



2026 HOCKEY - QUALIFYING TEAM SEMIFINAL & FINAL INFORMATION



[MHSAA Hockey Participating Schools Tournament Information](#)

[MHSAA Hockey Managers Manual](#)

ATHLETIC DIRECTORS & COACHES OF TEAMS QUALIFYING FOR THE MHSAA SEMIFINAL AND FINAL GAMES AT USA HOCKEY ARENA SHOULD REVIEW ALL INFORMATION WITH PLAYERS, PARENTS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS.

MHSAA HOCKEY SEMIFINALS & FINALS

General Tournament Information

For Participating Teams, Athletic Directors, Coaches & Spectators

CROWD MANAGEMENT - By Representative Council action, schools participating in MHSAA Ice Hockey Tournaments are required to have the school principal, athletic director, or another non-coaching faculty member, with a letter of authorization from the school principal, meet with the tournament manager before the game begins. In addition, teams playing in the Semifinal and Final Games are expected to bring at least six people to help with crowd management. **Chaperones will be expected to actively cooperate with MHSAA tournament staff in supervising student spectators!!!**

FACILITY - The MHSAA Semifinal and Final games will be played at USA Hockey Arena (formerly Compuware Arena) in Plymouth at the intersection of Beck Road and HWY 14. (14900 Beck Rd., Plymouth, MI 48170) Athletic Director Don Watchowski of Novi HS, along with hosts Mike Henry, Josh McAfee, and Tony Noble of USA Hockey Arena, will serve as tournament managers, with Cody Inglis of the MHSAA as the tournament coordinator. Livonia Hockey Officials Association and Northeast Hockey Referees Association members will serve as team hosts and handle all participating team coordination in the lower arena areas coordinated by Jim Gaglead and Dan DiCristofaro.

INJUNCTION/RESTRAINING ORDER - In the interest of fairness to all participants, if an injunction or restraining order is served or presented at an MHSAA tournament site and requires the eligibility of or participation by a student or team which a school and/or the MHSAA has ruled to be ineligible under MHSAA regulations, the on-site Tournament Manager is to suspend the entire competition (team competition) or events in which that student is intending to participate. If the game has begun, it shall be completed.

COMPETING SCHOOL EXPENSES - Mileage Reimbursement - Participating teams at the Quarterfinal, Semifinal, and Finals will receive mileage reimbursement directly from the MHSAA office after the conclusion of the tournament series, according to the following schedule for one-way miles. There is no form for schools to submit; the calculation will be completed and sent by the MHSAA.

0-75 miles – No payment (deductible)
76-100 miles – \$1.00 per mile
101-150 miles – \$1.50 per mile
151-250 miles – \$2.00 per mile
251-350 miles – \$2.50 per mile
351 miles & over – \$3.00 per mile

Lodging - The maximum allowance is the current hotel rate secured for up to twenty-three (23) individuals. Allowance for expenses of competing schools at the final rounds will continue for twenty-four hours after their elimination, provided they remain at the tournament center city. Schools eliminated in the Quarterfinals will not receive expenses to attend the Final games. All competing teams in the Semis and Finals who plan to stay overnight in the Plymouth area must make their own arrangements. The MHSAA office will be willing to assist where needed.

Additional Per Diem Allowance - In addition to meal and lodging allowances, schools competing in Quarters, Semis, and Finals will be paid one hundred dollars (\$100) for each day of competition. Teams unable to return home after winning Quarterfinal contests will be paid the additional per diem and expenses for Thursday travel. The MHSAA will compute the above payments for allowable expenses and one-way mileage and send them to competing schools at the conclusion of the tournament. There are no forms for schools to file.

TEAM ADMISSION, ROSTER LIMIT - Each competing school will be allowed up to thirty (30) admissions to enter the arena on their game date. This will allow for players, coaches, and managers. Arrangements for entry are to be made with the tournament manager. For each game, teams are limited to a maximum of 23 players in uniform on the bench, including the 23rd player if the 23rd player is a goalie. 20 skaters and 3 goaltenders. Teams should enter at the lower east gate door and must arrive together. (See schedule section). If teams will be arriving in cars separately, they should park in the main parking lot, then proceed to the main entrance and downstairs to the skate rental area. Once all team members and the coach have arrived, they will be escorted to their locker room. **ALL TEAM MEMBERS AND COACHING STAFF MUST ENTER TOGETHER in the back (lower east gate door). When a team arrives and is ready to enter, they should call Cody Inglis at 517-899-2656 or Don Watchowski at 586-739-0999 to arrange for MHSAA staff to meet them at the lower east door.**

CHAPERONES—Each school must provide at least 6 staff members to supervise student spectators at all tournament games. Those serving as Chaperones will be allowed admittance with a supplied MHSAA Chaperone pass. The six chaperones shall meet with Manager Don Watchowski 30 minutes before the game. **Chaperones will be expected to actively cooperate with MHSAA tournament staff in supervising student spectators!**

TICKETS – All Semifinals and Finals tickets will be sold digitally through GoFan; no paper tickets will be sold at the USA Hockey ticket office. **Semifinals** - Semifinal games will be 2 games, 1 ticket. The arena will be cleared after each 2-game Semifinal session. General admission tickets at \$13 (including parking) each may be purchased through GoFan and are good for both games of the session.

Finals—The Final games will be one game, one ticket. General admission tickets at \$13 (including parking) each may be purchased through GoFan. The arena will be cleared after each Championship game.

All-Session Tickets - All-Session tickets will NOT be sold for 2026.

Entering/Exiting Arena – Once spectators have entered the arena, they must purchase a ticket to re-enter if they leave. There are no exit/re-enter privileges. There are no smoking areas at the USA Hockey Arena. Please notify spectators and parents. If a spectator chooses to leave, they must purchase a ticket to reenter.

SPECTATOR REGULATIONS & EXPECTATIONS—The MHSAA will determine and assign each student section and adult spectator seating area in advance. School crowd control chaperones are asked to cooperate with the MHSAA supervisory personnel regarding assigned seating areas. **The first row of student section seating areas will be roped off and kept vacant. In addition, red tape on chairs indicates that a seat CANNOT be sat in at the USA Hockey Arena.**

1. Standing at the boards and pounding on the glass is unacceptable behavior and not allowed.
2. Throwing anything on the ice will result in immediate removal from the arena.
3. Standing on seats at any time will not be permitted.
4. Spectators are not allowed on the playing surface before or after the game.
5. Helmets worn by spectators will not be allowed.
6. Handheld signs on sticks or flags will not be permitted.
7. Whistles, air horns, cowbells, and noisemakers are prohibited.
8. Shirts are required at all indoor MHSAA tournament venues; body paint is prohibited.
9. No smoking is allowed inside or outside of USA Hockey Arena.
10. Bags and backpacks are not allowed inside USA Hockey Arena.
11. All necessary bags (medical, photo, diaper, etc.) will be checked by security.

SPECIAL NOTE - Any spectator, adult, or student who throws any object on the ice will be immediately ejected. The MHSAA and USA Hockey Arena reserve the right to check spectators for foreign objects before entry and to refuse entry to those who possess them.

TEAM CONDUCT—Competing teams will be held to an appropriate standard of conduct before, during, and after games in and around the locker room area. **Locker room areas should be left as found, clean of tape and trash.** Activities such as dumping water coolers on coaches/players should not occur.

TOURNAMENT PAIRINGS/TIME SCHEDULE – Please check the MHSAA website for team pairings. For 2025, a seed committee will meet after the Quarterfinal games to reseed the brackets in each division. Teams will be assigned game times.

Home teams will be determined by the higher MPR throughout the MHSAA tournament.

Division 2 - Thursday, March 5

5:00 p.m. – Semifinal

7:30 p.m. – Semifinal

Division 3 - Friday, March 6

11:00 a.m. – Semifinal

1:30 p.m. – Semifinal

Division 1 - Friday, March 6

5:00 p.m. – Semifinal

7:30 p.m. – Semifinal

CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES – Saturday, March 7

11:00 a.m. – Division 2 Championship

3:00 p.m. – Division 3 Championship

7:00 p.m. – Division 1 Championship

OVERTIME PROCEDURES - For all MHSAA tournament games that finish regulation tied, a sudden victory overtime will take place beginning with a maximum of four 8-minute periods, after which, if the game is still tied, a series of 4 on 4 sudden victory overtime periods will be played to determine a winner in accordance with the following procedures:

- At the end of regulation play, the two teams go to their locker room. The ice must be resurfaced before the start of overtime play.
- The overtime period shall be eight minutes of sudden victory.
- **Teams will change goals for the first overtime period.**
- If the game remains tied at the end of the first overtime period, there shall be a two-minute rest Period (with teams remaining at their bench), change goals, and continue with the second overtime.
- At the end of two eight-minute periods of overtime play, the ice shall be resurfaced. Teams may go to their locker rooms. This cycle repeats for an additional two overtime periods.
- At the end of four eight-minute periods of overtime play, the ice shall be resurfaced, and each team shall return to its locker room.
- If the score remains tied after four overtime periods, teams will begin with additional eight-minute periods of 4-on-4 hockey until a winner is determined. Carry-over penalties will apply; for example, one team may be short two players due to a carry-over penalty. The previous cycle of rest periods and ice resurfacing will continue.

HOME TEAM DESIGNATION/GAME JERSEYS—The home team (white jerseys) and visiting team (dark jerseys) will be determined by the higher MPR in advance by MHSAA tournament management. (See Schedule above.) **Teams are reminded to bring both sets of jerseys to USA Hockey Arena.**

PEP BANDS - School pep bands will be allowed to play at Semifinal and Final Tournament games only through **prior arrangement with tournament management**. Schools with pep bands must purchase admission for each band member and coordinate with the MHSAA in advance.

BANNERS, HANDHELD SIGNS, and NOISEMAKERS—Handheld signs on sticks are not allowed at MHSAA tournaments. Banners must be inspected by tournament management, placed only in a specified area, and not obstruct any sight lines. Per MHSAA rules, no artificial noisemakers are allowed at any indoor MHSAA tournament venues. [Artificial Noisemaker Guidelines.](#)

AWARDS PRESENTATION – After the Championship game, the MHSAA will conduct an awards ceremony with individual medals and team trophies given to the Champion and Runner-up teams. The MHSAA photographer will take team pictures after the awards ceremony. **No parents/spectators or media will be allowed on the ice for the awards ceremony.**

LOCKER ROOMS & EQUIPMENT—Teams will dress in locker rooms assigned by tournament management. Cell phones and cameras are not allowed in locker rooms at MHSAA tournaments. Teams will enter a cleaned locker room and are expected to leave it as they found it. Warmups are allowed inside the USA Hockey Arena, but soccer balls, etc., are not. A team liaison will answer all questions about your locker room area and the pregame preparation timeline.

BUS PARKING - Team buses may enter from Beck Road and proceed to the arena's east side. Buses should unload at the east side of the building near the lower-level team entrances. Buses should park in the main USA Hockey Arena Parking lot and be prepared to pick up teams after games at the east entrance door. The east entrance doors are only for bus and team pickup and drop-off. Teams MUST enter together and call Cody Inglis or Don Watchowski for entry procedures when ALL team members and coaches are on site.

ARENA ENTRY FOR DEFEATED TEAMS – Teams defeated in Semifinal games on Thursday or Friday, or teams that arrive early and would like to watch another division game, will be admitted without charge at the main arena entrance as a group. A school representative must accompany the team for free admission. Teams interested in this option should connect with MHSAA tournament management immediately.

INTRODUCTIONS/NATIONAL ANTHEM – Teams (all players dressed, max of 23, 20 skaters, and 3 goaltenders) must line up at the goal line before all introductions. Starting players will be announced at the semifinal games, and all players and coaches will be announced for the final games. Players will skate to the blue line with their helmets on when announced and must remain on it for the duration of the National Anthem. Team members will take off their helmets to play the National Anthem while on the blue line. Teams will face the other team while opposing team and player introductions occur. **Teams whose players do not comply are subject to a 2-minute minor penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct.**

GOAL DIFFERENTIAL RULE - A running clock will be used when a team leads by 8 or more goals during the first or second period. After two periods of play or any time during the third period, the game will be terminated when a team leads by 8 goals.

PRACTICE ICE – If schools wish to arrange practice ice on the adjacent Olympic-sized rink at USA Hockey Arena before the tournament, contact Mike Henry at 734-453-6400. **No practice will be allowed on the USA Hockey main arena rink during the week of the MHSAA Hockey Finals.**

POST-GAME PARENT / FAN INSTRUCTIONS - At the conclusion of each game, the teams will return to the locker rooms, where they will shower and change. Once the entire team has completed this process, they will be escorted out of the building to the back east entrance area or, if needed, up to the hallway between the Olympic and NHL (arena) rinks. Spectators will be asked to leave the arena after each game. If you need to see your player after a game, the hallway between the two rinks (directly outside the arena) will be designated as a meeting area. We ask that all parents and fans wishing to greet the players and coaches after the game exit the arena promptly so we may begin preparing for the following contest. To maintain a safe and orderly environment for the players and coaches, we also ask that parents and fans refrain from entering the east parking lot where the teams load and unload their buses, but meet their teams in the main front parking lot of USA Hockey Arena.

TRAINER - An MHSAA trainer will be on-site during the tournament. Teams accompanied by a trainer or physician are asked to coordinate and communicate with the MHSAA trainer.

TAILGATING PROHIBITED - No tailgating is allowed by spectators in the USA Hockey Arena parking lot. **No grills or alcohol consumption is allowed.** Violators will be subject to open intoxicant fines & penalties. The lot will be controlled, and fans who are grilling or where alcohol is present will be asked to leave, and/or law enforcement will take further action. The arena and the MHSAA will not tolerate such activity, and we ask for

your cooperation in letting fans know about these policies. Thanks in advance for your help in communicating this to your fans.

TV/INTERNET COVERAGE – The Saturday championship games will be streamed live on **MHSAA.TV** - Semifinal game video will be streamed live on **MHSAA.tv**. Audio of all games will be available on **mhsaanetwork.com**. For the 2026 Semifinals and Finals, fans can follow live, in-game statistical data via GameSheet. Special thanks to the Michigan High School Hockey Coaches Association for their support during the MHSAA tournament. Links will be provided on MHSAA.com during the event. Local radio broadcasts must be approved by the MHSAA office through Jon Ross.

PARTICIPATING TEAM/SPECTATOR INTERNET STREAMING – The broadcast and streaming rights of MHSAA post-season tournament events belong exclusively to the NFHS Network, which will be televising this event. Teams participating in MHSAA Tournaments are prohibited from streaming live video of any portion of an event over the Internet, including via social media platforms like YouTube and Facebook, or any other method. Likewise, individual spectators are also prohibited from streaming video through any means. Participating schools are responsible for informing their students, parents, and other fans of this policy and, upon request, assisting the MHSAA in enforcing it. Participating schools are asked to help promote their game on the NFHS Network.

VIDEO REPLAY—At the MHSAA Semifinal and Final games, video replay will review goals when the on-ice official deems it necessary. The policies and procedures regarding the use of video replay are attached.

WARM-UP/PRACTICE PUCKS—Before the contest starts, a 10-minute warm-up period will be provided. Practice pucks will also be provided. Teams do not need to bring their own pucks.

MEDIA RESPONSIBILITIES – Following the return to locker rooms after the game, head coaches and two or three player representatives will be escorted by MHSAA staff to the postgame interview room. This room is located downstairs, outside the main arena, just outside the locker rooms. These sessions should take no more than 15 minutes.

TOURNAMENT MANAGEMENT CONTACTS

- Cody Inglis, Senior Assistant Director, MHSAA (517-332-5046; cell 517-899-2656) cody@mhsaa.com
- Don Watchowski, Tournament Manager, Novi High School, 586-739-0999
donald.watchowski@novik12.org
- Mike Henry, USA Hockey Arena Manager, 734-453-6400



MHSAA 2026 HOCKEY FINALS ARRIVAL PROCEDURES - TIME SCHEDULE

ARRIVAL/TEAM HOSTS – Each team will be assigned host personnel to assist them when arriving at the USA Hockey Arena. Host personnel will direct teams to locker rooms and notify them when to take ice for warm-ups, introductions, and resumption of play. Arrival time for teams in the MHSAA Hockey Semifinals & Finals is **90 minutes before the game's scheduled start**. Should teams arrive earlier than 90 minutes before game time, they will be asked to wait in the parking lot before gaining access to the facility and their assigned locker rooms. If there is a desire to see a game ahead of their assigned game, entry must be coordinated with the MHSAA staff in advance. Teams will be asked to leave the USA Hockey Arena immediately at the game's conclusion and will not be allowed to access the main spectator area. The following schedule will be used for the 2026 MHSAA Semifinals & Finals. Times listed for the second game of a session are approximate. A ten-minute pre-game warm-up period is scheduled, but teams may use less. For 2025, a seed committee will meet after the Quarterfinal games to reseed the brackets in each division. Teams will be assigned game times. **Home teams will be determined by the higher MPR throughout the MHSAA tournament.**

Time Schedule – Thursday, March 5 - Division 2 Semifinals

D-2 Semifinal

4:30 p.m. – Warm-up
4:40 p.m. – Make ice
4:55 p.m. – Teams return to ice
 Introductions, National Anthem
5:00 p.m. – Faceoff – D-2 Semifinal #1

D-2 Semifinal

7:00 p.m. – Warm-up (approx.)
7:10 p.m. – Make ice
7:25 p.m. – Teams return to ice
 Introductions, National Anthem
7:30 p.m. – Faceoff – D-2 Semifinal #2 (approx.)

Time Schedule – Friday, March 6 - Division 3 Semifinals

D-3 Semifinal

10:30 a.m. – Warm-up
10:40 a.m. – Make ice
10:55 a.m. – Teams return to ice
 Introductions, National Anthem
11:00 a.m. – Faceoff – D-3 Semifinal #1

D-3 Semifinal

1:00 p.m. – Warm-up (approx.)
1:10 p.m. – Make ice
1:25 p.m. – Teams return to ice
 Introductions, National Anthem
1:30 p.m. – Faceoff – D-3 Semifinal #2 (approx.)

Time Schedule – Friday, March 6 - Division 1 Semifinals

D-1 Semifinal

4:30 p.m. – Warm-up
4:40 p.m. – Make ice
4:55 p.m. – Teams return to ice
 Introductions, National Anthem
5:00 p.m. – Faceoff – D-1 Semifinal #1

D-1 Semifinal

7:00 p.m. – Warm-up (approx.)
7:10 p.m. – Make ice
7:25 p.m. – Teams return to ice
 Introductions, National Anthem
7:30 p.m. – Faceoff – D-1 Semifinal #2 (approx.)

Time Schedule – Saturday, March 7 – Championship Games

D-2 Championship

10:30 a.m. – Warm-up
10:40 a.m. – Take Team Photos
10:45 a.m. – Make ice
10:55 a.m. – Teams return to ice
 Introductions
 National Anthem
11:00 a.m. – Faceoff – D-2 Final
**Awards immediately following
game**

D-3 Championship

2:30 p.m. – Warm-up
2:40 p.m. – Take Team Photos
2:45 p.m. – Make ice
2:55 p.m. – Teams return to ice
 Introductions
 National Anthem
3:00 p.m. – Faceoff – D-3 Final
**Awards immediately following
game**

D-1 Championship

6:30 p.m. – Warm-up
6:40 p.m. – Take Team Photos
6:45 p.m. – Make ice
6:55 p.m. – Teams return to ice
 Introductions
 National Anthem
7:00 p.m. – Faceoff – D-1 Final
**Awards immediately following
game**



MHSAA Hockey Semifinal and Final Tournament Games

Video Replay Procedures

Video replay will be used only in the following situations:

1. To determine if the puck crossed the goal line.
2. To determine if the puck crossed the goal line prior to time expiring at the end of a period or game.
3. To correct the time on the game as part of a goal/no-goal review.
4. To determine if the net was on or off the moorings when a goal is scored.
5. Only the in-house overhead video replay system will be used to determine goals.
6. Correct identification of an ejected penalized player. (NFHS rule 9-13)

Procedures

1. Only the on-ice referee will determine if there will be a video review. An on-ice decision will be made on each situation.
2. There will not be a coach challenge system used.
3. Players will be allowed to go to their bench during the video review.
4. The replay official will inform the on-ice official of the result of the video review. If the video review is inconclusive, the on-ice decision will stand.
5. The referee will signal a goal and point to the center faceoff spot, or wave off the goal and initiate the appropriate faceoff. If communication with the coach is needed, it will occur at this point in the process.
6. If a video review does not take place until the next whistle after a goal/no goal that needs review and is subsequently ruled a goal, all playing action that took place is voided, including goals, and the clock will be reset accordingly. Any and all penalties, including minor and major penalties, unsportsmanlike/flagrant conduct penalties, will not be voided.