

2026 Tournament Rules and Regulations

Number of Players:

Each team shall be permitted to play 4-position players plus a goalie in the Elementary division. Each team shall be permitted to play 3-position players plus a goalie in the Middle School and High School division.

- Players ARE permitted to use a regular hockey stick, i.e., they do not have to use one of the Bauer ball hockey sticks provided by the Lightning.
- The blade of any regular hockey stick must be at least 3-inches tall when measured from the bottom of the blade to the top of the blade at its thickest point. If less than 3-inches the stick shall be deemed illegal and may not be used in a game or shootout.
- Players are PERMITTED, but are not required, to wear hockey gloves, shin guards under their socks so that the shin guards are not visible, mouthguards, protective eyewear/goggles, knee pads and elbow pads. Shoulder pads, either alone or in combination with elbow pads, are NOT permitted.
- Goalies are REQUIRED to wear all appropriate protective padding including chest protector, leg pads, catching and blocking gloves, and helmet at all times **that will be provided by the teams**. This can be ice hockey or ball hockey goalie pads. Pads must be appropriate size for the individual and referee can ask for a goalie to change equipment if necessary.

Line Changes:

Line Changes shall be made at the discretion of the Head Coach and shall be made on the fly or during a stoppage in play, provided that at no time may a team have more than the allowed number of players and a goalie on the playing surface. Violation of this rule shall result in TOO MANY PLAYERS penalty.

Game Clock:

An official game shall consist of one (1) fifteen (15) minute period that is run time. The Home team gets to determine which net it will defend to start the game. The scorekeeper shall be aware of the time and call out the last 10 minutes and the last minute of play in the period.

Tie Games:

In the event a game is tied at the end of regulation play the game will end in a tie and each team will receive one (1) point.

During playoffs if a game ends in a tie, a five (5) minute 3-on-3 overtime will be played. If still tied after the overtime period, there will be a 3-player shootout with each team alternating shooters.

In the event the game remains tied after the 3-player shootout, a sudden death shootout will proceed. Teams must not repeat shooters until everyone on their team has gone unless the other team has less players and has begun repeating shooters.

Time Outs:

Each team shall be permitted to take one (1) timeout per game, provided the timeout may only be called during a stoppage of play, and provided the timeout shall be not more than 1-minute in length.

The referee shall notify the other team when a timeout has been called, and he or she shall also monitor the length of the timeout to ensure compliance with these rules. The scorekeeper will add an additional 1-minute at the end of the game if necessary.

Playing Rules:

- 1) Sticks are not allowed above a player's waist. Any stick brought or swung above the player's waist, regardless of whether the stick contacts another player, shall be ruled a **High Sticking Penalty**. As such, slap shots are NOT permitted!
- 2) There is no offsides or icing.
- 3) Each game shall begin with an opening faceoff at the center face off dot. The referee will blow the whistle prior to the faceoff and ensure that both goalies are ready before dropping the ball.
 - a. A faceoff shall occur after a goal has been scored at center court following the same procedures set forth above.
 - b. A faceoff shall also occur if the ball gets hit out of play at center court following the same procedures set forth above.
 - c. A faceoff will take place following the assessment of any minor penalties at center court following the same procedures set forth above.
 - d. A faceoff WILL NOT take place following the ball being frozen by the goalie.
 - i. When the referee blows their whistle because the goalie covered the ball, the offensive team **MUST** regroup at half court and remain there until the referee singles the start of the play.
 - ii. Once the defensive team retrieves the ball and the offensive team is at half court, the referee will blow the whistle to single the start of the play.

- iii. The team with the ball on the restart is required to make one pass that is at least fifteen (15) feet in distance before being able to take a shot on net or run with the ball at least fifteen (15) feet in distance before being able to take a shot on net.
- 4) A goal may be scored by directing the ball into the opponent's net with the player's stick, or by having the ball unintentionally bounce off the player's body and into the opponent's net.
- i. The ball may not be thrown, kicked, or otherwise intentionally batted into the net (except by use of the player's stick).

Penalties:

All penalties shall result in a penalty shot against the offending team. Matching penalties **WILL NOT** result in a penalty shot for each team. Instead, those players will be required to leave the rink until the next stoppage in play.

In the case of FIGHTING, which shall in every instance be a **GAME MISCONDUCT** resulting in the players getting ejected from the game and the rest of the tournament.

The referee shall inform the offending team and player what the call was. In addition, at the referee's discretion and in his or her judgment, the infractions of High Sticking, Slashing, Cross-Checking, Body Checking, and Abuse of Officials may also be ruled a GAME MISCONDUCT.

In the event the referee calls one of these infractions a GAME MISCONDUCT the offending Player shall also be removed from the game immediately and shall be suspended from the next game played by his or her team.

- a. **High Sticking:** Any stick brought or swung above the player's waist regardless of whether the stick contacts another player.
- b. **Slashing:** Player using the stick to intentionally strike or hit another player's body or stick, provided that stick-on-stick contact when battling for the ball is to be expected, and the Referee will exercise judgment in whether the play constituted a slashing violation.
- c. **Cross-Checking:** Player placing two hands on the shaft of the stick and using it to strike, hit or push an opponent.
- d. **Tripping:** Using the stick or feet to knock, push, pull, kick, or otherwise take a player's feet out from under them.

- e. **Holding:** Player using his or her hands to interfere with or prevent an opponent from moving freely around the court surface.
- f. **Interference:** Player using his stick or body position to prevent an opponent from moving freely around the court surface when the opponent does not have the ball and is not attempting to make a play on the ball.
- g. **Checking:** Body checking and hitting an opponent through physical contact is NOT permitted. **This is a NON-CONTACT tournament!**
 - i. Some contact is unavoidable, and referees will determine what is incidental and what is over the line.
 - ii. The referees have the discretion to blow their whistle and halt play if there is starting to be too much pushing and shoving in front of the net or anywhere else on the court.
 - iii. The referee shall blow the whistle, stop play, and inform the teams WHY the whistle was blown. If a player persists with excessive physical contact a penalty will be called for checking.
- h. **Delay of Game:** Any player, other than the goalie, who covers the ball with his or her hands or feet during play shall be guilty of Delay of Game.
 - i. Players can catch the ball and immediately place it on the ground but may not run or make a hockey move with a ball in hand.
- i. **Too Many Players:** Any violation of permitted player standards applicable to that game situation shall constitute in a minor penalty.
- j. **Abuse of Officials:** Any player, coach, or spectator using objectionable or undesirable language including, but not limited to, profanity, or who persists in arguing with the referee after he or she has been instructed by the referee to cease, or any coach who steps onto the playing surface during play or a stoppage in play (other than for a recognized time out), or who refuses to leave the playing surface once instructed to do so by the referee **shall be penalized for Abuse of Officials and could be asked to leave the tournament.**

General Requirements for Play:

Size of Playing Surface:

It is expected that all games will be played on a Ball Hockey Rink created by the Tampa Bay Lightning. The size of this rink is approximately 50' x 30'.

Responsibilities of the Tampa Bay Lightning

We will be responsible for providing a suitable playing surface in accordance with the above standard, and for ensuring the playing surface is properly cleaned, and that

regulation goal nets are in place at both ends of the playing surface. The Lightning will provide hockey balls for use in the game.

A scorekeeper will be provided so that both teams and spectators may see the score of the game in real time.

The Lightning shall supply the referees for all games during the tournament.

The Lightning shall also prepare the tournament schedule and keep the round robin statistics and standings for the tournament.

The Lightning will provide each team with team shirts to wear as the official team uniform for the tournament.

The Lightning will compile the standings and notify the top 2 - 4 teams of each division who will be playing in the playoffs. The playoff games are single elimination.

Responsibilities of the Teams:

The teams shall plan and ensure their arrival at the tournament is at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time.

The teams shall be responsible for providing and ensuring all their players have their own sticks and goalie equipment, and that all players are wearing their team shirts or similar color for game play.

Teams shall be responsible in making sure every player participating in the tournament has a Lightning waiver signed. If a player does not have a waiver signed that will not be allowed to play.

If a player is found playing that does not have a waiver signed, that team will be required to forfeit the game.

Responsibilities of the Referee:

The Referee shall ensure compliance with all rules and regulations, enforce playing rules, call penalties as warranted, confirm all goals, and shall have the final word in all disputes arising out of or occurring under the rules and regulations set forth herein.