



**Collective Bargaining Agreement
Between
Virtual Hockey Association Management,
VHA Member Clubs
and
VHA Players Association**

1.0 The Game

1.1 Version

EA SPORTS GAME VERSION

VHA GMs use NHL 09 on PC to play online games with their team in Online Season Mode (aka legacy GM Connected) against other VHA GMs.

1.2 Fee

There is no fee to play in VHA

1.3 Mandatory Items

VHA GMs must have the following mandatory items in order to join VHA:

- Have a fully functional PC with a stable high speed internet connection
- Be a member of <https://wasserlasser.com/forum/index.php?board/122-vha-virtual-hockey-association/>
- Have Discord app installed
- Have Hamachi app installed on your computer.

1.4 Mandatory Items and Member Duties

VHA Members are expected to fulfil the following:

- Have all mandatory items – section 1.3
- Behave according to the outlined VHA Member conduct in section 1.5
- Participate in league activities – section 1.7
- Schedule their games using Discord, messageboard and/or email – section 2.0
- Maintain a positive gameplay etiquette – section 3.0
- Manage their rosters to remain compliant with the CBA

1.5 VHA Member Conduct

All VHA General Managers will conduct themselves in a professional manner and show respect for their opponents. Anyone who consistently shows a lack of respect for the other members in the league can and will be removed without warning. This includes things such as running up the score, posting vulgar messages in the chat or forum, or doing anything else that will offend other members of the League. We do our best to keep this League fun and competitive, so please show your appreciation by complying with the rules and guidelines in place.

If it is determined by the VHA Admin Team that a material breach of Gameplay Etiquette has occurred, the Admin Team is permitted to take action against said VHA Member as they see fit. Penalties are permitted to be up to an including expulsion from VHA. Penalties are made at the sole discretion of the Admin Team.

1.6 VHA Admin Team

The VHA Admin Team is responsible for running VHA. It is the goal of the Admin Team that the league run smoothly and efficiently with fun and fairness in mind.

Admin Team Members: Sergio Caluori, Bill Roark, and Larry Marks

1.7 Participation

Each VHA member is expected to be available to play about 2 games per week and participate in 2 major offseason activities (VHA Entry Draft and UFA Frenzy)

Each GM must play 60% of the 58 game season, or 35 games to be eligible for the playoffs. Any GM who does not meet this minimum game threshold shall be removed from the League.

2.0 Playing and scheduling games

Each GM is responsible for being pro-active in scheduling their games with their fellow VHA members as they become available on the server by using any of the following methods:

- The preferred method of communication is Discord. Check for incoming messages regularly.
- You can also use the scheduling thread on the messageboard to set up a game time, specifying your availability.
- E-mail is acceptable
- If you don't hear back from your opponent, you may message any member of the Admin Team with a request to play **a sub**
- If neither team sets up a time to play on the message board and the game are still unplayed by the end of the scheduling period, it will be simmed. This is needed to ensure a smooth running pace to this League.
- The home team will always host games.

2.1 A Sub

In order to keep the VHA schedule moving forward, it may be necessary to play a **sub**, who can be any VHA GM you enjoy playing against.

2.2 CPU Teams

Games vs the CPU are not allowed. Instead, we allow you to play **a sub**.

2.3 Sub Rewards

Each game you sub is equal to 1 sub credit than you can later redeem for a variety of incentives. To reward GMs who sub consistently, the following rewards will be handed out:

- Hot streak - 5 credits
- Injury heal (short term) - 5 credits (less than 10 days)
- Injury heal (long term) - 10 credits (10 days or more)
- Get out of the next randomizer run injury free - 20 credits
- In season 50% of contract buyout - 10 credits (regular in-season buyouts are 65% in year 1 and 35% in year 2)
- FREE contract buyout - 20 credits
- Playoffs Injury heal - 30 credits

All unused sub credits can be awarded towards supplemental draft picks for a maximum of 1 pick per round (full cycle):

- 30 subs gets you a 1st round supplemental pick
- 15 subs for a 2nd round supplemental pick
- 8 subs for a 3rd round supplemental pick
- 4 subs for a 4th round supplemental pick
- 1 subs for a 5th round supplemental pick

- 58 subs gets you a cycle.

2.4 Disconnects

Please replay the game while recreating the score, no matter when the game crashes. For example, if your team is leading by 2 goals, then you can recreate the game, score a couple (using manual goalie) and skate around until you can continue from where the game cut off. If you're unable to complete your game, please inform the Admin Team to decide the course of action. You have the option to replay the game from scratch only if both GMs agree to it.

3.0 General gameplay Etiquette & illegal maneuvers

The main purpose of this League is to maximize realism and have a fun time playing a game we love. Let's elaborate on the VHA gameplay mindset you are expected to adopt 100% of the time and other specific moves you must AVOID entirely as part of your mandate as a VHA GM.

3.1 THE OBJECT OF THE LEAGUE IS NOT TO WIN BUT RATHER TO PLAY REALISTIC HOCKEY

- *Adopt a North-South mindset*

Excluding on the PP, keep moving up towards the other net on a rush. We've seen too many GMs pass it back, then forward, then back again until the AI falls apart, resulting in lanes opening like the parted sea. This isn't soccer. Also, the AI is dumb and it's an old game. Sometimes the right hockey play is the simple one, like banking it off the boards to clear the puck.

- *Keep your scripted plays at bay*

It's a 12 year old game. Try new things. The game might surprise you.

- *Dump the puck regularly*

- Skilled players dump and chase occasionally
- Grinders dump and chase regularly

If you aren't dumping and chasing, you are not playing realistic hockey.

- *Short shifts and use all four lines*

- A shift should last about 60 seconds. If you're leaving your line for more than that, you're not doing it right.

- Your 4th line needs to get a few shifts per period.

Note : We will not hesitate to enforce « Auto-line change » mode on teams that are unable to properly cycle through lines or limit shift length.

- *Backup Goalies*

- Backup goalies must play a minimum of 900 minutes per season.

- *Use players in their proper roles*

- Highly skilled players will tend to carry the puck and try fancy dekes
- Grinders will dump it in and play physical
- Offensive minded, smaller dmen will pokecheck
- Physical defensive minded Dmen will play physical

We are thriving for realism. These things matter.

- *The wandering winger, aka the stretch pass to the wing*

As soon as you retrieve the puck, your wingers starts skating towards the offensive zone and is able to receive a tape to tape pass in his skates like white on rice, creating a super easy scoring opportunity. USE

SPARINGLY! Instead, build up your play through shorter passes.

- *My face is in the glass; here's a perfect blind pass*

Take a second to at least turn your player in the right direction before making a bomb pass forward to start a rush. Realism please.

- *Auto-deke, spin-o-rama*

Sparingly, please. And with the right players.

- *Resetting*

STOP DOING IT. You made your move, you're alone against the goalie but you're not in the right angle or whatever? So you circle back? Don't reset - take the shot on goal.

- *Goalie passing*

Excluding on the PP, freeze the puck. Rest your lines, slow the pace. It's not handball or lacrosse, and it's not a race.

- *Hooking - Never hook!*

This would be a penalty 100% of the time in real life, so don't do it.

- If your CPU player hooks an opponent, give the puck back immediately. These things can happen and you can only control what happens after.

- *Poke check*

- A timely poke check to strip the puck anywhere on the ice is fair game. Charging with poke check pressed down all over the ice is not.

- Incessant poke checking - button mash - is banned

- Using poke check as a shield to block shots a mile away from the shooter is banned.

- Crease sitting with poke check pressed down is banned. Play positional D, not 2nd goalie.

- *Hipchecks*

Hipchecks are frowned upon and are deemed dangerous because they can injure, much like head shots in the NHL today.

- resulting in an injury: Intentionally or not, GM or CPU--any hipcheck resulting in an injury can be reviewed by the Admin Team (with stream as evidence) and disciplinary actions can be taken, including player and GM suspensions. Repeat offenders will have an impact on suspension length.

- no injury: Intentionally or not, GM or CPU--multiple hipchecks in the same game can be reviewed by the Admin Team (with stream as evidence) and disciplinary actions can be taken, including player and GM suspensions. Repeat offenders will have an impact on suspension length.

- *Hitting and bumping from behind*

- Keep your hits along the boards and in the slot area. Open ice hits are a big no no.

- In a puck race, don't bump a player away from the puck – especially when from behind. This would be an automatic interference penalty in real life. If you accidentally bump in this situation, give the puck back immediately. These things can happen and you can only control what happens after.

- *Desperation D*

- Poke from behind - banned
- Bumping from behind - banned
- Backing up your Dman in the crease and using him as a 2nd goalie - banned
- Diving - use sparingly, like almost never.

- *Don't argue, insult or harass your opponent*

Talk after the game about things you liked and things you disliked. We're all friends here, so be friendly.

- *Targets OFF!*

This is realistic league. If you don't know that by now you are asleep! When was the last time you saw a BULLSEYE inside a hockey net during a game? Wake up people!

Respect a 5 goal mercy rule at all times

- *Faceoffs*

- Use the hook button + direction. Otherwise, NEVER HOOK!

For those of you who use the hook resulting in a kick pass, this is essentially just like a hard pass. Make sure to respect the 2 pass rule before any shot can be taken on goal.

- *No mash*

Under Rule 76.4 of the NHL Rules: "the sticks of both players facing-off shall have the blade on the ice, within the designated area." Therefore, button mashing at the faceoff dot is BANNED, if this was not clear already. Please time your button press with the puck drop.

- *Even Steven*

Keep draws about 50% throughout the game. Don't win all the important defensive and offensive draws and leave the neutral zone ones to your opponent. Don't start giving back faceoffs only when you're up on the scoreboard. You're not fooling anyone.

3.2 Cheap goals to avoid

The general rule of thumb here is, mix things up. Try new things. The game might surprise you. If you score one of these goals by accident, do the right thing and offer this goal back immediately. Be a good sportsman and do the right thing.

- *Trick shot that makes the goalie slide wickedly away from his net.*

Whatever you're doing to make this happen, it's now BANNED from VHA!

- *the famous 1-2 deke*

This is the move that makes a player fake left and shoot right, or fake right and shoot left. By now, everyone can basically pull off at an almost automatic success rate.

- Please limit this to 0 to 1 attempt per game.

- A breakaway is not an automatic goal. Show some originality in your gameplay and think of another move you can make.

- *Floating shots*

Including backhand slow wrist shots from the blue line. It's cheap and ugly. BANNED.

- *Backhand one-timers*

Visual nightmare and totally unrealistic unless you are a few feet from the net. Use sparingly, like almost never.

- *Shooting the puck on net after the whistle*

Show some restraint. See realism rules above.

One GM told me he removed one-timers entirely from his repertoire because the success rate is too low. This approach is not what we are looking for. Try new things. The game might surprise you.

3.3 Playing on the Penalty Kill (PK)

- Clearing the puck is priority #1.

The game AI simply does not do enough to balance the risk/reward factor to an offensive mindset like it is in real life.

Exception: Late in the 3rd period, if you pull your goalie, you may disregard this rule and play as if it was even strength.

- Circling back and killing the clock is strictly forbidden. The game's AI simply doesn't react well enough in this situation.

- Valid SH goal opportunities

While on the PK, if you strip the puck at your blue line, intercept a pass in the neutral zone or the offensive zone with a clear path to the net, the realistic hockey play calls for a shorthanded shot attempt.

4.0 Salary Cap & Contract information

- \$84.0M hard cap for the VHA 7 season; Cap floor is \$64.5M.
- Maximum salary of 20% of the cap and term of 5 years per contract
- The minimum salary is \$700k
- VHA Entry Level Contracts (ELC) are calculated as follows: Cap hit + ((average of Performance Bonus amount over length of NHL contract) / 2)
- Transitional Tag
- Each alternating year, you may use to Tag one of your impending UFA players currently showing on the SS. If you haven't tagged anyone last offseason, you are entitled to Tag one of your UFAs in an effort to retain the player. Then you need to send your offer by email to the Admin Team. Please use recent NHL deals to justify your offer. If your Tagged UFA agrees to your offer, he will still listen to other team offers during UFA Frenzy. If he agrees to a better offer, you will have the opportunity to match and retain - or simply choose to not retain anyone. Note that all successful tagged players that you sign come with a 2 year No Trade Clause.
- Buyouts--Teams can buyout a player at a 50% cost of 1 year salary. Teams will be able to trade sub credits for a free buyout

4.1 2-Way contract

A 2 way contract includes a lower salary that is in effect when the player is assigned to the minors. All ELC are 2 way contracts.

4.2 No trade clause (NTC)

A no-trade clause is permitted on SPCs. A no-trade clause may be requested by a player as part of contract negotiations. UFAs signed for a contract in excess of \$2,000,000 per year will automatically be given a one-year no-trade clause. When a new GM takes over a Member Club, all NTCs will be immediately voided on that club.

4.3 Rosters

Your VHA Roster size is 50 players. This is including NHL and MINORS sections combined. Newly drafted prospects playing amateur hockey (Junior, NCAA) and players in European Leagues will not have contracts and do not count against roster limits (They are also not permitted to be used in VHA games).

NHL roster

- Each VHA player in your NHL section must have a VHA contract, a NHL contract and must not be playing overseas and not be playing in the CHL (Junior Canadian Hockey league).
- Each team must carry 23 players in their NHL team, which must include the following in their NHL roster at all times: 13 or 14 forwards, 7 or 8 dmen, 2 or 3 goalies

Minors

This section includes players in your farm team with a pro contract ready to be called up, as well as all other prospects you own rights to that can't be called up. You must carry 10 forwards, 6 defensemen, and 2 goalies on our minor roster. Waivers rules will apply on all players before being placed on a Minor League Roster. Players with an ELC that return to their Junior team or are loaned to Euro leagues count towards the Minor League Roster size but can only be called up for emergency purposes (injury call up).

4.4 Waivers

Waivers are the means by which the rights to a Player are offered to all other Clubs of the league in VHA in order to place the Player on a Minor League Roster or to Buy-Out a Player from their Contract. In VHA, a Waiver Wire will be maintained on the league forum that will be made available to all 30 Member Clubs to claim a player.

Once a player is placed on Waivers during the season, the player will remain on the Waiver Wire for 24 hours before clearing. In the offseason, the player will remain on the Waiver Wire for 48 hours before clearing. At that point the Member Club will be permitted to either place that player on their Minor League Roster (assuming the player is eligible to be sent to the Minors) or be permitted to Buy-Out the Player from their Contract under the Buy-Out provisions in the CBA. If requested, a player on waivers may stay on the Club's NHL Roster after clearing Waivers.

All VHA Member Clubs are permitted to place a claim on a player on the Waiver wire as long as they can fit that player under their roster rules. Claimed players must be placed on the NHL Roster of the claiming team. In the event multiple clubs place a claim on a player, a waiver priority list will be maintained by VHA Management, and the club that is highest on the list will get the player.

4.5 Start of season Roster

Immediately prior to the beginning of the VHA season, all member clubs must set their 23 man NHL Roster. Any players that are waivers eligible that are not on the NHL Roster will need to clear through a Waiver Draft prior to clearing waivers prior to the beginning of the season.

If a player that is not Minors Eligible is not on the NHL Roster, that player will go through a waiver draft prior to clearing waivers. If the player clears, the Member Club will have the option to either amend their NHL Roster to include the player, or to buy-out the player as an In-Season Buy-Out.

4.6 Waiver exemption

All players who were born July 1, 1996 or after will be designated as waivers exempt for the 2019-2020 season. Those players can be sent to the minors without having to clear through waivers. Players born on June 30, 1996 or earlier would have to clear waivers to go to a Minor League Roster.

4.7 Trades

Trades are encouraged as part of VHA. All trades are reviewed by the Admin Team to ensure all trades maintain both the spirit of and the letter of the VHA CBA. Trades will not be permitted during a Roster Freeze.

4.8 Trade Deadline

Any player not covered by a NTC is permitted to be traded during the season until the Trade Deadline. All VHA Member Clubs will be advised of the date of the VHA Trade Deadline at minimum one week prior to the deadline. Once the trade deadline has occurred, a Trade Freeze will be in place until the conclusion of the VHA Playoffs. Players will be permitted to be called up and sent down during this period and standard Waiver Rules will be in place.

4.9 Ineligible players

There are exceptions that will prevent your player to see VHA action.

- Any player who has missed 40 consecutive NHL games is ineligible in VHA until they are cleared to play in the NHL.
- Players that are holding out (pending RFAs), i.e. without a NHL contract.
- Players not activated on NHL roster in real life (on personal leave or not cleared for contact)

4.10 Cap Bonus

Playoff teams will receive the following cap bonus to increase their cap for the next following VHA season:

Conference Quarterfinal Losers: \$0
Conference Semifinal Losers; \$2,000,000
Conference Final Losers: \$4,000,000
Stanley Cup Loser: \$6,000,000
Stanley Cup Winner: \$8,000,000

5.0 Offseason

5.1 Entry Draft

Draft is five rounds, and includes supplemental picks at the end of each round awarded in exchange for sub credits. Draft order is based on reverse order of standings and playoffs. In other words, there will be no order manipulation, artificially moving up or down ranks regardless of team status, CPU, active or inactive GM at that time or leading up to the draft.

Similarly to the NHL, there will be a slightly modified version of the Draft Lottery to give every non-playoff team a chance to draft 1st overall, 2nd and 3rd overall.

Supplementary Draft Choices

As directed by the Admin Team, there will be additional Draft Choices given out to Member Clubs for outstanding efforts to the league. Supplementary Draft Choices will be given at the end of each round for the round they are awarded.

Draft Eligibility

All players drafted must be age 18 or older on or before September 15, 2019 to match the minimum NHL draft requirements. A player must not be on another team's roster or reserve list. Players who have not been previously drafted in to VHA remain eligible to be drafted until such time as they reach UFA age.

Order of Selection

The Admin Team determines the rules governing the order of selection for the Entry Draft. The rules are to be based upon the same rules used by the NHL for their Entry Draft, including holding a draft lottery, organizing the order for division winners, Stanley Cup finalist and winner, and conference finalists. The methods by which these decisions are made are at the sole discretion of the Admin Team.

5.2 UFA Frenzy

This is the time of year when VHA GMs take out their checkbooks to sign players from the pool of available Unrestricted Free Agents (equivalent to July 1st in the NHL).

Unrestricted Free Agent

An Unrestricted Free Agent (UFA) is any player who has played through the conclusion of his contract and is 27 or older as of July 1st of the year. For the 2019-2020 season that date is on or before June 30, 1993 will be designated a UFA. A UFA is free to sign a contract with any Member Club.

Off-season UFA Process

UFA Players will not be permitted to be signed by any Member Clubs until the UFA Process is opened by the Admin Team.

Member Clubs will use a Free Agent Editor Tool to submit UFA offers during the Primary Off-season UFA Process. Once offers are merged and processed, there will be a daily update. Updates will indicate the team with the leading bid (contract terms will not be shown). Member Clubs may not make offers that are in excess of their available cap space.

Maximum term for UFA Frenzy is the Real Life term for the player. For example, you will not be able to offer a 2 year deal on a player that signed for 1 year in the NHL.

UFA players will sign quickly when they see a great offer.

UFA players will not sign if the offer is too low.

If a UFA player receives many close offers, he will wait until the following round.

When the round closes, the Admin Team will merge all offers (using the FA Editor) and determine which UFAs sign and which ones wait.

Whoever isn't signed will be included in the next round. Updates will indicate the Team with the leading bid, while contract amounts will be hidden. 40 to 50 players will be added to each round until we run out of players or teams run out of money.

We expect to do 1 round every day or so for about a week, so there should be about 6 or 7 rounds in total. More if needed.

Use the VHA SS to know exactly how much money you have to spend BEFORE making offers.

You can make offers to more than 1 UFA in the same round. Remember that if the player doesn't sign, your offer is still committed to that player.

Be careful and bid wisely

As long as you have a bid on a player, even if you aren't the leading bidder, the money remains committed until you decide to retract your offer. Make sure you do that before bidding on someone else because if the SS shows that you have \$10M in cap room and all your offers adds up to \$10.1M, all your bids will be void and you will lose a complete round of bids. This happens to at least 1 GM EVERY year, so be careful!

GMs are encouraged to increase their offer at any time in subsequent rounds even if you are the leading bidder.

GMs can only retract your offer if your team isn't the leading bid for a UFA, meaning there is no asterisk (*) next to your team.

Offers \$5M and higher come with an automatic 1 year No Trade Clause.

For those of you who have a pending TT, keep money you invested before making your bids. That money counts in your bids until he signs with you or someone else.

Make sure you leave yourself enough cap space for your unsigned RFAs. If you don't have enough money to sign them, you will have to make a trade to fit under the cap.

Players without a NHL contract are excluded from the VHA Frenzy pool. As players sign in real life, they will be added to subsequent rounds. Only then will you be able to make an offer.

Remember there is an AHL roster size requirement. You must have 10F 6D 2G in your farm team. Use this UFA period to fill out your farm team by making 2-way offers to fringe NHL players or career AHLers. Use the Comment area to specify it's a 2 way offer.

5.3 Transition Tag (TT)

Every 2nd year each Member Club is permitted to designate one pending UFA player with a Transition Tag (TT). This player will then go into negotiations with the old club. Should the Player and Member Club agree to a deal, that player will sign an offer-sheet with the original Member Club. That player will then proceed to the UFA market. If a new club offers that player a superior deal to the deal agreed to by the original club, the original club will be permitted to match that superior offer. If the original club matches the offer, he signs with the club for the new offer's terms. If however the original club declines to match the new offer, that player will sign with the new club. There is no compensation for losing a TT'd player should the original team decline matching the offer.

5.4 Restricted Free Agent (RFA)

A Restricted Free Agent (RFA) is any player who has played through the conclusion of his contract and is 26 or younger as of July 1st of the year. For the 2019-2020 season that date is any player born before June 30, 1993 will be designated an RFA as long as their former club states their intention to re-sign the player. An RFA is the property of their former club and that club will have exclusive negotiating rights with that player until such time as a new SPC is agreed to. RFA players are permitted to be traded while they do not have a contract.

VHA will honor all VHA Restricted Free Agents (RFA) with their respective NHL contract, term and money amounts. This means you don't have to do anything, other than keep a big stack of money aside for them until they sign their NHL deal.

NHL teams must give a Qualifying offer to all RFAs they wish to retain under contract. In VHA we always assume you are qualifying all your RFAs. However, you can decide to let a RFA walk. He comes off your roster at no cost and becomes UFA.

If you choose NOT to send a QO on any of your RFAs (before he signs his NHL deal), advise the Admin Team via email.

RFA Offer Sheets

There is no RFA offer sheet process in VHA

Arbitration

There is no arbitration process in VHA.

5.5 Buy-outs

Member Clubs shall have the right to exercise the option to Buy-Out a Player at any time during either an ELC or SPC as they see fit, other than during a Roster Freeze. Once a team buys out a player, they are not permitted to re-acquire that player for one season.

- *Off-Season Buy-Outs*

Member Clubs are permitted to Buy-Out any Player during the off-season, other than during a Roster Freeze. The cost for completing an off-season Buy-Out will be 50% of the one year salary for a player and will be tolled against the next VHA season salary for the Member Club. Member Clubs must place the Player on Waivers and the Player must clear Waivers prior to being bought out.

- *In-Season Buy-Out*

Member Clubs are permitted to Buy-Out any Player during the season, other than during a Roster Freeze. The cost for completing an In-Season Buy-Out will be 100% of the one year salary for the player and will be tolled against the current VHA season at a 65% and 35% in the following season. Member Clubs must place the Player on Waivers and the Player must clear Waivers prior to being bought out.

- *Player Retirement*

During the season, should a player under contract in VHA announce their retirement in the NHL, at the end of a season, that player will become ineligible immediately upon the completion of the VHA season in which he retires. If a player fully retires mid-season in the NHL, that player will become ineligible immediately in VHA. If a player retires during the VHA Off-Season, that player will become ineligible immediately.

Note that retired players VHA contracts are honored until expiry.

- *Long Term Injury*

During the season, a player who has missed 40 consecutive NHL games shall be removed from your VHA active roster and be placed on Long Term Injury Reserve ("LTIR"). They are not eligible to return until such player has been cleared to return to the NHL. Such player shall not count toward cap until they are removed from LTIR.

6.0 GM of the Year

Each season the Admin Team will award one General Manager the GM of the Year Award. This award goes to the GM who best exemplifies what VHA is all about. Strength of sim play, participation in the chat, trade activity, sub activity, and respectful interaction with other GMs are some of the factors that the Admin Team will consider. With the Award, the GM will receive a supplemental first round draft choice in the next draft.