

Changes to U14 Programming for 2025-2026 Season

Beginning in the 2025-2026 season, Ringette Nova Scotia will no longer host U14 Provincial programming. Rather, all U14 programming will be hosted and operated at the Association level. U14 Team Nova Scotia will be decided at U14 Tier 1 Provincials in March. The top two U14 Tier 1 teams at Provincials will secure a spot at the Eastern Canadian Ringette Championships (ECRC). ECRC will take place in Mississauga in April 2026.

Ringette Nova Scotia remains committed to safe and effective athlete development. This adjustment at the U14 level is a strategic move to encourage growth at the local level in terms of participation numbers, team strength, and community cohesion. The success of both our Community and High-Performance programs relies on the prosperity of Community initiatives. Community associations and teams are the foundation of ringette, including our High-Performance Program.

It is important to note that there will be no changes to the High-Performance Programs at the U16 and U19 levels, at this time.

This change will align NS with the majority of other provinces that compete at ECRC. This decision aims to strengthen Nova Scotia's performances at ECRC by fostering a sense of community and collaboration among athletes. U14 is an important age for skill development, including social and emotional skills. Creating additional competitive teams for more athletes to perform and develop, while also retaining numbers at the local associations. By removing the emphasis on individual success in tryouts, we anticipate a stronger team spirit and bonding as athletes collectively work towards the common goal of competing as a team for the right to represent Nova Scotia and attend ECRC.

We invite our members to embrace this change, and to foster an environment where every athlete has the opportunity to wear the Team NS uniform with pride. We are excited about the prospect of great matchups and thrilling games at the 2026 Nova Scotia Provincial Championships in March!

Questions, comments, and concerns can be directed to your local association presidents who will relay information to the Ringette NS working group responsible for implementing this change.

FAQ

Why Change?

There are a number of important considerations driving the change, including:

LTAD (Long Term Athlete Development) alignment: as the foundational framework for all youth sports including ringette, LTAD clearly states that u14 is a development stage and not a High-Performance stage. As such, U14 should not be part of the Ringette Nova Scotia Provincial High Performance program. Rather, U14 needs to represent an age group that is focused on development, with more focus on the U14 Tier 1 loop, keeping athletes engaged, with the right split between skills development and meaningful competition.

Financial strain: Double-carding creates additional financial strain on families, reducing the ability for club teams to manage events and finances (tournaments, etc.).

Why now?

- This important topic has come up as part of a larger High Performance policy review by Ringette Nova Scotia. This was conducted in consultation with a panel of regional experts in the sport, who are not members of the RNS Board, as well as member associations
- Nova Scotia has generally underperformed in national and eastern competitions in recent years. As U14 forms the foundation for our competitive ages, a new approach was deemed to be necessary.
- Development opportunities for our U14 athletes needs to be better coordinated across the province.

How will this work?

- Associations will run their U14 programs as they have done during previous years.
- Being cognizant of numbers and caliber imbalances across the region, tryouts will be coordinated across Associations to maximize opportunities for as many athletes as possible to have an opportunity for development and meaningful competition.
- RNS will coordinate with Associations to ensure that U14 ice time is reallocated to support clubs and to ensure that ice time is maximized.
- The winner of NS U14 T1 Provincial Championships will be Team Nova Scotia, and the runner up will have the option of also attending, representing their Association.
- RNS will enhance its role in coach development, coordinating with Associations to support coaching and athlete development.