



Glacier Hockey Association Parent Handbook

Mission Statement

Glacier Hockey Association (GHA) is a non-profit, youth hockey program dedicated to providing a fun, safe, and rewarding learning environment to enhance the growth and development of young athletes through high-quality hockey programs.

Goals of the Association

GHA strives to ensure that it accomplishes this mission by promoting each player's love of the sport through hockey instruction that emphasizes team and individual skill development. Our goal is to continue to develop and strengthen our programs and organization and give our players the opportunity to participate to the best of their ability and develop as young athletes, while making the costs of our programs affordable to all families.

GHA Policy Manual

This Parent Handbook is a brief overview of what may be found in the [GHA Policy Manual](#). If you have any further questions, please refer to the Policy Manual or contact the Hockey Director for clarification.

This is a working document that is continually amended by GHA's Board of Directors to ensure the vitality of its Mission Statement is upheld.

Registration

Registration for hockey season participation will open in August and close for the upcoming hockey season no earlier than September 15th. It is advantageous to our

administration to receive registrations early in order to build a season for each age group or team. Registration link will be posted to our website when it is ready:

<https://www.glacierhockey.org/>

Our leagues that we participate in, as well as tournament registrations, all schedule out in the late summer/early fall time span.

All players must register through our Sportsengine webpage with a current season's USA Hockey Confirmation Number (<https://membership.usahockey.com/>) prior to participating in any on-ice activities. This is to maintain accountability that the player is properly insured through the USA Hockey membership.

***Some GHA programs may require additional registrations. These include:

Learn to Play Hockey program: 5 week sessions

Yeti Program: Half season sessions (approximately 8 week sessions)

Out of town Tournaments: Determined by team at pre-season meeting

If there is a need for financial assistance, we provide scholarship applications found on the website: <https://www.glacierhockey.org/scholarship-application>.

Hockey Equipment

Each player shall have the following equipment prior to participating in any GHA on-ice activity. All equipment must be in good condition, within the manufacturer's expiration date (applicable to helmets), and be properly fitted.

Hockey equipment checklist:

- Hockey pants/Breezers
- Shoulder pads
- Shin/knee pads
- Elbow pads
- Gloves
- Helmet with full face covering
- Skates (sharpened and with appropriate length laces)
- Stick (cut to appropriate height and correct handedness)
- Mouth guard
- *Neck guard - required at the 8U and above level when participating in Canada
- Practice jersey
- Hockey socks (these go on the outside of the shin/knee pads)
- Jack/Jill protective cup
- Personal sports water bottle

NEWTOHOCKEY.COM

FULL EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST FOR KIDS



READ THE DESCRIPTION FOR MORE DETAILS ABOUT EACH PIECE OF EQUIPMENT

GHA offers free “rental” gear, a \$100 deposit check will be held to ensure the equipment is returned at the end of the season. There is a very low inventory for skates and sticks, GHA recommends that these items are personally purchased by each player.

If there are any questions with getting equipped, please reach out for assistance. Additional resources can be found on Youtube:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=intro+to+hockey+gear

Coaches appreciate parents tying skates up to the 10u/Squirt age level. Players at the 12U/Peewee and above level are highly encouraged to tie their own skates.

Age Classifications

Learn to Play Hockey (L2PH)/Hot Shots: Any age that a youth player would like to enter the game.

8U/**Mite**/Novice:

10U/**Squirt**/Atom

12U/**Peewee**

14U/**Bantam**

16U/Junior Varsity/Minor Midget

18U/Varsity/Major Midget

10U Girls

14U Girls

19U Girls

Practices

Please bring your child to the rink to allow for plenty of time to get dressed and on the ice at the specified practice times. Practice scheduling is set up to maximize on-ice instruction by our coaches. It is a disruption to the group to have players late to practice.

Players are expected to pay attention to the coaching staff during practice time and follow directions. If a player is a distraction to the rest of the group during practice times, coaches will implement their procedure to allow for the best learning opportunities for the good of the group. Coaches discretion with how to keep control of their practices will be endorsed by the Hockey Director and the Board of Directors in terms of disciplinary action.

Parents are to be observers only, no observation behind the players benches. Please use the observation lobby and the bleacher sections of the rink. It is a distraction to the player and the coaches to have parents trying to communicate with their players during practices. Please notify the managers prior to any circumstance where a child needs to be notified.

Regular season practices usually will start the first week of October and run through no earlier than March 1st.

Six months of hockey practices will equate to an **average** of 42 total practices over a 21 week schedule **over all the programming**. Other in-season training/development opportunities will also be offered throughout the year, sometimes for an additional fee.

Local Programming

GHA is proud to partner with Flathead Valley Hockey Association to provide local hockey opportunities through our [Yeti House League](#) program. Players participate in all team practices and play games locally. Games are usually hosted at alternate facilities on Friday nights.

There are **two sessions** of Yeti League per hockey season:

Session #1 - October to Christmas Break

Session #2 - First of January to Early March

Yeti League is currently offered at the 8U/10U/12U age levels.

Players are also allowed to partake in a practice only hockey experience. Please contact the Hockey Director for further information on this opportunity.

Tryouts/Evaluations

When final registrations have been accounted for and if there are more players registered than would be advised to play on one team at any specific age classification, a formal evaluation process will take place during the first 2-3 weeks of regular season practices in order to place players on an appropriate skill level team. GHA has in place an evaluation process in helping to navigate this process written in its [Policy Manual](#) under the heading: Player Evaluation Policy.

Reputable evaluators will be selected as unbiased/non-related observers to work with the coaching staff and Hockey Director in the attempt to place the athletes on appropriate teams in regards to the players' development arc.

Game Jerseys and Socks

Before any games are played, the team manager will be tasked with issuing both a home and away game jersey. A deposit check may be required to ensure return after the season. Game sock orders will be placed by each team manager at the expense of the parents to incur. It is the players responsibility to bring both sets of jerseys to each game. Please wash and maintain your issued jersey as these jerseys will need to be used in subsequent seasons. It is the team's decision, and responsibility, to pay and affix any temporary name plates that may want to be used for the season. Jerseys must be returned to the organization in the way they were issued.

Games

Players are expected to arrive at all game locations no less than 45 minutes prior to each scheduled game time. They must have both sets of game jerseys as well as game socks in possession.

Home games are staffed by our GHA volunteers. Positions include time clock operator's, scoresheet volunteer (both written and egame sheets), penalty box attendant, etc.

GHA plays in two different leagues

- Our home league is the **East Kootenay League (EKL)** based out of Cranbrook, British Columbia. In order to participate in this league, children should possess a passport (card or book) and a notarized permission letter to travel out of country with a child (if travelling as a single parent or carpooling). The maximum distance of travel for this league is Golden, B.C. (266 miles, 4.5 hours). Other participating league towns include: Fernie, Cranbrook, Creston, Invermere/Windermere Valley, Sparwood, Elkford, Canal Flats, Kimberley.

A tiering tournament will open the season, usually in mid October. This is used as a tool to place each participating minor youth association team in the appropriate level. Participation is expected.

Banner tournaments are the league finals that are held at the end of the season (late February through second week of March, depending on age group).

- Our secondary league is **Montana Amateur Hockey Association's Treasure State League (TSL)**.

Games are intended to be played regionally but this is not always the case. Managers and schedulers will try their very best to minimize the amount of travel for this option. It is not unheard of to play state tournament games in Miles City (536 miles, 8.5 hours). Due to the

constraints of such a large state to play in, GHA endorses a regionalized schedule and this option is mostly used at the Peewee (12U) and up age groups. State Tournaments are held in late February through Mid March, depending on age group.

Tournament schedules are set at preseason team meetings. If a team wants to explore other opportunities for game play, GHA endorses getting a consensus of buy-in from families participating. Costs are assumed by the team participating, GHA will register the team and managers will be in charge of having participants registering through our Sportsengine website.

In addition to away tournaments, GHA will host a home tournament for each age group/team that will be included in the regular season registration fee. Also included in regular season registration fees are the league fees and tiering/banner tournaments.

Exhibition games are another opportunity to gather more game experience. These can only be set up once league schedules and tournament schedules are announced.

If your player has committed to league play, or to a tournament, they are expected to attend all of the games. A stiff fine is issued for cancelling any league game or tournament. This is a team commitment and it is imperative that each member attends and participates in each game in order to ensure a successful season. If you are non-committal, please do not sign up for these programs. If a conflict arises, please notify the team manager as soon as possible.

Injuries and Illness

GHA strives to provide a safe environment in which youth can partake in the game of hockey. If an injury does occur, your USA Hockey Insurance is available if needed. Please fill out an Injury Report Form (<https://www.glacierhockey.org/safety>) at the earliest chance. Head injuries are very serious business, if a player shows any signs of having suffered any kind of head injury, please consult your doctor or make a trip to the Emergency Room. GHA has in place a Concussion Protocol and will not allow the player to return until those prerequisites have been met.

In the case of any kind of illness, please notify the team manager/coach and keep your player at home until they are symptom free. Please do not come to a GHA Hockey event/practice/camp/etc. if you or your player have any of the following symptoms:

- Fever or chills
- Coughing
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Standards of Conduct

GHA works hard to provide quality coaching/mentorship for its programming. **Standards of Conduct** are put in place to enforce appropriate behaviors in order for GHA to fulfill its Mission. Coaches may enforce additional standards for their team with the approval from the Hockey Director and Board of Directors. GHA believes that every member has the right to learn the game of hockey and develop freely and will not tolerate disruptions to this environment (listed in the GHA Policy Manual under Standards of Conduct).

GHA upholds Codes of Conduct for players, coaches, managers/volunteers and parents. We are a community and hold value in representing ourselves with dignity and grace.

Scheduling

GHA administrator's are in charge of scheduling all games for all age levels. Travel tournaments are identified and proposed to each team at the preseason meetings. TSL commitment forms are due early September and league scheduling occurs in person during the MAHA Summit meeting in Bozeman, the first weekend of October. EKL Tiering tournament is scheduled for mid October with the in person scheduling meeting to occur in Cranbrook the following weekend. There are many obstacles to fit in place for scheduling so please notify your team manager of any conflicts early and often.

Travel

GHA is driven to provide the best hockey experience for our young athletes. This includes opportunities to travel to gain experience as a teammate and a member of a

community. Please represent our town and organization with respect towards the places we visit.

With this great opportunity to travel comes with it a cost. Travel is expensive and time consuming. If you would like a different hockey experience, please review our in-house or local programming.

In order to cut down on some costs over a long season, we encourage carpooling to destinations and the sharing of costs for lodging. Managers are in charge of securing room blocks at hotels and taking advantage of hockey group discounts, when available. It is the parent's duty to reserve the aforementioned available rooms on their own if they intend to travel to these games. Managers will communicate through TeamSnap, or equivalent, to issue team notifications to all members including such information as: directions, hotel blocks, game times, etc.. Please use these apps for team only relevant information, they are not to be used as a promotional or otherwise instant messaging platform.

Team Managers

The team manager is the liaison between the parents and the organization (note: the coach is considered part of the organization). Please use this resource before confronting the coach or any member of the board of directors. The manager can also steer you to the appropriate person when necessary. The Hockey Director can also be used to file any complaint or grievance in regards to anything hockey related. It is important to communicate your expectations for the season. Some teams may want to play every weekend while others may want much less. It is GHA's intention to provide the best opportunity for what the consensus desires. As a team sport, it takes a team to define what a successful season looks like to them. It is the organization's job to provide the tools and avenues to obtain said opportunities.

Coaches

Coaches are recruited on a volunteer basis. Many coaches have children in the age group they are coaching. A [Coaching Application Form](#) must be filled out and returned to the Hockey Director prior to any on-ice activities. The coaching candidates are then voted on by the GHA Board of Directors.

Coaching is a time commitment, especially in the requirements needed to become qualified through USA Hockey and committing to practice and game times throughout the season. Please contact the Hockey Director for assistance.

GHA is always looking to develop its coaching staff towards success in being an educator/steward of the game of hockey. GHA and its Mission Statement are the

backbone for what each coach's responsibilities are for the organization. Above all else, GHA coaching tenets must be in alignment as to *provide a fun, safe, and rewarding learning environment to enhance the growth and development of young athletes through high-quality hockey programs.*

Coaches work in accordance with the Hockey Director in establishing their teams goals and expectations for the season. These will differ at each age level. Also, a Coaches Code of Conduct must be signed and adhered to for each season.

Hockey Director

The Glacier Hockey Association's Hockey Director position is established to uphold the GHA Mission Statement and act as a direct liaison between the Board of Directors and its membership. It is the Hockey Director's job to promote, recruit, develop and mentor all members of the Glacier Hockey Association. The Hockey Director is in charge of strategically planning, scheduling and monitoring for the success of a viable youth sports organization. The Hockey Director will be the top contact of organizational structure for all things related to administering and operating a youth hockey program.

This position is offered to an Independent Contractor who demonstrates a commitment to the growth and development of local athletes, has an established hockey background and is in alignment with GHA's Mission Statement.

Board of Directors

All authority of GHA is vested in a Board of Directors as specified in GHA's bylaws. The Board of Directors is responsible for developing and enforcing the bylaws, policies, and activities of GHA.

Members of the Board of Directors are volunteers who are tasked with duties in order for the Association to succeed in its mission. Term limits are staggered and are set for a minimum of 2 year intervals.

Current GHA Board of Directors:

President: Clint Muhlfeld

Vice President: John "Jock" Craig

Secretary: Stefanie Swenson

Treasurer: Kate Daniels

Registrar: Elizabeth King
At Large: Joel Christiansen
At Large: Mike Alves