



Little Native Hockey League (LNHL) Tournament Rules

Final November 19.25

Little Native Hockey League (“LNHL”) Tournament Rules

The four pillars of the Little NHL – Sportsmanship, Citizenship, Respect and Education – are more than words. They are the spirit of the tournament, the heartbeat of every team, and the foundation of every moment on and off the ice. As we come together for the LNHL tournament, we call on everyone – players, coaches, families, spectators, officials, volunteers, vendors – to carry these values with pride. Let them guide how we cheer, how we compete, how we lead, and how we support one another. When we honour these pillars, we honour our Nations, our youth, and the generations who built this tournament. Together, we create an environment where every participant can feel safe, celebrated and inspired. Let’s lift each other up. Let’s model the best of who we are. Let’s play with heart, spirit and purpose – The Little NHL way.

These rules will be used for governance of the Little Native Hockey League Tournament and apply to all participants. All decisions of the LNHL Executive are made in accordance with these rules and all decisions of the LNHL Executive are final and binding. Strict compliance with these tournament rules is mandatory for all participants. Any violation of these rules will result in immediate removal of the team from the tournament.

1. Team Eligibility:

The LNHL tournament is an inter-Reserve minor hockey tournament. All teams must represent an Ontario First Nation to enter the tournament. For the purposes of these Rules, a hockey season refers to the period September to March in any year.

2. Player Eligibility

To be eligible to play in the LNHL,

- a) a player must have a valid Certificate of Indian Status identifying their Ontario First Nation; or
- b) a player without a Certificate of Indian Status from Ontario, must have at least one biological parent who has a Certificate of Indian Status from an Ontario First Nation. A player using their parent’s Certificate of Indian Status, must provide a Statement of Live Birth (long form) or a Band Council Resolution from their Parents’ First Nation. The Band Council Resolution must verify that the parent is a member of that Ontario First Nation.

3. Registration Deadline

All teams must be registered by the 15th of January in the year in which the tournament is held (i.e., LNHL 2026th registration deadline would be January 15, 2026).

After January 15th, there will be no additions to the roster (this is for both players and bench staff). This deadline is not negotiable, and no exceptions will be made. This is a hard deadline.

Any player not registered with Hockey Canada in the hockey season in which the LNHL tournament is being held, shall pay an additional fee to purchase insurance for the player from Hockey Canada. Insurance fees are determined by Hockey Canada and are included as part of the new registration process for the 2026 tournament.

The LNHL Executive will review and approve each team registration. The LNHL Executive will communicate with the team manager if there are any issues with player registration or team registration.

4. Registration Process

New for the 2026 Tournament – teams will register directly on the Hockey Canada Registry.

Following registration of the team – each team will book their accommodations via Event connect.

Links for the above are on the Little NHL website at lnhl.ca.

Registration Fee:

Registration fees for teams may be paid:

- a) on the Hockey Canada Registry; or
- b) by sending a certified cheque or money order to LNHL at 16 Fisher Street, Brantford, ON N3T 0G3; or
- c) online by electronic money transfer (EMT) to lnhlregistration@lnhl.ca. No password is required as the account is set up for auto deposit.

All payments will be recorded into the registration system, and the team manager will receive an email receipt confirming payment was received.

5. Home First Nation

All players are expected to represent their home First Nation unless they have either:

- a) met the requirements for the residency option; or
- b) obtained a formal written release from their First Nation.

6. Residency Option: For On-Reserve Residents only

To confirm residency, the team manager must submit one of the following documents with the team registration before the final deadline:

- a) Band Council Resolution (BCR): A BCR stating that the player has been a resident of the First Nation since the beginning of September in the hockey season during which the tournament is held.
- b) School Letter: a letter from the school principal confirming that the player was enrolled at the start of the school year for that same hockey season.

Note: Players who enroll in the school after the start of the school year are not eligible to use this residency option for that season's LNHL tournament.

7. Player Release Requirements for Non-Home First Nation Representation

A player who is not playing for their home First Nation must obtain a signed release using the Official LNHL Player Release Form, available on the LNHL website. Only one signature is required, and the release must be authorized by one of the following individuals of the First Nation granting the release. Please request a signature in the following order of priority:

- 1) President of the Minor Hockey Committee/Association
- 2) If unavailable, the Manager of the LNHL team that holds rights to the player and agrees to release them.
- 3) If both are unavailable, the Chief of the First Nation.

If a team manager believes they may have territorial rights to a player from a neighbouring First Nation, they must notify the LNHL Executive in writing at Chicor.lnhl@gmail.com no later than January 20 of the tournament year. The LNHL Executive will make every effort to resolve all player disputes by January 30, and team managers will be informed of the final decision.

8. Player Pick-up Limits

The Little NHL Executive Committee will use the most recent Indian Registry population data provided by INAC, as posted on the LNHL website, to determine the official on-reserve population for each Ontario First Nation. This official population list will be used to calculate the maximum number of pick-up players that each First Nation team is permitted to roster.

	The number of pick-up players a First Nation team is permitted to include on its roster is as follows:
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First Nation Total on-reserve population	House/Recreation Division	Competitive Division	Girls Division
1-999	7	6	9
1000-1999	4	4	6
2000-4999	2	2	4
5000 or more	0	0	2

- (a) A House/Recreation Player is any player who competes at the A level or lower. House/Recreation teams may roster a maximum of four (4) A-level players.
- (b) A Competitive Player is any player who competes at the AA level or higher. Competitive-level players are not eligible for the House/Recreation Division.
- (c) High School “A” players are considered equivalent to a B-level player for classification purposes and are eligible to play in the House/Recreation Division.

9. Goalie Pick-Up Rule

Each team is allowed to pick up one goalie without using a designated pick-up player spot.

All goalies are expected to play for their home First Nation unless they have received an official release from that First Nation.

10. Team Minimums and Maximums

- a) Each team may register a maximum of 17 skaters and 2 goalies, in accordance with all LNHL eligibility rules.
- b) Each team must have a minimum of 11 players registered prior to the tournament. Every player must be given an opportunity to play, and the LNHL Fair Play Rule (Rule 21(a)) applies to all games.
- c) At the start of each game, teams must have at least 6 players ready to play, including a goalie. During gameplay, teams must maintain a minimum of 3 skaters plus a goalie on the ice.

If a team falls below 6 total players at any time, the game will be forfeited immediately, except in the Tyke division, where exceptions may apply.

11. Team Files & Managers' Duties

It is the responsibility of the Team Manager to create the team in the registration system which will allow for documents to be uploaded.

Note: it is the responsibility of the team manager to ensure that all the player and coaching staff paperwork is in order and that the team is properly registered for the tournament and that all rules of the LNHL have been complied with.

Note: is the ultimate responsibility of the head coach of any team to ensure that all rules of the LNHL have been complied with. Failure of ensure compliance with the LNHL rules could result in the head coach being subject to sanctions including but not limited to suspensions that could carry over into the following year(s) of the LNHL.

12. Certification – Managers, Coaches and Trainers

To ensure a high-quality tournament experience for all participants—including players, spectators, tournament organizers, and officials—the following certification is mandatory, unless an exemption is granted by Hockey Canada through the LNHL Executive Committee:

	Respect in Sports	Coaching Certification Minimum NCCP Requirement – Coach 2*	Hockey Trainers Certificate Level 1
Managers	X		
Coaches & Assistants	X	X	
Trainers	X		X
Tyke/u7	X	X	

*Tyke/u7 and Novice/u9 Coaches and Assistants may have Instructional coach certification - Coach One – National Coaches Certification Program.

13. Recategorizing Teams from House/Recreation to Competitive Divisions

The LNHL Executive reserves the right to recategorize a team from house/recreation to competitive divisions and vice versa. The rationale for this rule is to ensure that teams are playing at the level that they should be based on team composition and levels of players. This rule is intended to ensure that all teams have a valuable experience competing with teams of the same or similar calibre. This rule is also in keeping with the Little NHL four pillars of citizenship, education, respect, and sportsmanship. All rosters are reviewed by the Little NHL Executive and if a decision to recategorize is made, the manager of the said team will be contacted. Please refer to rule 8.

14. Ineligible Player Protest for Players from the Players Pool

Only the Team Manager may file a protest regarding an ineligible player. The protest must be player-specific and submitted in writing by email to discipline.lnhl@gmail.com within one hour of the game's completion. A non-refundable protest fee of \$1000 is required. Payment must be made by cash or an email money transfer. If the protest is successful, the fee will be refunded to the applicant. If the protest is denied, the fee remains non-refundable. The LNHL Executive's decision on any protests is final and binding. There are no rights of appeal.

15. Division Rules

a) No Body Contact

Body contact is not permitted in the LNHL tournament. This rule is in place to prioritize the safety of all participants, including players, officials, and spectators.

b) Competitive and House/Recreation Divisions

Teams may register to compete in either the Competitive Division or the House/Recreation Division.

Each division may include A, B, C, and additional finals, depending on the number of teams registered in that division.

c) Player Rules

- i. Players are not permitted to play on more than one team during the tournament.
- ii. A player's division is determined by their age as of December 31st of the hockey season in which the tournament takes place.

Division	Age
Tyke/U7	5 and 6
Novice / U9	7 and 8
Atom / U11	9 and 10
Peewee / U13	11 and 12
Bantam / U15	13 and 14
Midget / U18	15, 16, and 17

16. Girls Division

- a) Girls are permitted to play in all divisions of the LNHL tournament.
- b) Boys are not permitted to play in any Girls' divisions.

17. Playing up a division

For safety reasons, players are expected to play within their designated age group. If a player wishes to move up a division (i.e. Novice to Atom or Pee wee to Bantam), the following conditions must be met:

- a) the player must provide written consent from their parent or guardian to the team manager and the team manager will be required to upload this consent as part of their registration.
- b) This rule also applies to any 3 and 4-year-old players who wish to play in the Tyke/U7 Division.

18. Tyke Division – Half Ice/Cross Ice

- a) the maximum number of players are 17 skaters and 2 goalies however for the Tyke division, the LNHL recommends 10 skaters and a goalie.
- b) Teams will play 5 on 5 with one goalie who will be in full gear.
- c) Each team is guaranteed 3 ice time slots for games.
- d) 2 half ice sessions will be played during the designated ice session with a sound buzzer to identify the start of the game (24 minutes = 1 game); team will then rotate and play another team.
- e) A buzzer or whistle will sound every 3 minutes for line changes. No off-sides and no penalties will be called however, coaching staff are to ensure players are following the code of conduct and abiding by the 4 pillars of the LNHL. No score sheets will be required for games.
- f) Blue picks are mandatory for all tyke sessions.
- g) Teams will share benches and be assigned a designated door. Teams must respect the other players on the bench and on the other half of the ice and not interfere.
- h) One designated coach or certified helper per team will be required to be on the ice (mandatory).
- i) All on ice coaches/helpers must wear proper helmets.
- j) All coaches must have respect in sport and coach certification per rule 12.
- k) At the end of 1 game, all players will shake hands before switching to their next game.

2 games – two half ice games run simultaneously.

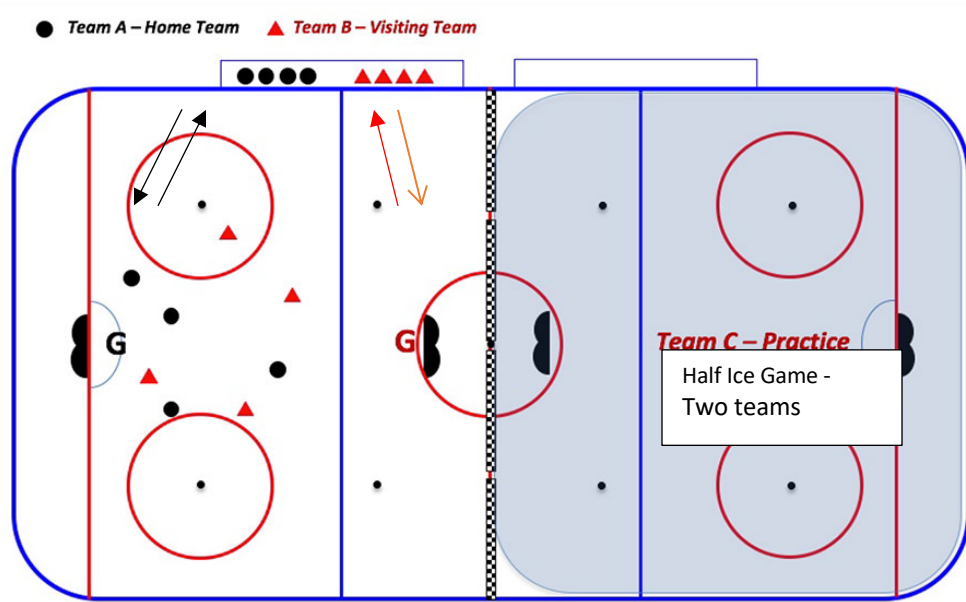


FIGURE 4: Two Teams – One Half-Ice Game Model with Practice Sheet

Teams share player benches and use one door each.

19. Game Format

- a) All divisions from Novice/u9 to Midget/u18, including the Girls Divisions, will play three 10-minute stop-time periods per game. This format also applies to championship games. If a game reaches a goal differential of five or more goals, the game will switch from stop time to straight time for the remainder of the game.
- b) Mercy Rule -If a game reaches a goal differential of seven or more goals, the mercy rule will apply. If the head coaches for each team agree, the game may continue for fun, but the score will remain frozen at the mercy rule threshold.

20. Rules of Play

The LNHL tournament will follow Hockey Canada's Official Rules for all games. In addition, the following LNHL-specific rules apply:

a) Fair Play

Fair play is mandatory in all LNHL games. Coaches must teach and encourage players to play fairly and to respect the rules, officials, and opponents. Coaches are responsible for ensuring that all players receive equal instruction, support, and playing time.

b) Major Penalties and Disqualification

Any player who receives a major penalty for fighting or any other infraction that carries

an automatic match penalty will be disqualified from the tournament and will not be permitted to play in any further games.

The LNHL Executive will review the incident and may impose additional disciplinary action if warranted. Any suspension resulting from a major penalty or match penalty will carry over to subsequent LNHL tournaments year over year until fully served.

c) Game Readiness

All teams must be ready to play 30 minutes before their scheduled game time. Failure to do so may result in a forfeit.

d) Jersey Conflicts

If two teams have similar jersey colours, the home team is responsible for changing jerseys or requesting a set of pinnies from the LNHL arena captain.

e) Time-Outs

A 30-second time-out is permitted only in Championship games. No time-outs are allowed in any other games during the tournament.

21. Tie Breaker Rule

All playoff bracket games in all divisions (except Tyke/u7) must result in a winner. Ties are not permitted in playoff rounds.

During the round robin, standings will be determined based on the following point system:

- Win = 2 points
- Loss = 0 points
- Tie = 1 point

If teams are tied in points after the round robin, the following tie-breaking criteria will be applied in order:

1. Head-to-Head Result – Winner of the game between the tied teams.
2. Goal Percentage – Calculated by dividing teams' total "goals for" by the sum of the teams's "goals for and goals against." $TGF / (GF + GA) = \%$ (see chart below). The team with the higher percentage advances.
3. Fewest Goals Against – The team that allowed the fewest goals.
4. Most Goals For – The team that scored the most goals.
5. Fewest Penalty Minutes – The team with the least total penalty minutes.
6. Coin Toss – If all other criteria are equal.

Note: Tie-breaking rules must be followed in sequence. Once a rule has been applied or deemed not applicable, it cannot be reused.

TIE BREAKER CHART

		TOTAL GOALS AGAINST																				
T O T A L G O A L S F O R		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	1	0.500	0.333	0.250	0.200	0.167	0.143	0.125	0.111	0.100	0.091	0.083	0.077	0.071	0.067	0.063	0.059	0.056	0.053	0.050	0.048	0.045
	2	0.667	0.500	0.400	0.333	0.286	0.250	0.222	0.200	0.182	0.162	0.154	0.143	0.133	0.125	0.118	0.111	0.105	0.100	0.095	0.091	0.087
	3	0.750	0.600	0.500	0.429	0.375	0.333	0.300	0.275	0.250	0.231	0.214	0.200	0.188	0.176	0.167	0.158	0.150	0.143	0.136	0.130	0.125
	4	0.800	0.667	0.571	0.500	0.444	0.400	0.364	0.333	0.308	0.286	0.267	0.250	0.235	0.222	0.211	0.200	0.190	0.182	0.174	0.167	0.160
	5	0.833	0.714	0.625	0.556	0.500	0.455	0.417	0.385	0.357	0.333	0.313	0.294	0.278	0.263	0.250	0.238	0.227	0.217	0.208	0.200	0.192
	6	0.857	0.750	0.667	0.600	0.545	0.500	0.462	0.429	0.400	0.375	0.353	0.333	0.316	0.300	0.286	0.273	0.261	0.250	0.240	0.231	0.222
	7	0.875	0.778	0.700	0.636	0.583	0.538	0.500	0.467	0.438	0.412	0.389	0.368	0.350	0.333	0.318	0.304	0.292	0.280	0.269	0.259	0.250
	8	0.889	0.800	0.727	0.667	0.615	0.571	0.533	0.500	0.471	0.444	0.421	0.400	0.381	0.364	0.348	0.333	0.320	0.308	0.296	0.286	0.276
	9	0.900	0.818	0.750	0.692	0.643	0.600	0.563	0.529	0.500	0.474	0.450	0.429	0.409	0.391	0.375	0.360	0.346	0.333	0.321	0.310	0.300
	10	0.909	0.833	0.769	0.714	0.667	0.625	0.588	0.556	0.526	0.500	0.476	0.455	0.435	0.417	0.400	0.385	0.370	0.357	0.345	0.333	0.323
	11	0.917	0.846	0.786	0.733	0.688	0.647	0.611	0.579	0.550	0.524	0.500	0.478	0.458	0.440	0.423	0.407	0.393	0.379	0.367	0.355	0.344
	12	0.923	0.857	0.800	0.750	0.706	0.667	0.632	0.600	0.571	0.545	0.522	0.500	0.480	0.462	0.444	0.429	0.414	0.400	0.387	0.375	0.364
	13	0.929	0.867	0.813	0.764	0.722	0.684	0.650	0.619	0.591	0.565	0.542	0.520	0.500	0.481	0.464	0.448	0.433	0.419	0.406	0.394	0.382
	14	0.933	0.875	0.823	0.778	0.737	0.700	0.667	0.636	0.609	0.583	0.560	0.538	0.519	0.500	0.483	0.467	0.452	0.438	0.424	0.412	0.400
	15	0.938	0.882	0.833	0.789	0.750	0.714	0.681	0.652	0.625	0.600	0.577	0.556	0.536	0.517	0.500	0.484	0.469	0.455	0.441	0.429	0.417
	16	0.941	0.889	0.842	0.800	0.762	0.727	0.696	0.667	0.640	0.615	0.593	0.571	0.552	0.533	0.516	0.500	0.485	0.471	0.457	0.444	0.432
	17	0.944	0.895	0.850	0.810	0.773	0.739	0.708	0.680	0.654	0.630	0.607	0.586	0.567	0.548	0.531	0.515	0.500	0.486	0.472	0.459	0.447
	18	0.947	0.900	0.857	0.818	0.783	0.750	0.720	0.692	0.667	0.643	0.621	0.600	0.581	0.563	0.545	0.529	0.514	0.500	0.486	0.474	0.462
	19	0.950	0.905	0.864	0.826	0.792	0.760	0.730	0.704	0.679	0.656	0.633	0.613	0.594	0.576	0.559	0.543	0.528	0.514	0.500	0.487	0.475
	20	0.952	0.909	0.870	0.833	0.800	0.769	0.741	0.714	0.690	0.667	0.645	0.625	0.606	0.588	0.571	0.556	0.541	0.526	0.513	0.500	0.488
	21	0.955	0.913	0.875	0.840	0.808	0.778	0.750	0.724	0.700	0.677	0.656	0.636	0.618	0.600	0.583	0.567	0.552	0.538	0.525	0.512	0.500

GOALS FOR DIVIDED BY / (GOALS FOR + GOALS AGAINST)
HIGHER % TEAM ADVANCES