Board of Directors determines that a coach should be removed, the Committee shall select and recommend to the Board a successor after consideration of the coach selection and recommendation enumerated above.

Assistant coaches and team managers:

The head coaches will select assistant coaches and team managers only after team rosters have been finalized and posted. In selecting assistant coaches, head coaches shall consider the coach selection factors discussed above.

Team managers should be individuals with good organizational skills and a demonstrated ability to work effectively and cooperatively with others.

Assistant coach and team manager selections are not finalized until approved by the board. The board shall provide great deference to the head coaches in naming assistants and team managers and will only disapprove of a choice after careful deliberation and providing a clear explanation to the individuals involved.

All coaches and managers must undergo a background check, consistent with MeAHA and/or USA Hockey rules.

VIII. COACHES HELMET POLICY

In accordance with USA Hockey policy, all PIYH coaches and instructors must properly wear an approved ice hockey helmet with a chin strap during all on-ice sessions, including practices, controlled scrimmages, and clinics. Face shields are strongly recommended but not required.

IX. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

24-Hour Rule: Coaches should encourage a 24-hour grace period regarding (minor) conflict resolution by all parties on issues that do not require immediate action. A 24-hour period of incident reflection often reduces tensions and allows time for all parties to gather better details to resolve the issue at hand.

Coaches should use the following steps in order to effectively manage conflicts among players, coaches, and parents:

1. The coach will speak with the player, parent, or coach. (Player conflict should be resolved with the player and parent together.)
2. The coach, player, or parent will address the Vice President of the board (Player conflict should be resolved with the player and parent together.)
3. The Vice President of the board will address the full Board of Directors for final disposition if necessary.

Significant referee disputes (misconduct penalties, player suspensions, game forfeits, etc.) must be immediately brought to the attention of the President or Vice President of the board.

Should a player or coach receive a major (game) misconduct penalty causing that player or coach to also serve a game suspension, the President or Vice President of the board should be immediately notified. The Vice President will review the matter and may take appropriate action including addressing the player or coach and possibly imposing additional penalties upon that individual. Please note that the Vice President is also authorized to review or address matters pertaining to off-ice misconduct.

X. DISCIPLINE

The following applies to all players, coaches, and parents.

All incidents must be reported to the Vice President as soon as possible via email. Email should contain a brief description of the incident, name(s) of people involved, action taken, and contact information. A follow-up phone call is also encouraged. The Vice President reserves the right to final approval of discipline actions in all steps.

STEP 1: The coach will address the player/parent and take action.

STEP 2: The coach will report the incident to the Vice President, and the Vice President will address the player/parent and take action.

STEP 3: The coach will report the incident to the Vice President. The Vice President will consult with the President and decide on an action plan. Actions in this step can be appealed in front of the Executive Board with written notice to the President or Vice President.

Significant issues (misconduct penalties, fights, player suspensions, game forfeits, etc.) must be immediately brought to the attention of the President or Vice President. The President/Vice President may take action including imposing additional penalties upon the offending individual(s). Please note that the Vice President is also authorized to address off-ice matters pertaining to misconduct.

All players, coaches, and parents are expected to honor the PIYH mission statement during any sanctioned PIYH event as well as while representing PIYH at any time during the season on or off the ice.

XI. PAYMENT POLICY

- PIYH will not accept a registration from any player that has an unpaid balance from any MeAHA-affiliated organization.
- A \$20 fee will be assessed to the player's account for any returned check in addition to any applicable bank fees.
- It shall be the responsibility of the parent of the player to notify the PIYH Treasurer (via email) of any changes in contact information or credit card information that would differ from that submitted at the time of registration. Failure to do so may result in delinquent payments/suspension of the player.
- PIYH assumes no responsibility to contact members regarding payment plans, alternate payment plans, and/or unpaid balances. Members assume responsibility to monitor and keep account(s) current.

misconduct policies; are in a managerial or supervisory role; are employees or volunteers. This includes, but is not limited to: Coaches, Board Members, and Team Administrators.

XV. MISCELLANEOUS