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## Indoor 2023 24 Programs

CUSA has offered a boardless choice during the winter season since 2018 19 where there were 34 teams taking part in the 8v8 program. It continued to grow until last season when there were 126 teams taking part. A 270% increase in interest from the CUSA Membership in 4 seasons of play!

When seasons are being set up one of the first steps in the process is to work with the facility operators to secure permits for that upcoming season's use. The added complicating factor for the facility access is the agreement between the City of Calgary and the Four Primary Funder groups at the Shouldice Bubble. For the first two years of the facility's operations, they have priority booking access, with other user groups like CUSA, receiving access to field time not required by them.

When CUSA received our first draft of permits back from the City for Shouldice our first access time for the 2023 24 season was February 21, 2024, for use on one third.

- That is a 45% decrease in game times at Shouldice from the season prior, 193 games!
- That is 21% of the entire boardless program for the past season.
- To offer the program on thirds would mean the league would need to decrease, at minimum, by 21% or 27 teams.
- To decrease the number of games each team plays by a minimum of 21% would be to shift from 16 games to 12.

Faced with this reality CUSA has looked at what the alternatives were. A sample group of players and officials volunteered to help us to consider options on what switching to play on the quarter sized field would mean. The group played 7v7; 6v6; and 5v5 with the consensus being that 6v6 with a single official would be the best product for player satisfaction. Capping the number of teams or decreasing the number of games were not options that the league believed could be considered.

How long will this modification be in place for? We honestly do not know. Currently, within the three venues we have access for boardless games at capacity we can expect playing on the smaller pitch until more venues are opened. Part of the challenge is the ability to have the fields switched from teams playing on the quarters to our program playing on the thirds. With the switch to quarters, we have managed to secure moderately earlier start times, and on some evenings the ability to run at least double-headers.

This certainly was not the direction we had wanted to see the CUSA Boardless program take, however, we are fortunate that we can provide the membership with an alternative to the boarded game. We do appreciate your understanding of the decision we were faced with and expect you will quickly adapt to the field and number of players on the pitch.