



Cochrane Minor Hockey Association

Fair Play Policy

This document presents the vision agreed to by the Board of Directors of the Cochrane Minor Hockey Association ("CMHA") regarding fair play for all members of Cochrane Minor Hockey.

I. Key Principles

- A. We need to inspire and support coaches to continue to develop all players' strengths and weaknesses. A focus on development for strong players while forsaking those deemed to be weaker is unacceptable.
- B. CMHA follows the Hockey Canada Development Model as well as endorses the Hockey Canada Fair Play Code for Players and Coaches. The Hockey Canada Fair Play Code for Coaches states: "I will ensure that all players get equal instruction, support and playing time."
- C. Development of players comes from playing and experiencing all game situations.
- D. Player development is more valuable than game scores.

II. Fair Play Policy

- A. All players, regardless of skill level, deserve the opportunity to play in all situations in order to maximize their development.
- B. This applies to AA, Rep and RHL teams. It is not acceptable for a coach or assistant coach to remove a player from a regular rotation on the bench in order to gain an advantage over their opponent. We ask that all coaches embrace the spirit of the Fair Play Policy and encourage the development of all players to succeed in all game situations. Forward lines and defense pairings should be rotated, designated power play and penalty kill lines will not generally be accepted and Goaltenders will start and play every second game. For Goaltenders in REP Divisions below Atom and all RHL teams may choose to split games or make other arrangements with goalies playing out when not in net.

- C. CMHA recognizes that minute for minute playing time is not a reality due to the complex nature of the game of hockey and that situations will arise where it may be necessary for a coach to make difficult decisions involving their players that may result in unequal playing times. We present the following guidelines to assist coaches in these situations. These guidelines are not exhaustive and are presented for illustrative purposes only:
1. The safety of a player is being compromised i.e: a possible injury has occurred or the player has become a target by opponent(s) etc.
 2. If a player intentionally displays poor conduct towards his teammates or opponents or is in breach of the principles of Respect in Sport, the coach has the authority to use playing time as a discipline tool. If a player is being kept from playing for a disciplinary reason(s) the coach must discuss the matter and the repercussions with the player. Based on the severity of the incident coaches should use their best judgment as to the amount of shifts a player should miss.
 3. A player is not confident in certain game situations. When this instance occurs, it is imperative that the player be communicated to directly and coached through the issues.
 4. CMHA does not expect any of these instances to become chronic. We believe that most issues can be solved through open lines of communication and the display of mutual respect.

III. EQUAL PLAY POLICY U15AA and U18AA (The season will be divided into two separate portions.)

- A. (From the start of the season to Christmas break) All players, regardless of skill level, deserve the opportunity to play in all situations to maximize their development. This applies to U15 and U18 AA, it is not acceptable for a coach or assistant coach to remove a player from a regular rotation on the bench to gain an advantage over their opponent. Forward lines and defense pairings should be rotated, designated power play and penalty kill lines will not generally be accepted and Goaltenders will start and play every second game or as agreed upon by both Goalies.
- B. (From Christmas until the end of the season) Coaches can designate power play and penalty kill lines. The total amount of time each player spends on the ice should be monitored as the intent is to stay within the 90th percentile of the Fair Play policy. It is acceptable for a coach or assistant coach to remove a player from a regular rotation on the bench to gain an advantage over their opponent at strategic points in the game. Forward lines and defense pairings should be rotated, designated power play and penalty kill lines will be accepted and Goaltenders will start an equal number of games but the rotation is at the discretion of the coaching staff.
- C. CMHA recognizes that at the U15 and U18 AA level, minute-for-minute playing time is NOT a reality due to the complex nature of the game of hockey and that

situations will arise where it may be necessary for a coach to make difficult decisions involving their players that may result in unequal playing times. We present the following guidelines to assist coaches in these situations. These guidelines are not exhaustive and are presented for illustrative purposes only:

- i. Speciality teams will be at the discretion of the coaching staff.
- ii. Line matching is required, or the safety of a player is being compromised.
- iii. If a player intentionally displays poor conduct towards his teammates or opponents or is in breach of the principles of Respect in Sport, the coach has the authority to use playing time as a discipline tool. If a player is being kept from playing for a disciplinary reason(s) the coach must discuss the matter and the repercussions with the player and/or guardian if needed. Based on the severity of the incident coaches should use their best judgment as to the number of shifts a player should miss.

IV. Accountability and Management of the Fair Play Policy

- A. CMHA will rely on our coaches and coaching staff to use their best judgment relative to the Fair Play 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 communicate as often and openly as possible.
- B. As a parent or guardian, if after at least 2 games have passed and you have waited out the 24 -hour rule from the last incident of concern, if you believe your child has not experienced Fair Play, CMHA asks that you follow the following process:
 - i. Discuss your concern(s) with your team manager.
 - ii. The team manager will discuss these concerns with the coaching staff and try to bring resolution at the team level.
 - iii. If resolution is not achieved, the team manager will contact the division director.
 - iv. The divisional director will investigate the concern(s) and if necessary coordinate meetings with the parent, player and coaches, as required. The divisional director will refer the information obtained to the division VP for resolution
 - v. The actions required to resolve the matter will be communicated back to the parent, player and coach as soon as possible with a goal of 72 hours.
 - vi. An appeal of any decision can be made to the Appeal Committee. The formation of this committee and the procedure for this appeal process is presented in the Association By-Laws.
- C. After an investigation, if a coach is found to have shortened his/her bench, short shifted their players or played one goaltender over the other the coach will receive.
 - vii. 1st offence-A verbal warning
 - viii. 2nd offence-A written warning
 - ix. 3rd offence-Released from their position as coach with CMHA

- D. 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 CMHA's Respect and Discipline policy.

V. Responsibilities and Promises

- A. As a coach, you have the responsibility to encourage all players to be the best they can be, and provide equal opportunities for them to develop self-esteem and sport skills. When you play your talented athletes more often, you make other players feel less important and deny them the chance to improve their skills.
- B. As a parent, you have the responsibility to understand the challenges of fair play time and speak up if you feel it is abused. Give our coaches some latitude and consider your position over at least 2 games. Please don't bring your stopwatch to the game. We respectfully ask parents to realize that it is impossible for all players to receive the exact same number of shifts or minutes of play time in a single game. Many times the shift length depends on whistles or what end the puck is in. We should strive to have equal and fair Play time over multiple games.
- C. As an Association, we promise to put a greater emphasis on the spectator, player and coach's code of conduct as outlined by Hockey Canada, making our expectations clear and concise. We will continue to ensure our teams are as competitive as possible, our coaches are equipped and informed and our players are thriving in a positive environment.

VI. Q and A's from a Coaching Perspective

Q) When is a coach allowed to shorten the bench to try and win a game?

A) A coach is to develop all players in all situations regardless of the game or situation. A coach is expected to allow players to play during all times of the game and not sacrifice a player's confidence and place a greater emphasis on winning.

Q) Can a coach develop roles for individual players?

A) A coach should develop all players in order to experience all aspects of the game (i.e. all players have the opportunity to develop skills on the power play and penalty kill)

Q) Is a coach expected to rotate all lines during crucial parts of the game?

A) It is important to develop all players in all situations in order to maximize their skill level in the future.

Q) Am I allowed to play goalies against certain teams vs going with a rotation?

A) A coach is expected to follow a rotation. Goalies are hockey 'players' and the Fair Play policy applies to them as well

Q) Am I allowed to pull a goalie and replace him with the one on the bench?

A) Aside from injury, the expectation is to remove a goalie only to allow him to regroup. The expectation is to put him back into the game after allowing time for him/her to regain their focus. You can of course pull your goaltender for an extra attacker.

Q) Is a coach or assistant coach allowed to sit any player for poor performance i.e. a “bad game” vs. disciplinary issues.

A) It is generally not acceptable for coaches to sit players for poor performance (i.e. having a bad game) this also applies to goaltenders.

Q) Can a coach sit a player or goaltender for not attending team practices?

A) Cochrane minor Hockey acknowledges that schedules/situations can conflict with practices but chronic non-attendance without communications to the coach can result in disciplinary measures.

Q) What about those parents who disagree with Fair Play?

A) Cochrane Minor Hockey adheres to their Fair Play Policy.

Q) Fair Play is going to ruin my player’s hockey career! Win at all costs attitude and focusing on the development of a select number of players will ruin your child’s minor hockey experience faster than Fair Play.

A) Fair Play does not change the rules of the game or change the fact that our main focus is on developing our players, not winning hockey games.

“There are ways in which a coach can ensure that every kid gets a fair amount of playtime and at the same time allow for his best players to play in crucial situations. There's NO need to shorten your bench in minor hockey. If we take the fun out of the game, kids will lose interest and thus less kids will continue to play our great game.” -Bob Hartley July 2014

VII. Implementation

- A. CMHA believes that coaches are our most powerful leaders. They have the ability to set the tone for the season. We expect our coaches to be stewards of this policy and support the implementation of it going forward.
- B. Coach Selection Process - During the coach selection process coaching candidates will be provided with this policy and the expectations that surround them.
- C. Coaches/Managers Meeting - During the pre-season coaches and managers meetings the policy will be presented and clarification surrounding the policy can be given at this time.
- D. Initial Team Meeting - At the initial team meeting coaches and managers will review and sign the Coaches, Spectators and Players code of conduct.
- E. Continuing Education and Monitoring - Throughout the season CMHA will continue to educate our coaches, players and parents on the guiding principles behind the Fair Play Policy.