



TRAVEL HOCKEY and TRYOUT GUIDE

Updated March 29, 2024

Travel Hockey Programming

The North Pittsburgh Youth Hockey Association (NPYHA) offers competitive ice hockey programming for children residing in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area. NPYHA is a member association of USA Hockey and a member of the Pittsburgh Amateur Hockey League (PAHL). The ice hockey season traditionally runs from mid-August through the end of March. League play typically runs from October through the first week of March.

Travel teams are traditionally formed by age classifications. NPYHA will field several teams in the following classes:

Age Class	Abbreviation	Formerly Known As	Typical age of players
Players 10 and under	10u	Squirt	9 and 10
Players 12 and under	12u	Peewee	11 and 12
Players 14 and under	14u	Bantam	13 and 14
Players 16 and under	16u	Midget	15 and 16
Players 18 and under	18u	Midget	17 and 18
Girls Only 12 and under	Girls 12u	Girls Peewee	10-12
Girls Only 14 and under	Girls 14u	Girls Bantam	12-14
Girls Only 19 and under	Girls 19u	Girls Midget	14-19

NPYHA will field several teams in the age classes of 10u, 12u, 14u, and 16u. NPYHA traditionally fields 1 team at 18u, and traditionally 1 team in Girls 12u, Girls 14u, and Girls 19u.

Due to the large number of prospective players in the area, and the limited availability of ice, players are selected to NPYHA teams through a **tryout process**. All players who attend tryouts are scored on their fundamental skills and game situations. Players are graded by several evaluators who are carefully selected from the local hockey community for their youth hockey experience and knowledge. Evaluators may include current NP coaches, past NP coaches, and independent coaches from other amateur, high school, junior, college, and professional programs. NP strives to have at least 50% of evaluators come from outside the organization, and to use evaluators with no children on the ice.

Practices and Games

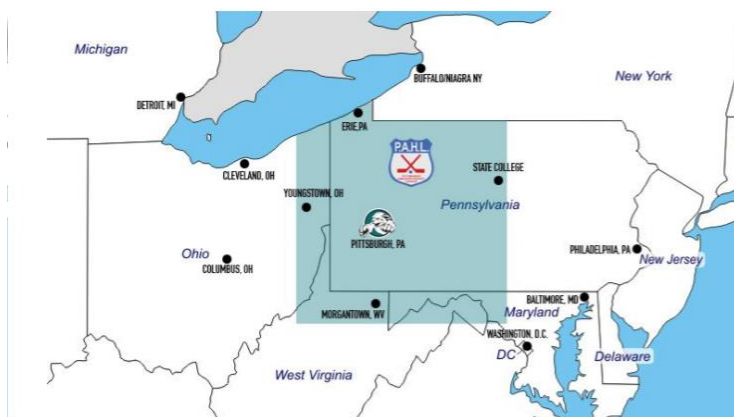
NPYHA teams traditionally practice on weeknights and have additional practices and games on weekends. Weeknight practices may start as early as 5:00 PM and may run as late as 11:00 PM. Later practices are usually assigned to teams with older age players. Some teams may have Friday evening practices. Each team will receive standing ice slots for practice at the beginning of the season. These ice slots are permanently assigned for the duration of the season, giving NP families some surety and a more predictable schedule.

NPYHA will make every attempt to provide older teams with practice times on Wednesdays to avoid conflicts with local middle school and high school teams. Local school teams do not typically play games on Wednesday evenings, so players should be free to practice with their amateur teams.

Weekend ice slots may start as early as 6:00 AM and may run as late as 9:50 PM. Again, the later ice slots are typically given to older teams.

The number of games played in the season is dependent on the team direction as set by the team Head Coach. A typical team will have 2 preseason games, 20 league games, and hopefully some playoff games. In addition to league play, a typical team will enter some local and out of town tournaments. Some NPYHA teams will seek to add additional scrimmages against similarly skilled opponents from inside and outside our region. A typical team may finish the season having played 35-40 games. Some teams may participate in state and national playoffs and may finish the season with a higher number of games played.

Travel Commitment



The Pittsburgh Amateur Hockey League is made up of youth hockey associations in and around the Western PA region. The league is centered around Pittsburgh, but travel may be required as far north as Erie PA, as far east as State College PA, as far south as Morgantown WV, and as far west as Youngstown OH. See the shaded region above. League games are traditionally scheduled on Saturdays and Sundays. League games may begin as early as 7:00 AM and may start as late as 9:00 PM. Depending on a team's schedule, overnight travel may be recommended for early away games.

NPYHA travel teams also participate in non-league games such as local and out-of-town tournament games, independent games, or home-and-home series against teams of similar skill in the Eastern and Central US. Therefore, travel and overnight stays may be required outside the Western PA region to cities such as Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Buffalo, Rochester, Philadelphia, and Washington DC. Travel outside the US to Canada may also be required.

Occasionally, an out-of-town tournament may require teams to play games on Fridays and/or Mondays. This may conflict with personal schedules including school and work. These dates are out of the control of NPYHA.

Fortunately, many weekend tournaments are held around public holidays. This helps to minimize the disruption to families' daily routines.

Playing Independent

On rare occasions, an NPYHA team may wish to opt out of PAHL and play an independent schedule. If a team is interested in playing outside of PAHL, it must have 100% parental backing and must present its case to the NPYHA Vice President and Director of Travel Hockey for consideration by June 30. The application will subsequently be evaluated by the NPYHA Board of Directors.

Teams may also elect to play a hybrid schedule consisting of both league games and independent games. In this case, no special permission is required from the board.

Team Composition and Alignment

NPYHA uses its tryout process to form teams. Players are assigned to a team based on similarity of hockey skills as demonstrated in the tryout process. This assures that players are practicing and developing with like-skilled players throughout the season.

NPYHA aims to place 15 skaters and 2 goalies on each team. At 14u, 16u, and 18u, we may place additional skaters on teams. If NP is unable to place 15 skaters and 2 goalies on a team, the association will make efforts over the summer and during the season to identify and add players after tryouts to reach these numbers.

For competitive purposes, PAHL places local teams into divisions based on a presumed skill level. NPYHA teams are selected to PAHL divisions using player data and the results of preseason games. Placement of our teams will be determined by PAHL and there is no guarantee of any NPYHA team (or teams from other PAHL associations) playing in the top division of an age group.

The top 14u team, the top 16u team, and the top 18u team will register as Tier II National Bound teams and are expected to compete in the Mid-American District Championships and the USA Hockey National Championships.

Remarks on Birth Year Teams

Due to recent PAHL re-alignment at the 14u level, North Pittsburgh will plan to create birth year teams at 14u and older age classes. This will result in one 13u team (expected to play in PAHL 14u AA Minor), one 14u team (expected to play in PAHL AA Major), one 15u team (expected to play in PAHL AA or A Major Black), and one 16u team (expected to play PAHL 16u AA). All other 16u and 14u teams will be comprised of mixed birth years with players placed on teams according to similar skills. If we do not have enough players of similar skill registered in any particular birth year, we will revert to mixed birth year teams where necessary.

At 10u and 12u, North Pittsburgh will assign players to teams based on similar skills rather than similar age. This ensures that all players will have the most competitive peer group for practice and ensures that all teams will have the most homogeneous skillset possible for league placement and game play. Birth year teams at 12u and 10u are possible at North Pittsburgh, but they are not formed by design. For example, the top team in each age group is typically made up of second-year players, and therefore often qualifies as a birth year team.

Professional Hockey Instruction

NPYHA has historically provided professional power skating instruction, skill development, and goaltending instruction to its travel players. North Pittsburgh plans to use professional instructors again for the upcoming season pending their availability. These services are typically offered to our 10u, 12u, 14u, and Girls 12u-14u teams. This instruction is typically delivered during weeknight practices.

Financial Commitment and Fee Descriptions

A family will incur many costs throughout the duration of a hockey season. Players trying out for a travel team will need to pay a **Tryout Fee** to attend tryouts. Your tryout fee will be collected online at the time of registration. The tryout fee covers the cost of tryouts and is NOT counted as a credit if you make a team.

All prior season balances must be paid in full before a player may be permitted to try out. **The Tryout Fee is not refundable.**

At registration, we will also collect from you a **Commitment Fee** to secure your player's spot on a travel team if your player makes a team. Your Commitment Fee serves as a down payment on your association fees for the upcoming season. If you decline your placement on a team, your Commitment Fee will be refunded. **If your child is assigned a roster spot on the top team in the age group, your Commitment Fee is not refundable.**

By paying the Commitment Fee, you agree to have your player play at North Pittsburgh in the upcoming season. You are also making a promise to North Pittsburgh to pay all other association fees in full during the upcoming season. Should a player pay the Commitment Fee, accept a placement, but leave NPYHA after the acceptance deadline, the Commitment Fee will not be refunded.

Organizational (Season) Fees cover ice time for practices, pre-season games, and league games, and professional services for games including referees and emergency medical technicians. Organizational Fees for the upcoming season are not finalized at this time, and will be finalized over the summer after tryouts, after the final rosters are determined and the annual budget is approved. The Organizational Fee is adjusted based on the number of teams and number of players registered per age group level and the amount of planned practice ice that the team will receive. Organizational Fees can be paid up front or on a 5- payment schedule. **Fees must be paid in full by December 31.** Failure to make regular payments will result in ice privileges being suspended until your account is in good standing. **Starting in the 2024-2025 season, payments must be made electronically. No cash or check payments will be accepted.**

You agree that, if at any time, after acceptance of a position, your child withdraws from NPYHA, declines to play for their assigned team, leaves to play for another organization or team, or is suspended or terminated for disciplinary reasons, you are still responsible for payment of the entire Season Fee. Acceptance includes verbal or

written acknowledgement and/or failure to explicitly decline within 24 hours of the offer of a position. The NPYHA Board of Directors reserves the exclusive right to allow or disallow refunds on a prorated basis in cases of serious and prolonged injury or serious illness. Injured or ill players must submit a written petition to the board with specifics of condition and relief sought.

Coaching Fees may be assessed to teams led by a qualified coach who has no child on the team. In most cases, the coach is compensated for his time by the association. North Pittsburgh expects to increase the use of non-parent coaches for some of its higher-end teams. This has been well received by membership in recent years. If your player is assigned to a team with a non-parent coach, your Organization Fee will be increased a few hundred dollars to cover the cost of the non-parent coach. Team Fees are used to form a pool of funds to cover team-specific expenses, such as tournament fees, extra ice slots, professional services for the team, and team social activities. Team Fees are mandatory at North Pittsburgh, and you may not opt out of the Team Fee if your player cannot attend any team event. The fee will be finalized over the summer by your team head coach and team manager, and payable to your team manager no later than October 1.

The required uniform for NPYHA is: 1 home game jersey, 1 away game jersey, 1 black pant shell, 1 pair home socks, and 1 pair away socks. **Uniform costs** do not include warm-up suits or other NPYHA branded apparel or equipment. You will receive more uniform details and ordering information immediately after making a team.

18u

The past several seasons our 18u team(s) has operated as a “Game Only” format. The teams received a limited number of practices in the pre-season (August - September) and before the post-season (February or early March). There were no or very few weeknight practices. The lighter practice schedule was meant to balance the demands on youth at this age who are likely participating in their high school hockey program and with NPYHA. Since the high school and amateur seasons coincide. **Due to feedback received and the consistent request of these teams for additional practices, NP reserves the right to alter this format for the upcoming season. Details will be disclosed prior to commitments for those that earn a spot on the team.**

Girls Only Teams

PAHL traditionally has Girls divisions at 12u, 14u, and 19u. Historically, North Pittsburgh has been able to field teams in all of these age classes.

North Pittsburgh will make every attempt to form girls travel teams in these age classes. These teams will operate as traditional travel teams and will have weeknight practices, weekend practices, and games. North Pittsburgh will participate in PAHL if the league hosts Girls divisions. If PAHL is unable to create a Girls division, NP girls teams will play an independent schedule against teams within our geographic region.

Example Payment Grid

PLAYER TYPE	LEVEL	SEASON FEE	INSTALLMENT PAYMENTS**
ALL	ADM	\$1,000	\$160
	IN HOUSE	\$1,250	\$210
SKATER	10U,12U,14U16U MIXED TEAMS	\$2,250	\$370
	11U,13U BY TEAMS	\$2,250	\$370

	10U,12U,14U,16U,18U AA TEAMS	\$2,350-\$2,950	\$390-\$510
	GIRLS 12U, 14U	\$1,850	\$290
	GIRLS 19U	\$2,150	\$350
GOALIE	10U	\$1,200	\$160
	12U,14U16U MIXED TEAMS	\$1,450-\$1,495	\$210-\$220
	11U,13U BY TEAMS	\$1,670	\$255
	10U,12U,14U,16U,18U AA TEAMS	\$1,575-\$2,200	\$235-\$360
	GIRLS 12U, 14U	\$1,250	\$170
	GIRLS 19U	\$1,375	\$195
<p>season fees listed are 2023-2024 and may increase for 2024-2025</p> <p>AA Teams include paid coach's fees</p> <p>Commitment Fee paid at registration is part of your season fees</p> <p>**5 installments (August - December) + processing fee charged and collected by Team Snap</p> <p>Paid in Full Discount \$75 (if paid by first installment due date) sent as refund in September / October</p>			

The Tryout Process

Register with USA Hockey

You must have a USA Hockey number to register for North Pittsburgh tryouts. If registration opens on or after April 1, you must obtain a new USA Hockey number for the upcoming season. If registration opens before April 1, you will be able to register with your current USA Hockey number. USA Hockey traditionally opens registration April 1. If you registered with a number from last season, you will need to obtain a new USA Hockey registration number and provide it to NP upon joining a team. Obtain your new registration number or look up your old number online at <http://www.usahockeyregistration.com>

Register for an NPYHA Program

With your USA Hockey registration number handy, go to the NPYHA web site at www.wildcatshockey.net and go to Tryouts > Registration. Click on the appropriate link to register. Tryout Fees will be collected electronically during registration. Commitment Fees will also be collected online. NPYHA will require four acknowledgements online during your tryout registration process.

- USA Hockey Zero Tolerance
- USA Hockey Code of Conduct
- NPYHA Parents Code of Conduct
- NPYHA media release

NPYHA will also be collecting health insurance information on all players at registration, with your acknowledgement that NPYHA has your consent to treat your player for injuries sustained during our events and activities.

What Time Is My Tryout?

Dates for tryouts will be posted on the NP web site. Skaters are grouped alphabetically by last name for the first day of tryouts. Tryout times and last-name groupings will be posted on our home page at <http://www.wildcatshockey.net> the night before the first day of tryouts.

After the first day, players are re-grouped each day for the remainder of tryouts. You must check the NPYHA website each evening during tryouts to determine your next tryout time. Ice slot assignments will be posted on our home page at www.wildcatshockey.net

Please note: the tryout process is several days long, however, the process may not require all days as listed on our web site and may be concluded sooner than published.

Tryouts Day 1 Procedures

There will be a sign-in table at the front of the rink, where we will record attendance, collect any outstanding paperwork, and assign each player a **tryout bib number**. The tryout number is required to be displayed on the front and back of each player's jersey for every day of the tryout process.

Preparing for the Ice

Arrive at the rink for your designated tryout in plenty of time to check in and change. Bring two jerseys for every session - one black and one white. Please do not wear bright colored jerseys such as red, green, orange, etc. Stick with black and white. These jerseys should be unmarked. No names and no emblems of PAHL, PIHL, or AAA teams are permitted at tryouts. Please do not wear identifying pants shells and socks for tryouts. Players with identifying colors will be sent back to the locker rooms to change.

Affix your tryout pin-on number to both the front and back of your jersey. You will need to keep your pin-on numbers for all days of the tryout process. Please note that we may assign you a jersey color (black or white) during tryouts and the assigned jersey color may change from black to white or white to black during tryouts.

Tryout Absences

If a player is going to miss all or part of the tryout process due to injury, illness, or a school-related conflict, you must still register and pay your tryout fee. If you have played recently with NPYHA, we will make every effort to place the player based on information we have on file about your player. If you have not previously or not recently played with NPYHA and cannot attend our tryouts, NP will typically decline your registration.

You must also notify the Director of Travel Hockey (directorofhockey@wildcatshockey.net) and the Registrar (registrar@wildcatshockey.net) of any absences as soon as possible. We will do our best to accommodate a player's absence within the tryout process.

Post-Tryouts: What Happens Next?

The following day after tryouts, team assignments will be posted to our web site at www.wildcatshockey.net. No names will be posted to the web site. Only tryout bib numbers will appear on the page.



Coaches will be in touch shortly after tryouts are completed and teams are assigned.

Players that make the top team for their age division will have 24 hours to accept their roster position

Players that make all other travel teams are required to make a decision to accept or decline their roster spot within 48 hours of final results posted on the website. The head coach or tryout coordinator will make every effort to contact each family in a timely manner. However, please understand that it is the family's responsibility to decline the roster spot. **If you do not email the coach or Director of Hockey declining your spot, we will assume that you are accepting your offer, and we will keep your Commitment Fee with no possibility of a refund.** The deadline to decline your roster spot is 48 hours from the time of our team announcements.

14U Inhouse:

Players that are not offered a travel position are invited to join our 14U Inhouse program. Families of these players need to contact our registrar@wildcatshockey.net to request the move into the 14U Inhouse program. We then apply the tryout fee and \$50.00 of the already paid commitment fee to secure your place in that program. The remaining portion of the travel commitment fee is then refunded.

Discounts and Refunds Policy

Discounts (full travel teams only. Not applicable to Game-only teams)

The following discounts are available to NPYHA players.

- Multi-player families receive: \$100.00 discount per travel player and \$50.00 discount for players in 8U ADM and 14U Inhouse.
- Early payment discount of \$75 per full travel team player will be applied if your total organizational fees are paid in full before the 1st installment due date.

Fundraising

- NPYHA offers several fundraisers throughout the season. All fundraising events are announced via Team Snap, our website, and social media accounts as they take place.

Refunds

If a player makes a travel team accepts their position and then decides to leave NPYHA, their Commitment Fee and Organizational Fee WILL NOT BE refunded, except for the reasons listed below:

1. If you move from the Pittsburgh region prior to the start of the season, NPYHA will release you from our rosters and refund your fees.

2. If you move after the start of the season, NPYHA will release you from our rosters and pro-rate your reimbursement based on your departure date.
3. Injury refund – discussed on a case-by-case basis with the Board President and Director of Hockey