



2017 - 2019 North Zone Tier 1 & 2

Roll-out Plan

North Zone Parents and players

This document is to provide a clear and reliable overview of the **High Performance (HP) Zone Team** being assembled by your North Zone Team Committee (NZTC). The goal of this communication is to outline 2017/18 dates, as well as 2018/19, so you can more confidently plan your son's HP hockey path. Your group of North Zone association representatives was organized at the request of BC Hockey and the OMAHA district leadership. The goal of the NZTC is to drive effective localized decision making on a more timely basis. We have been asked to set aside our association biases and are now working for the common good of all the HP players and parents in our North Zone.

Background

You are all aware of the increasing trend of HP players feeling pressured to attend costly Hockey Prep Schools. Some of you are perhaps even wondering whether you should buy that new car or are perhaps better suited to send your child to one of these pricey institutions instead. Clearly the expense of these programs not only prohibits most average families from joining the "club", but these schools are also pulling scouting attention away from some very excellent young hockey talent in minor hockey. Stacked recruited teams make "one-stop shopping" very easy for scouts. Minor hockey can't ignore this.

Additionally, having 13 and 14 year old children move away from home is not always palatable for many parents. That said, Prep schools are not going away any time soon and as their numbers increase in B.C., recruiting pressure for players will increase for sure. Therefore to keep our HP performance players developing in our associations and still believing they can achieve their hockey goals, we must respond. The reality is that new Prep school benchmark

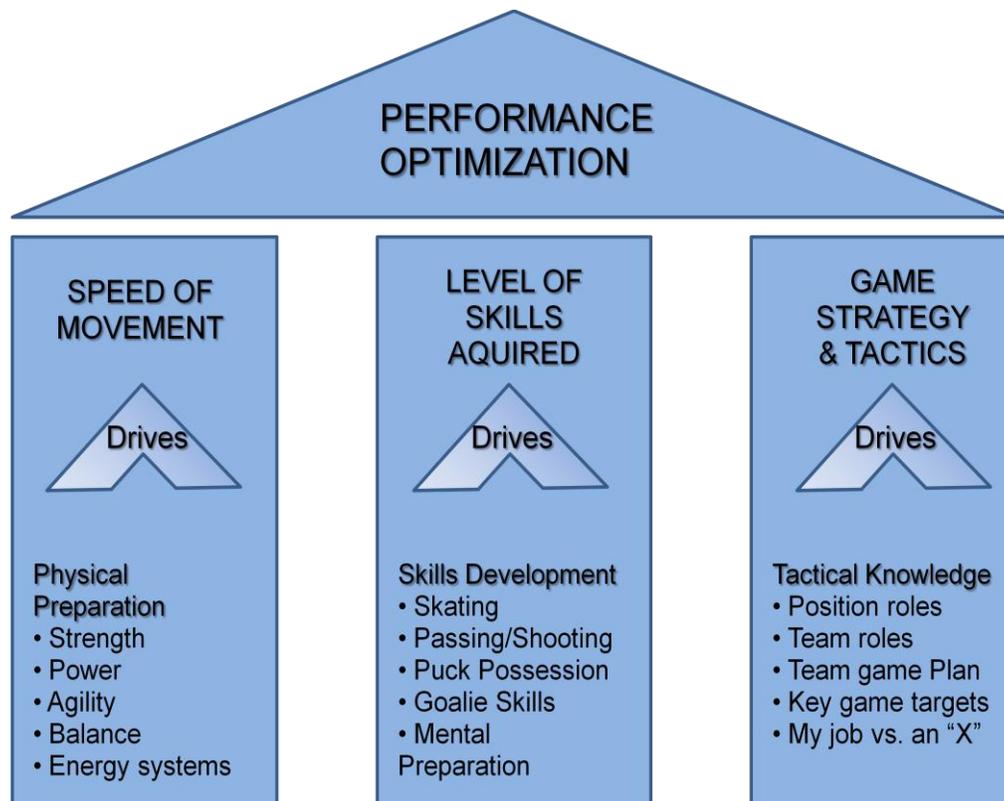
challenges us, and arguably makes obsolete, many of our traditional minor hockey development approaches. We are being pushed to make change. The bar has been raised and competition makes us better if we respond. Ignore or adapt? We choose to adapt. So the key question is....what exactly do we do about it? Action speaks louder than words, so here it is.

Plan Strategy

Launching BC Hockey Zone teams will allow the OMAHA district to raise the level of play for HP players. This is designed to increase competition, sharpen total development, share best practices and increase pass through of our HP players on to higher level hockey. It will also provide leading edge HP development for coaches and staff. Another key point to keep in mind, is that the new HP Zone model also has a mandate to cascade learning, down through the lower hockey tiers. This includes on-trend development information and training tools. This will assist aspiring HP players to improve opportunities to achieve their target hockey levels.

This Zone plan will strengthen the three fundamental athletic performance optimization pillars;

1. Improving Speed of Movement (Effective Practice plans/Strength and Conditioning)
2. Accelerating Skill Acquisition (More and better skills training)
3. Strengthening Game Knowledge (HP coaching on team strategy and individual tactics)



Plan Details

Zone Teams

The North zone will host Bantam/Midget Zone Teams in the Tier 1 and Tier 2 categories. Tryouts will be held in late August/Early September preceding the Association Rep tryouts to ensure players know where they will play. Specific dates and full details for tryouts will be issued

The **Tier 1 Zone "Kings"** and the **Tier 2 "Royals"** will soon come to represent the pinnacle of our new North Zone HP hockey development systems. We intend to help support every young aspiring player being possibly named to one of these elite rosters. These teams will be open to all North Zone players regardless of the home association they may register with. The plan is to build a truly elite hockey program that is accessible for our top players.

Zone Team - Tryouts/Evaluations

To avoid the concerns about the risk of biased player selection, two initiatives will be installed.

- Non-partisan evaluators, set by the District will make the initial player selections. This to mitigate the risks of preferential or biased selections. Head Coaches will be given final say on the roster spots from that post try-out group established by the evaluators.
- More open borders to allow North Zone residents to tryout where it best suits them. Open borders are used very successfully in other hockey regions.

Tryout dates/Locations

- 2017/18 Tryouts and combine level fitness testing are targeted to start on September 5th
- Final dates, locations, and details will be issued shortly after close of 2017 player registration
- 2018/19 Target tryout and combine dates are March 23, 24 & 25, 2018

Practice/game locations

It was determined that the best approach, for ensuring the true Zone feel to each of the teams, is to hold extra practices and games in several locations. This is of course is somewhat dependent on ice availability. Each Zone team ice plan will be mindful of driving and time of day needs. No 6:00 a.m. practices are planned. For example a Tier 1 team should expect to practice in Vernon, Armstrong and Enderby on a rotating basis. Games will be held at various arenas to promote broader Zone community support.

High Performance Head Coaches

We know that quality head coaches can have a dramatic impact on a young players development. Coaches will expected to directly and positively influence players skills, game knowledge, in game performance and character development.

To that end, there is a plan to elevate our level of Zone team Head Coaches to the Hockey Canada High Performance standardized level. As well, there is intent to seek effective non-parent candidates. The Zone team coaching selection process is being handled by a District committee lead by the President of OMAHA. BC Hockey HP coaching applications are being collected and final selection interviews will happen in early June, 2017. Coaching announcements are targeted to be made by June 15, 2017.

For 2018, Head Coaches are to be selected and announced by March 9, 2018

Please note that Head Coaches will be provided the opportunity to be paid a reasonable honorarium for their service. This will be funded by team fees.

Player Development Focus

This leagues is designed with a HP development mindset going in. Preference will be given to players that exhibit the proper development attitude both on and off the ice. Head Coaches will be provided the ability to make roster changes, post team start-up, if warranted. This is to ensure players view their involvement as an earned privilege and one that needs to be carefully maintained. There will be direct consequences for those players electing to engage in inappropriate outside activities. The player expectations process will be fully explained in the North Zone player participation packages that will follow shortly.

Skill Development

Players will be provided the most advanced skill development opportunities by way of

- Better Coaching
- Increased ice time
- More access to at-home skill development learning and guidance
- Local School District Hockey Academies support

Strength and Conditioning (S&C)

Today's game is all about speed and skill. Ice hockey is one of the world's most challenging sports to master. Part of a player's development toolbox is improving their knowledge and commitment to building their own strength and conditioning. Zone plans are being developed to address this important piece. This includes

- Combine Testing and Target Standards. The plan is to host NHL type combine tests preceding the Zone 1 and 2 tryouts. This serves two purposes: 1) it gives tryout evaluators one more tool for assessing player readiness/team fit and 2) provides team S&C trainers and Head Coaches data driven access to where the best payback development areas are, by player.

- Intelligent and purposeful integration of in-season off-ice plans with team practice strategies. Old school methods of exhausting practices and endless bag skates followed by non-strategic and typically high cardio based "dry-land" actually slows players down and doesn't create better players. Today, like the NHL, energy management principles will help shape proper energy strategies for on/off-ice plans to ensure players do not burn out.

- Off-season strength conditioning guidance and expectations. There is a great deal of information out there on this topic. Perhaps too much. There is a clear need for some clarity on how players should best approach this. The sharing of "Best Practices" within the Zone teams can help all Minor Hockey participants to navigate this.

Exposure Tournament

It is clear that players and parents alike seek better exposure to MML, Jr. B, Jr. A, Major Junior and College scouts. Therefore a target tournaments will be carefully selected by each Zone team that will balance travel costs and exposure effectiveness. In addition Tier 1 coaches will be expected to Scout Tier 2 games and Tier 2 to scout Tier 3 games to stay current on AP prospects. Keeping travel costs in control and maximizing exposure is our key to success

Budgets

Estimated budgets for team participation have come down significantly from initial rumours about the cost of playing on a Zone team elsewhere. The NZTC committee and the District are in full agreement that we must remain very vigilant in the management of costs. That is our key advantage and a strong heritage all associations enjoy in this Zone. Current projected fees for core team costs for Tier 2 are \$2,250.00 and Tier 1 \$2,750.00. Options to bring costs down will be openly shared amongst the participating teams. We all know that minor hockey thrives on the power of the of volunteers and the generosity of its local sponsors. This won't change.