

WHL Playing Rules 2025-2026

1. **LENGTH OF GAMES** – Games will be 3 periods, 15 minutes each, running time. The final minute of the 1st and 2nd periods will be stop time. The last 2 minutes of the 3rd period will be stop time only if the difference in the score is 2 goals or less. The clock will be set to 18:00 to accommodate a 3-minute warm-up which will start immediately after the zamboni doors are closed.
2. **GET READY TO RUMBLE** – Referees will drop the puck at 15:00 to start the game and at 14:00 of the 2nd and 3rd periods whether teams are ready or not. Puck can be dropped sooner if both teams are ready.
3. **GAME PUCKS** – The Home Team must provide 2 game pucks. A minor penalty for delay of game will be assessed if they cannot provide 2 pucks. The opening faceoff will be in the Home Team's end zone.
4. **NO BODY CHECKING** – A 3-minute minor penalty or a 7-minute major penalty and automatic game misconduct shall be assessed.
5. **RECKLESS PLAY RULE** – A 10-minute misconduct penalty will be assessed to any player who plays in a reckless manner, accidentally or otherwise, that puts others in potential danger. The team will not play short-handed. The penalized player will serve the full 10-minutes in the penalty box. This penalty may be assessed instead of, or in addition to, any minor or major penalty from the same play.
6. **PENALTIES** – Minor penalties are 3 minutes running time. Major penalties are 7 minutes running time. 10-minute misconduct penalties are running time. All penalties begin when the puck is dropped to resume play. If a player's penalty expires during a stoppage in play, the player must wait in the penalty box until the puck is dropped before going on the ice. *Players cannot walk to their team bench when their penalty expires. They must exit onto the ice and then enter their team's bench using the door from the ice. A minor penalty will be assessed to players who do not abide by this rule.
7. **JAILBREAK RULE** – Any time a short-handed team scores during a MINOR penalty, their penalized teammate returns to the ice immediately. The power play ends. This does not apply to MAJOR penalties.
8. **MAJOR PENALTIES** – 7-minute Major penalties will result in the player being removed from the game (automatic Game Misconduct) and a review of the incident by league organizers. Another player from her team, who was on the ice at the time of her penalty must serve the full 7 minutes running time in the penalty box. Additional penalties or misconduct penalties, especially for Reckless Play, or abuse of other players, officials (verbal or physical) will also be reviewed by league organizers to determine if further discipline is warranted.

9. HIT THE SHOWERS – any player receiving 3 penalties in the same game will be immediately ejected from that game (game ejection). Another player from her team, who was on the ice at the time of her 3rd penalty must serve her 3rd penalty. Each 3-minute and each 10-minute penalty will count as 1 penalty toward the 3 penalties per game rule. A double minor penalty (6 minutes for roughing) will count as 2 penalties. A delayed penalty washed out due to the scoring of a goal will also count toward a player's 3 penalties. The referee will report a delayed penalty to the timekeeper and inform the player, even though the penalty is not actually served.
10. SEE YOU NEXT YEAR – Any player who receives 3 game ejections or 3 game misconducts or a combination to equal 3 occurrences during the season will be suspended from playing, refereeing, timekeeping, or volunteering for the remainder of the season. League organizers will review the player's conduct to determine if further discipline is warranted.
11. JERSEY RULE – Fun, Beer & Middle Leagues Only. No player is permitted to score more than 3 goals per game. The player's 4th goal will be disallowed, and the ensuing face off will take place in the offending team's zone.
12. SLAP SHOTS
 - (a). No slap shots, or fake slap shots allowed (wind up above the knees) in Fun, Beer, or Middle Leagues. A 3-minute minor penalty will be assessed, and the team will play short-handed.
 - (b). Slap shots ARE allowed in Big League – the bigger the better! BUT... When playing against a team with no goalie, a player who takes a slap shot that puts anyone on the ice in jeopardy of injury, will be assessed a 10-minute misconduct.
13. SHOOT OUT - BIG LEAGUE ONLY: If a game is tied at the end of regulation time, the tie will be broken with a 3-player shootout. If the outcome is already determined after 2 shooters from each team, the 3rd shooter will not shoot. If still tied after 3 shooters, teams will continue to send shooters until the tie is broken (in a 'sudden death' format). All players dressed for that game must take a turn before any player is allowed to take a second shot. *Pick up Players and players serving their own penalty at the end of the game cannot participate in the Shoot Out.
14. PLAYING WITH NO GOALIE – A team with no goalie can play with 6 skaters instead. If one of the skaters is equipped with a goalie blocker and glove, she will be granted all goalie privileges, meaning she can cover the puck in the crease for a whistle and does not have to play the puck on icings. If none of the 6 skaters has a goalie blocker and glove, none of them will have goalie privileges, meaning they cannot cover the puck at any time, and they must attempt to play all icings.

15. NUMBER OF PLAYERS TO START A GAME

(a). You must have at least 5 players to start the game. Teams with less than 5 at the 15:00 mark of the first period (puck drop) will begin with a 2-0 deficit. If the team still has less than 5 players with 5-minutes remaining in the first period, the team will lose by forfeit (officially a 5-0 win for the opposing team).

(b). The above measures can be avoided if both teams agree to allow the short-handed team to pick up players from the opposing team, either temporarily or for the entire game. In this case, the captains must decide before the game if it will count as an 'official' game or a forfeited game. In either case, the game **MUST** be played.

(c). It is perfectly legal for a team to be made up entirely of pickup players, without any of the team's original roster. This will count as an official game.

16. CANCELLING GAMES – Teams cannot cancel games (refer to League Procedural Items #2 on the next page).

17. LINE CHANGES – Teams have 15 seconds after each whistle to make player changes. Referees will use the Line Change Procedure (raising an arm to signal that time is up) to assist with this and make full use of your playing time. Make your changes quickly!

18. INJURIES – When a player is injured, the Referee is the only person who can instruct the Timekeeper to stop the clock. Players, preferably a captain, can ask a Referee to stop the clock. Referees have been asked to keep the rinks on time and may choose not to stop the clock, depending on the game situation (time left in the game, the score, whether the rink is behind, the seriousness of the injury, etc). Players who disrespect the timekeeper or referees in these circumstances run the risk of being assessed a penalty or game misconduct.

19. 50% OF YOUR GAMES – Everyone is encouraged to play at least 50% of their own team's regular season games. Chronically absent players may not be allowed to play in the playoffs. League Managers will make this decision in cooperation with the team captains.

20. MINIMUM AGE FOR BENCH STAFF – For insurance purposes, everyone on the bench (including "door openers") must be at least 19 years old. Referees and Timekeepers have been asked to 'patrol' this.

21. MUST BE A WHLer – No player from outside the league may play in any league game.

League Procedural Items

1. Games will only be cancelled or changed if the league receives notice from the Arena to do so. The WHL cannot cancel games for any reason. If there is a game cancelled or a location change, the League Scheduler will send out a mass email to the involved players and to the League Manager. Notice of the cancellation will also be posted on the league Website and Facebook page. It is then the Captain's responsibility to inform players who may not regularly use email or social media about the game change/cancellation.
2. No Team can cancel a game. Teams who do not show up for their game will be fined the cost of the game (\$270) and lose 5-0. Further consequences may also be assessed. Captains are expected to pick up players and ensure that the game is played. An entire team of pickup players is perfectly acceptable.
3. All players, referees and timekeepers are insured by CARHA (Canadian Adult Recreational Hockey Association). A player or official with an injury requiring an insurance claim should contact their League Manager.
4. **The WHL does not provide First Aid Kits. Not all rinks have First Aid Kits readily available. If this is a priority for your team, we recommend you purchase a basic First Aid Kit and bring it to your games.**
5. WHL players are expected to conduct themselves in a fair and responsible manner and shall refrain from comments or behaviour which is disrespectful, offensive, abusive, racist, or sexist. Behaviour which constitutes harassment, abuse, bullying or cyberbullying will not be tolerated. Members who display negative behaviour may face discipline and be considered not-in-good-standing. Players who are not-in-good-standing will lose the privilege of participating in the Women's Hockey League.
6. Please provide your League Manager with feedback during the season. Suggestions to improve the fun and operations of your League are welcome. Let her know immediately and preferably by phone, of any serious incidents or situations that need immediate attention.

WE CAN'T FIX IT IF WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT IT.