

The Player's Guide to Starting a Hockey Team

WHAM's Guide to Success for New Team Managers

This information is provided through the efforts and assistance of the WHAM Board. For questions or comments, please contact a Division Commissioner, contact information is on the WHAM website www.whamhockey.org

The following packet contains information that is designed to help you through the process of organizing and managing a hockey team in the Women's Hockey Association of Minnesota (WHAM). Reading through the entire book will provide you with the information you will need to ensure your team gets off to a good start and continues to run smoothly. Our goal is to provide you with the tools for making your inaugural season successful—organizationally speaking, the skating and shooting are up to you. ☺

Congratulations on starting your new hockey team!

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WHAM, What Is It?

For a detailed history, check out the WHAM website, www.whamhockey.org.

WHAM stands for Women's Hockey Association of Minnesota. We are a league for women hockey players from beginner levels (C3 Division) to Elite players (A Division). WHAM has existed since the early 1980's and has grown to a league of over 70 teams and 1200 players from all over the metro area as well as Duluth and Western Wisconsin. The WHAM season ends with a state tournament for all Divisions. In addition, WHAM sends teams to the USA Hockey National Tournament each year.

To become affiliated with WHAM, your team needs to contact the appropriate Division Commissioner for the division in which you might enter. Newer skaters would likely enter into the C2 or C3 division, while skaters with high school and college experience would enter into the A and B divisions. Division Commissioner contact information is located on the WHAM website. Once you've contacted them, more detailed information about registration procedures will be provided.

All ages and skill levels are welcome! Last year, the age range for all of WHAM was from 19 years to 60+. The skill level ranged from D1 college level players to women who have never been on skates before!

Welcome to the coolest sport on ice. This game is a blast and WHAM is here to help you play and have fun. Congratulations on starting your new hockey team!

Table of Contents:

Chapter	Page #
1 Getting Started in WHAM	3
2 Before the Season	4
3 Playing the Season	6
4 State Tournament	7
5 WHAM Calendar	8
6 Running a Team - How Other Teams Do It	9

1. Getting Started in WHAM

OK, so you've decided you want to start a team. Since you're the one reading this booklet, the assumption is that you're in charge - meaning **you** are the Team Manager. *Congratulations!*

As Team Manager, you are responsible for ensuring that all of the paperwork required by WHAM and our affiliated organizations (MN Hockey and USA hockey) is submitted correctly and on time. In addition, it is your job to ensure that your team fees are paid on time, and when there are questions about your team, WHAM will ask you. Team Managers are central for WHAM's operation. Team Managers relay information from their players and teams to the commissioners and board members, and information about WHAM gets to the players through the Team Managers.

Players / Team ↔ **Team Manager** ↔ Commissioners / Board Members

You are the hub!

In the following pages, you will find everything you need to start your season in WHAM. Each chapter is organized so that a short "To Do" list gives you the highlights, followed by more detailed information. In addition, the WHAM Handbook provides valuable information about rules, procedures and who to contact when you have questions.

2. Before the Season

To Do list:

1. Inform the WHAM Division Commissioner that your team will be playing in the upcoming season by the deadline posted in the WHAM Operating Rules which are located in the WHAM Handbook.
2. Begin your roster of eligible players.
3. Purchase ice
4. Coaching certifications
5. Jerseys
6. Delegating team responsibilities
7. Additional things to do

1. Intent to Play.

By the posted deadline of the upcoming season, you need to let your Division Commissioner know that you intend to field a team and will play in that division. In the interest of fairness to other players and teams, WHAM rules specify who is eligible to play at which levels based on previous playing experience. Players wanting to skate outside of the rules will be required to attend an on-ice skills evaluation. For example, a player with high school experience is directed to play in B1 per WHAM's Operating Rules. If that skater wanted to skate on a B2 team, she would need to attend an on-ice evaluation. Refer to the WHAM Operating Rules and WHAM website for further information on the experience guidelines and skills assessments. If you have any questions about players or the appropriate level at which your team should play, talk with the Division Commissioner of your likely level or a Board member.

2. Roster.

It is the Team Manager's responsibility to make sure their players individually register online and are eligible to skate at that level per the WHAM Operating Rules; failure to do so creates problems for everyone in the league. All new players to the league may need to attend a skills assessment unless they have a certain level of experience and enter at the appropriate level, per WHAM Operating Rules. It is your responsibility as Team Manager to understand the skills assessment process and make sure your players comply. Not complying can lead to player suspensions and team disqualification of both regular season and state tournament games.

Most C level teams have at least 13 skaters and a goalie. Some have as many as 20 skaters. The rules allow for 25 women on your roster, but remember, only 20 may be dressed and on the bench at game time. Skaters are required to wear full protective equipment (helmet, shoulder pads, elbow pads, gloves, breezers, shin guards, skates and a mouth guard is recommended).

3. Purchase Ice.

It is each team's responsibility to contract and pay for their own ice for their home games. This is accomplished by calling on the various rink managers of the arenas that you are interested in playing at. Some rinks will reserve ice for you as early as May of the upcoming season, while others will contract with you later in the summer or early fall. Regardless, you must have your ice times set for the entire season by the time you meet with other Team Managers at the Fall Scheduling Meeting. The earlier you book your ice, the less likely you are to have late ice times (note: late ice may cost less money at some rinks). Also note that referees may charge slightly more per game for starts after 9:30 or 10:00 PM. You can schedule practices as late or early as you wish. Payments are usually due prior to use, so budget accordingly. For Minnesota rinks, location, contact information and availability: www.rinkfinder.com

How many hours of ice should you buy? You will need anywhere from 10-15 hours of ice for home games. You should contact your division commissioner to determine how many home games you will play – generally you play each team in your division at least twice, once on your ice and once on their ice. Ice costs vary from \$140 –180 per hour.

Many teams open a checking account that is dedicated for team funds only. Over the course of the season, you'll receive player payments and you'll write checks to cover ice time, referee fees and tournament fees. Overall, your record keeping will be much cleaner with a dedicated account.

4. **Coaches.**

If you have a coach, s/he should be certified through Level 2. To help meet this requirement, WHAM reimburses teams for one certification. Send a copy of your coaching card (both front and back) to the WHAM Treasurer for reimbursement.

To find out when and where the next coaching certification clinics are taking place, check out:

<http://www.usahockey.com>

5. **Jerseys.**

Teams are required to have matching jerseys. Though the season may be several months off, it may take time to get your jerseys before the season. You will need both home and away jerseys. Rules for jerseys are: the home set must be white or a very light color (stay away from gray, gold and any color that might be seen as a darker color) and the away set should be a dark color (again, stay away from gray, etc.). Numbers are needed on the back of the jerseys in a size easily seen (usually about 10 inches). For home games, you'll wear your light jerseys; away games, your dark ones.

Practice weight/single color jerseys are the least expensive. You may be able to strike a deal with a local sporting goods shop to sponsor your team and provide jerseys at a reduced cost. Otherwise, plan on paying about \$30-\$50 per jersey per player and about \$15 per player for hockey socks.

Since you're forming a new team, it's also a good idea to make it clear at the start of the year who owns the jerseys. Does everyone pay for their own jerseys and then keep them if they leave the team? Or does the team own them but everyone helps pay for the jerseys and the jerseys are turned in at the end of the year for next year's team? Deciding this before you order the jerseys can save you a lot of problems later if there is a misunderstanding over who owns the jerseys.

6. **Delegating Team Responsibilities.**

You'll soon find out that organizing and managing a team can be a lot of work for one person. Don't be afraid to get your teammates involved. For instance, one person on your team might work with the arenas on getting ice time, another might attend the scheduling meeting, and someone else might take care of the team's finances. But, no matter how your team shares the work load, the Team Manager will always be the contact person for WHAM related matters.

7. **Additional Things to Do.**

Players - If you need players, you can post a message on the WHAM website indicating your team is looking for players. You can also attend area women's hockey clinics, go to open skating sessions, or attend summer and/or fall women's leagues. Many players are found by asking people you know to recommend someone who is available to join your team or by networking with other players. If you are starting a new team of new skaters, ask your friends! Players looking for teams are also listed on the WHAM website.

Goalie – If you have a new goalie, you will soon find out the gear is expensive. WHAM allows new teams, and new goalies to "borrow" goalie equipment for the first season. If you think your team would like an opportunity to use this gear, let your Division Commissioner know. There are a limited number of sets so make sure WHAM knows that you need it. There is a \$100 deposit on the gear which is refunded upon return of the gear.

Practices – Though it is summer, you may want to schedule some practices on the ice. Now is also a good time to get some dryland training.

3. Playing the Season

To Do list:

1. Players must register online with WHAM before their first game.
2. Attend Mandatory Fall Meeting
3. Attend Ice Scheduling Meeting
4. Officials
5. Score sheets

1. Online Registration.

Before any games can be played, waiver forms and online registration for every player and coach must be submitted to the league registrars. Failure to do this prior to playing a game results in game forfeitures, as well as, jeopardizes the ability of the league to insure any player(s) that may be injured during play.

2. Attend Mandatory Fall Meeting.

During the Fall Meeting (Sept/Oct) any updates regarding USA hockey playing rules, officials, etc. are provided to the Team Managers who, in turn, are expected to relay this information to their players. Failure to attend this meeting incurs a monetary penalty.

3. Attend Ice Scheduling Meeting.

This meeting sets the playing schedule for the season. Come with your ice schedule (and a fellow teammate to help!), so that you can work with the other Team Managers in your division and your Division Commissioner to schedule your games for the season. On average, at least 2 games are scheduled with each team in your division. Home games will be on your ice and away games on the other team's ice. If an odd number of games are decided upon, be sure to clarify which teams will be home / away.

If you can reserve a few extra sheets of ice with the option of selling them back to the arena or be flexible with your practice dates, it will make scheduling a bit easier – remember the other teams have schedule constraints too.

4. Officials.

After the scheduling meeting, a master schedule is sent to the referee association, who then assigns refs to the games. Be sure to double check the master schedule with your Division Commissioner. For the home games, your team is responsible for paying the referees and in the case of odd numbered games, each team usually pays one ref fee. The usual procedure is to provide each ref a check leaving the Payee line blank or made out to Cash.

5. Score sheets.

You will be provided with a supply of blank score sheets prior to the start of the season. Home teams are responsible for bringing the score sheet to the game. Fill out your team information, date, rink, and opposing team in the appropriate places. Be sure to designate which player is the goalie. Many teams use pre-printed, self adhesive labels with player names and numbers. You will need 4 labels for each game (original and 3 duplicate copies).

In addition, as the home team you are responsible for supplying someone who can run the clock and complete the score sheet. This could be the same person, but it might be easier if there was more than one person. Dressed players cannot fill this function.

After the game, the winning team is required to update the game online through WHAM's stat cat program and mail the official score sheet to the designated "stat cat" within 7 days of the game. Failure to do so, will result in a forfeiture of any points earned for that game. In the event of a tie, the home team is responsible for sending the score sheet in.

4. State Tournament

To Do list:

1. Submit tournament fees
2. Sign up to help at the tournament
3. Sell advertising for program

1. Submit Tournament Fees.

The top teams in each Division will have an opportunity to play off for State Championship. The Division Commissioners will let you know if your team qualifies. Teams are required to pay a fee to play in the tournament to help cover ice time and referees. In the past, this fee has been in the \$400-\$525 range. All tourney deadlines and information will be communicated to you by your Division Commissioner.

2. Volunteer.

The state tournament is run by volunteers from the league. People are needed to keep score, open the penalty doors, run the clock and sell tickets at the door. This is a great opportunity to watch a lot of hockey AND support your league. It can also be a fund-raising event as your team earns money by donating a minimum amount of their time to the event.

3. Program Advertising

You can reduce your teams cost to enter the State Tournament by selling advertising in the State Tournament Program. Information on costs will be communicated in your tournament packet.

5. WHAM Calendar

Important dates

Sept 1	Declare team status. Requires sending notification to the Commissioner of the Division your team will be playing hockey for the upcoming season.
Sept/Oct	Scheduling meeting.
Sept/Oct	Mandatory Fall Meeting for Team Managers (or other designated representative from your team). At this meeting, information that is important for managing and playing hockey is shared with the managers who are responsible for sharing this information with their players. Failure to attend this meeting incurs a monetary penalty.
Mid-Late Oct	Start of the hockey season. WHAM games are not to be played prior to the announced date.
Dec 31	Last day to add players to roster and have them eligible to play in the State and National tournaments.
Last Weekend of February	End of regular season. Date last games may be played.
Mid-March	State Tournament.
Early April	Mandatory Spring Meeting for Team Managers (or other designated representative from your team). At this meeting, teams will vote on rules changes, elect board members and you may even choose to run! Failure to attend this meeting incurs a monetary penalty.

6. Running a Team – How Other Teams Do It

Team A

When the team was formed, people provided input to the Team Manager who created lists of responsibilities for the Team Manager, Coach(es), Team Captains, and Team Players. This created a framework for everyone to know and understand what was expected of them.

Team B

Having learned over the years, we now require our players to be paid up before they take the ice in November. In June, a \$100 non-refundable deposit is used to hold a spot for the upcoming season. Estimates of the season fees are communicated to the players so they can budget accordingly and make their payments (too often, some members of the team were funding payment shortages).

Team C

The Team Manager liaisons between WHAM and the team, and does most, but not all of the team communications regarding practices, social events, etc. There are another 4 -5 players who help run the team. For example, someone else is responsible for managing the checkbook (at least 1 other person is a signer on the team account), someone else orders extra jerseys, t-shirts, hats. Others reserve rink time (which happens as soon as the rink allows us), and go to the scheduling meeting. For our team, it's much easier if everyone pitches in to help. The other players are responsible for bringing pucks and having a scorekeeper at our home games.

Team D

Players have the option to buy their jersey and have their names screened or to use a team jersey, which is to be returned at the end of the season. We usually keep 2 extra sets of jerseys for subs or new players. We roster 14 players (goalie included) and 2 subs, who pay almost half the cost of a full-time player.

Team E

Our team's first year budget was as follows:

\$ 50 per player	Registration Dues (USA Hockey, Minnesota Hockey & WHAM)
\$100 per player	Jerseys
\$150 per player	Ice Times (practice and games, 20 ice times/20 players)
<u>\$ 40 per player</u>	Referee costs (10 home games at \$80 per game/20 players)
\$340 per player	Total cost for one season of play (not including tournaments)