



Ontario Women's Hockey League

RULES and REGULATIONS

2025 – 2026 Regular Season

Section 1 – League Liaisons

Each Association/Independent team shall designate one person as the main contact for the League. This designated person shall be called the League Liaison. The responsibilities of the League Liaison (LL) shall be to maintain communication between the League and all teams of the Association/Independent team. The duties include the following:

- a) Communication between a team in the Association/Independent team and the League on all matters other than immediate scheduling.
- b) All discipline matters regarding any team in the Association.
- c) Notifying the League about teams the Association wishes to enter in the league for the next season of play by August 29th, 2025 by 4:00pm.
- d) Registering the contact information for each team in the manner prescribed by the League by the required date as set annually by the League.
- e) Monitoring and ensuring that each team is duly registered with the League before its first league game.

The League Liaison must have full e-mail service and must inform the League of any changes in contact information immediately. The League Liaison must have the authority to speak for the Association at all times. The League Liaison is expected to attend the League General Meetings and vote upon issues for their Association/Independent team. The League will only deal with individual teams through the League Liaison.

It is the policy of the OWHL to respond only to concerns and issues raised by each association's League Liaison. Any comments other than operational questions sent directly to the OWHL will be forwarded back to the association's League Liaison in adherence to the policy.

Section 2 – Player Eligibility

- a) All players must be properly registered on their team's OWHA team registration form as per OWHA rules.
- b) To be eligible for League playoffs, all players must have played a minimum of five (5) Ontario Women's Hockey League (OWHL) league games with their OWHA registered/USA Hockey team prior to **December 31**. Requests for exemption for league play are to be submitted in writing to leagues@owha.on.ca by December 31.
- c) An eligible player must play within the League. House league players will be eligible when picked up from within their own association.

Section 3 – Team Rosters

Players and staff must be registered on an approved roster with the OWHA before they are eligible to play in the OWHA / OWHL.

For USA Hockey-registered teams participating in the League, the USA Hockey registered team will be responsible for providing the OWHA with its official, approved USA Hockey team roster prior to their first League game. During the season, any addition to or deletion from the official USA Hockey roster must be identified to the OWHA by sending a copy of the approved updated USA Hockey roster to the OWHA to be approved before a player or staff is eligible to participate in the OWHL.

Section 4 – Association and Team Responsibility

- a) Teams applying for participating in this league, accept that there may be travel restrictions due to geography.
- b) Each Association and Independent team shall file its OWHL Application Form no later than **August 29th, 2025 by 4:00pm.**
- c) Any team that has any unresolved issues with the OWHA may not be eligible for participation within the league.
- d) The OWHL requires all teams must register to play at their assigned OWHA level each season. Teams will be required to play in the division and category to which they have been assigned by the OWHA. Teams/ Associations are responsible for assigning their teams to the appropriate categories. A final change may be made prior to the scheduling meeting if appropriate.
- e) Commitment to League Playoffs and Championship Weekend is an important priority. Please remember that OWHA Playdowns are also an important priority.
- f) If a team is re-categorized up at any point in time by the OWHA, they can continue with league play but will be ineligible for playoffs.
- g) If a team is re-categorized down at any point in time by the OWHA, they will still be eligible for OWHL playoffs at the level they began the regular season at.
- h) On or prior to a date set annually by the OWHA, each team shall supply a cash, cheque or money order payable to the OWHA to cover the entry fees for the forthcoming season. The entry fees are non-refundable, unless the team provides written notice to the OWHA, on or prior to the OWHA Category Deadline Date, of its decision to withdraw from the League.
- i) Teams must make best efforts to ensure they are applying for the appropriate division and category in consideration of all teams and players. We would recommend that teams play two (2) OWHA sanctioned games against two (2) different teams at their own OWHA registered level or higher in order to place their team in the most appropriate category.
- j) RAMP Electronic game sheets must be used for all games so that the games can be verified.

Section 5 – Scheduling

- a) The OWHA will notify the League Liaisons of the date of the Scheduling meeting on the week of September 22nd for U13 to U22 division. The week of October 6 will be for the U9 and U11 divisions.
- b) Scheduling will provide flexibility to accommodate OWHA provincial playdowns and championships. Each team must undertake to have sufficient ice time to meet playoff requirements by the set completion date annually.
- c) All changes to game times, dates or locations of games must be reported to leagues@owha.on.ca at least forty-eight (48) hours before actual game time so the online system may be properly updated, and referees informed. Failure to do so may result in a \$500.00 fine payable by the HOME team.
- d) All games must be scheduled before leaving the scheduling meeting. Games are not allowed to be scheduled beyond the completion date for the regular season set out by the OWHA.
- e) All league games must be created and entered in the RAMP Game Portal at least 5 days prior to the start of the game. Failure to do so in the regular season may result in a fine of \$500.00 per day to the offending association until the game sheet data is entered.
- f) All USA team must play their games in Ontario.
- g) A virtual session for any Coaches and Managers wanting to review of league Rules will take place on September 8th starting at 6:00pm. The link will follow.

Playoff Format: Format will be determined annually by the OWHA.

Section 6 – Pick-up Players

- a) A team may use any eligible player to a maximum of three (3) but not to exceed the number of players currently registered with their team. Pick-Ups are not permitted for suspended players.
- b) All Pick-Ups must be done through the RAMP Game Portal.
- c) For Regular Season League games, a team may pick up any eligible player, to a maximum of three (3) pick up players, from a lower category to bring the total team strength to, but not exceed, the number of officially registered players on the team. The OWHA may authorize the movement of a goaltender for emergency situations only, identified as being situations in which the team would have no roster goalie available to play.
- d) Pick Up players are not eligible for playoffs. (Exception for Goalies with League approval only if they have a rostered goaltender that is not available).
- e) A Pick-Up Player is defined as EITHER from:
 - i) a lower age level and the same classification or lower
 - ii) the same age level and lower classification:
(E.g.): 1 – U15 A team can call from U13 A team

(E.g.): 2 – U15 A team can call from U13 BB team

(E.g.): 3 - U15 A team can call from U15 BB team

(E.g.): 4 – U15 A team can NOT call from U13 AA team

- f) Any team found to have violated the Pick-Up Players rule by virtue of not having complied with any of the requirements or limits specified in Rule 7, subsections a) through e) will forfeit the game in which the violation(s) was found to have occurred and by a score that is in accordance with subsection 9) of the Forfeiture Policy listed in the OWHA Handbook. Teams violating Rule 7, as above, will be considered by the League to have used an ineligible or illegal player and the violation will be reported to the OWHA as a suspendable offence.

Section 7 – Suspensions

Any suspendable offence must be reported to the OWHA (stats@owha.on.ca) by the team.

- a) For any suspendable offence occurring in any game including a League game, the OWHA must be notified by the offending team within 24 hours or prior to the teams next game, whichever comes first. Failure to do so will result in a two-game (2) suspension to the head coach.
- b) An email indicating a suspension issued or game served, must be submitted to the OWHA via stats@owha.on.ca immediately following the game. If a team has failed to send the documentation and the suspended player participates in a game, the head coach will be considered to have used an illegal player and the current OWHA discipline shall be levied.
- c) All members must follow the minimum suspension guidelines as circulated annually by the OWHA. These suspensions must be served at the next OWHA sanctioned event(s).

NOTE: Exhibition games cannot be used to serve suspensions, and the suspended individual cannot participate in these games, until their suspension has been served in full.

Section 8 – Protests

- a) Members can only protest a game regarding an interpretation or violation of a OWHL rule. Judgement calls do not qualify for protest. Notification that a game is being protested MUST be communicated to protests@owha.on.ca within twenty-four (24) hours of the infraction(s). The Protest form needs to be submitted to the OWHA and the Opposing Team, within 24 hours of the scheduled start of the game that was played, of your intent to protest via email to protest@owha.on.ca. The final documentation must be submitted to the OWHA within 48 hours of the scheduled start of the game that was played.

- b) To Protest, a team must:
 - i. With respect to protest relating to the interpretation of a playing rule, notify the referee verbally of the protest before, during, or at the end of the game, before they leave the ice,
OR
 - ii. With respect to an improperly registered, unregistered, ineligible, or suspended player or team official, notify the OWHA Office within forty-eight (48) hours of the starting of the game that was played.
 - iii. These are the only situations which are eligible to be protested to the League.
- c) Prepare the protest on the form provided.
- d) Payment for the protest can be made via credit card by calling the OWHA office. There will be a 2.4% processing fee that will apply in addition to the \$500.00. Payment can also be made via cash, cheque or money order and must be in the OWHA office within (48) hours of the scheduled start of the game that was played.
- e) Within seven (7) days of the protest being filed, the OWHA shall set a date for the hearing of the protest. The hearing date will be no more than fifteen (15) days after the filing date. Teams attending a OWHL Protest Hearing must be represented by a rostered staff member.
- f) Protest Decisions are final and binding and are not subject to an appeal.
- g) Refunded fees for protests will be at the discretion of the panel.

Section 9 – Officials

- a) All on-ice officials must be Hockey Canada certified for this season and should be registered with the OWHA.
- b) Feedback regarding on-ice officials go to officiating@owha.on.ca.
- c) It is recognized that there is currently a shortage of certified officials in some areas of Ontario. As such, games may proceed with fewer than the ideal number of on-ice officials. For example, games normally scheduled with 3 officials may be officiated by 2 officials. In exceptional circumstances, 1 official may work the game with agreement of the official and with written approval from both teams. Once the agreement has been made, a game cannot be protested on the basis of having one official for the game.
- d) At all times, associations and coaches are to be in control of themselves and their teams and support fair play for all involved.
- e) It is the responsibility of every association, team, and participant to always treat officials with respect. When an official is wearing a green armband, they are a young person learning and contributing to the game. Minimum suspensions may be increased at any time and special attention will be paid to any violations against green armband officials.
- f) All officials must be currently certified and provide their OWHA (or Hockey Quebec) referee number or certification number along with their name to the timekeeper so that this can be entered on the RAMP Electronic Gamesheet App.

- g) All officials MUST use RAMP Electronic Gamesheet for their games. The games must be signed off by the official with 24 hours of the game being played and they must complete incident and penalty reports where applicable.
- h) Officiating Systems:
 - 1. In U18AA, the 4-official system is recommended; however, games may proceed with the 3-official or 2-official system where officials are not available. Referees officiating the 4-official system must be qualified to do so. OWHA Officiating Coaches are available to work closely with Officiating Assignors to determine suitability of assigned officials.
 - 2. In U13AA, U15 AA, U15 A, U18 A, U18 BB, U22 A, the 3-official system is recommended; however, games may proceed with the 2-official system where officials are not available.
 - 3. All other divisions will utilize the 2-official system. 2-official system games must not be cancelled due to a shortage of officials as a result of scheduling 3-official and 4-official system games at higher levels.
- i) In all games, the officials will use the fast face-off procedure. The puck shall be put into play at the indicated start time of the game regardless of whether both teams are lined up in face off position.
- j) Officials are to be on-ice at game time and are to order the clock started for a three (3) minutes warm up period as soon as both nets are pegged and available for the teams to begin their warmup. Once the game clock has started, the officials shall initiate the Fair Play procedures. When two minutes have elapsed, a game official will blow the whistle to let the teams know they have one minute to get to their benches and get their starting line up to centre ice. If teams fail to be ready a delay of game penalty is to be assessed.

Section 10 – Cancellation and Rescheduling Rules

- a) After scheduling day(s), teams will be allowed a period of three (3) calendar days to change times and/or locations of games on the originally submitted schedule, after which time the team's schedule will be marked Final and entered into the League's on-line game system. Any changes made during the 3-day grace period must be made known to the team's opponent. After a team's regular season schedule is marked final, each team will be allowed to rearrange a maximum of three (3) games during the season.
- b) Cancellation of a regular season, playoff or championship game by a team may be done without cancellation penalty if prior approval from the OWHL is given. Any cancelled game must be rescheduled as provided below.
- c) Ice costs for a game cancelled less than two weeks before the game day becomes the responsibility of the team which gives notice of cancellation unless the ice is used by the non-cancelling team, or some other team. In addition, the cancelling team may be assessed a minimum \$500.00 disciplinary fine payable to the OWHA.

- d) Games cancelled must be rescheduled within seven (7) days of game cancellation. Any team that does not reschedule within the seven (7) day period may be assessed a \$500.00 disciplinary fine payable to the OWHA. A rescheduled game is not considered to be locked into the schedule until the League has been notified.
- e) The OWHA reserves the right to issue an additional \$500.00 fine, payable to the OWHA, to any team who either fails to show for a scheduled league game without just cause; cancels a scheduled league game within twenty-four (24) hours of its playing time without just cause; or refuses to reschedule a cancelled game. In addition, the OWHA shall have the right to suspend all or any member of the team staff of the offending team for up to one (1) year and to refuse the admission of teams from the offending association for the next season.
- f) For the purposes of this Section, a team that withdraws from the League shall be deemed to have cancelled all of its remaining scheduled games.
- g) If a game must be cancelled because one or both teams cannot travel due to inclement weather, the following policy is in effect:
 - 1. The team cancelling the game must DIRECTLY contact by PHONE and speak to a designated team representative, a follow-up email must be sent to leagues@owha.on.ca with both teams copied on the email, before this game is officially considered cancelled.
 - 2. A date for the rescheduled game is to be provided within seven (7) days.
 - 3. Ice costs for a game cancelled less than two weeks before the game day becomes the responsibility of the team which gives notice of cancellation unless the ice is used by the non-cancelling team, or some other team.
- h) When a game has started and cannot be finished due to any reason, and both teams can agree to a solution, an email must be sent to leagues@owha.on.ca for confirmation. If the teams cannot agree to a solution, each team and the on-ice officials must submit their position to leagues@owha.on.ca on what happened and their proposed solution within 24 hours of the start of the game. The OWHA will render a decision that is final and binding.

Section 11 – Starting Games Times

The following guideline for Regular Season and Playoff game start times must be followed unless alternate arrangements are mutually agreed upon by both teams:

- Monday to Friday game start times must be such that starting travel time from the visiting centre is no earlier than 5:00 p.m.
- Sunday to Thursday game start times must be such that allowing for a reasonable post-game change period, the visiting team arrives home no later than:
 - U9 – 9:00 p.m.
 - U11/U13/U15 – 10:30 p.m.
 - U18/U22 – 11:30 p.m.

Section 12 – Game Lengths

Teams in the OWHL-SOUTHERN Divisions and Categories to follow:

- a) All League games including Championship games shall consist of three (3) stop time periods of ten, ten, twelve (10-10-12) OR fifteen, fifteen, flood, fifteen (15-15-Flood-15) as designated for that division.
 - The following divisions will play 10-10-12
 - All U9
 - All U11
 - U13 A, BB, B, C
 - U15 BB, B, C
 - U18 B, C
 - The following divisions will play 15-15-Flood-15
 - All Senior
 - All U22
 - U18 AA, A, BB
 - U15 AA, A
 - U13 AA

Teams in the OWHL-EASTERN Divisions and Categories to follow:

- The following divisions will play 1.5-hour games 15-15-Flood-15:
 - U18 AA, A & BB
 - U15 AA, A & BB
 - U13 AA
- The following divisions will play 1.0-hour games 10-10-12
 - All Other teams.
- b) All League games are STOP TIME. Running time is not allowed and, if used, the game will be replayed at the cost of the home team.
- c) No time outs are allowed in regular season games. If a team request a time out during a regular season game, the team may be fined \$500.00 and the coach will be suspended for one game.
- d) The number of regular season games will be standardized.

Section 13 – Electronic Game Sheets

- a) Electronic game sheet data is collected, and any falsification of data will result in suspensions and may impact insurance coverage. It is important that the game sheet data be entered accurately both during and as soon as the game has been completed. Teams only have 24 hours from the start time of the game to enter the details of the game into the electronic gamesheet. Game Codes are deactivated 24 hours after the game start time.
- b) The on-ice officials must review the data entered into the electronic game sheet via the code they have been provided and sign off on the game as soon as possible following the end of the game and within 24 hours from the start of the game.
- c) It is the responsibility of the team that assigns the game officials to ensure that all officials sign off of the electronic gamesheet. Failure to follow this process will result in fines being levied to the association.
- d) It is the responsibility of the home team to provide the game codes to other parties (visiting team, officials, and timekeeper). Both the home and visiting team must access the electronic game sheet, via their respective code, to select the players and staff for that particular game at least fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled game time.
- e) All teams must use the RAMP Game sheets for all League games. Failure to do so is a \$500.00 fine per game payable to the OWHA.
- f) If any players on your team have different sweater numbers for home and away, then please modify the appropriate numbers via the RAMP game sheet app. You DO NOT have to name your starting line-up. With the exception of goalie, player positions are not necessary. The option to identify your C's and A's is available through the game sheet app by selecting the player's name and choosing their role.

Section 14 – Notification of Game Results

- a. It is the responsibility of both teams to confirm the stats of the game. If there are any discrepancies, both teams should be emailing game details to games@owha.on.ca. Ensure that the game ID # is provided as well as which league you are playing in. The games@owha.on.ca email is to be used if game stats are not entered or entered incorrectly. Both teams are to be copied on the email.
- b. In the case of a suspendable offence, whether in the regular season or in the playoffs, the offending team must notify the OWHA via email at stats@owha.on.ca with suspension information within 1 day (24 hours) of the game in which the suspension was issued or before the next game, whichever comes first.

Section 15 – Tie-Breakers – Regular Season

If teams are tied at the end of the Regular Season the following criteria will be followed: (same as OWHHA Playdowns)

- a. Total Points
- b. Most wins overall
- c. Head to Head Points (2 teams)
- d. Best Goal For – Goal Against Overall
- e. Least Goals Against Overall
- f. Fewest Penalty minutes Overall
- g. Flip of coin by a neutral party agreed to by the OWHHA Designate.

Section 16 – Curfews

1. All League games are expected to start at their designated starting times. Curfews will be allowed for all regular season games if both teams have agreed prior to the start of the game.
2. All League games shall consist of three (3) stop time periods as designated for that division. (Refer to Section 12 – Game Lengths)
3. In order to maximize the ice time, players are to warm up and complete their pre-game cheer prior to getting on the ice. A three (3) minute warm up will start each game.
4. All League games are STOP time. Running time is not allowed.
5. All Regular season games played must have a curfew notice showing on the RAMP Electronic Game sheet. When a team creates a game through the RAMP Game Portal, after all the game details are entered, in the NOTES box, please enter the Curfew information. This information will show on the RAMP Gamesheet APP in the game details just above the game codes.
 - a. In arenas where there is a curfew, the notification will state “CURFEW” and a specified time of day” (e.g. CURFEW 10:20 p.m.). The game must stop at the specified time.
 - b. All game officials (referee(s) & timekeepers) must be notified of the curfew as well. They will be able to see this information via the RAMP Game sheet app on the game details page.
 - c. The actual start time of the game is to be recorded by the timekeeper. For the purpose of the time of day, the arena clock will be the official time piece. In the case of no time-of-day clock being present, the referee(s) will designate, prior to the start of the game, what the official time piece will be and advise both coaches of such a decision.
 - d. It will be the responsibility of the timekeeper to sound the end of game horn when the official time piece reaches the designated curfew time, and the game

will be considered over at that point. Under no circumstances is the game to continue past the designated curfew time.

- e. If a team wishes to protest a curfew, the Protest process (see Section 8) must be followed.
- 6. Games that must be curfewed due to a serious injury that requires medical assistance to be called or due to a serious mechanical equipment failure in the arena that makes playing dangerous or impossible are permitted to be ended even if the electronic game sheet says no curfew. The referee makes this decision.
- 7. If the game cannot be completed, the OWHL will review and make the final and binding decision of the outcome.

Section 17 (Home and Away Jersey Colors)

Home teams will wear dark colored jersey and visiting team will wear light.

NOTE: For the 2025/2026 season, home teams have the option of wearing light jerseys. If they choose to wear light jerseys at home, they must notify the visiting team when the games are scheduled.