



NORTHWEST CHARGERS

PARENTS

HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

This handbook sets forth the basic policies of the Northwest Chargers Hockey Association concerning all spring and fall travel teams. The fundamental goal underlying these policies is to give the best possible experience to the greatest number of children. While we hope that our teams win their share of games, it is more important that the players develop hockey skills, and learn the rewards of teamwork, sportsmanship, and dedicated effort.

This handbook is not an exhaustive list of all policies and procedures, but rather a compilation of those policies that are likely to be of great concern to the parents. Questions about these or other policies of the Northwest Chargers should be addressed to any of the Board Members listed on the web site.

ORGANIZATIONS OF AMATEUR HOCKEY

USA HOCKEY

USA Hockey, Inc., founded in 1936-37, is the National Governing Body for the sport of ice hockey in the United States. Its mission is to promote the growth of hockey in America and provide the best possible experience for all participants by encouraging, developing, advancing and administering the sport.

Headquartered in Colorado Springs, Colo., USA Hockey is the official representative to the United States Olympic Committee and the International Ice Hockey Federation. In this role, USA Hockey is responsible for organizing and training men's and women's teams for international tournaments, including the IIHF World Championships and the Olympic Winter Games.

Closer to home, USA Hockey works with the National Hockey League and the National Collegiate Athletic Association on matters of mutual interest.

USA Hockey's primary emphasis is on the support and development of grassroots hockey programs. USA Hockey is divided into 11 geographical districts throughout the United States.

Each district has a registrar to register teams; a referee-in-chief to register officials and organize clinics; a coach-in-chief to administer educational programs for coaches; a risk manager to oversee liability and safety programs; and a skill development program administrator to facilitate learn-to-play programs for youth players and their parents.

For players, USA Hockey annually conducts regional and national championship tournaments in various age classifications; sponsors regional and national player identification and development camps; studies and makes recommendations for protective equipment; distributes Hat Trick, Playmaker and Zero Club Awards; and provides an insurance program that includes excess accident, general liability and catastrophic coverage.

For coaches and officials, USA Hockey conducts clinics and produces training manuals and videos through its Coaching Education and the Officiating Education Programs.

USA Hockey also promotes uniformity in playing rules and the interpretation of those rules.

USA Hockey has not forgotten parents, supplying this vital segment of the hockey family with a "Parent's Introduction To Youth Hockey" brochure, which includes tips on buying equipment, rules of the game and the role of parents in youth sports.

USA Hockey also publishes *USA Hockey Magazine*, the most widely circulated hockey publication in the world, which is sent to the household of every registered member as a benefit of membership. The organization's official website, www.usahockey.com, also provides up-to-the-minute coverage of news and events

AMATEUR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS (AHAI)

The Amateur Hockey Association of Illinois was founded as the governing body of Illinois amateur hockey in 1975. During that season, AHAI was recognized as a sanctioned affiliate of USA Hockey which was appointed by the United States Congress as the governing body of American Ice Hockey.

AHAI consists of nearly 2500 member teams of all sizes and shapes. There are boys' and girls' teams. There are pre mite teams (for the 5 and 6 year olds), house league youth teams, all-star youth travel teams, high school teams, senior men's teams, and Junior teams for the top contenders in Illinois.

AHAI is operated under a strict set of By-Laws which are established by member teams. These By-Laws and the Association Rules and Regulations are carried out by the Board of Directors which are elected by the membership of the Association.

On the national basis, AHAI is a part of USA Hockey's Central District which includes Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska. As a combine of associations, the Central District of USA Hockey is the third largest provider of American ice hockey talent.

CENTRAL STATES DEVELOPMENTAL HOCKEY LEAGUE (CSDHL)

To operate a highly competitive league specifically designed for the elite Tier II hockey teams within Illinois and the Central States region.

To develop and promote the development of Tier II hockey in Illinois and Central States region by offering, establishing, and maintaining the highest standards of excellence and sportsmanship in the individualized and team play.

To affiliate with USA Hockey and encourage registration of all teams at all levels of play with USA Hockey.

To conduct hockey tournaments and to sanction teams to enter and participate in said tournaments.

To communicate and cooperate with the USA Hockey Central District Association, other State and Officials Associations so as to improve and promote the sport of hockey both within and without the State of Illinois.

To promote excellence in the academics and personal conduct among Tier II youth hockey players by establishing and maintaining the highest standards for participating teams and players as a condition for membership in the League.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS HOCKEY LEAGUE (NIHL)

To operate a highly competitive All-Star League in the geographic area of Northern Illinois and to encourage a continuing drive for the highest standards of excellence and sportsmanship in hockey play among member teams.

NIHL shall operate under the auspices of USA Hockey, the Amateur Hockey Association Illinois, Inc. (AHAI) and of any other organization (governing organization) by which NIHL may elect to be governed. NIHL shall not be conducted for pecuniary profit.

Application for membership in NIHL shall be open to any recognized AHAI Tier II organization, and such other organizations which meet the same AHAI standards, which may be based out of Illinois. Applications for membership shall also be open to any recognized AHAI Tier I organization, and such other organizations which meet the same AHAI standards which may be based out of Illinois, but such organizations shall be permitted to field only all-girls' teams in NIHL. Membership may be limited by practical considerations on the maximum number of organizations that can be effectively accommodated in NIHL and by judgments of the ability of prospective members to comply with the standards set forth in this Article.

All participating players must qualify to appear on an official roster for that team in a Tier II State Tournament sanctioned by a governing organization or, in none, a roster approved by the Board of Directors.

NIHL shall conduct competition at the highest level of play for Tier II teams for the Mite, Squirt, Pee Wee, Bantam, and Midget age classifications. The Board of Directors may establish additional criteria for teams to participate in any of the competition levels.

As determined by the Board of Directors, NIHL may conduct competition at various levels of play, i.e. Elite, Gold, Silver and Bronze for any one or more Mite, Squirt, Pee Wee, Bantam, Midget Minor and Major age classifications.

Once the season has begun, subject to the NIHL Tournament's Committee's recommendation, teams can be moved between Levels in order to make for a more competitive season.

NORTHWEST CHARGERS HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

The Northwest Chargers Hockey Association is governed by a Board of Directors. Any member of the Chargers may apply to serve on the Board. Meetings are held the second Monday of each month at the West Meadows Ice Arena at 7:00pm and are open to the public. Members wishing to bring issues before the Board should contact the Secretary to be placed on the agenda by the Friday prior to any meeting.

TEAM SELECTION/ICE POLICIES

TEAM SELECTION

Selection of players for Charger Travel teams is a coaching decision with the Hockey Director overseeing the complete process. Questions concerning team selection decisions should first be addressed to the coach and then the Hockey Director.

It is the policy of the Northwest Chargers Hockey Association that players must play on the team they are chosen for. However a player may petition the Chargers Board of Directors for an exception to this policy if done so in writing on or before March 1 for the Spring season and on or before August 1 for the Fall season, with a statement of reasons as to why the player is unable to play for an anticipated coach or team. It shall require a 2/3 vote of the Board to allow an exception to this policy.

OUT OF AGE LEVEL PLAYERS

It is the policy of the Northwest Chargers Hockey Association that players must play on any Charger sponsored team at their appropriate age level. However a player who wishes to play up a level may petition the Chargers Board of Directors for an exception to this policy if done so in writing on or before March 1 for the Spring season and on or before August 1 for the Fall season, with a statement

of reasons as to why the player is unable to play for an anticipated coach or team. It shall require a 2/3 vote of the Board to allow an exception to this policy. A player playing up a level must play at the highest division of that level.

ICE POLICIES

A player's ice time during games is not guaranteed. There is no correlation between ice time and the Chargers fees and fees will not be prorated based on player ice time. Questions concerning a player's ice time should be addressed to the coaching staff.

Only Rostered Charger team members and registered coaches may take the ice during a Charger ice slot. Non-Rostered Fathers and siblings, whether younger or older, may not participate in Charger practices even if the sibling is a member of another Charger team. Also prohibited are father/son games. Former and present Chargers may not help out as "Assistant Coaches" for another team unless they are registered under the USA Hockey Student Coaching program. USA Hockey, as well as the Chargers, will not assume liability for the expense of an injury to an unauthorized player/parent/coach. Additionally, USA Hockey may revoke coverage for the entire team or hockey club. Coaches and Managers must see that this rule is strictly enforced. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action by the Rules & Ethics Committee.

CAMERAS AND CELL PHONES

The use of cameras and cell phone are not permitted in the locker rooms.

HAZING/LOCKER BOXING

The Northwest chargers abide by the policy of USA Hockey that there shall be no hazing of any participant involved in any of its sanctioned programs. Hazing is defined as conduct which is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, offensive, or physically harmful. Any player, team official, executive member of a team, club or association having been party to or having had knowledge of any degrading hazing, or initiation rite, without reporting it or taking action, shall be subject to suspension from playing or holding office with any team, club or association affiliated with the Northwest Charger, AHAI or USA Hockey. The Chargers are opposed along with USA Hockey to the activity known as "Locker Boxing" that produces head trauma in children and young adults. Participants and those having had knowledge of this activity may be subject to disciplinary action.

COMMITMENT

Being selected for a travel team requires a much higher level of commitment than house league, and indeed, most other recreational activities. Families should carefully abide by the following policies.

ABSENCES

Attendance at practice and games is **mandatory**. The only excused absences are for health reasons, required school activities, and family emergencies. Parents or player should notify the coach or manager before any absence. Coach's along with the Hockey Director will establish and enforce written rules concerning the consequences for unexcused absences. These rules, as well as any other rules concerning disciplinary matters, shall be applied consistently to all players.

PARTICIPATION

By participation on a travel team, each participant agrees to full participation in all aspects of the Northwest Chargers program including team approved tournaments as well as NIHL, AHAI, and CSDHL tournaments.

ZERO TOLERANCE

The Northwest Chargers Zero Tolerance Policy affords all participants direction in developing self discipline, leadership, integrity and a healthy attitude and respect for rules and regulations. All persons associated with the Chargers must understand that situations will arise during the course of the season which might be upsetting; however, all must work through these occasions to set an example for the entire organization and the sport of hockey.

Parent are required to review and sign a copy of the Zero Tolerance Policy which outlines the specific conduct prohibited and the possible consequences of violating the policy. The Zero Tolerance Policy is also posted on the Charger web-site. Our position is that abusive or excessive behavior by any Charger parent, guardian, coach, manager, team official, or player will not be tolerated. Any violation of this policy constitutes conduct detrimental to hockey and makes the participant subject to disciplinary action, with possible suspension by the Rules & Ethics Committee. All violations are subject to review by the AHAI Rules & Ethics committee.

Any person with a zero tolerance violation has the option of accepting the disciplinary action or has five (5) days in which to notify the Rules & Ethics Chairmen to request a hearing. Any disciplinary action will be valid until such hearing is held. Rules & Ethics will make its best effort to conduct a requested hearing within 10 days. Upon receiving the results of the hearing, you will have further right of appeal to the entire Northwest Charger Board of Directors at its next Scheduled board meeting. Please be aware, if you appeal your decision, your discipline may be reduced, kept the same or added on.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The consumption/use/abuse of altering substance is detrimental to a healthy state of mind, body, and spirit in an athletic participant. This is especially true for those participants aspiring to develop their talents in the furtherance of their playing, coaching or officiating careers in the sport of hockey. Therefore, discovery of any violation of this policy will result in an immediate suspension from participation in all charger programs until members of the Rules & Ethics Committee complete a review hearing. Further disciplinary action could result. Altering substance shall be defined to include, but not limited to, the following:

- Intoxicating beverages, including but not limited to alcohol
- Non-prescription or prescribed controlled substances when used to excess in violation of doctor's orders to produce a state of intoxication in the participant
- All forms of tobacco/nicotine
- Steroids or any other illegal performance enhancing substance
- Any illegal drugs/substance not described above
- Sales or distribution of any of the above

UNIFORMS

JERSEYS

Jerseys are the property of the Northwest Chargers. Players may not carry their own individual jerseys home. Parent volunteers will be needed to wash and carry each set of team jerseys throughout the season. Jerseys must be kept in good condition. Any necessary repairs should be reported to the Equipment Director immediately. Jerseys will be collected at the end of the season.

SOCKS

Each player will receive a set of home and away socks. These socks are to be worn for **games only**. Parents are asked to repair any holes that appear in the socks during the season.

STANDARD COLORS AND EQUIPMENT

- Jersey and socks will be provided to all players by the organization at no additional cost.
- Helmets, any new player to the organization will be required to wear a navy blue helmet. Any returning Charger players will be allowed to wear a navy blue or black helmet for the 2011 – 12 season. For the 2012 – 13 season all players will be required to wear a navy blue helmet.
- Pants, we request all players to wear navy blue pants.

In addition to standard hockey equipment (shoulder pads, shin guards, cup and supporter, hockey gloves, hockey skates, helmet and hockey pants) all players Mites – Midget age are required to wear neck guards, and all players Pee Wee – Midget age are required to wear mouth pieces.

TEAM APPAREL

The Northwest Chargers have contracted with Jerry's Pro Shop to provide charger wear such as warm up suits, golf shirts, and turtlenecks, etc. There are numerous other items available. Teams should place all orders for team apparel through Jerry's since this clothing has been approved by the board. **The Charger logo is a registered trademark and will no longer be allowed to be used on unapproved Charger wear.** Any unauthorized use of the logo will be subject to legal and disciplinary action by the AHAI and Charger Rules & Ethics Committees.

FEES

TRAVEL FEE PAYMENTS

Your fee includes an average of 3 home ice slots per week, home and away jersey & socks, AHAI & team league fees, individual & team picture, year-end banquet, and goalie clinics.

OPTIONAL FEE PAYMENT PLANS

OPTION #1 – One payment upfront September 6 of the full payment (credit or debit card only)

OPTION #2 – 3 equal payments September 6, November 1 & December 1 (credit or debit card only)

OPTION #3 – Payment plan shown above (credit or debit card only payment)

All credit or debit card payments (whether you've chosen Payment Plan #1, #2 or #3) will go through the online payment system found on our website.

When paying by credit or debit card via Payment Plan #2 or #3, the charges will post to your card on the dates shown above. The credit card must not expire within the time in which fees will be charged to the card. You are responsible for keeping a current credit or debit card number on file with the Treasurer of the Chargers Hockey organization.

If a credit or debit card is declined, a \$35 NSF fee per transaction will be assessed to your account. If for any reason you feel your credit or debit card will not clear, please notify the Treasurer at least 10 days prior to the transaction date to avoid any NSF charges.

Please note: You must **choose your payment plan immediately following team selection**. Once a payment plan is chosen it *cannot be changed later*. All past due fees from any organizations, including the Northwest Chargers, must be paid in full prior to being placed on any Charger roster.

Players who do not have payments submitted by September 6 will not receive a jersey and will be denied access to the ice.

LATE PAYMENTS

Any late payments, denied credit or debit card charges or unpaid balances may result in the player being suspended from the ice. In addition, under the rules and regulations outlined by the Amateur Hockey Association of Illinois (AHAI), which is the governing body of amateur hockey in Illinois, the Northwest Chargers Hockey organization may file for Financial Suspension. This will suspend the player(s) involved for non-payment within any Northern Illinois Hockey League (NIHL) or Amateur Hockey Association of Illinois (AHAI) sanctioned hockey club.

RAFFLE TICKETS

Each player will receive 50 tickets at \$10 each to sell for a value of \$500. All tickets that you sell, goes back to you, so you have the ability to put \$500 towards your fee.

MUTLI-PLAYER DISCOUNT

Any family, who has more than one player registered with the Northwest Chargers, will receive a 5% discount off of the lowest fee for the second player and 10% off each additional player.

GOALIE DISCOUNT

All goaltenders will receive a discount of \$1000 off their player fee. To qualify for the discount, the player will need to dress as a goalie (i.e., not a forward) for half (or more) of the games. Players who serve as occasional goalie substitutes but who skate forward the majority of the games will not qualify.

AD BOOK AND SPONSORSHIP CREDITS

As a reminder, all of our families have the opportunity to reduce the cost of fall fees by soliciting ads and sponsorships. The Chargers website outlines the specific thresholds for ad book and sponsorship credits. If you have ad book or sponsorship credits coming, you will receive a check from the Chargers on or shortly after November 15 for the amount of the credit earned. Rebate checks will include an itemized list of all credits received.

Ad book and sponsorship letters for distribution will be available on the website and in our information bins at West Meadows. All sponsorship and ad book forms are due by October 14.

INJURY POLICY REFUND

Medical related injuries and illnesses will be considered on an individual basis for possible pro-ration of fees once a player has missed 8 consecutive weeks of the season. Pro-ration, if granted, will begin after the 8th week. No refunds will be granted for injuries that occur after December 31st of the fall season. Prior to a skater returning to his/her team, a medical release must be provided by the attending physician.

Any family wishing to pursue an injury related refund will need to complete the "Injury Refund Request Form" which can be found on the Northwest Chargers website. Contact the Northwest Chargers Treasurer with questions about this policy.

TEAM FEES

Each team will receive a checkbook with their team name on the checks. Each checkbook will begin with a \$10 balance. This \$10 balance must also be the ending balance at the end of the season. Since each team has their own account, there is no reason for any manager to be mixing personal money with team funds. Questions concerning team checking accounts should be directed to the Charger Treasurer.

- 1) Money may not be used for souvenirs, unless every member of the team agrees and they all receive the same souvenir.
- 2) Money may not be used for a team party. If the team agrees to hold a team party, money can be used for the players portion only, when all players are in attendance. All family members and friends who attend the party must pay their share separately.
- 3) Restaurant or out of town meals - you can only cover the players portion of the bill. All other must pay separately.
- 4) Money cannot be used to pay for alcohol at any time.
- 5) The team manager will provide the parents of the team and the Charger Treasurer with a statement 3 times during the season, Nov. 1, Jan 30 & at the end of the season.

OUT OF TOWN TRAVEL & TOURNAMENTS

The coach may commit their team to either of the following without the parents' consent:

- 1) Two out of town trips/tournaments within a 300 mile radius of the Chicago land area, or
- 2) One out of town trip/tournament outside the 300 mile radius within the United States or Canada.

League games are not considered out of town trips for the purposes of this policy. Any additional tournaments must be approved by the Charger Board prior to team selection or by a 75% vote of the team taken by secret ballot thereafter. Any international travel outside Canada will require an international travel

permit and require Charger Board approval two week prior to departure. Please see the AHAI Guide book for the international permit requirements.

BEHAVIOR

Behavior at Charger functions and on trips should reflect the positive image of the Chargers, one of good sportsmanship and fair play. Guidelines for behavior, on and off the ice, and policies concerning substance abuse and zero tolerance are explained in this handbook. Any player, parent, coach or manager who is charged with a substance abuse or zero tolerance violation will face a minimum of a 5 game suspension.

UNSUPERVISED MINORS

No player is allowed to travel unsupervised out of town. Managers will be given parent consent forms to be filed for any player who might be traveling with another family out of town. This consent form must have the parent's signature and insurance information. For players with extended families, it is required that both parents signatures agreeing to the out of town travel. A copy of this consent form must be given to the manager and a copy will be retained by the Registrar.

EXPENSES

Managers have a responsibility to the families on the team to keep these expenses to a minimum, both to the team as a whole and for the coaching staff. Reimbursable expenses are those incurred on tournament or game days only, unless a team is scheduled to play before noon or a **team** must fly the day prior. In such cases, expenses for dinner and lodging the night before will be reimbursable.

Rooms: A room for one head coach and two assistants are to be paid for by the team unless the coaches have a player on the team and is attending the trip. Coaches are to room together, unless a coach has a player on the team. Teams are not responsible for any of the coaches' personal expenditures, such as phone calls, movies, video games, etc.

Team transportation costs:

- 1) Bus trips: The cost of the bus should be divided by the number of people using the bus,(excluding the coaches) not by the number of families attending or the number of players on the team. Thus, the total cost per family would be the cost per person times the numbers in each family using the bus. When taking a bus out of town, the team should pay for the driver's room and meals unless it is written in the bus contract. You should also include a tip for the driver at the end of the trip.
- 2) Air travel: If the team will be traveling by air out of town, the coaches' air fare will be paid for by the team unless a coach has a player on the team.

Coaches' per Diems: Coaches' expenses should be reimbursed up to the following maximums when substantiated by receipts:

- 1) Gas \$.50 per mile
- 2) Breakfast \$7.50
- 3) Lunch \$12.50
- 4) Dinner \$15.00
- 5) Full Day \$35.00

Please remember these figures when choosing a restaurant for team meals.

WEB-SITE: nwchargers.org

The Charger's web-site is an additional source for organizational, league and team information. This site has the capability to provide each team with their own game and practice schedule, roster, as well as team news. No individual player or personal information will be allowed on the web-site for security purposes. This will be the only approved web-site for all Charger teams. Separate team sites will not be allowed or tolerated. Any team in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action by the Rules & Ethics Committee.

SUMMARY

Please let the Board or Hockey Director know of any questions, suggestions, ideas, or problems that you may have. Our most successful teams are not necessarily the teams that end the year with flags. They are often those that establish a sense of unity, family, and trust. Vince Lombardi said "Build for your team a feeling of oneness, of dependence on one another, and of strength to be derived by unity".

Good Luck with your season and your team.

Contact Info

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	Rules and Ethics		
Bob Neubecker	Equipment Director	847-687-5711	bneubecker@nwchargers.org
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