



### Introduction:

The NAHL and USA Hockey are continually working to create a safer, positive environment for our athletes. The NAHL Department of Player safety will work to strengthen the enforcement of rules regarding dangerous or reckless actions that put an opponent at risk of injury. This Department will have a heightened awareness of injurious infractions including but not limited to: head contact, checking from behind, kneeing, staged fighting, stick work or any negative behavior that jeopardizes the safety or well being of a player.

The Department of Player Safety will deal with all safety issues with team management in a professional manner. The rule applications, discipline, structures and verbiage of this Department will parallel that of the NHL Department of Player Safety and we will have communications with the NHL to update any safety standards that are required. It will impose stricter penalties for repeat offenders or to any player who presents a detrimental or negative factor to the competitiveness of the NAHL.

The NAHL has an understanding that its stakeholders: fans, players, coaches, officials and team owners, are committed to player safety. Team management is responsible for educating their players and coaches on safety standards, while the players are responsible for recognizing potentially dangerous or injurious game situations. The Department of Player Safety will work with team management on any rule changes needed to ensure a safe on ice experience for NAHL players.

The NAHL Department of Player Safety is committed to creating a safe hockey environment for its players while maintaining the passion and physical competitiveness of the game. Our objective is to provide a forum that allows talented players to showcase their skills by making the NAHL the safest junior hockey league for its athletes.

I wish all team members a safe and successful season.

Regards,

Mark Faucette  
NAHL, Director of Player Safety

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### Section 1: Progressive “Dangerous Play” Minor Penalties

• **Dangerous play penalties:**

- Boarding
- Checking from Behind
- Elbowing or Kneeing
- Head Contact
- Butt-Ending
- Spearing

**Of same penalty category:**

**1) Three (3) minor penalties:**

- Written warning
- Optional informal hearing with player to review player’s penalties and actions

**2) Four (4) minor penalties:**

- 1 game suspension
- Optional informal hearing with player to review player’s penalties and actions

**3) Five (5) minor penalties:**

- 2 game suspension
- Mandatory hearing to review player’s penalties and actions
- \$250 fine

**4) Six (6) minor penalties:**

- 4 game suspension
- Mandatory hearing to review player’s penalties and actions
- \$500 fine

**5) Seven (7) minor penalties:**

- Indefinite suspension
- Mandatory hearing to review further, final discipline
- \$1,000 fine

(Note: double minors are counted as a single minor for accumulation purposes)

### Section 2: Progressive Misconduct/Game Ejections

(Note: only stand alone misconducts and ejections are counted for accumulation purposes)

• **Three (3) misconduct and/or game ejection penalties:**

- 1 game suspension
- Optional hearing to review player’s penalties and actions

• **Six (6) misconduct and/or game ejections penalties:**

- 2 game suspension
- Formal hearing to review player’s penalties and actions, supplemental discipline
- \$250 fine

• **Any player who receives 3 additional misconduct and/or game ejection penalties during the same season shall be assessed, in addition to automatic suspensions issued, the following additional penalties:**

- An additional one game added to the previous game suspension
- A formal hearing with League personnel to review player’s penalties and actions, supplemental discipline
- An additional \$250 added to the previous team fine



### Section 3: Progressive Major Penalties (Non-Fighting)

All major penalties assessed are counted cumulatively throughout the regular season and playoffs. In addition to automatic suspensions issued, the following additional penalties will be assessed:

**1) Three (3) major penalties:**

- Written warning
- Optional hearing to review player's penalties and actions

**2) Four (4) major penalties:**

- 1 game suspension
- Optional hearing to review player's penalties and actions

**3) Five (5) major penalties:**

- 2 game suspension
- Formal hearing re: supplemental discipline
- \$250 fine

**4) Six (6) major penalties:**

- 4 game suspension
- Formal hearing re: supplemental discipline
- \$500 fine

**5) Seven (7) major penalties:**

- 8 game suspension
- 1 game coaches' suspension
- Formal hearing
- \$1,000 fine

**6) Eight (8) major penalties:**

- Indefinite suspension
- 1 game coaches' suspension
- Formal hearing
- \$1,500 fine

### Section 4: Fighting

#### Fighting Major Penalties

All major penalties assessed for fighting are counted cumulatively throughout the regular season. Any player who accumulates multiple major penalties for fighting during the regular season (excluding playoffs and those when his opponent is assessed a instigator penalty) shall be assessed the following additional penalties:

**1) Eight (8) major fighting penalties**

- Suspended pending review of penalties and record
- Discretionary hearing
- Suspension of up to three (3) games

**2) Nine (9) major fighting penalties:**

- Suspended pending review of penalties and record
- Mandatory hearings
- Suspension of 2 to 5 games
- Fine of up to \$500

**3) Ten (10) major fighting penalties**

- Mandatory hearing
- Indefinite Suspension
- Fine of up to \$1,000

- 4) All fighting major penalties incurred by a player during playoffs shall be subject to review by the Office of the Commissioner, and if determined to be excessive, the Office of the Commissioner shall impose discipline which may include, but is not limited to, the player's suspension for one (1) or more playoff games; a fine imposed upon the player's team, and/or a period of probation during the playoffs during which further infractions may incur further suspensions and/or fines.**



### **Instigator Penalty**

A minor penalty plus an automatic game misconduct penalty is assessed to any player who is deemed to be an instigator in a fight. A player accumulating two or more instigator penalties during the same season shall be subject to the following suspensions (these are in addition to any other suspensions received through the playing rules):

- 1) Upon receiving 2nd instigator penalty – 1 game suspension
- 2) Upon receiving 4th instigator penalty – 2 game suspension and \$250 team fine
- 3) Upon receiving 5th instigator penalty - 3 game suspension and \$500 team fine
- 4) Upon receiving 6th instigator penalty – 5 game suspension and \$750 team fine
- 5) Upon receiving 7th (and subsequent) instigator penalty – suspended indefinitely (pending a league hearing) and \$1,000 team fine

### **Secondary Fights**

Two or more fights occurring during the same stoppage of play shall be deemed to be a multiple fight situation and subject to the following disciplinary action (these are in addition to any other suspensions received through the playing rules):

*(Note: Two fights occurring at the same time may be considered coincidental, but never three fights.)*

- 1) Any player deemed to be engaged in a secondary fight (not deemed to be the original fight) shall automatically be assessed a game misconduct penalty and a two game suspension.
- 2) If an instigator is established during a secondary fight, he shall receive a minimum 2 game suspension and the non-instigating player shall not be suspended.
- 3) If it is clear that multiple fights were instigated by one team, each player involved in fighting from the instigating team shall be suspended for a minimum of 2 games, the coach of the instigating team shall be suspended a minimum of 2 games and the team fined \$1,000. In this instance, the players on the opposing team shall not be assessed any additional suspensions.
- 4) Any player who was not on the ice at the time the original fight started and becomes involved in a secondary fight or is deemed to be the third player in shall receive a minimum 5 game suspension and the team shall be fined \$1,000.

### **Goalie Fights**

Any fight involving one or both goalkeepers shall incur the following suspensions (these are in addition to any other suspensions received through the playing rules):

- 1) Any goalkeeper that leaves his crease and is involved in a fight with an opposing player, (other than a goalkeeper) shall be suspended a minimum of two games in addition to any other suspensions imposed under the playing rules.
- 2) Any goalkeeper who is involved in a fight with an opposing goalkeeper shall be suspended a minimum of 3 games.
- 3) Any goalkeeper who skates across the center red line to become involved in a fight with the opposing goalkeeper shall be deemed an instigator and suspended for a minimum of 5 games.



### Section 4: Fighting (continued)

#### Staged Fights

Staged fights are those where a player(s) have left the bench during a stoppage of play and get involved in an altercation before or immediately following the face-off being conducted to start the new play. All fights which are deemed to be staged shall automatically carry a one game suspension. Any player engaging in multiple staged fights shall have an additional two games added on to his suspension with each subsequent infraction.

#### Removal of Equipment

A player who is involved in a fight and purposely removes any equipment other than his stick or gloves, or leaves any equipment other than his stick or gloves on the bench, shall be assessed an automatic game ejection/game misconduct penalty in addition to any other penalties incurred. Without limiting the foregoing and with particular respect to the removal of helmets:

- 1) A player who deliberately removes his helmet prior to or during an altercation shall be assessed a game misconduct.
- 2) A player who deliberately removes his helmet prior to or during a fight shall be assessed a game misconduct.
- 3) A player who deliberately removes his opponent's helmet prior to or during a fight shall be assessed a match penalty in addition to any other penalties incurred.
- 4) A player assessed a second game misconduct, or match penalty under this subsection (removal of equipment) during the same season (including playoffs) shall be automatically suspended one game. For every subsequent game ejection, game misconduct, or match penalty under this subsection (removal of equipment) during the same season (including playoffs), the player shall have the period of suspension doubled (that is, a two-game suspension after the third penalty, a four-game suspension after the fourth penalty, etc.)
- 5) The first suspension of a player under this subsection in each regular season (including playoffs) shall result in a fine imposed on the player's team of Two Hundred and Fifty Dollars (\$250). A second suspension imposed under this subsection in the same season (with respect to any player) shall result in a fine of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500). Thereafter, every suspension imposed under this subsection in the same season shall result in a fine of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000).

#### Team Fine

Any team that is assessed five fighting major penalties during the same game (non-multiple fighting incidents) shall be fined \$250 per occurrence.



## **Purpose:**

The NAHL Code of Conduct has been created to promote player safety and to ensure the future health and well-being of our players. It explains regulations and consequences for targeted dangerous and illegal actions that we all want out of the game. It is critical that all NAHL Coaches, Players and Officials read and understand this document and the potential disciplinary actions contained for engaging in specific, repetitive, negative and high-risk behavior.

## **Background:**

USA Hockey and the NAHL are seeking solutions to ensure that junior hockey is played at a high level of competition that serves as a developmental path to college and professional hockey.

The emphasis of our shared efforts in making our game better centers around the following actions – fighting, checking from behind, contact to the head and dangerous hits and/or stick infractions that can lead to significant injuries.

It is the position of USA Hockey and the NAHL that players, coaches, officials, ownership and team officials must all share in the combined efforts of improving the quality and player safety in the game while also taking responsibility for and having fair, yet clear ramifications for illegal and dangerous on-ice actions.

## **Role of the Coach:**

The relationship between an athlete and their coach plays a critical role in the mental, physical and emotional development of the junior-aged hockey player. Coaches are conduits through which the values and goals of junior hockey are promoted and messaged to players. Coaches should emphasize to players that they must be in control of their actions at all times.

## **Coaches have a responsibility to:**

1. Be knowledgeable of the objectives of the Player Safety Initiative, the Code of Conduct, and the Rule Supplement.
2. Understand the consequences of these negative actions and the subsequent discipline that shall be enforced for engaging in this unwanted behavior.
3. Understand that the NAHL Code of Conduct was created for the players safety, that controlling their actions will define them as a player and that they will be accountable for negative and unwanted behavior.
4. Make the athlete's future health and well-being the top priority when making decisions regarding an injured athlete's ability to continue playing or training.
5. Respect the game, the rules, fellow coaches, the players, the officials, the volunteers and the fans.



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### **Background:**

USA Hockey and the NAHL are seeking solutions to ensure that junior hockey is played at a high level of competition that serves as a developmental path to college and professional hockey.

The emphasis of our shared efforts in making our game better centers around the following actions – fighting, checking from behind, contact to the head and knee contact, especially when the result is an injury.

It is the position of USA Hockey and the NAHL that players, coaches, officials, ownership and team officials must all share in the combined efforts of improving the quality and player safety in the game while also taking responsibility for and having fair, yet clear ramifications for illegal and dangerous on-ice actions.

### **Role of the Player:**

You, the player are the greatest asset to the game of hockey. It is critical that you, the player understand the specific and high-risk behavior that has been targeted to ensure that your development takes place in the safest and most competitive environment possible.

### **Players have a responsibility to:**

1. Be knowledgeable of the objectives of the Player Safety Initiative, the Code of Conduct, and the Rule Supplement.
2. Understand the consequences of these negative actions and the subsequent discipline that shall be enforced for engaging in this unwanted behavior.
3. Understand that the NAHL Code of Conduct was created for your safety, that controlling your actions will define you as a player and that you will be held accountable for negative unwanted behavior.
4. Respect the game, the rules, fellow players, the coaches, the officials, the volunteers and the fans.
5. Refrain from public criticism of fellow athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers.
6. Refrain from the use of profane, insulting, harassing or otherwise offensive language.



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## **Role of the Official:**

The primary role is to “enforce the rules of the game” to the best of your ability. Additionally, you are expected to maintain the highest standard of professional and ethical behavior both on and off the ice. Officials must also agree to abide by the rules and guidelines set forth in this document and communicate with supervisors, players and coaches accordingly. Doing so will ultimately hold individual players accountable for their own actions and will ensure the path to a safer environment for competition.

## **Officials are responsible to:**

1. Be knowledgeable of the objectives of the Player Safety Initiative, the Code of Conduct, the Rule Supplement, the Playing Rules, their interpretations and their proper application.
2. Act in a professional and businesslike manner at all times, take their role as an official seriously, and act with honesty and integrity in every situation. Do not participate in any form of hazing, bullying, or engage in any form of unlawful or unethical conduct.
3. Understand that the NAHL Code of Conduct was created for the players safety, that controlling their actions will define them as a player and that they will be accountable for negative and unwanted behavior.
4. Respect the game, the rules, the players, the coaches, fellow officials, the volunteers and the fans.
5. Manage games according to the current ‘Standard of Enforcement’ creating a positive and safe experience for all participants.