



Rules and Policies for Current and Potential Minnesota Junior Hockey League (MJHL) Players

For the player and family who are new to Junior Hockey, the scope, rules and procedures governing participation may be a difficult to understand. These rules and procedures are enacted to protect both the player and the teams. The MJHL posts this overview of the relevant rules, procedures and understandings in order to provide players and their families the information needed to understand how the MJHL operates. The MJHL's desire is to make participation understandable for all concerned. The MJHL provides this statement of policies and procedures to assure awareness of mutual responsibilities of players, parents and teams. Additionally players and families are encouraged to familiarized themselves with NCAA and other sanctioning agents with respect to amateurism and college eligibility

THE PHILOSOPHY OF JUNIOR HOCKEY

Junior hockey is the pinnacle of the skill development program of USA Hockey. It is available to male athletes who are 20 & under as of the 31st day of December in the season of competition.

The program is available to high school students and graduates who seek a greater or different challenge than that which might be available through their prep school team, high school varsity or club team, or area midget teams.

The principal purpose of this development program is to prepare the athlete for career advancement either in a collegiate or professional opportunity.

THE PURPOSE OF JUNIOR HOCKEY

The purpose of Junior hockey is really two-fold:

1. To provide an opportunity for players in this age group to play organized hockey; and
2. To improve and develop the skills and abilities of the participants, including the players, coaches, and officials.

THE GOALS OF JUNIOR HOCKEY

1. Skill Development- To provide talented young men with the opportunity to develop competitively in an organized, structured, and supervised environment;



2. Quality Coaching- To provide considerable training time, quality coaching, and concerned supervision;
3. Social Maturity- To provide players with a healthy, constructive environment in which to develop socially;
4. Educational Advancement- To provide assistance and opportunities for the accomplishment of the participant's educational goals;
5. Recruiting Exposure- To provide players with exposure to collegiate and professional scouts and recruiters;
6. Advanced Competition- To provide players with exposure to national and international competition;
7. Protection of Amateur Status- To protect, most importantly, the amateur status of all participants under the rules and guidelines established by the International Ice Hockey Federation, USA Hockey, Hockey Canada, the NCAA, the NAIA, and the National Federation of High Schools.

THE MINNESOTA HOCKEY LEAGUE AND USA HOCKEY

MJHL is one of six Junior A designated leagues at the Tier III level sanctioned by USA Hockey. The Minnesota Junior Hockey League (MJHL) was established in 1976. Currently, the MJHL has 9 affiliated teams in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

THE CORPORATE STRUCTURE AND LEGAL STATUS OF THE MJHL

The MJHL is a Minnesota nonprofit corporation with federal 501 (c) 3 status. All of its member teams are not for profit in corporate entities. The MJHL is governed by a Board of Directors represented by each of the member teams. The President of the League also serves as a Voting Member of USA Hockey's Junior Council. The League is administered by a Commissioner who is responsible for the day to day management of the League.

INDIVIDUAL TEAM OPERATION

Member teams are managed by independent management groups which include a Board of Directors, a President, and a General Manager. Typically, the General Manager is responsible for the day to day management of the team. Players relate primarily to the Coach and also to the team's General Manager.



The MJHL Player Agreement

Players affiliated with a member team sign a three-part MJHL Player Agreement. Each completed agreement is forwarded to the MJHL Commissioner in order to protect the interests and amateur status of the player while safeguarding the interest of member teams and the league.

Each player receives a signed copy of the three-part player agreement. A player may be included on the team's **protected list for three games** while this agreement is being completed. The signed copy of the agreement shall be received by the Commissioner in order to be eligible to play additional games. Once a player plays in his fourth game and the Agreement is submitted, he is deemed 'assigned' to that team for the purposes of MJHL playing rights (see MJHL playing rights below). If a Player Agreement (The player should receive a copy of the Player Agreement) is not submitted within 48 hours after the third game, the player shall be removed from the team's protected list and deemed a free agent. The team will not be eligible to sign the player again during the current season.

Description of the Player Agreement:

Part A consists of a document prepared by the league which describes league policies and procedures for participation.

Part B consists of an individual Team Agreement prepared by each member team. This document contains the description of services, specific rules of conduct, rates of player fees, schedule of payment to the team and waivers.

Part C consists of a Billet Agreement which is prepared by each team to address team-related housing issues. The document shall describe the process of placement, the costs, specific rules of conduct and other particulars of the housing program.

It is important that players and their families are fully aware of the various components of the Player Agreement.

Playing Rights, Player Movement and Termination of the Player Agreement

MJHL teams maintain a 25 player active roster called a protected list. Those players are eligible to participate in games. Typically players may be added or removed from this list from time to time until the final rosters are finalized in February. A player who appears on a MJHL's team's protected MJHL and USAH list's playing rights are



maintained by that team. Playing rights may be waived, traded or otherwise relinquished by the Team to another team in USAH or in MJHL.

Players may intermittently be rotated on or off a team's protected list. If a player is removed from the active roster, he may move voluntarily to any other USAH League. However, his MJHL rights remain with the team with whom he has signed a player agreement (assigned to). He may remain with the team and may be added to the protected list again.

A player's MJHL rights may be waived, traded or otherwise relinquished by the Team to another MJHL team. First year players (to the MJHL) who are not currently on the protected are list are eligible to be claimed for trade by another MJHL team which has a protected list vacancy. That claiming process is described below. It is important to note that each player may decide to move to a claiming team or to remain with his current team. A player may request clarification of his roster status with the team G.M. or the League Commissioner at any time. Within the MJHL a specific mechanism is available for assigned players to move within the MJHL and it will be outlined below.

Regarding movement to another league, USA Hockey allows for free player movement for any player whose name does not appear on any current USA Hockey team protected roster; if a player is not on the Team's protected list at any time during the season, that player may seek alternate playing options with teams in any other USAH league outside of the MJHL

An assigned player's MJHL rights shall be retained by Team for the duration of his Junior eligibility (unless transferred to another MJHL team). It is important to note that should an assigned player leave and return to the MJHL by any manner from another league, college, etc. his playing rights will remain with the MJHL assigned team. Should another MJHL team wish to trade for his MJHL playing rights a trade may be executed. However, unless the player is listed on the member team's current USA Hockey protected list, the player is a free agent within USA Hockey and may leave to play anywhere outside of the MJHL without a trade or compensation.

USAH (Non MJHL) Playing Rights for Subsequent Seasons

According to USAH rules, at the completion of the current season all players are free to tryout or to sign with other USA teams outside of the MJHL. MJHL players and those who have previously signed Player Agreements with a MJHL team are not eligible to tryout with another MJHL team.



Tampering and improper contact with players

It is important for players to be aware that staff/representatives from other teams are not permitted to initiate contact with a player whose name appears on a USAH protected list nor with members of the player's billet family, nor with the player's parent/guardians nor with the player's family indirectly (i.e. through family members, parents, guardians, billet families or other teammates).

Similarly, while a player is on a Team's protected list that player or members of his family, friends, etc. are not permitted to initiate contact with any other team and may not willingly communicate with a representative from any other team on the player's behalf. The intent/spirit of this policy is to assure roster integrity and prevent disruption to teams and players.

Such improper contact is considered 'tampering' and carries significant penalties to teams or players who violate the rules. The purpose of this USAH rule is to protect roster integrity and the integrity of the player- team or coach relationship. If another team is interested in a particular player, they are required to communicate directly with another team's coach, general manager or the league Commissioner.

Tenders

The MJHL tender form is an internal league document that commits a player to an MJHL team for a current season. It applies only to the MJHL. Players who sign a tender may participate for any USAH team. The MJHL rights of a player who has signed a MJHL tender shall remain with the originating team for the full season unless the player's playing rights are traded to another MJHL team.

Player Movement in the MJHL During the Season

An assigned player who may be intermittently on and off the team's protected list during the season is considered a member of the Team and the Player Agreement remains in effect with regard to mutual obligations. A player who is not on the 25 man protected may continue to participate with their teams.

They are free to consider playing in any other USAH league or they may elect to move within the league if claimed by another MJHL through a process managed by the League Commissioner's office. The Commissioner will contact them if another MJHL team is interested in acquiring their playing rights. After a brief period of communication with the interested MJHL team's staff, the player may choose to be traded to this MJHL team or that may choose to remain with the current Team organization.



The process is designed to provide structured mechanism to allow an option for players who may wish to move during the season while also allowing players to remain with their current team if they prefer.

The process is applicable only during the season in which an assigned player enters the league. Assigned players MJHL rights, in subsequent years, may be transferred to another MJHL team by virtue of trade.

The Ineligible Player List (IPL)

A player may be placed on the IPL for one of three reasons. If a player is injured with a medical report he may be placed on the list for a minimum of two weeks.

Players may be placed on the IPL for financial delinquency. Financial delinquent player may not participate in MJHL games until financial deficiencies are resolved.

Players may also be placed on the IPL due to violation of team of league rules. Such violations and any consequences must be provided to the player in writing and the period of suspension defined. A player may be removed when he has met all obligations of his suspension .

Termination of Player Agreement

Team Initiated Termination

If the separation between the player and the team is initiated by the team's action without tampering or discipline being involved, the player shall be entitled to a prorated refund or reduction in team fee due, less any obligations owed to the team and/or his billet family. USA Hockey guidelines on prorated refunds as found in USA Hockey's Annual Guide (www.usahockey.com) call for an 80% prorated refund of fees based on the team/league schedule.

Player-Initiated Voluntary Termination

If a player who is on the team's protected list or Ineligible Player List, chooses to terminate his playing relationship with the team, he shall not be entitled to any prorated adjustment of any fees and foregoes any claim to a refund or to a reduction in his bill statement. (An exception shall be made for a player who sustains a season-ending injury verified by an independent physician or other exceptions as outlined in Part B (the Team Agreement).

As soon as possible after making the decision to terminate the relationship with the Team, the player shall submit his intentions in writing to the Team. Upon termination, he must settle full financial account, to return all Team equipment and to vacate my billet home immediately.



Disciplinary or Financial related Termination

A MJHL player who is dismissed from the team for disciplinary or financial reasons is not eligible for a pro-rated refund of team or billet fees paid.

If the departing player initiated, or participated in, tampering with another team, the player shall forfeit any refund and the amount equal to the amount of team fees due as outlined in Part B of the Player Agreement.

Team-Initiated Termination

If the Team chooses to terminate its relationship with a player for reasons other than disciplinary consequence, or financial delinquency, players shall be entitled to a pro-rated portion of player fee returned to me based on or the terms of Part B of the Player Agreement.. Such reasons may include issues of on ice performance, documented season ending injury or trade.

Complete Service of Existing Reasonable Suspensions Required

A player who is under a reasonable disciplinary suspension by his current league or team, unrelated to the player's departure, may not move to another USA Hockey member team and compete for that team, until such time as the suspension has been fully served.

Team & Billet Fees and the Protection of Amateurism

Team Fees

The minimum Team fee for all players on all MJHL teams is \$3,500. Each team establishes its individual team fee based on a number of variables unique to the team. Those variables may include differing specific services provided to the players, resources available to the Team, manner of team travel, training opportunities, etc. The specific features of a team's fees are outlined in Part B of the Player Agreement. A payment schedule, a method for calculating prorated cost and the team's refund policy is also described in Part B. Team fees shall be prorated for a player who joins or leaves the Team at various times during the season as outlined in Part B.

A player's Team fee must be paid by the player (or a family member, close friend or solicited by and received by the player based on his own contacts with hometown businesses or friends. **No team scholarships/financial discounts are allowed to any individual player.** The player must pay his fees in full and the team may not solicit funds on his behalf, may not discount or otherwise provide a scholarship or any other fee reduction.



Billet Fees

Unless the player lives at his parents' home or the home of a relative/close family friend as defined by NCAA, he shall be required to be part of the Team Billet system. for which he shall pay a monthly housing fee to the team for room and board. Part C of the Player's Agreement outlines, costs, rules and procedures regarding each team's billeting program.

Billet fees are collected from the player and then distributed to the host home on a monthly basis. The host families are then reimbursed from a Team Housing Account. Billet Fees vary by member team/community. Each player is charged an amount uniform for all players on the Team for equitable accommodations. Players may not receive free or discounted billet fees and the billet is not permitted to employ a player in exchange for housing fees. Players are required to retain cancelled checks or receipts for payment and to make those available to the League, USAH or other appropriate agent upon request to verify compliance.

Players are not permitted to live with a Team coach unless they are immediate family members. To prevent a conflict of interest and to provide protection for all parties, a player shall not be housed by any member of the coaching staff. An exception may be made in an emergency situation wherein players may be temporarily housed for a period of up to 2 weeks if the accommodation includes a separate sleeping room. It is recommended that another adult or another player also stay in the home during this temporary period.. In such a situation, the GM and Billet Supervisor shall notify the Commissioner regarding the temporary placement and regarding the resolution when the player is placed in a permanent billet home.

In order for a MJHL player to remain eligible for competition, the Team shall collect Team fees and billet fees as per the schedule noted in Parts A and B of the Player Agreement. The Team fee must be paid by the player (or a family member, close friend or solicited by the player based on his own contacts with hometown businesses or friends).

PROTECTION OF AMATEUR STATUS

To help protect the amateur status of all participants under the rules and guidelines established by the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF), USA Hockey, Hockey Canada, the NCAA, the NAIA and the National Federation of High Schools, the Minnesota Junior Hockey League requires that each player comply with the following regarding team fees, billet fees and employment.



Teams are forbidden to solicit or to allocate funds for a specific player(s) and may not discount a particular player(s) team or billet fees. Similarly, players may not receive special funding or discounts in team or billet fees.

Amateurism Issues regarding Team Fees and Billet Fees

Each team maintains a bank account that managed by the General Manager and the team's Board of Directors. Each team maintains a detailed accounting record of financial transactions and makes it available upon request to the league accountant or to USA Hockey for periodic review. The team provides a written receipt to the player for all payments and shall maintain detailed records of payments provided by players.

Each player shall be responsible to meet all contracted financial responsibilities that result from his participation with the team, including team fees and any billet fees. No funds or refunds shall be paid in cash. The team shall collect the team fee directly from a bank account/credit card of any of these approved sources: the player, from the player's relative, from a close friend of the player as personally solicited by the player, from a financial award or from a donation described herein. Players who are delinquent with his team or billet fees shall be reported to USAH and suspended from MJHL participation. After signing a MJHL player agreement, a player shall not remain eligible for participation with the team unless his team fees are paid in full on a monthly basis or unless an approved financial source co-signs with the player, agreeing to a payment schedule that meets the player's financial responsibilities. The player's account shall be paid in full in order to be eligible for playoffs.

Allowable and Non Allowable Sources of Player Funding

Financial Awards:

As permitted by state law, NCAA and the awarding institution, players that choose to accept financial awards from corporate, civic or educational groups may have these funds directly applied to the player's bill for team fees or billet fees. Players are strongly encouraged to check with NCAA before accepting any awards and to retain all documentation of such awards. The team shall provide the awarding institution with a receipt and other appropriate documentation for tax purposes.

Please note however, that no player shall receive gifts, cash, reimbursements, discounts or scholarships of team or billet fees, receive prizes, free merchandise or financial aid from a team source unless such benefit was provided to every other player on the team.

**Donations to the Team:**

A team representative may request donations from individuals, companies or civic groups for funds to be applied to the team general budget or for goods/services that will be applied to every player on the team. However, no team representative shall solicit any donation on an individual player's behalf. No general team funds for the team shall be directly applied to an individual's player's bill for team fees, billet fees or other individual behalf.

Financial Gift to pay for Player's Bill:

As permissible by state law and NCAA, a player may personally solicit his own contacts with hometown businesses or friends and may receive financial gifts/donations of funds to pay for team fees/billet fees. Financial gifts from these sources may be paid directly to the player or they may be deposited with the team and applied to the player's bill for team fees and/or billet fees. The team shall provide all corporate groups and individuals that to the team with a receipt and other appropriate documentation for tax purposes. It is recommended that teams remind players to retain documentation regarding all gifts that are made to the player/player's family and to consult NCAA regulations regarding allowable sources of gifts.

Donations of Equipment/Services for Player:

As permissible by state law and NCAA, a player may personally solicit and receive donations of hockey equipment from his own contacts with hometown businesses or friends. Players should retain documentation regarding all gifts that are made to the player/player's family, and should consult NCAA regulations regarding allowable sources of gifts and to provide a receipt.

Player employment-

No player may be employed by the team. A player must be employed by a business entity which provides IRS statement (e.g. 1099, W-2, etc). An exemption is made for players who are immediate family members of team staff/Board of Directors who are employed in their family's business. The team may assist all players in finding employment: however, all employment opportunities must be at market rates and all taxes must be withheld as per IRS requirements. Players must retain records to verify that income tax has been withheld and that compensation is at fair market rate for the services and to make those available to the League, USAH or other appropriate agent upon request to verify compliance.



Frequently Asked Questions

I don't understand parts of the Player Agreement.

Have a trusted person review it with you. Write down your specific questions and contact the team's general manager to review your questions. If you are still unclear, as for another opportunity to review your concerns or contact the commissioner for his assistance.

My friend who is playing elsewhere says his coach/team wants me to play for them-

Your friend may unwittingly be engaging in 'tampering'. Do not communicate with him about their interest in you and advise your coach and GM immediately. Engaging in such conversations is a violation of USA Hockey Rules and places you as well as your friend is at risk.

I don't feel comfortable in my billet home.

You should contact your team's Billet Director of Coordinator to discuss your concerns.

I am a MJHL veteran who played for a team last season. I have decided to leave college or I have been dropped from my current team and wish to return to the MJHL

Contact the General Manager of the MJHL team for whom you are a veteran player. That team maintains your playing rights. The G.M. will help you return to the team or if you request may seek transfer to another MJHL team via a mutually acceptable trade.

I signed a Player Agreement which was filed with the League in the past last season and want to play in the MJHL this season. I don't think I want to play for my previous team.

Contact the Coach or GM of your previous team and talk about your interests. They may be able to negotiate a trade to another MJHL team which is acceptable to both teams. You may also talk with the MJHL Commissioner for advice and assistance.

I am not playing as much as I thought I would.

Talk with your coach. Ask about your role on the team. How does he see you fitting in and what are his goals for you. If there is some aspect of your play that needs



specific improvement ask for suggestions on how to improve. Ask how he sees you fitting in with the other players. Sometimes, off ice or personality considerations influence playing time and your role on the team.

I played only three or fewer league games for a team and a Player Agreement has not been submitted and I have not been advised of my status. What are my obligations to the team?

If the team fails to submit your signed Player Agreement within 48 hrs after your third game played, your name must be removed from the 25 man protected list. Contact the Commissioner or talk with your Coach/G.M. about your status. If a signed agreement has not been submitted, you are a free agent and may contact any other you. Apart from prorated fees for the time of your participation, you have none. You may seek other playing opportunities in the MJHL or any other USAH teams or leagues unless under suspension.

I am going to school and don't want to be traded to another team. If the Commissioner advises that another MJHL team is interested in me, do I have to go?

No you can decide. If you wish, you may remain in your situation if that is your choice. However, you should be aware of your playing situation and role on your current team.

I want to quit the team not play hockey any longer.

You should review your Player Agreement so you are aware of the implications of your request. Speak with your coach and general manager. Put your request in writing and date and sign it. If you are a minor, obtain a parent's signature.

I am not happy here and want to go play elsewhere.

You should review your Player Agreement so you are aware of the implications of your request. Talk with your coach and General Manager. They will try to arrange a trade which is fair to both teams.

Someone has talked with me about playing for a different MJHL team or in another league.

Advise your coach and general manager immediately. Do not communicate further with the person(s) who have contacted you. If you are on a team's protected list, there is a likelihood of 'tampering' which is a violation of USAH and league rules. 'Tampering' of 'tampering' can have serious implications for both you and the person who has contacted you or who is otherwise representing another team.



I am not able to meet my financial obligations as outlined in my player agreement.

Talk with your General Manager as soon as you realize that there is a problem or potential for a problem. Do not avoid discussing your situation with your coach or GM. Most serious problems occur when players or families are embarrassed or hesitant to talk with the GM about financial concerns or problems they encounter. If a General Manager has to confront you about late payments or other financial issues it may already be too late to help you.

I have been promised things by my coaches that I am not receiving.

Ask to speak with the coach and or General Manager privately away from the rink. Ask if a family member can also sit in on the meeting. Describe your concerns and give specific instances where promises were not fulfilled. If after that meeting you are still unsatisfied, contact the MJHL Commissioner and discuss your concerns with him.

The team is not meeting its obligation as outlined in the player agreement

Follow the same procedure as above. Remember that the Commissioner is available to assist both players and teams in meeting their mutual obligations

I have been offered a chance to work by member of the team's Board of Directors can I accept this employment?

You may accept the offer but you must follow IRS guidelines and maintain documentation of hours worked, duties performed and wages paid. Your compensation is required to be at fair market value and your employer must meet the applicable IRS rules regarding reporting of income. You should discuss any questions you have with the MJHL Commissioner to clarify any problems that might occur.