



INFORMATION BULLETIN 21-10

June 2, 2022

MINOR LEAGUES TO IMPLEMENT U18 NON-BODY CHECKING AT TIERS 4-6 FOR 2022-2023 SEASON

Hockey Alberta's Minor Leagues Committee, which is comprised of Alberta's six (6) tiered Minor Hockey Leagues (CAHL, NAI, NEAHL, All Peace, EFHL & Hockey Calgary) have unanimously agreed to implement non-body checking / body contact only hockey at the Tier 4 – 6 categories of the U18 division for the 2022-2023 season.

The decision to extend non-body checking into the U18 division at the Tier 4 – 6 categories comes after having implemented the same changes two season ago at the U15 division prior to the 2020-2021 hockey season.

As outlined below, Minor Hockey Associations in any of the six (6) tiered Minor Hockey Leagues will be required to declare their teams in accordance with the Alberta One Standardized Tiering Grid:

- a. Minor Hockey Associations who only operate one (1) team within a division that has both body checking and non-body checking tiers, will be given the one-time declaration at the start of each season to declare that team as either 'body checking' or "non-body checking". This declaration must be made to the League on a date determined by the League.
- b. Minor Hockey Associations with two (2) or more teams within a division that has both body checking and non-body checking tiers, must declare their teams as 'body checking' and "non-body checking" as per the Alberta One Standardized Tiering Grid.
- c. For the purposes of tiering, should a team declared for body checking wish to move to non-body checking after their tiering round games, they shall be able to do so prior to the completion of the Tiering Rounds.

2022-2023 ALBERTA ONE STANDARDIZED TIERING GRID

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3		Tier 4	Tier 5	Tier 6	Total
	Body Checking				Non-Body Checking / Body Contact Only			
One team			1 (Option)					1
Two Teams		1			1			2
Three Teams	1		1 (Option)			1		3
Four Teams	1		1		1	1		4
Five Teams	1		1		1	1	1	5
Six Teams	1	1	1		1	1	1	6
Seven Teams	1	1	1		1	1	1	7
			1 (Option)					
Eight Teams	1	1	1		1	1	1	8
		1			1			
Nine Teams	1	1	1		1	1	1	9
	1		1 (Option)			1		



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	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3		Tier 4	Tier 5	Tier 6	Total
	Body Checking				Non-Body Checking / Body Contact Only			
Ten Teams	1	1	2		2	2	1	10
	1							
Eleven Teams	1	1	2		2	2	2	11
	1							
Twelve Teams	2	2	2		2	2	2	12
Thirteen Teams	2	2	2		2	2	2	13
			1 (Option)					
Fourteen Teams	2	2	2		2	2	2	14
		1			1			
Fifteen Teams	2	2	2		2	2	2	15
	1		1 (Option)		1			
Sixteen Teams	2	2	3		3	3	2	16
	1							
Seventeen Teams	2	2	3		3	3	3	17
	1							
Eighteen Teams	3	3	3		3	3	3	18
Nineteen Teams	3	3	3		3	3	3	19
			1 (Option)					
Twenty Teams	3	3	3		3	3	3	20
		1			1			
Twenty-One Teams	3	3	3		3	3	3	21
	1		1 (Option)		1			
Twenty-Two Teams	3	3	4		4	4	3	22
	1							
Twenty-Three Teams	3	3	4		4	4	4	23
	1							
Twenty-Four Teams	4	4	4		4	4	4	24
Twenty-Five Teams	4	4	4		4	4	4	25
			1 (Option)					

Enclosed with this Bulletin is a "Frequently Asked Questions" document which will help Minor Hockey Associations in the education of their membership.



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If you have any questions regarding the implementation of non-body checking hockey at the U18 division, please contact either your League President or the Hockey Alberta Office.

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



NON-BODY CHECKING / BODY CONTACT ONLY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The FAQ document has been created to assist Minor Hockey Associations in the planning and implementation of Non-Body Checking / Body Contact Only hockey at the Tiers 4-6 categories of the U15 and U18 divisions.

1. What division and categories are changing?

Tiers 4-6 in the U15 and U18 divisions are affected by this change and are now non-body checking tiers of hockey. The U15 and U18 divisions will look as follows for the 2022-2023 season:

Division & Category	Body Checking / Non-Body Checking
U18 AAA, U17 AAA, U18 AA, U16 AA, U18 Tiers 1-3	Body Checking
U18 Tiers 4-6	Non-Body Checking
U15 AAA, U15 AA, U15 Tiers 1-3	Body Checking
U15 Tiers 4-6	Non-Body Checking

2. What Leagues are implementing this change?

Minor Hockey Associations that participate in the following Leagues will be affected by this change:

- Central Alberta Hockey League (CAHL)
- Northern Alberta Interlock (NAI)
- North Eastern Alberta Hockey League (NEAHL)
- All Peace Hockey League (APHL)
- Edmonton Federation Hockey League (EFHL)
- Hockey Calgary

3. What are the expected benefits of making this decision?

There are two significant benefits with non-body checking options at U15 and U18:

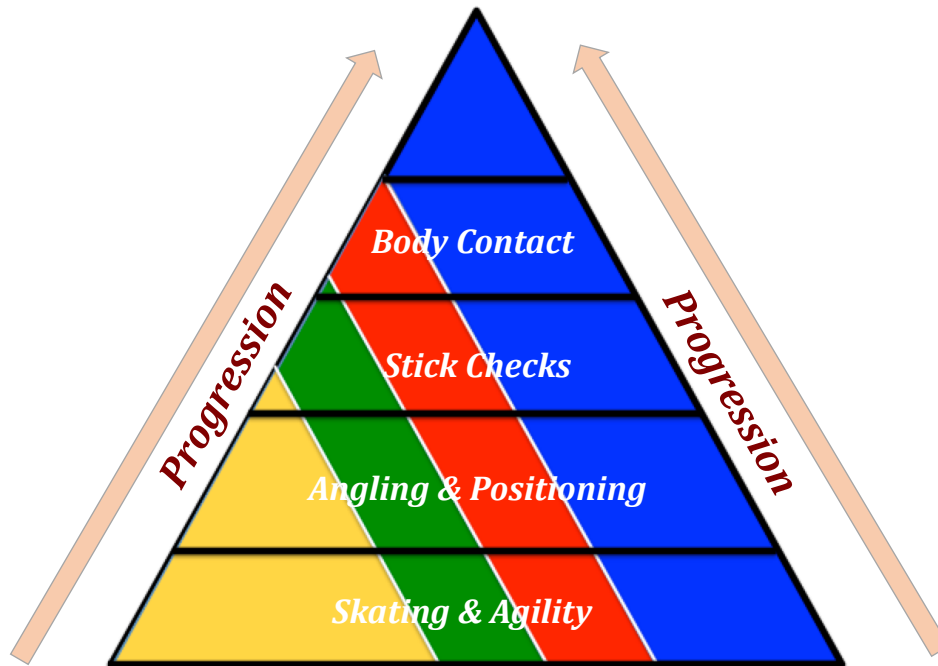
- Increased safety for our participants, and
- More options for our participants to continue playing hockey, as associations that have implemented non-body checking options have generally seen growth at the U15 and U18 divisions.

4. Why was the decision made to implement non-body checking starting at Tier 4?

First, aligning leagues and non-body checking hockey across the province was essential. The EFHL and Hockey Calgary have been operating non-body checking hockey, starting at the Tier 4 category, for several seasons, and have seen growth at these categories of hockey. To align with these two leagues, the Minor Leagues Committee unanimously supported the implementation starting at Tier 4.

Second, from a player development, progression and safety standpoint, there are four (4) essential skills that will allow players to properly give and receive a body check. Those four (4) skills are skating and agility; angling and positioning; stick checks; and body contact. Players who are limited in these four (4) essential skills do increase the risk of injury to themselves or other players should they be participating in body checking hockey. This progression is highlighted in the following diagram:

NON-BODY CHECKING / BODY CONTACT ONLY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



5. Is 'Body Contact' being eliminated as part of this change?

No, 'body contact' will not be eliminated, nor can it be eliminated. Body contact does and continues to play a crucial role in the game at all divisions.

6. What is the difference between Body Checking and Body Contact?

Body Checking is "an attempt by a player to gain an advantage on the opponent with the use of the body. Body checking results when two opposing players collide while skating in opposite directions or when positioning and angling allow the checker to use the force of the body to gain the advantage."

Body Contact is "incidental contact of two opposing players in pursuit of the puck or position on the ice in the same direction. Body contact occurs as a result of movement by the offensive player."

Below are two videos that will help educate your association and membership on the differences:

Body Checking: <https://youtu.be/49eOGJzPzs8>

Body Contact: <https://youtu.be/byVpydXxMV8>

7. Should coaches of non-body checking teams be teaching their players the skill of body checking?

Yes, Hockey Alberta strongly recommends that coaches continue to teach the skills of properly giving and receiving a body check. By teaching these skills, players will be able to affiliate to teams playing with body checking and progress into playing with body checking in future seasons.

Minor Hockey Associations are encouraged to develop a coaching plan with their U13, U15 and U18 coaches to ensure these skills are being taught on a regular basis.



NON-BODY CHECKING / BODY CONTACT ONLY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

8. Will players from non-body checking teams be eligible to affiliate to 'body checking' teams?

Yes, players from non-body checking teams will be eligible to affiliate to teams playing with body checking rules, should that player agree to be affiliated as such. Hockey Alberta's Affiliation Regulations will apply to the affiliation of all players.

9. As an association with only one (1) team in the U15 and/or U18 divisions, my association will be able to declare to our League that we are either 'body checking' or 'non-body checking'?

Yes, on a year-by-year basis, associations with only one (1) U15 or U18 will be given the one-time declaration to choose either 'body checking' or 'non-body checking' by their League Team Declaration deadline. Hockey Alberta strongly recommends that associations have an idea of the team's competitiveness prior to League Tiering to ensure they are declaring based on the teams competitiveness and not the want of playing with body checking.

For those associations who declare their one (1) team as 'body checking', but due to their competitiveness in the League Tiering Process wish to move to the 'non-body checking' tiers of hockey (4-6), will be given the opportunity to move prior to the end of their League Tiering Process; or by their League's re-tiering deadline.

However, those associations who declare their one (1) team as 'non-body checking' will not be given the opportunity to move up to 'body checking' / Tier 3 or higher.

10. As an association, should I ask players if they would like to participate in 'non-body checking' hockey?

Yes, Hockey Alberta strongly recommends at the time of player registration, that an option is provided for players to indicate if they would like to participate in 'body checking' or 'non-body checking' hockey. This will allow associations to determine their numbers for either option and to start planning for League play accordingly.

Our recommendation is that a check box is added on the association's individual player registration form to gather this information.

11. As an association with one (1) team at the U15 and/or U18 division, what should I do if half the players select 'body checking' and the other half select 'non-body checking'?

Hockey Alberta strongly encourages that associations, within a close proximity to each other, work together to form two (2) or more teams. By working together, associations can have one (1) team declared as 'body checking' and the other team declared as 'non-body checking' as per the Alberta One Standardized Tiering Grid.

12. As an association with one (1) team at the U15 and/or U18 divisions, what should I do if there are a one or two players of a higher skill, but our team has declared as 'non-body checking'?

Hockey Alberta strongly encourages that associations, within a close proximity to each other, work together to form two (2) or more teams, so that these players might be able to access a higher tier with 'body checking'.

NON-BODY CHECKING / BODY CONTACT ONLY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



With that said, all players at the U15 and U18 divisions, regardless of their resident Minor Hockey Association, are guaranteed the opportunity of a tryout with their resident Elite and AA Draw Zone teams. This opportunity affords all players the ability to access a higher level of hockey at the U15 and U18 divisions with body checking.

- 13. As an association with one (1) or two (2) teams at the U15 and/or U18 divisions, do we have to allow players the opportunity to play 'body checking' even though they have been placed on a 'non-body checking' team?**

All players at the U15 and U18 divisions, regardless of their resident Minor Hockey Association, are guaranteed the opportunity of a tryout with their resident Elite and AA Draw Zone teams. This opportunity affords all players the ability to access a higher level of hockey at the U15 and U18 divisions with body checking.

Nonetheless, Hockey Alberta would encourage associations to allow players who would like to play 'body checking' to be granted the ability to do so, if either their skills warrant the movement or if it doesn't jeopardize the associations ability to ice a team at the U15 or U18 divisions.

Movement between associations would take place using Hockey Alberta's Minor Player Movement Form.

- 14. As an association with one (1) team, if our team has declared as 'body checking', but we have players that want to play 'non-body checking', do we have to allow them the ability to access 'body non-body checking'?**

Yes, as this speaks to a safety component of the game. Players who would like to play 'non-body checking' hockey have to be given the opportunity to access this option and cannot be forced to play 'body checking' hockey.

- 15. Will Hockey Alberta be operating a Provincial Championship at the U15 Tier 4 and U18 Tier 4 Non-Body Checking Categories?**

Yes, Hockey Alberta will be operating Provincial Championships at the U15 Tier 4 and U18 Tier 4 categories for the 2022-2023 season. These Provincial Championships will be comprised of the U15 Tier 4 and U18 Tier 4 League Champions respectively.

- 16. From an Officiating Standpoint, how will officials know if a game is 'body-checking' or 'non-body checking'?**

Hockey Alberta will be including this information in all Officials Clinic, so that the officials are equipped to officiate both 'body checking' and 'non-body checking' hockey at the U15 and U18 divisions.

To help aid the officials, Hockey Alberta will require that for U15 and U18 'non-body checking' games, the home team will be responsible for indicating on the game sheet prior to the start of the game that 'non-body checking' rules will apply. This can be done by writing "U15/U18 Tier (Insert Number) Non-Body Checking Game". Associations are strongly encouraged to ensure their Coaches & Managers know that this information must be included on game sheets going forward.

NON-BODY CHECKING / BODY CONTACT ONLY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



17. Will there be the opportunity for changes to be made on province wide 'non-body checking' hockey?

Yes, Hockey Alberta and the Minor Leagues Committee will be reviewing and soliciting member feedback to see if any changes might be needed, including where the non-body checking line is placed.