



TEXAS AMATEUR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION  
2025-26 TIER II STATE TOURNAMENT GUIDELINES (YOUTH)



**YOUTH**

**1. Tournament**

- a. The Texas Amateur Hockey Association (“TAHA”) shall designate a committee of individuals (“Tournament Committee”) to preside over the 2025-26 TAHA Tier II **YOUTH** State Tournament (“Tournament”).
- b. The Tournament will be held Friday, February 27 – Sunday, March 1, 2026, at Children’s Health StarCenter – Farmers Branch, 12700 N. Stemmons Fwy., Farmers Branch, TX 75234.

**2. Tournament Fees**

- a. The Tournament entry fee per team is \$1,900.
- b. **No invoice shall be issued. Tournament fees are due pursuant to these Guidelines** via check (payable to TAHA) either:
  - i. delivered to Don Girard, TAHA Treasurer, **on or before Wednesday, February 25, 2026**, at 11164 Windjammer Drive, Frisco, TX 75036, or
  - ii. hand delivered to the TAHA Travel Section President on the day of, but prior to, the team’s first State game.

**3. Number and Qualification of Teams**

- a. The Tournament shall consist of four (4) teams at each of the 18U, 16U, and 14U Tier II divisions.
- b. Subject to Section 3.d. herein, where the teams in any given age classification participate in a historical, balanced league schedule as set forth on the Texas Hockey League (“THL”) [Hockey Shift site](#) (“Hockey Shift”), teams eligible to participate in the Tournament shall consist of the top four (4) teams as determined by [THL standings](#) upon the completion of all regular season games.
- c. Where the teams in any given THL division participate outside of a historically balanced league schedule as set forth on Hockey Shift, the Tournament Committee shall determine rankings -- for all eligible TAHA teams in such division -- based on, inter alia, THL regular season league game scores, My Hockey Rankings, tournament or non-THL game scores (which must, if requested, be evidenced by a Game Record Summary and scoresheet submissions, including dates, opponents, tier, level, and scores), etc. The Tournament Committee shall endeavor to make such determination within twenty-four (24) hours of the THL standings, relative to the applicable teams, being clinched.
- d. In either event set forth in Section 3.b. or 3.c. above:
  - i. Should the fifth-ranked team (“Team 5”) finish with **three (3) or fewer** points than the fourth-ranked team (“Team 4”), Team 5 has the option to challenge Team 4 to a playdown game (as hereinafter defined) to determine which team shall participate in the Tournament. **Such Playdown Game must be completed before 11:59pm on Sunday, February 22, 2026.**
  - ii. However, should the sixth-ranked team (“Team 6”) also finish with **three (3) or fewer** points than Team 4, Team 6 has the option to challenge Team 5 to a Playdown Game to determine which team shall have the option to challenge Team 4. **Such Playdown Game must be completed before 11:59pm on Saturday, February 21, 2026.**



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- iii. Team 5 may opt out of the process, whereby Team 6 may, therefore, directly challenge Team 4.
- iv. The lower-ranked team in any Playdown Game will be considered the “Challenging Team”.
- v. Notification of intent to challenge must be made by the Challenging Team via email to both the Tournament Committee and the opposing team within twenty-four (24) hours of the Tournament Committee’s ranking determination set forth in Section 3.c.
- e. Upon completion of all THL regular season games and any Playdown Games, but no later than 11:59pm Tuesday, February 24, 2026, the Tournament Committee shall rank all eligible teams for purposes of determining the Tournament game pairings for each age classification.

**4. Format for Playdown Games**

- a. A Playdown Game shall be a **single-elimination** game with the winner advancing towards the Tournament (“Playdown Game”).
- b. Team 4 and/or Team 5, as the case may be, will host and be the Home team (the “Host Team”).
- c. The Host Team shall be responsible for securing ice, officials, and a scorekeeper for the Playdown Game.
- d. Regardless of the outcome of a Playdown Game, **the cost of said game shall be paid seventy-five (75%) percent upfront by the Challenging Team and twenty-five (25%) percent by the opposing team.**
- e. If teams from different cities compete in a Playdown Game, such Playdown Game shall be played in the city of the Host Team with travel consideration given to the scheduling process; provided, however, that a Playdown Game between north and south non-DFW teams would be played in Dallas.
- f. A Playdown Game shall follow the Playing Rules and Game Procedures as set forth in the [THL Policies, Game Rules & Procedures](#) (Sections 2 and 3, respectively).
- g. It is the responsibility of the **Host Team** to submit the final scoresheet of the Playdown Game to the Tournament Committee.
- h. A THL regular season game is **NOT** eligible to double as a Playdown Game.
- i. The pairings, schedule, and results of each Playdown Game, once determined, will be made available on the [TAHA State Tournament](#) webpage.

**5. Eligibility/Registration**

- a. General:
  - i. Each team shall be certified by the TAHA Registrar to have complied with all eligibility requirements.
  - ii. Any non-US citizen player must have an approved transfer from USA Hockey (“USAH”).
  - iii. All team players shall be community-based, as defined by USAH and TAHA or, if not community-based, shall have been granted the appropriate out-of-community waiver by TAHA for the 2025-26 season.
- b. Credentials:
  - i. Each team’s official USAH Certified 1T Roster (“Official Roster”) and credentials documents (“Credentials”) must be submitted to the TAHA Registrar for verification and certification in advance of the Tournament.



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- ii. Credentials are due in accordance with the Credentials Guideline as distributed by TAHA Registrars.
- iii. All players, and any registered team member (e.g., coaches), must be eligible to compete in the Tournament to be eligible to participate in the Tier II USAH National Championships should that team advance.
- iv. A Credentials Verification Sheet (“CVS”) must be completed for each team and included with the Credentials.
- v. 20/10 Requirement:
  - A. Each team must have competed as a team unit in at least twenty (20) Games.
  - B. Each player must have played on his/her team at least ten (10) Games prior to the Tournament.
  - C. Originals or printouts of score sheets for all Games listed on the CVS are required to be included with the team’s Credentials.
  - D. Games before Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> will not count toward 20/10.
  - E. Roster changes after December 31<sup>st</sup> will not be accepted.
  - F. For score sheets to count towards meeting the within 20/10 requirement, the CVS, Official Roster, and applicable score sheets must be verified and certified by the TAHA Registrar.
  - G. For purposes of this Section, “Game” is a match played against another team that is registered with a member organization of the IIHF at the same competitive level and that is officiated by registered officials. Such Game shall consist of at least three (3) periods, which, collectively, last a minimum of sixty (60) minutes.

**6. Number of Players**

- a. A maximum of twenty (20) players, including goalies, shall be permitted to play in a Tournament game.
- b. All teams are requested to arrive with two (2) goalies.
- c. Any team unable to arrive with two (2) goalies must submit a request to the Tournament Committee for a second goalie one (1) week before the team’s first Tournament game and provide proof/an explanation of the extenuating circumstances leading to the absence of a second goalie. Upon approval of the TAHA President, teams may use a substitute goalie of the same age classification and from a lower-level team of the team’s association. Substitute goalies shall be declared to all teams before the first game of the Tournament. The Tournament Committee shall determine any exceptions.

**7. Playing Rules**

- a. Only official USAH Playing Rules, currently in effect, shall be used for Tournament games.

**8. Merchandise and Awards**

- a. Championship ‘team’ and ‘player’ awards, as well as a runner-up ‘team’ award, will be given at each age classification.



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**9. Uniforms**

- a. All teams must be properly uniformed with matching home and away jerseys/socks.
- b. Home teams shall wear light jerseys; visiting teams shall wear dark jerseys in all games.

**10. Time Between Games**

- a. No team shall play a second Tournament game in a day against a team playing its first game on that day.
- b. Unless extenuating circumstances preclude same, all Tournament games shall be scheduled to allow for a minimum of:
  - i. four (4) hours between games played on the same day, and a minimum of
  - ii. twelve (12) hours between games played on consecutive days.
- c. Between games is defined as from the end of one game to the start of the team's next game on the schedule.

**11. Age Classifications**

- a. To be eligible to compete during the 2025-26 season:
  - i. 18U player must be born January 1, 2007, or later
  - ii. 16U player must be born January 1, 2009, or later
  - iii. 14U player must be born January 1, 2011, or later.
- b. Exceptions to Section 11.a. must be supported by the appropriate TAHA, Rocky Mountain District, or USAH waiver for the 2025-26 season.

**12. Warm-ups, Periods, Penalties, Time-Outs, & Ice Cleanings**

- a. All Tournament games will be played with stop time to completion.
- b. Warm-up, period, and penalty times:

Age

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Warmup</u>	<u>Periods</u>	<u>Overtime*</u>	<u>Minor</u>	<u>Major</u>	<u>Misconduct</u>
18U	5	17	10/17	2	5	10
16U	5	17	10/17	2	5	10
14U	5	16	10/16	1.5	4	8

\*Games tied in the Round Robin and in the Championship will follow overtime rules set forth in Sections 15.a. and 15.b., respectively, herein.

- c. Each team is permitted **one (1) time-out of sixty (60) seconds per game, whether in regulation or overtime.**
- d. The ice shall be cleaned **before every game and upon the completion of every second period.**

**13. Tournament Pairings/Format**

- a. Tournament format shall be a three-game round robin wherein each team will play each other ("Round Robin").
- b. Round Robin pairings shall be determined as set forth in Section 3.e. herein.
- c. The two (2) teams accumulating the most points upon completion of Round Robin play will advance to compete for the championship game ("Championship").
- d. In the event only one (1) Texas-based team advances to the Championship and is determined runner-up, that Texas-based team shall be considered as the advancing team from Texas for purposes of USAH's 2026 Tier II National Championship.



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- e. The schedule of games, including home and visiting team designations, shall be set by the Tournament Committee, approved by TAHA, and sent to all qualifying teams no less than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the first game of the Tournament.

**14. Process to Determine Tournament Finalists**

- a. During Round Robin play, each team will be awarded:
  - i. three (3) points - regulation win
  - ii. two (2) points - overtime or shootout win
  - iii. one (1) point - overtime or shootout loss
  - iv. zero (0) points for a regulation loss.
- b. All games will be played until a winner is determined using the format in Section 15 below.
- c. If, upon completion of Round Robin play, two (2) or more teams have an equal number of points, their positions in the standings shall be determined by the following tie-breaking format. If one (1) tiebreaker establishes a position for one (1) or more teams, each team is placed in the applicable position. Once a team is placed, the remaining tied teams shall start the tie-breaking process over again at Step a) as set forth in Section 14.c.i. below. The tie-breaker formulas are as follows:
  - i. The results of only the head-to-head games played between the tied teams in the following order:
    - A. Standings – Most points earned.
    - B. Most Total Wins – Regulation, overtime, and shootout.
    - C. Most Regulation Wins – Regulation wins only.
    - D. Differential - Subtracting goals scored against from goals scored in these games, the positions being determined in order of the greatest surplus. A maximum goal differential of plus or minus eight (8) per game will be used in tie-breaking rules.
    - E. Quotient - Dividing the goals scored in these games by the goals scored against, the positions being determined in order of the greatest quotient. If a game has a goal differential of more than eight (8) goals, the goals for will be decreased until there is a maximum of eight (8) more goals against in a given game prior to dividing (i.e. 10-1 game would use 9-1 for purposes of quotient). A quotient involving dividing by zero (0) has a higher standing than a quotient from dividing by any number other than zero (0). When two (2) or more teams have no goals against and the quotient tiebreaker is required, the teams shall be ranked high to low in descending order of “goals for”.
    - F. Most Periods Won – In the games played by each tied team, points will be awarded for each regulation period won (2 points) and for each regulation period tied (1 point). Positions shall be in the order of highest point total.
    - G. Lowest Number of Penalty Minutes — Calculate the number of penalty minutes accrued during all Round Robin games. The teams shall be ranked low to high in ascending order of “penalty minutes for.”
    - H. Quickest First Goal – The team that scored the quickest goal in any of its Round Robin games shall be ranked highest.



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- ii. If, after applying the formulas of i. a), b), c), d), e), f), g), or h), the tie still exists, i. b), c), d), e), f), g), or h) shall be applied using all of the games played by the teams tied.
- iii. If the above procedure does not break the tie, the tied teams shall use a shootout procedure as described below.

**15. Tied Games**

- a. **Round Robin** - Should any Round Robin game be tied following regulation play, one (1) **sudden death, 10-minute, 3-on-3, stop time** overtime period shall be played as follows:
  - i. At the completion of the third period, the tied teams shall receive a **2-minute rest period**.
  - ii. The teams will remain on the ice and **shall switch ends** at the end of the third period.
  - iii. If the score is tied at the end of the 10-minute sudden death overtime period, there shall be a shootout (as hereinafter defined).
  - iv. The winner of the shootout will be credited with one (1) additional goal in the final score.
- b. **Championship** - Should any Championship game be tied, one (1) **sudden death, 5-on-5, stop time** overtime period shall be played as follows:
  - i. At the completion of the third period, the tied teams shall receive a **2-minute rest period**.
  - ii. The length of the overtime shall be **equal to the length of the third period** and shall be sudden death.
  - iii. The teams will remain on the ice and **shall switch ends** at the end of the third period. If the score is tied at the end of the sudden death overtime period, there shall be a shootout (as hereinafter defined).
  - iv. The winner of the shootout will be credited with one (1) additional goal in the final score.
- c. **Shootout Procedures** - The shootout ("Shootout") will be conducted as follows:
  - i. A shootout is defined as a player attempting to score a goal and the opposing goalkeeper attempting to stop the shooter from scoring the goal.
  - ii. The **Home team** will have the choice whether the Home team will shoot first or second.
  - iii. All goalkeepers and all players from both teams listed on the official game sheet shall be eligible to participate in the Shootout; provided, however, that any penalized player whose penalty had not been completed when the overtime period ended, or who receives a penalty during a Shootout, is not eligible to participate in any portion of the Shootout and must remain in the penalty box.
  - iv. The goalkeepers will defend the net they were defending in the 3rd period.
  - v. The Shootout shall begin with **three (3) different individual shooters** from each team taking alternate shots. The players do not need to be named beforehand.





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- vi. The goalkeepers from each team may be changed after each shot.
- vii. The players of both teams will take the shots alternately until a decisive goal is scored. The remaining shots will not be taken.
- viii. If the score remains tied after the Shootout, there will be a sudden-death shootout (as hereinafter defined).
- d. **Sudden-Death Shootout Procedures** - The sudden-death shootout will be conducted as follows:
  - i. A sudden-death shootout is defined as each team attempting a shot. Should one team be successful and the other team not, the successful team shall win the shootout (“Sudden-Death Shootout”).
  - ii. The teams will continue to shoot in the same order as during the Shootout.
  - iii. Teams will select their shooters to participate in any order in the Sudden-Death Shootout, whether or not they shot in the previous round. **The last player in the first round of the Shootout may be the first player in the Sudden-Death Shootout.**
  - iv. Players in a Sudden-Death Shootout shall not be allowed to take another shot until **two (2) different individual teammate shooters** have completed their attempts.
  - v. All goalkeepers and all players from both teams listed on the official game sheet shall be eligible to participate in the Sudden-Death Shootout; provided, however, that any penalized player whose penalty had not been completed when the overtime period ended, or who receives a penalty during either shootout procedure, is not eligible to participate in any portion of the Sudden-Death Shootout and must remain in the penalty box.
  - vi. The goalkeepers from each team may be changed after each shot.
  - vii. The official scorekeeper shall record all shots taken indicating the players, goalkeepers, and goals scored.

**16. Waived and Forfeited Games**

- a. In the event – upon completion of the first four (4) Round Robin games of any age classification – two (2) teams have secured championship positions in the standings, those two (2) teams shall be permitted the option to mutually agree to waive the final Round Robin game. **The standings, as they appear on Hockey Shift at the time of such mutual agreement, shall determine the Home/Away designation for the Championship.**
- b. Except as set forth in a. above, all teams shall be expected to play all Round Robin games regardless of the impact those games may have on the standings, extenuating circumstances excepted (e.g. weather, injuries, etc.).
- c. An intentional forfeit of any game will result in that team’s immediate removal from the Tournament and may impact that team’s association’s eligibility to participate in future TAHA Tier II State tournaments.

**17. On-Ice Officials**

- a. All efforts will be made to procure a four-man system for all Tournament games.
- b. All on-ice officials must meet the minimum certification level pursuant to USAH’s guidelines for the age classification the on-ice officials are assigned to.
- c. Officials will be assigned by the TAHA Referee-in-Chief or his/her designee.



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**18. Noise-Making Devices**

- a. Noise-making devices are prohibited at any time during the Tournament.

**19. Discipline Committee**

- a. The Tournament Committee shall serve as the Discipline Committee, which shall be responsible for deciding any action, suspension, or otherwise to be taken against a player or team official receiving a match penalty. This includes all Tournament games.
- b. The Discipline Committee shall have authority to initiate action for supplemental discipline against a player or team official whether or not it involves playing rules; provided, however, that the player or team official is given notice of the intended action and has an opportunity for a hearing.

**20. TAHA as Host of the Tournament**

- a. TAHA is responsible for providing all financial aspects of running the Tournament, including the following:
  - i. A sufficient amount of ice and associated fees.
  - ii. On-ice officials and associated fees.
  - iii. Scorekeepers and associated fees.
  - iv. Medical personnel, if available, and associated fees.
  - v. Merchandise and awards.
- b. The Tournament Committee may be reached at [travelsectionpresident@tahahockey.org](mailto:travelsectionpresident@tahahockey.org).

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