

OARHL

RULES & REGULATIONS

Winter 2026/27

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Ottawa Adult Rec Hockey League

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Scope: league administration and competition rules, including division-specific exceptions. This book does not reproduce Hockey Canada's complete playing rules. Registration terms, fees and issued season or playoff formats remain separate documents.

1. AUTHORITY, INTERPRETATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

1.1 Application and hierarchy

- 1.1.1** These Rules and Regulations apply to all OARHL games and to all players, Team Representatives and team personnel.
- 1.1.2** For a playing-rule matter not addressed here, the Hockey Canada Playing Rules 2026–2028 apply by default. An express OARHL rule or division-specific provision controls where it differs from Hockey Canada, subject to applicable law and mandatory insurer or facility requirements.
- 1.1.3** An exception applying to one division, team or participant does not change the rule for any other division, team or participant.
- 1.1.4** A later written League bulletin prevails only to the extent that it expressly changes an existing rule. A failure or delay in enforcing a rule once does not waive the rule or require the same result in another matter.

1.2 League Management and officials

- 1.2.1** League Management has final authority within OARHL to interpret and apply these rules and to determine administrative, eligibility, divisional, disciplinary and competition matters, including circumstances not expressly covered.
- 1.2.2** League Management may consider safety, fairness, competitive balance, sportsmanship, disciplinary history, operational impact and the circumstances of the matter. Material decisions should include a concise explanation where practical.
- 1.2.3** On-ice officials control the game and make playing-rule and judgment calls during play. League Management controls registration, divisional eligibility, supplementary discipline and competition administration. A disputed call does not permit a team to refuse to play.
- 1.2.4** League Management may clarify or amend these rules. Material changes will normally be communicated to Team Representatives before taking effect. Urgent safety or operational measures may take effect immediately.

1.3 Communications and other documents

- 1.3.1** Each team must maintain a primary and alternate Team Representative with current contact details. Notice sent to either registered contact is notice to the team, and the representatives are responsible for informing their participants.
- 1.3.2** Team-initiated communication must come from a Team Representative unless League Management authorizes another person to communicate on a specific matter.
- 1.3.3** Fees, payment dates, cancellation rights and purchased season commitments are governed by the applicable registration terms and official season notices. This rulebook does not independently create a refund, credit or financial guarantee.

2. TEAM ADMINISTRATION AND GAME RECORDS

2.1 Team responsibility

- 2.1.1** Teams must maintain accurate records, use eligible participants, attend scheduled games, comply with payment obligations and ensure that their participants understand applicable rules, suspensions and eligibility restrictions. Delegating a roster or spare-player task does not transfer responsibility away from the team.
- 2.1.2** Each team may designate one Team Manager and one Alternate Team Manager as its official Team Representatives. A change after the regular season begins requires League Management approval.

2.2 Registration and identity

- 2.2.1** Every participant, including a spare player or replacement goaltender, must complete the required registration and waiver process before participating for a team. Placement on a Game Sheet does not replace registration. Participation before registration or waiver completion does not earn a playoff-eligibility credit.
- 2.2.2** Participants must use their own legal identity and may be required to provide reasonable identification. False names, use of another player's registration, forged signatures, incorrect attendance entries and deliberate concealment of an ineligible player are subject to League review.
- 2.2.3** League Management may require correction or additional verification before further participation. Using an unregistered, ineligible, suspended or falsely identified player may result in forfeiture, suspension, a team fine and further discipline. A playoff violation may result in forfeiture of the game or series.

2.3 Game Sheets and attendance

- 2.3.1** The Team Representative must ensure that the game roster is entered through the approved Game Sheet process, including jersey numbers, goaltenders, participating players, attendance-only players, scratches and late arrivals.
- 2.3.2** Every participating player must personally sign in before entering the game. Another person may not sign in for a player. Every non-player behind the bench must be registered for insurance purposes and identified on the Game Sheet.
- 2.3.3** A skater may receive one team-specific eligibility credit without dressing or taking a shift by being physically present and personally completing the approved attendance-only sign-in. An attendance-only player is not recorded as dressed, receives no game statistics and may not enter the ice or players' bench unless the player's status is properly changed.
- 2.3.4** Team Representatives must promptly review the completed game record and report a verified attendance or roster discrepancy through the official League channel within 96 hours after the scheduled start. League Management may correct a verified error later, but an unsupported late request need not be accepted.

2.4 Game Feedback Form

- 2.4.1** Only a Team Representative may submit the Game Feedback Form. It must be submitted at least 24 hours and less than 96 hours after the game ends.
- 2.4.2** The form may be used to report an alleged incorrect application of a written rule, use of an ineligible player or a material administrative error. It is not a mechanism to appeal an official's judgment call.
- 2.4.3** Submitting the form does not change the game result, pause a suspension or stop a disciplinary review already in progress. After review, League Management may confirm the result, correct a record, continue or replay a game, declare a forfeit or impose another appropriate remedy.

2.5 Schedules

- 2.5.1** The posted League schedule is authoritative. Teams may not privately move, cancel or exchange a game without League Management approval. League Management may arrange a replacement opponent, substitute game or schedule adjustment where appropriate.

3. PLAYER AND PLAYOFF ELIGIBILITY

3.1 General eligibility and division suitability

- 3.1.1** Participants must be at least 19 years old before their first OARHL game unless a stricter division rule applies. Any exception requires prior written League Management approval and compliance with applicable insurer and consent requirements.
- 3.1.2** League Management may approve, restrict, condition or prohibit a player's participation in any division. Relevant factors may include playing background, demonstrated ability, pace, physical play, surrounding roster, safety and the intended competitive standard. Age eligibility does not establish skill eligibility.
- 3.1.3** A player may be reassessed after participating. League Management may require a move, limit the teams or positions for which the player may participate, impose roster conditions or adjust a result where an eligibility breach or material competitive unfairness warrants it.

3.2 Regular-season spares and multiple teams

- 3.2.1** A player may participate for more than one team during the regular season, including multiple teams in the same division, provided the player is registered and eligible for each team, suitable for each division and not subject to a League restriction. Captain or opponent agreement cannot override a League decision.

3.3 Playoff game-credit requirements

- 3.3.1** A skater must earn at least seven team-specific regular-season game credits to qualify for the playoffs. A credit may be earned by participating, completing an approved attendance-only sign-in while physically present, or receiving an approved opponent-forfeit credit.
- 3.3.2** A goaltender must actually participate in goal in at least one regular-season game for that team. Attendance-only and opponent-forfeit credits do not satisfy the goaltender requirement. A player qualified only as a goaltender may not participate as a skater unless the player separately satisfies the skater requirement.
- 3.3.3** A Team Representative may submit skaters for opponent-forfeit credit within 48 hours after the team completes its regular-season schedule. Each approved credit counts toward the seven-game minimum. The forfeiting team receives no credits.
- 3.3.4** Playoff-eligibility exemptions will be considered only where an opponent's forfeit affected a skater's game-credit total. Injury, work, travel, goaltender availability or failure to qualify a backup does not support an exemption.
- 3.3.5** League Management will review League records after the regular season and establish each team's eligible playoff-player list. Teams do not submit proposed playoff rosters. Eligibility remains fixed throughout the playoffs and cannot be earned through playoff participation.
- 3.3.6** A player may represent only one team within the same playoff division unless League Management gives written approval before the player participates for a second team.

3.4 Roster size

- 3.4.1** There is no maximum number of registered players on a team and no maximum number of otherwise eligible players who may dress for a game, subject to registration, age, division, Game Sheet, bench-space and other eligibility requirements.

4. EQUIPMENT, UNIFORMS AND FACILITIES

4.1 Required equipment

- 4.1.1** Players must wear safe, properly fitted ice-hockey equipment required by Hockey Canada, OARHL, the insurer and the facility, including skates, shin pads, protective pants, elbow pads, gloves and a properly fastened CSA-approved helmet with an approved visor or cage. Neck guards are strongly recommended.
- 4.1.2** Goaltenders must wear approved goaltending head and facial protection and all required goaltending equipment. Equipment must be worn as designed.
- 4.1.3** A skater who loses a helmet must immediately stop participating and replace it or go directly to the bench. Play must stop immediately when a goaltender loses required head protection.

4.2 Jerseys and numbers

- 4.2.1** Each team must maintain primary and secondary jersey sets in contrasting colours. The home team has first choice of its primary jersey. The visiting team must wear whichever set avoids a colour conflict.
- 4.2.2** Before warm-up, the Team Representatives must locate one another at the dressing-room area and visually confirm the colours each team will wear. Teams must resolve the selection before entering the ice so both teams are ready without delay.
- 4.2.3** Jerseys must be matching and distinguishable. Each skater must display a clearly legible, unique and securely attached number. Tape may not be used to create or modify a jersey number. Goaltenders may be exempt from matching-design or numbering requirements where necessary.

4.3 Facilities, injuries and privacy

- 4.3.1** Participants and spectators associated with a team must follow facility rules. Participation while impaired is prohibited. Dressing rooms must be left clean and vacated within the facility's required time.
- 4.3.2** Damage, threats, theft, abuse of facility staff and misuse of facilities may result in removal, restitution and League discipline. A team may be responsible for charges caused by its participants or spectators.
- 4.3.3** Officials may stop or end play for an injury, unsafe ice or an emergency. Facility emergency procedures must be followed and emergency services contacted where appropriate. A seriously injured person should not be moved unless necessary to avoid immediate danger.
- 4.3.4** Participation must stop where a concussion or another serious injury is suspected. Return to participation is subject to applicable medical, facility and League requirements.
- 4.3.5** Photography and recording are prohibited in dressing rooms and other private areas without appropriate consent. Game footage submitted for League review must use the designated reporting channel. Public posting is not a substitute for formally reporting an incident.

5. GAME FORMAT AND TIMEKEEPING

5.1 Scheduled format and warm-up

- 5.1.1 Regulation consists of three stop-time periods: a 10-minute first period, a 10-minute second period and a 12-minute third period.
- 5.1.2 The standard booked ice slot is 50 minutes unless the published schedule states otherwise. The booked end time controls; a late start does not create a right to extend the slot.
- 5.1.3 A three-minute warm-up begins as soon as the arena door closes after the Zamboni has left the ice.
- 5.1.4 The League does not schedule preseason games.

5.2 Five-and-two procedure

- 5.2.1 At the next stoppage when five minutes or less remain in the booked ice slot, if more than two minutes remain in regulation, the timekeeper reduces the game clock to 2:00. If 2:00 or less remains, the clock is not increased.
- 5.2.2 If the third period has not begun, any remaining earlier-period time is removed and play resumes in the third period with no more than two minutes remaining.
- 5.2.3 Active penalty clocks are not reduced solely because game time is removed. The remaining regulation time continues as stop-time. The game ends when regulation expires or the booked ice time ends, whichever occurs first.

5.3 Minimum lineup and late arrival

- 5.3.1 The minimum lineup is seven eligible players dressed and available on the ice or players' bench: six skaters and one goaltender. Five skaters and the goaltender may be on the ice, leaving at least one substitute skater available on the bench.
- 5.3.2 At the end of warm-up, the first-period game clock begins running whether or not a team has the minimum lineup. A short team may use the running first-period time to obtain the missing eligible skater or goaltender.
- 5.3.3 If the team reaches the minimum during the first period, the clock stops at that time and the team is assessed a two-minute Delay of Game penalty. If the team remains short at the end of the first period, it forfeits.
- 5.3.4 A late-arriving eligible player may enter before the third period begins after completing the approved sign-in and reporting process.

5.4 Goaltender replacement

- 5.4.1 If a goaltender is injured, officials may allow up to 10 minutes to dress an eligible replacement. The replacement must be registered and satisfy the division's age and suitability requirements. No dressing time is guaranteed when a goaltender is ejected.
- 5.4.2 If a team does not use a replacement goaltender, it may continue with a sixth skater in place of the goaltender. No additional ice time is created by that choice.

5.5 Timeouts, tied games and running time

- 5.5.1 Each team may take one 30-second timeout during regulation. A timeout may not be taken after the five-and-two procedure has been applied or while running time is in effect.
- 5.5.2 A regular-season game tied at the end of regulation remains tied. There is no regular-season overtime or shootout.
- 5.5.3 During the final five minutes of the third period, the game clock changes to running time when the goal differential reaches five or more. If the differential falls below five, the clock returns to stop-time.
- 5.5.4 A penalty assessed during a stoppage begins when play resumes. During running time, the penalty clock runs continuously with the game clock. Goal-related releases and player-strength rules continue to apply. If stop-time resumes, any remaining penalty time also continues under stop-time.
- 5.5.5 Officials may stop both clocks for an injury, equipment problem, disciplinary incident or timekeeping correction.

6. PLAYING RULES AND ON-ICE PENALTIES

6.1 League modifications

- 6.1.1** Bodychecking is prohibited in every division. Incidental contact and lawful positional play do not authorize a deliberate hit or dangerous contact.
- 6.1.2** Icing is determined using the defending team's blue line. Icing is still called where the puck travels through the goal crease, subject to the other applicable icing exceptions.
- 6.1.3** Slapshots are permitted. Legal substitutions are permitted subject to the officials' procedure and applicable playing rules. Teams must make changes promptly and may not use substitutions to consume the booked slot.

6.2 Penalty durations and game removal

Penalty type	OARHL time / result
Minor	2 minutes
Double Minor	4 minutes
Major	5 minutes plus ejection and automatic review
Misconduct	10 minutes
Game Misconduct	Ejection and automatic review
Gross or Match Misconduct	Ejection and indefinite restriction pending review

- 6.2.1** A player who receives three counted penalties in one game is ejected for the remainder of that game. A Minor counts as one, a Double Minor as two, and a Major or Misconduct as one. A bench penalty served on behalf of the team does not count against the serving player.
- 6.2.2** A participant assessed a Major, Game Misconduct, Gross Misconduct or Match penalty must leave the ice and bench area and is barred from OARHL participation until League Management provides written notice of eligibility to return.

6.3 Safety-focused rules

- 6.3.1** Checking from behind, head contact, high-sticking, slew-footing, butt-ending, spearing, fighting, deliberate attempts to injure and abuse of officials are subject to the applicable on-ice penalty and automatic League review.
- 6.3.2** A player leaving the bench or penalty box to join an altercation will receive at least a Game Misconduct and an indefinite restriction pending review.
- 6.3.3** Discriminatory taunts, insults or intimidation are prohibited and will result in a Gross Misconduct and automatic League review.

7. CONDUCT, DISCIPLINE AND REVIEW

7.1 Conduct and supplementary discipline

- 7.1.1** Abuse, threats, harassment, discrimination, fighting, deliberate injury, reckless play and retaliation are prohibited on the ice, in facilities and in League-related communications.
- 7.1.2** League Management may investigate and discipline conduct whether or not an on-ice penalty was assessed. There is no published fixed offence-to-suspension chart. Relevant factors may include seriousness, intent, recklessness, harm, repeat conduct, disciplinary history, context, cooperation, accountability and impact on others and League operations.
- 7.1.3** Available measures include warnings, suspensions, fines, probation, participation conditions, division restrictions, a personal discipline or performance bond, loss of privileges and removal from the League. Measures may be combined. OARHL does not use a transferable seasonal team-bond system.

7.2 Suspension service and historical restrictions

- 7.2.1** A suspension must be served through completed games of the team for which it was imposed or on which the incident occurred. Until served on that designated team, the player may not participate for any other OARHL team. This may cause the player to miss several games for other teams.
- 7.2.2** An unserved suspension carries forward until completed and all participation conditions are satisfied. Outstanding historical OSAHL suspensions and indefinite restrictions provided to OARHL remain in force after identity and status are reasonably confirmed, unless League Management determines otherwise in writing.
- 7.2.3** League Management may impose an interim restriction while identity, historical status or reported conduct is reviewed. OARHL does not purport to bind another organization.

7.3 Team penalty-minute thresholds

- 7.3.1** OARHL uses the following regular-season team penalty-minute thresholds and consequences:

Team PIM total	Consequence
150 PIM	\$200 team fine
200 PIM	Additional \$250 team fine; \$450 cumulative total
250 PIM	Mandatory League Management meeting and potential expulsion. Reinstatement may require a discipline bond and participation conditions.

- 7.3.2** Threshold consequences are cumulative. If a team passes more than one threshold before the totals are processed, every applicable consequence is imposed.
- 7.3.3** Team Representatives are responsible for monitoring team totals. As an administrative courtesy, League Management will normally provide notice when a team comes within five penalty minutes of a threshold. Failure to receive notice does not remove or delay a consequence.

7.4 Correction requests and appeals

- 7.4.1** A participant or Team Representative may report a clerical error, mistaken identity, incorrect game count or other objectively verifiable recording error within 48 hours after receiving a disciplinary decision. No deposit is required. A correction request is not a rehearing and does not stay the decision unless the League expressly says so.
- 7.4.2** A merits appeal is available only for a suspension of three or more games, an indefinite suspension, removal for the balance of a season, expulsion or a comparable material participation restriction. One-game and two-game suspensions are not appealable on their merits.
- 7.4.3** An appeal must be received within 48 hours after written notice of the decision, unless a reasonable shorter playoff deadline is stated. The filing must identify the challenged finding or consequence, requested outcome, permitted ground and supporting evidence. A \$40 deposit must be paid when filed.
- 7.4.4** Permitted grounds are a material factual error, misapplication of a written rule, significant new evidence not reasonably available earlier, material procedural failure or a consequence clearly disproportionate to the stated reasons. Disagreement with an on-ice judgment is not an appeal ground without a separate rule-application error or misconduct allegation.

- 7.4.5** An appeal does not stay a suspension or restriction unless the League expressly grants a stay. A conflict-screened reviewer should not be the primary decision-maker where practical and may confirm, reduce, rescind or otherwise vary the decision. The internal appeal outcome is final.
- 7.4.6** If a merits appeal reduces or rescinds the discipline, the team account receives a \$20 non-cash credit and OARHL retains \$20 as an administrative fee. The credit applies first to outstanding balances and otherwise to a future season; it is non-refundable and non-transferable.

8. FORFEITS, CANCELLATIONS AND ABANDONED GAMES

8.1 Notice

- 8.1.1** A team unable to play must submit the Forfeit Form available through the Captains Portal. If the form is unavailable for any reason, notice must be emailed directly to admin@oarhl.ca. No other method constitutes official notice.
- 8.1.2** Receipt time is the recorded form-submission time or email-receipt time measured against the scheduled game start. Telling only the opponent, an official or another participant is insufficient.

8.2 Fine schedule and repeat forfeits

Notice / occurrence	Consequence
96 hours or more	No base forfeit fine
48 hours to less than 96 hours	\$100 team fine
Less than 48 hours or no-show	\$200 team fine
Third and later occurrences	Progressive \$50 increase to the otherwise applicable fine
Third occurrence	Mandatory League Management review

- 8.2.1** Notice given exactly 96 hours before the game falls in the no-base-fine band. Notice given exactly 48 hours before the game falls in the \$100 band.
- 8.2.2** Beginning with a team's third forfeit in the same season, the fine otherwise applicable increases progressively by \$50 for each occurrence. A third forfeit also triggers mandatory League Management review. Possible outcomes include conditions, a discipline bond, suspension or removal from the League.

8.3 Results and disruptions

- 8.3.1** A forfeit is recorded as a 1–0 loss unless the non-responsible team already leads by a larger margin, in which case the existing score may stand.
- 8.3.2** A game is abandoned when a team that validly began can no longer continue with the minimum required players or refuses to continue. League Management determines the final result and any discipline.
- 8.3.3** A League-directed cancellation caused by facility closure, unsafe conditions or another circumstance outside a team's control is not automatically a team forfeit. League Management determines whether an interrupted game stands, resumes, is replayed or is otherwise resolved.

9. STANDINGS AND PLAYOFF GAMES

9.1 Regular-season standings

- 9.1.1** A win earns two points, a tie earns one point and a loss earns zero points. Regular-season games tied at the end of regulation remain tied.
- 9.1.2** Teams are ranked first by in-division points percentage: points earned divided by twice the number of counted in-division games played. Unless a realignment notice states otherwise, only games against teams assigned to the same division when standings are issued count toward that division's ranking.
- 9.1.3** If teams remain tied, apply: head-to-head points percentage where schedules are reasonably comparable; fewest forfeits; goal differential per counted game; goals against per counted game; and then a recorded random draw. Reapply the sequence to teams remaining tied after a separation.

9.2 Playoff structure

- 9.2.1** Open divisions use a 22-game regular season, conference-based double-elimination playoffs and a single East-versus-West City Championship game. The published bracket controls seeding, byes, advancement and any reset game.
- 9.2.2** Each team is guaranteed a minimum of two playoff games through the double-elimination format. The City Championship is an additional game earned by advancing teams and is not counted toward the two-game minimum.
- 9.2.3** League Management will publish separate playoff formats for 35+ and Women's divisions. A format applying to one division does not automatically apply to another.

9.3 Playoff shootout

- 9.3.1** A playoff game tied at the end of regulation proceeds directly to a shootout without overtime. Each team selects three eligible skaters for the opening round. Opposing shooters shoot simultaneously on opposite nets, beginning on the referee's whistle, with one referee positioned at each goal line.
- 9.3.2** After three shots per team, the team with more goals wins. If tied, the shootout continues in sudden-death rounds of one simultaneous shot per team. The game ends when one team scores and the other does not in the same round.
- 9.3.3** A skater is ineligible to shoot if a penalty assessed directly to that skater remains unexpired at the end of regulation. A skater serving a penalty assessed to another player or to the team remains eligible. Ejected or otherwise ineligible participants may not shoot.
- 9.3.4** Every eligible skater must shoot once before any skater may shoot again. After all eligible skaters have shot once, repeat shooters may be used in any order; teams need not preserve the original order.

10. DIVISION-SPECIFIC PROVISIONS

10.1 Open divisions

- 10.1.1** Players and teams must be suitable for the assigned skill division. “Open” does not remove League Management’s authority to restrict a player from a particular level.

10.2 35+ divisions

- 10.2.1** A regular-roster skater must turn 35 no later than the final day of the published regular season. A goaltender must be at least 30 years old at the start of the season. Standard spare skaters must be at least 30, subject to the younger-spare exception below.
- 10.2.2** During the regular season only, a team may dress no more than two approved spare skaters aged 26–29 in a game. Each must be registered, be an appropriate calibre and receive League Management approval at least 24 hours before the scheduled start.
- 10.2.3** A younger approved player is spare-only, cannot be treated as a regular-roster player in the 35+ division and is not eligible for the playoffs. The goaltender age rule continues during playoffs.

10.3 Women’s divisions

- 10.3.1** All common registration, eligibility, playing and disciplinary rules apply. League Management will issue the conference structure, playoff bracket and any crossover or City Championship format separately.

10.4 Written scope

- 10.4.1** A division-specific notice must identify the affected division and the provision it changes. A participant-specific exception must be confirmed by League Management and cannot be created solely by captain agreement.

END OF RULES AND REGULATIONS

Questions and official submissions must use the channel identified in the Captains Portal or the applicable rule above.