IMPORT SPORTS MANAGEMENT

THE NDL FAMILY CHECKLIST

USA Hockey Development League, 2027-28: what to get, what to ask and when, before you sign.

1. THE DATES

Jan 15 to 31, 2027	Early signing: a program's returning players only.
Feb 1 to 28	Open signing: any eligible player, from anywhere.
Mar 1 to Apr 4	Blackout: no tryouts and no signings until Nationals end.
From about Apr 6	Tryouts and signing reopen, for DL and Tier 1 teams, 48 hours after the last game of Nationals.
Aug 1	Team practices may begin.
September 2027	First season starts: 40 to 55 games to March.
Feb 15, 2028	Last day a player can be added to a roster.

2. BEFORE ANY OFFER: THE TEAM FACT SHEET

A DL team must give you this sheet, signed, before it can offer a Player Agreement. Check that it shows:

- ☐ The **specific team** (15U or 17U) your player would be rostered on.
- ☐ The **season's fees**: team fee, uniform and equipment.
- ☐ **Anticipated travel costs** for the player, and any travel parents are required to make.
- ☐ Any **other fee** that is a condition of playing.
- ☐ The **payment schedule** or payment options.
- ☐ The planned number of **practices, games and off-ice sessions** a week.
- ☐ Any player or parent **code of conduct**.
- ☐ **Signatures** from the team and from you.

3. IF YOUR PLAYER IS NOT A US CITIZEN

- Each team may roster **two non-US citizens**, and they must be **skaters**.
- Each needs a **previous season on a USA Hockey team**.
- Every DL **goalie must be a US citizen**. A dual citizen counts as one.
- An approved **USA Hockey transfer** and US residency documents come first. Ask who files it.

4. EIGHT QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU SIGN

Put these to the program's hockey director, and ask for the answers in writing.

- ☐ **The paper.** May we have the Team Fact Sheet now, and the full Player Agreement to read at home?
- ☐ **The real number.** What is the all-in cost per month, and what is not in it: flights, hotels, parents' travel, housing, school, equipment?
- ☐ **The exits.** What do we owe if he leaves after the first game for the USHL, the NAHL or the NTDP? What if a CHL team calls?
- ☐ **The camps.** May he attend a USHL, NAHL or CHL camp next summer while he is signed with you?
- ☐ **The travel.** Of the 40 to 55 games, how many are flights, how many nights away, how many school days?
- ☐ **The staff.** Who are the head coach, the goalie coach and the strength coach, and are they signed for 2027-28?
- ☐ **The age spot.** If he is one of the four 14-year-olds on 15U, or one of the two 15-year-olds on 17U, what is the plan for his ice time?
- ☐ **Home and school.** If he would move to play, where does he live, who screens the host family, and which school does he attend?

5. WHAT SIGNING BINDS YOU TO

- One team for the **whole season**. The team is bound too: the roster spot is his.
- **No tryouts** for any other team while signed, except the NTDP, the USHL and the NAHL.
- Trying out for another DL or Tier 1 program: **18 months** before he can sign or play there.
- Leaving for another DL or Tier 1 team in season: no roster spot there for **the rest of that season and the next**.
- Signing with the NTDP, USHL or NAHL **before the first game**: released with no financial penalty. The **CHL is not named** in that rule.

Source: USA Hockey Development League Guidebook, 2027-28 season (sections F, G and I), and USA Hockey's 2027 National Championship schedule. Reviewed November 24, 2026. This sheet is a summary to help you prepare, not legal advice: read the guidebook and your own agreement before you sign.

The full guide, with sources: **importsports.ca/blog/usa-hockey-development-league** · **Import Sports Management**, family advising for hockey players in Canada and the United States.