

	<b>Title</b>	<b>Ice Time Policy</b>
	<b>Policy #</b>	Organizational – 2.3
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	<b>Owned By</b>	Executive Committee

## 1.0 OVERVIEW

The following document outlines AMHA’s Ice Time Policy so that all stakeholders understand the mandate set out by AMHA’s Executive Committee and Board of Directors in relation to communicating the Association’s vision of ice and playing time for members of Airdrie Minor Hockey Association (AMHA).

Key Factors/ Principles Leading to the Creation and Implementation of this policy.

- 1.1 Support the Coaches
- 1.2 Reward hard work, effort and success of players
- 1.3 To achieve a balance between competitive player development and team effectiveness

AMHA’s Vision of Hockey Canada’s Fair Play Code: **Everyone working together to create success**

## 2.0 POLICY GUIDELINES

Communication is key, and coaches are expected to discuss their coaching philosophy regarding ice time at the beginning of the season, to ensure that all players and parents understand what the expectations are for the year.

During games coaches will provide ice opportunities for all players, regardless of ability, throughout the season. Please note however that fair ice is NOT always equal ice. Throughout the course of a game, situations will arise which may result in the coach choosing to support line consistency and a specific line of players may have to be adjusted. Coaches will strive to ensure that all players receive similar amount of playing time in games.

During both practices and games, coaches will do their best to maximize the number of teachable moments for all players. Coaches will offer individual and collective praise where due; correction where required – with demonstration or explanation of the appropriate action expected of the player. All players will be given the opportunity to train in all situations during practices.

With all of this in mind, AMHA supports the following guidelines for our coaches to follow in regard to Ice Time directives for each division and stream:

**2.1 CAHL (U11)  
RMFHL (U11)  
RHL (U13 to U18)  
City Team Players (U7 to U11)**

- 2.1.1 The expectation is to roll lines throughout the whole game, allowing and giving everyone fair ice time and opportunity to play in every scenario of the game.
- 2.1.2 Coaches can only sit a player for disciplinary reasons. (see 3.0)

**2.2 AA, CAHL and RMFHL (U13 to U18)**

- 2.2.1 AMHA is committed to having as many players as possible play at a level of competition suited to their skills and abilities. Therefore, AMHA recognizes that there are intrinsic differences between competitive and recreational hockey streams and that coaches may need to make reasonable adjustments to player ice times during games to ensure that a proper balance between competitive player development and team competitiveness is achieved over the course of the season.
- 2.2.2 Coaches should attempt to have all players receive fair ice times; however, several circumstances may require a coach in the competitive stream to adjust ice times to make the team or players more effective.

Some examples of these may include, but are not limited to:

- Special Teams: Penalty Kill and Power Play lines. Coaches should wait until the second half of the season to determine if this is even a strategy that would truly benefit the team and if so, then they should also adjust the PK and PP lines throughout the season based on players efforts and attitude, sometimes less skilled players can oftentimes surprise, especially when they are having a great game.
- Important face off situations
- Overtime/shootouts
- Adjusting lines to competitively match an opposing teams' strengths/weaknesses
- Adjusting lines in the final minutes of a play-off/championship game to ensure a competitive advantage is maintained
- Adjusting starting goaltender rotations

If any of these strategies are going to be used during the season, the coaching staff must have a discussion with the parents and players, at the beginning of the season, to make it clear that should such a decision be made, it's for the net benefit of the team in those instances.

Throughout the season, coaches also need to ensure that the strategy is communicated on a regular basis to the players affected to help minimize any bad feelings.

***The goal is to win, but our purpose is to develop young athletes into great people.***

- 2.2.3 While reasonable ice-time adjustments may be necessary to ensure the competitiveness of the team, the coach must ensure that all players receive exposure to, and the opportunity to develop in, as many tactical and situational aspects of the game as possible.
- 2.2.4 This approach may result in some players finishing certain games with more ice time than others, but it is expected that coaches will endeavor to ensure that all players receive equitable ice over the course of the season.
- 2.2.5 The intent of the AMHA ice time policy for these divisions is to provide a reasonable degree of fair ice time to all players, in consideration of the factors outlined above in this section, while ensuring that, throughout the course of a season, their players are adequately exposed to, and prepared for a future in, competitive hockey.
- 2.2.6 Coaches can also sit a player for disciplinary reasons. (see 3.0)

### 2.3 **Goaltenders (CAHL, RMFHL, RHL & City – All divisions)**

Goaltenders will start and play every second game.

Younger divisions U11 may choose to split games or other arrangements, like goalies playing out when not in net.

The method of sharing games will be clearly communicated to the players and parents at the start of the season.

## 3.0 DISCIPLINE

A player's ice time can be reduced for disciplinary reasons, repeated violations of the Players Code of Conduct are a good starting point. As well, repeated penalties involving risk of injury (i.e. checking from behind, head contact, cross check or slash, etc.) and "bad taste" penalties (i.e. unsportsmanlike, roughing after the play, etc.) may be considered disciplinary reasons to sit a player for a period of time.

Examples of behaviour that might warrant a disciplinary ice time restriction may include but is not limited to:

- Bullying of teammates either on or off the ice
- Excessive or inappropriate penalties
- Disrespectful language directed towards a coach, team official or teammate
- Disrespectful language directed towards an on-ice official
- Inappropriate displays of unsportsmanlike behaviour
- Violence or other behaviour which is likely to cause injury to another player

Duration of discipline must be dependent on, and directly proportional to, the behaviour. For example: a "bad taste" penalty could result in sitting for a single shift, whereas a disrespectful behaviour toward team personnel or a teammate could result in sitting for the remainder of the game.

Following an instance where disciplinary related ice time restriction is imposed, coaches and parents of the player concerned are encouraged to discuss the situation in a timely manner. Coaches are encouraged to notify their Division Coordinators in the event of a chronic pattern of such behaviour.

The best method for coaches, players and parents is to clearly define the limits at the start of the season of what will be acceptable behaviour and what is not and could therefore lead to consequences of disciplinary measures of lost ice time.

#### 4.0 INTERPRETATION

Overall, it is expected that by the end of the year, every player will have played in all situations, such as power plays and penalty kills, and ice time would be fair in comparison to their peers.

AMHA recognizes there will be instances when a player will not receive “equal” ice. We realize that minute for minute playing time is not a reality due to the complex nature of the game of hockey and there will be practical instances throughout the season where ice time will be different amongst players in any given game. Although AMHA expects the spirit of the ice time policy to be adhered to, one must consider the following situations that can arise to affect a player’s ice time, just to name a few:

- 4.1 All teams traditionally have more players playing forward position than defense position. While teams at younger age divisions are encouraged to rotate players through positions, teams at older divisions normally have players in set positions for the season. In this instance, the defense players will obviously have more playing time than the forward players, and for that matter a single goalie on a team will have the most playing time.
- 4.2 For games with numerous penalties, line rotations can sometimes be difficult to organize or maintain, and because of these circumstances it’s not uncommon for some players to arbitrarily end up with more or less playing time.
- 4.3 Depending on the skill level of the opposing team, players can sometimes get “boxed in” to their defensive end or alternatively, generate sustained pressure in the offensive zone. Both of these situations can make it difficult to change lines within the expected shift length set by the coach (i.e. 45 sec to 1 min shift maximums)
- 4.4 Other factors, could include:
  - Player fatigue
  - Injuries, illnesses, absences or other factors resulting in an uneven roster
  - One goalie vs two goalies
  - Equipment failure

#### 5.0 ACCOUNTABILITY AND MANAGEMENT

Airdrie Minor Hockey will continue to rely on our coaches to use their best judgment relative to the Ice Time Policy. Based on the complexity of the game of hockey and the countless scenarios that arise we trust our coaches, players and parents to work together and to communicate as often and openly as possible.

However, if you have concerns regarding ice times, first and foremost, take the time to determine if your concerns are warranted, always allow a minimum of 24 hours to pass before taking any action with your coach.

- 5.1 Ask yourself if the ice time may have varied beyond the control of the coach.

- 5.2 Consider the examples listed above in section 4.0.
- 5.3 If you still have concerns after 24 hours, then ask to speak to the Head Coach and/or Team Manager to try to find a resolution at the team level.

Keep in mind that AMHA is very fortunate to have a number of dedicated volunteer coaches in our association that openly welcome questions and the opportunity to discuss concerns in a respectful and considerate manner.

The work of a volunteer coach is very busy during the game and it may simply be the case that they were unaware there were inequalities in ice time. The coach deserves an opportunity to discuss and explain in a mutually respectful manner; and be given an opportunity to address and correct in the future, if an inequality indeed exists.

- 5.4 If a resolution is not achieved at the team level:

It is recommended that you document the inequality and then contact the applicable Division Coordinator to discuss further.

- 5.4.1 If required, the Division Coordinator will communicate the concern to the Stream Director, who in turn may discuss with the Executive Committee.
  - 5.4.2 They will investigate the concern and determine a resolution.
  - 5.4.3 Resolution will be communicated back to parent, player and coach with in a timely manner.
- 5.5 After an investigation, if a coach is found to have violated the ice time policy, the following discipline may apply:
    - 1<sup>st</sup> offence - A verbal warning
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> offence - A written warning
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> offence - Released from their position as Head Coach with Airdrie Minor Hockey
  - 5.6 If a parent confronts or harasses a coach about playing time and does not follow the steps outlined above, that parent will be subject to discipline under Airdrie Minor Hockey's Respect Matters Policy #2.1.