



INFORMATION BULLETIN 20-18

July 13, 2021

HOCKEY ALBERTA – RECREATIONAL HOCKEY MODEL

Starting in the 2021-22 season, Hockey Alberta is implementing a new Recreational Hockey Model that provides interested participants with a moderately structured stream of hockey with some modified playing rules, limited registration rules, and no residency requirements.

Hockey Alberta's Recreational Hockey Model provides general structural and administrative guidelines for Recreational Hockey Programs across the province and outlines the activity options that member Minor Hockey Associations and partner organizations can implement within their communities.

The goal of the Recreational Hockey Model is to ensure families have access to affordable, fun, and safe opportunities to participate in youth hockey with a low to moderate time commitment. The Recreational Hockey Model is open to both Minor Hockey Associations and community / non-minor hockey programs.

The Recreational Hockey Model includes three streams of hockey. Each stream has a varying competitive structure and level of commitment appropriate to the level(s) and age(s) of the player(s).

Within the Recreational Hockey Model are several recommendations on how organizations / programs should operate and structure their program; however, organizations/ programs are provided the flexibility to create and maintain their own internal processes to adjust their program to the needs of their participants.

The full Recreational Hockey Model document is included with this Bulletin and can be found on the Hockey Alberta website, www.hockeyalberta.ca.

Hockey Alberta will also be hosting an **Information Session on Tuesday, July 20th at 7:00 PM** to present and answer any questions from Minor Hockey Associations and community/ non-minor hockey programs interested in the Recreational Hockey Model. To register for the Information Session, please click [here](#).

If your Minor Hockey Association or Community Program is interested in starting up a Recreational Hockey Program or transitioning an existing program, please contact Bryden Burrell, Coordinator, Hockey Programs.

Bryden Burrell
Coordinator, Hockey Programs
bburrell@hockeyalberta.ca
403-342-6777

RECREATIONAL HOCKEY MODEL





RECREATIONAL HOCKEY

WELCOME TO RECREATIONAL HOCKEY

The goal of Hockey Alberta's Recreational Hockey Model is to ensure families have access to an affordable, fun and safe opportunity to participate in youth hockey with a moderate to low time commitment. Regardless of the program, Hockey Alberta encourages good sportsmanship, fair play, friendship and respect. This guide outlines the activity options that member Minor Hockey Associations and partner organizations can implement within their community.

Key Outcomes

- Provide organizations with the opportunity to offer families different options to play the game.
- Provide a positive opportunity and experience for all players.
- Provide a welcoming environment for youth to be active in a safe and positive manner.
- Instill a sense of community and camaraderie among teammates.
- Provide youth the opportunity to learn teamwork skills through sport.
- Promote fair play and sportsmanship among players, coaches, parents, officials and spectators.
- Promote and provide leadership opportunities through sport.
- Provide athletes an opportunity to develop their hockey skills (skating, passing shooting) and passion for the game - HOCKEY FOR LIFE.

Streams of the Recreational Hockey Model

- **Learn to Play** – A program for 5, 6, 7 and 8 year-old players consisting of one ice session per week on a half sheet of ice. The program introduces the basic skills of the game and provides an opportunity for players to learn those skills and the game. As of January 1, participants have the option to transfer to an Intro to Hockey team at a nominal cost and finish the year in the Minor Hockey system.
- **Pond Hockey** – An unstructured hockey option with no defined rules or age categories. Players can join a team and enjoy the game regardless of their skill set or commitment levels. Players registered in a Pond Hockey program can be registered simultaneously in Rec Hockey or a Minor Hockey program and participate within league play.
- **Rec Hockey** – A moderately structured level of hockey with somewhat modified playing rules and regulations. Rec Hockey provides a more competitive structure than a Pond Hockey program but still requires less commitment than a Minor Hockey program. Players registered within Rec Hockey can also be registered in a Pond Hockey program but cannot also be registered in a Minor Hockey program.

Benefits of Registration with Hockey Alberta

- Medical and Dental [Insurance coverages](#) program for registered participants (players, officials, team officials).
- Directors & Officers Liability Insurance coverage for Organization executives and volunteers.
- Support with Injury Reporting and Claim process.
- Support with organizational governance processes.
- Administration and operational support from Hockey Alberta volunteers and staff.
- Player and Coach development support from Hockey Alberta Regional Centres.
- Access to an online Registration system and support from subject matter experts.
- Support and policy guidance regarding Risk and Conduct Management protocols and processes (screening, complaint handling, Abuse & Harassment, etc.).
- Sanctioning of on and off-ice team and development activities.
- Access to Hockey Alberta certified officials.
- Administration of Discipline processes and procedures and control of suspended players (Major penalties, Match penalties, etc.).
- Assistance in the organization of competition.
- Uniform interpretation and standardization of playing rules.
- Access to participate against other sanctioned programs/ teams across Alberta, Canada and the world.
- Access to player, coach and officiating development programs.



RECREATIONAL HOCKEY

- Access to Hockey Canada development programs brought to the local organization through Hockey Alberta.
- Access to coaching clinics, coaching development seminars, officiating clinics, officiating development programs, skills testing programs, parent programs, administration programs, etc.
- Involvement in the setting of amateur hockey policy in the province.
- Access to a vast amateur hockey network to share best practices, ask questions and obtain feedback.
- Regular communication through member updates, publications, and website.
- Availability of resource material from Hockey Alberta and Hockey Canada (Bylaws, Regulations, Rule Books, policy manuals, coaching/ officiating documents and videos).
- Opportunity to nominate for the Membership Awards program to recognize volunteers, coaches, players and officials.
- Access to the Hockey Alberta Foundation's Every Kid Every Community Grant Program.

Registration Process

Families who choose to access any options available within the Recreational Hockey Model may register with the organization of their choice and are not bound by the residency regulations that govern Minor Hockey. Players who are registered within the Rec Hockey stream may not affiliate to a registered Minor Hockey team, but organizations can decide to allow participation with additional Rec Hockey teams within the organization if needed.

Organizations registering Learn to Play, Pond Hockey or Rec Hockey programs will be required to utilize the online registration system provided by Hockey Alberta and Hockey Canada.

It is recommended that organizations set all Program Fees at the start of the season and that no additional costs are added to the families at any point of the season. Participant Fees for registration with Hockey Alberta are reviewed and set annually. Hockey Alberta's standard registration fee for Rec Hockey is \$36.80 per participant (players & Team Officials):

- Includes Hockey Canada Registration & Insurance Fee - \$23.80
- Includes Hockey Alberta Participant Registration Fee - \$13.00

Organizations not previously registered with Hockey Alberta that wish to register a Recreational Hockey Program have the ability (prior to January 1st) to apply using the online form to become part of the Hockey Alberta family and may be eligible for a reduced rate per participant (players & team officials) for their first season.

The Online Recreational Hockey Sanction Request Form can be found [here](#).

REGULATIONS & GAME PLAY RULES

Recommended Age Divisions

U8:	5, 6 & 7 year olds
U11:	8, 9 & 10 year olds
U14:	11, 12 & 13 year olds
U18:	14, 15, 16 & 17 year olds
U21 (Juvenile):	18, 19 & 20 year olds

Overage / Underage Players

Organizations may approve/ deny underage and overage requests for their teams that are registered as recreation based on their own policies and procedures. While it does not require Hockey Alberta approval, we recommend that organizations create their own internal processes to handle such requests and situations.

Affiliation Processes

The filing of Affiliation is not required within the Recreational Hockey Model. When needed by a team, or in the best interest of a player, organizations will be permitted to use age-appropriate players that are registered within their



RECREATIONAL HOCKEY

Recreation program for any sanctioned games. Players who are registered within the Recreational Hockey Model may not affiliate to registered Minor Hockey.

Exhibition & Tournament Games

Organizations / Programs, at their discretion, can schedule their teams to play exhibition games and participate in tournaments against other registered Rec Hockey programs. It is important to note that low costs and low commitment can be a driving factor for participation in this level and it is recommended to monitor the amount of travel and number of tournaments Teams are participating in to make decisions in the best interest of the athletes, families registered and the recreation program as a whole.

Length of Games

Organizations can adjust based on their association guidelines & ice availability, but should use the following guidelines:

- All Games are run-time
- 5 Minute Warm Up
- No floods in between periods (consider 1 flood for older age divisions)
- Period lengths are determined prior to the start of the game (as a part of the scheduling process)
 - Example: U8 (half ice) & U11 - 1 hour games (Periods of 15, 15 and 15 minutes)
 - Example: U14, U18 & Juvenile - 1.25 hour games (20, 20, and 20 minutes)

If the game being played involves two different organizations, they should come to an understanding on the length of periods prior to the commencement of the game.

Officiating & Discipline

- Two-Official system is recommended for Juvenile, U18 and U14 games.
- One-Official system is recommended for U11 and U8 games.
- Officials should be at least one year older than the oldest permitted age of the division of hockey.
- If using a One-Official system for Juvenile, U18 or U14, it is recommended that the official be a certified Level 2 and have at least three years of experience officiating.
- All officials must be Hockey Alberta certified.
- Players can score a maximum of three goals in one game.
- Players who receive 3 penalties in a game will be removed from the game.
- Officials Reports are required for all major penalties.
- Suspensions can be administered by the Organization but must follow the Hockey Canada / Hockey Alberta Minimum Suspensions.

Fair Ice Time

- A 'Fair Ice Time' policy should be established locally to ensure that all players get the same opportunity to participate in games, regardless of age, skill or ability.
- A coach's responsibility is to develop all players and help them become capable.
- Shortening of the bench and sitting players is not permitted.
- All players should receive as close to equal ice time as possible, including opportunities on special teams (powerplay and penalty killing).
- The use of a buzzer (ie - every 2 or 3 minutes) is recommended for younger age groups to ensure shift lengths are similar. Upon hearing the buzzer, play will be stopped and teams will change as quick as possible. The clock shall continue to run.
- All skaters should rotate through all positions to ensure each player can try each position. (LW/C/RW/LD/RD)
- Full-time goaltenders are allowed. If a team has two goalies, they should rotate for equal playing time and the goalie not playing should be allowed to play out as a skater.



RECREATIONAL HOCKEY

SEASONAL STRUCTURE

Practice & Game Play Recommendations

It is recommended for all levels to keep practice and game times to a consistent day and time of the week. Having a structured/ set schedule allows for families to plan and athletes to potentially participate in other non-hockey related activities (school sports, music lessons, etc).

For the U8 and U11 Divisions, it is recommended that a practice to game ratio be 1:1 to promote skill development. Emphasis should be placed on foundational skills such as skating, passing, and shooting.

For the U14, U18 and Juvenile Divisions, it is recommended that a practice to game ratio of 1:2 be implemented. Should a team or organization not have practices, it is recommended that additional drop-in skills sessions are offered to the players.

There are no playoffs. However it is recommended that year-end tournaments and/ or jamborees take place to provide players, parents and coaches the opportunity to celebrate their season together.

Example of a Potential Seasonal Structure to Consider

OCTOBER - Skill Development and Player Evaluation Sessions

- It is recommended to provide skill development sessions for players during this time.
- Organizations can conduct player evaluations and placements as they deem necessary.

NOVEMBER – FEBRUARY - Scheduled Hockey Season

- Games can be scheduled starting November 1.
- Practices should still focus on fundamental skill development, building individual player skills such as skating, passing, and shooting.
- Programs should be focused on the promotion of participation and enjoyment of team sport.
- Contributing to a team and enjoyment of the sport should always be the key principles in the Recreational Hockey Model. Winning should never be the primary focus of a coach or player.
- Game play should focus on maintaining the enjoyment of hockey for the player and ensuring a competitively balanced experience.
- Organizations may shift rosters at any time during the season in order to keep a good competitive balance.

MARCH - Year End Tournaments / Jamborees

- Season wrap up events are encouraged.
- 100% of players, playing 100% of games.
- Promotion of participation and enjoyment of team sport.

APRIL to AUGUST - Off-Season

- Provides players the opportunity to pursue other sports / activities.
- Multisport activities are recommended during this phase.
- No player evaluations or formal games are permitted.
- Associations may choose to run development initiatives in April and May or September (prior to the season starting). Must be optional for players to attend.



RECREATIONAL HOCKEY

COMPARISON OF PROGRAM TYPES			
	Pond Hockey	Rec Hockey	Minor Hockey
Registration Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unstructured • No Residency Rules • No Registration Rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-Structured • No Residency Rules • Limited Registration Rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully Structured • Residency Rules • Registration Rules, etc.
Roster Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Permanent Rosters Required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Permanent Rosters Required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Permanent Rosters Required for U9 & U7 • 18 skaters, 2 goalies: U18AAA • 17 skaters, 2 goalies: all other teams (U18, U16, U15, U13, U11)
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Participation • No travel for game play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Participation • Limited Travel for Game Play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • League Participation • Travel Required for Game Play
Operation of Intro to Hockey Ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half Ice Required for U8 programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half Ice Required for U8 programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half Ice Required for U7 and U9 programming
Coach Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RIS Required for all Instructors, Coaches & Team Officials • One Team Official per Team is required to complete the online Safety program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RIS Required for all Instructors, Coaches & Team Officials • One Team Official per Team is required to complete the online Safety program • Coach 2 Recommended for Coaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RIS Required for all Instructors, Coaches & Team Officials • One Team Official per Team is required to complete the online Safety program • Specific NCCP Levels Required for Coaches Depending on Level of Hockey
Criminal Record Checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory for the organization to screen all Volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory for the organization to screen all Volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory for the organization to screen all Volunteers
Conduct Management (Off-Ice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handled by the individual organization, using Hockey Alberta guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handled by the individual organization, using Hockey Alberta guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handled by the MHA, League and/ or HA
Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Practices Necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 Practice to Game Ratio (U8 & U11) recommended • 1:2 Practice to Game Ratio (U14 & Up) recommended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended 2:1 Practice to Game Ratio
Playing Rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited Use of Hockey Canada Playing Rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modified use of Hockey Canada Playing Rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Implementation of Hockey Canada Playing Rules
Body Checking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U18, U15 (Tier 3 and higher)
Discipline from Game Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handled by the individual organization, using HA guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handled by the individual organization, using HA guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handled by the MHA, League and/ or HA
Tournaments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Festivals Permitted for all Registered Players 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host/attend tournaments with other HA Registered Rec Hockey Programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host/attend Tournaments with other IIHF Registered Minor Hockey Associations
Playoffs / Provincials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • League Championships for all Levels: U18, U16, U15, U13, U11 • Provincials for U18, U16, U15, U13 (Tiers 1, 2, 3, 4, AA, AAA)