

Introduction: On-ice and Off-ice Rules & Regulations and How They are Enforced

This note is for all participants in Windy City Storm's AAA hockey programs.¹ It describes at a high level the rules and regulations governing our hockey club and all of its on-ice and off-ice participants. It also explains how potential violations are reported and handled. Links are provided to online resources that contain full sets of the rules, regulations, and policies governing all participants in Storm hockey.

The Storm is an affiliate the Amateur Hockey Association of Illinois, known familiarly as AHAI, which in turn is USA Hockey's designee for overseeing all amateur hockey in Illinois, like Storm's AAA programs. As such, Storm is subject to USA Hockey and AHAI rules, which extend to all hockey-related activity on-ice and off-ice. In the first instance, however, Storm enforces USA Hockey and AHAI rules within its own club.

Storm's Rules & Ethics Committee (described below) assists the club in educating its participants on the rules and the enforcement process, and in reviewing and investigating potential violations. While Storm enforces the rules at the club level, including meting out discipline when required, it reports to AHAI which in turn reports to USA Hockey. In appropriate cases, its decisions can be reviewed and modified by AHAI or USA Hockey.

What are the Rules and where to I find them?

AHAI maintains a website that contains information about all aspects of amateur hockey in Illinois. It also contains a link to its by-laws, rules and regulations, and policies.
<https://www.ahai.org/page/show/6335118-by-laws-rules-and-regulations-policies>

Of most immediate interest are AHAI's Rules & Regulations.² These cover the broad range of AHAI's regulation of all Illinois youth hockey. They contain rules governing organization and guidelines for Tier I or AAA hockey (Art. 18); coaching regulations which depend heavily on USA Hockey rules regarding certification, SafeSport training, background screening, and coaching conduct (Art. 21); and on-ice playing rules which are mandated by USA Hockey rules but supplemented by AHAI (Art. 25).

Article 22 of the AHAI rules is of particular note. It describes the overall disciplinary process and its purposes. They include the Zero Tolerance policy (condemning all disrespectful or unsportsmanlike behavior by any participant); the process by which AHAI imposes sanctions with and without hearings; rules and sanctions regarding abuse of officials; and rules regarding sanctions when any spectator or parent is ejected from a game by an official.

USA Hockey also maintains a website rich in detail regarding its oversight of amateur hockey nationwide: <https://www.usahockey.com/> Of immediate interest to Storm participants, it

¹ "Participants" include club ownership, club management, team coaches, trainers, team managers, players, and their families and guests.

² AHAI's by-laws relate to how AHAI's corporate form and internal organization. AHAI's policies include broad statements regarding equal opportunity, whistleblower protections, substance abuse, document retention, certain conduct meriting suspension, coaching ethics, etc.

contains information regarding SafeSport purposes and training. The U.S. Center for SafeSport is a separate organization that has partnered with USA Hockey to help guard against emotional, physical, and sexual misconduct. Most every adult involved in managing youth hockey is required to undergo annual SafeSport training which is also described here.

<https://www.usahockey.com/safesportprogram> And here:

<https://www.usahockey.com/uscenterforsafesport>

USA Hockey's website also contains hockey playing rules, its Zero Tolerance policy, standardized discipline guidelines, and other crucial information:

<https://www.usahockey.com/rulesandresources>

While there is a lot of detail in these materials, and this overview does not include everything important, the rules in general demand that all participants in a youth hockey program behave as common sense dictates. The overriding theme is that all participants must be good sports, meaning they should respect and follow the rules, and they should refrain from all manner of boorish, disrespectful, disagreeable, demeaning, or bullying conduct. While hockey can be an intensely physical sport, all participants must respect the line between physical play that is within the rules and physical conduct that violates the rules.

One good summary of the rules' purposes and goals is the USA Hockey Code of Conduct which governs all hockey participants from club management to coaches to players to parents and spectators: <https://www.usahockey.com/annualguide>

While no one is expected to be expert on the details and nuance of all the rules, equally so no one can avoid responsibility for adhering to them by claiming ignorance. If any participant has a question about how to conduct himself or herself on-ice or off-ice, ask a coach or a member of Storm's Rules & Ethics Committee.

If we are to be a club that respects and follows the rules, we must work together to learn, educate, and enforce.

The Rules & Ethics Committee

Storm's Rules & Ethics Committee is charged with educating all Storm participants on the governing rules. It also investigates and enforces the rules. Separately, if AHAI or USA Hockey have questions regarding Storm participant conduct, on-ice or off-ice, Storm's Rules & Ethics Committee investigates and responds.

By agreeing to participate in the Storm hockey program, every participant at every level agrees to cooperate fully with all Rules & Ethics Committee investigations, whether by Storm itself, by AHAI, or by USA Hockey. This includes answering questions fully and honestly and providing written or published material when and if necessary. Failure to cooperate fully is, standing alone, a basis for imposing discipline, including suspension.

Storm's Rules & Ethics Committee may issue any form of discipline it deems appropriate subject to whatever guidance and limitations apply under AHAI or USA Hockey's governing rules and any further rules imposed by Storm. If conduct is found to have violated Storm, AHAI, or USA Hockey rules, guidelines, or policies, without having transgressed a rule that more

precisely governs the conduct in issue, Storm reserves the right to impose appropriate discipline under the Zero Tolerance policy which bans all unsportsmanlike conduct by any participant in the Storm program. USA Hockey and AHAI both include the Zero Tolerance policy on their websites. USA Hockey: <https://www.usahockeyrulebook.com/page/show/1015130-zero-tolerance-policy> and AHAI Rules & Regulations, Article 22.1.9.

For the 2024-2025 season the Storm Rules & Ethics Committee consists of the following members:

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Appeals

Decisions by Storm's Rules & Ethics Committee may be appealed to Storm's President, Mark Jalcovik. His review is limited to whether the committee abused its discretion or applied the governing rules in a manifestly incorrect manner. He will not accept information regarding any decision that was not first presented to the committee. In appropriate circumstances, he may uphold, reject, or modify any finding of a violation and/or any assessment of discipline.

Any participant affected by a committee decision, following resolution of an appeal to Storm's President, may further appeal to AHAI's Rules & Ethics or Suspension Committee, as appropriate. How such appeals are handled is governed by AHAI rules.

A decision of the Storm Rules & Ethics committee shall remain in full force and effect pending any appeal to Storm's President, AHAI, or beyond, unless overturned or modified. If modified, the modified form of the decision shall remain in full force and effect pending all further appeals.