



Asheville Hockey League
Travel Program
Operational Guidelines
Asheville Rapids

Section 1. Purpose.

The purpose of the Asheville Hockey League (AHL) travel program is to provide a safe, fun environment allowing players to learn good sportsmanship, leadership, responsibility and fellowship through competitive team play. All AHL travel program Administrators and Coaches will encourage these goals, and the AHL hopes parents and spectators will reinforce them. The AHL intends to exemplify the principles and philosophies of USA Hockey InLine, the national governing body for the sport of inline hockey in the United States. As a guide to achieving these goals, the AHL has adopted the USA Hockey Inline Sportsmanship Rule, Section 17, and Codes of Conduct for coaches, administrators, parents, spectators, and players, Section 18. The AHL also will provide our coaches USA Hockey InLine-sponsored training. Additionally, the AHL will provide programs that provide playing opportunities for players of all ages, levels, and degrees of commitment.

Section 2. Travel Board

The AHL Travel Board will be a subcommittee of the AHL Executive Board consisting of the following members, appointed by the AHL Board: Travel Program Commissioner, Travel Program Asst Commissioner, and Travel Program Administrator.

Section 3. Name, Colors and Logo

The name of the AHL travel program teams will be the Asheville Rapids. The colors of the Asheville Rapids shall be royal blue, black, and white. The Asheville Rapids logo shall be: The Asheville Rapids Logo shall not be reprinted without the express permission of the AHL.



Section 4. Fees

Registration fees will be calculated on a per season basis for the entire program. Fees will include practice times, tournament fees, pucks, and any other miscellaneous purchases as needed. Registration fees are based on a minimum of 10 players on a roster and an 8 tournament schedule. **New jerseys are NOT included in the registration fees** (see section 6 – Jerseys).

Registrations Fees may be paid in full at the time rosters are determined, or may be paid in four installments – Oct 1st, Dec 1st, Feb 1st, and Apr 1st.

Section 5. Tournament Schedule

The AHL Travel Committee and the Coaches for all teams will meet at the beginning of the travel season to set the schedule for the entire season for all teams. Travel teams will enter an average of 8 tournaments per season. Every attempt will be made to arrange a schedule such that all teams will attend the same tournaments, however there may be times when each team chooses to attend different tournaments. **Tournament dates will be scheduled to have the least impact on the AHL recreational season.**

The AHL travel program tournament schedule will be posted to the AHL - Travel Program web page at <http://www.ashevillehockey.org/travel.html>

Section 6. Jerseys.

Each travel player is required by the AHL travel program to have two game jerseys (one home & one away). New jerseys may be purchased through the travel program, at the expense of the player. New jerseys will be ordered after team selections. Players need to bring both jerseys to all games – washed and clean for every tournament. Screen printing of names and numbers will be arranged at time of the purchasing of new jerseys and is the expense of the player. *Game Jerseys are not to be worn during practices.*

New players must select a number not utilized within the team or in the division above, if the player will age to the next division team before the player having same number ages out.

Section 7. Coaches

Coaches for each age level will be accepted on a volunteer/nomination basis. If more than one head coach wishes the position for the same team, applications will be accepted and the AHL Executive Board will make the final decision. The team Head Coaches should be identified as early as possible to ensure the program requirements and tryout process is addressed at the earliest possible dates. All coaches are required to complete an AHL coach's application and City of Asheville Coaches Application, including a background authorization. All coaches and administrative personnel participate on a volunteer basis. No coach or volunteer with the travel program will receive compensation in any way for their participation.

In selecting coaches, consideration will be given to:

- Tenure in coaching with the AHL travel program teams.
- USA Hockey Inline certification levels, or other coaching certifications
- Past experience in coaching competitive youth sports.
- Thorough knowledge of the rules, individual and team skills, and instructional techniques.
- The ability to instill both good sportsmanship and discipline (on and off the playing surface.)
- The ability to deal with parents, coaches, and officials associated with the game.
- Leadership ability, both on and off the playing surface.
- Willingness to abide by the applicable policies.
- Ability to develop the players to their fullest possible hockey potential.
- Availability and dependability.

All Head Coaches should strive to achieve at least Level I and Level II of the USA Hockey InLine coaches program. AHL will select the most qualified coaches and assistant coaches at each level. The goal is to have a minimum of two coaches on each bench. All coaches will adhere to the AHL guidelines.

Section 8. Waiver/Exceptions to Players Playing in Their Age Division.

AHL expects & strongly encourages all players to register and compete at their age appropriate level as determined by USA Hockey InLine rules. The option of "playing-up" into a different age division is not a right. Development of a competitive environment at each playing level depends on the use of players of all skills within those playing levels. AHL programs are specifically designed to optimize the learning experience of all AHL players and build an understanding of team responsibility. The AHL Travel Committee must specifically approve any exceptions to this policy.

In the extremely rare case when approval to play up a division is considered, the Travel Committee will interview coaches involved in the team selection process to solicit their assessment. A player requesting to move up into a higher age classification must complete the try out evaluation session with the older age group. After this evaluation is complete, the score will be compared to the age group's scores in the older age group in which the player is seeking to play. In order to be considered, the petitioning player's score must place that individual within the top five skaters of the older age group in which he/she desires to compete.

Section 9. Team Assignments/Tryout Schedules

Team assignment shall be made through a tryout process that evaluates all players seeking to play travel hockey for the AHL travel program. **Any player registering to try out for the AHL travel hockey program is required to play in at least one session of the AHL recreation program the same season - either fall or spring.** If, during the season, a team requires additional players because of losses for injuries, or members leaving a team, the Head Coach of the team may select players from the AHL recreation program in the same age group or request a player from the travel team of the division below play on both teams. This decision must be agreed upon by both coaches.

Teams will have specific evaluation sessions. These sessions will number at a minimum of two and not to exceed ten. All players must attend a minimum number of sessions (to be determined by the head coach) to be properly evaluated for team selection. All players should attempt to attend the maximum number of evaluation sessions as possible. Evaluation sessions for each team will be announced on the AHL - Travel Program web page at <http://www.ashevillehockey.org/travel.html> . Team selections will be announced no later than one week after the evaluation sessions end and will be posted on the AHL - Travel Program web page at <http://www.ashevillehockey.org/travel.html> .

The head coach of each team will determine the course of action for those participants who are not placed on their team. (i.e. cut, whether to offer a practice squad, offer to be on the team for development purposes (little or no play), etc...)

Section 10. Individual Team Rules

Each Coach is responsible for providing all players and parents on that team with a list of all team rules. Parents and players will acknowledge receipt of these rules, which will be understood and agreed to by all involved. In general, behavior such as fighting, foul language, temper tantrums on or off the surface and stick banging will not be tolerated.

Section 11. Commitment

The sport of hockey is team oriented. As such, players are expected to commit to regular attendance at practices and games. Participation on an AHL travel team should not be viewed as "pick-up hockey." Team play and skill development are stressed in all AHL programs.

Players and parents should understand that participation in the AHL's travel program requires a significant commitment of time and effort. Each travel player is expected to take seriously his or her willingness to be an important part of a team representing AHL in travel play. AHL expects each travel player to make participation on the AHL inline travel team his or her highest inline hockey priority during the travel team's season. **Players *MAY NOT PARTICIPATE* on a non-AHL inline hockey team where that participation WILL CONFLICT with the player's AHL commitments.** Players may participate, *with prior approval* of the AHL travel team's Head Coach and the AHL travel commissioner, on a non-AHL inline hockey team where that participation

does not conflict with the players AHL commitments. *Requests to play on a non-AHL inline hockey team should be kept to a minimum.*

Section 12. Player Returning After Leaving

If a player leaves the AHL travel program at the end of a season, that player can tryout and be accepted on an AHL travel program team without prejudice. However, if any player that has been selected for an AHL travel program team leaves that team at anytime before the end of the season to join a team in another hockey association, the player will be required to apply with the AHL Executive Board of Directors to be accepted back into AHL travel program. The Board will review each case, based on the reason for leaving and the needs of the program. A player can be selected to tryout by board approval. All returning players must first apply with the Travel Program Commissioner.

The only exceptions will be for a player who leaves with his/her family relocating to another city. Players who withdraw from AHL travel program prior to team selection for the next year forfeit their right to their jersey number, and will only be allowed to tryout for future teams as a new player on a space available basis.

Section 13. Player Utilization.

Coaches must remember that they have a strategic responsibility to the overall development of each player assigned to their team and a broader responsibility to the overall progress of the AHL player pool as a whole. This policy is applicable to both Recreation and Travel programs.

Since parents and players accept that travel hockey is of a more competitive nature, implementation of this policy differs slightly between recreation and travel programs. However, travel coaches are not exempt from the intent and spirit of this policy and shall support this policy as they develop, challenge and use their players.

Player utilization during tournament play may be adjusted to optimize the team's competitive ability, but at no time should there be players who are not utilized at all during a game. Possible exceptions to this policy involve travel players added to a team's roster for developmental reasons, as a means of developing the player and the program's talent pool. Coaches must make clear to the player and the player's parents the conditions under which the player is being offered a slot on the team. Players added to a roster for developmental reasons must be so identified to the Travel Program Commissioner. Coaches are free to use such players somewhat less during tournament play, but at no time should the player sit an entire game for the sake of competitive advantage. Coaches must look for opportunities to expose the player to game play whenever possible.

Section 14. Player Safety

All players must wear approved skating and protective equipment at all practice sessions and games.

Section 15. Substance Abuse Policy

AHL believes that the consumption, use, or abuse of alcohol or illicit drugs is detrimental to a healthy state of mind, body, and spirit in an athletic participant. This is especially true for those participants aspiring to further their playing, coaching, or officiating skills in the sport of hockey. Therefore, the AHL travel program prohibits the consumption of alcohol or use of illicit drugs by any

underage participant who is actively participating in AHL programs as stated in Article 13 – Screening & Substance Abuse of the AHL By-Laws.

Section 16. Grievances/Discipline

Address all complaints to the Team Representative, Coach, or the Team Manager in private. The 24 hour rule must be followed – this means that all complaints or discussions with coaches must wait 24 hours after the applicable game or practice. If the Coach and/or Team Manager/Representative are unable to resolve the problem, they will present the problem to the Travel Program Administrator. If the Travel Program Administrator can not resolve the problem, then the Administrator will bring the problem to the AHL Disciplinary Committee for resolution. At no time should a parent involve other Board members or parents with individual or team problems. If a parent feels that they can not address the problem to the Coach, Team Manager, and/or Team Representative, then they should address their problem directly to the Travel Program Administrator.

Section 17. AHL Sportsmanship Rule

Players, Coaches, Parents, and Spectators are required to conduct all their relations with other teams, their own team, and the other Program individuals in a spirit of good sportsmanship.

Section 18. AHL travel program Codes of Conduct.

The AHL travel program adopts the USA Hockey InLine Codes of Conduct for use by AHL travel program players, coaches, administrators, parents, and spectators. The AHL travel program's Codes of Conduct, which are based on the Codes of Conduct of this national sanctioning body are as follows:

Player's Code of Conduct

- Play for FUN and enjoyment of the sport.
- Winning is a consideration, but not the only one, nor the most important one.
- Work hard to improve your skills.
- Be a team player--get along with your teammates.
- Learn teamwork, sportsmanship and discipline.
- Be on time for practices and games.
- Learn the rules and play by them.
- Always be a good sport.
- Respect your coaches, teammates, parents, opponents and the officials.
- Never argue with an official's decision.
- Respect the arena and its facilities. Without them, you wouldn't have a place to play.

Coach's Code of Conduct

- Winning is a consideration, but not the only one, nor the most important one.
- Care more about the child than winning the game.
- Be a positive role model to your players, display emotional maturity and be alert to the physical safety of players.
- Be generous with your praise when it is deserved; be consistent, honest; be fair and just; do not criticize players publicly; learn to be a more effective communicator; don't yell at players.

- Adjust to personal needs and problems of players, be a good listener, never verbally or physically abuse a player or official; give all players the opportunity to improve their skills, gain confidence and develop self esteem; teach them the basics.
- Organize practices that are fun and challenging for your players.
- Familiarize yourself with the rules, techniques, and strategies of hockey; encourage all your players to be team players.
- Maintain an open line of communication with your players and parents. Explain the goals and objectives of the AHL travel program.
- Be concerned with the overall development of your players; it's more important to be a good citizen than a great hockey player.
- Stress good health habits and clean living.
- Promote the tenants of the AHL travel program coaching approach: FUN, FUNDAMENTALS, and FOCUS.
- To play the game is great; to love the game is greater.

Parent's Code of Conduct

- Do not force your children to participate in sports, but support their desires to play their chosen sport. Children are involved in organized sports for their enjoyment. Make it fun.
- Encourage your child to play by the rules. Remember, children learn best by example, so applaud the good plays on both teams.
- Do not embarrass your child by yelling at players, coaches or officials. By showing a positive attitude toward the game and all of its participants, your child will benefit.
- Emphasize skill development and practice and how they benefit your young athlete. De-emphasize games and competition in lower age groups.
- Know and study the rules of the game, support the officials on and off the surface. This approach helps in the development and support of the game. Any criticism of the officials only hurts the game.
- Applaud a good effort in victory and in defeat; enforce the positive points of the game.
- Never yell or physically abuse your child after game or practice--it is destructive.
- Work toward removing the physical and verbal abuse in youth sports.
- Recognize the importance of volunteer coaches. They are important to the development of your child and the sport. Communicate with them and support them.
- If you enjoy the game, learn all you can about the game, and volunteer!

Spectator's Code of Conduct

(A few simple rules so that everyone may enjoy Rapids hockey)

- Display good sportsmanship.
- Always respect players, coaches and officials.
- Always act appropriately; do not taunt or disturb other fans; enjoy the game together.
- Cheer good plays of all participants; avoid booing opponents.
- Profanity and objectionable cheers or gestures are offensive; cheer in a positive manner and encourage fair play.

- Throwing any items on the ice surface can cause injury to players and officials; help provide a safe and fun environment.
- Do not lean or pound the glass surrounding the surface. Do not kick or pound on the metal bleachers
- Support the referees and coaches by trusting their judgment and integrity.
- Be responsible for your own safety--be alert to prevent accidents from flying pucks and other avoidable situations.
- Respect locker rooms and the private areas for players, coaches, and officials.

Administrator's Code of Conduct

- Follow the rules and regulations of USA Hockey, the AHL travel program and any other associated organizations to ensure that their philosophy and objectives are enhanced.
- Support programs that train and educate players, coaches, parents, officials and volunteers.
- Promote and publicize our programs; seek out financial support when possible.
- Communicate with parents by holding parent/players orientation meetings as well as by being available to answer questions and address problems throughout the season.
- Work to provide programs that encompass fairness to the participants and promote fair play and sportsmanship.
- Recruit volunteers, including coaches, who demonstrate qualities conducive to being role models to the youth in our sport.
- Encourage coaches and officials to attend USA Hockey clinics and the AHL travel program education opportunities; support the necessity of that training to maintain League growth.
- Make every possible attempt to provide everyone, at all skill levels, with a place to play.
- Read and be familiar with the contents of the USA Hockey Annual Guide and Rule Books.
- Develop other administrators to advance to positions in the AHL travel program, perhaps even your own.