

**Fair Play Code – Respect in Sport**

**WHAT IS FAIR PLAY?**

Fair Play is introduced to promote SAFETY and RESPECT, and a positive environment in minor hockey for all participants.

The four main participant groups are:

* the players
* the Coaches
* the Officials
* the parents

How these four groups interact at any game determines how positive, or how negative the event becomes.

Fair Play has five basic principles:

1. Respect the rules.
2. Respect the opponents.
3. Respect the Officials and their decisions.
4. Have everyone participate.
5. Maintain self-control at all times.

Fair Play does not change any rules of the game.

Fair Play encourages all players on all teams to be as competitive as possible but within the rules of the game.

There are an increasing number of concerns becoming more evident in minor hockey today. These concerns go against the principles of Fair Play, what minor hockey represents, and the objectives of recreational minor hockey organizations.

Some concerns in minor hockey are:

* the lack of respect for opponents
* verbal abuse of Officials
* inappropriate spectator behavior in the stands
* violence on the ice
* the win-at-all-costs attitude
* the increased pressure on young players to win
* the lack of FUN for many

**FAIR PLAY PROGRAM RATIONALE**

A Fair Play Program will:

* outline the rights and responsibilities to all participants involved in our Minor Hockey Association
* make all individuals aware that playing minor hockey is a PRIVILEGE, not a right.
* provide our Association with a visible commitment that promotes the concepts of SAFETY and RESPECT
* outline a clear set of expectations and guidelines that all participants involved in our Minor Hockey Program will follow.
* will define a positive set of expectations that our Minor Hockey Association will provide, as a recreational organization, to all our participants.
* be used to educate participants of the many positive contributions that minor hockey offers as a recreational activity in our community.
* ensure that all participants are aware of our Minor Hockey Association's philosophies and objectives.
* promote and develop a positive set of values to Coaches, players, parents, and Officials in the Association. These values can further enhance the many positive aspects of the Minor Hockey Program.
* will develop a comprehensive guide by which this Association’s executive body can run its programs, in addition to existing rules, regulations and objectives.

**THE BENEFITS OF FAIR PLAY**

* Increased SAFETY and RESPECT on and off the ice by participants.
* Increased positive team unity.
* More appropriate spectator behavior.
* Decrease the win-at-all-cost attitude.
* Increase of on-ice positive behavior.
* Participants take more responsibility for their actions.
* Increase in sportsmanship.
* More parents become promoters of positive attitudes.
* Fair ice time for all players.
* New participants are drawn to the game of hockey by the positive aspects of Fair Play.
* Refocusing of the intent of minor hockey as a positive recreational program for many young players and other participants involved.

**Fair Play is a win-win program for our Minor Hockey Association.**

**FAIR PLAY PROGRAM COMMITMENTS**

Development of a Fair Play program is a long term project. The following represent MLMHA’s commitment to promote SAFETY and RESPECT, and a positive environment in minor hockey for all participants (the commitments adopted, developed, and tailored to meet the needs of an Association will be determined by the Associations' budget, logistics, and volunteer resources).

**Commitment #1 – Coach Selection**

MLMHA has a formalized coaching selection policy. The criteria for coach selection should include experience and attitude towards the principles of Fair Play – Respect in Sport.

**Commitment #2 – Member Acknowledgement of Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct was developed to identify the standard of behaviour which is expected of all MLMHA Members and participants, including but not limited to all players, guardians, parents, Coaches, Officials, volunteers, Directors, Officers, Committee Members, Commissioners, Team Managers, Trainers, and Administrators involved in MLMHA activities and events. **All members of MLMHA are** **required to sign the Member Acknowledgement which ensures that they have read, understood, and will comply with the Code of Conduct and Association rules (please see Appendix A for a copy of the MLMHA Member Acknowledgement).**

**Commitment #3 – Team Selection**

Procedures for selection of competitive and recreational teams vary with Associations. In player selection, 'skill/ability' and 'attitude' should be considered. All participants are to be made aware of these two criteria prior to selections. Players exhibiting poor sportsmanship, lack of honesty, and lack of safety and respect for others, should be made aware that attitudes such as these are not tolerated in Fair Play.

Attitude is important. Coaches should be allowed to select some players on a probationary basis giving these players an opportunity to improve their attitudes.

**Commitment #4 – Coaches/Managers Meetings**

Conduct an early season meeting with all Coaches and Team Managers for the purpose of reviewing the Fair Play Program, respond to the specific needs of the Coaches and teams, and ensure that all Members understand and are prepared to support and promote the principles of the Fair Play Program.

Information is distributed outlining the program, the commitments and their purposes, and the roles and responsibilities team staff has in the Fair Play Program. This meeting allows Coaches and Managers to ask questions, get clarification regarding any of their concerns, and allow input from team staff.

All team staff are expected to attend to clarify their roles in the Fair Play Program.

**Commitment #5 – First Team Meeting**

Once any team is formed, a meeting is held with all parents and team staff, and another meeting with Coaching staff and players is also held.

The objective of these two meetings is to clarify the team’s expectations regarding the upcoming season. Specifically, items discussed include MLMHA rules and policies and expected compliance; timeline of the season (including playoffs and tournaments), fundraising possibilities etc.

**FAIR PLAY CODE FOR PLAYERS**

1. I will play hockey because I want to, not just because others or Coaches want me to.
2. I will play by the rules of hockey, and in the spirit of the game.
3. I will control my temper – fighting and “mouthing off” can spoil the activity for everybody.
4. I will respect my opponents and team members.
5. I will do my best to be a true team player on and off of the ice.
6. I will remember that winning isn’t everything – that having fun and improving skills, making friends and doing my best are also important.
7. I will acknowledge all good plays/performances – those of my team and of my opponents.
8. I will remember that Coaches and Officials are there to help me. I will accept their decisions and show them respect.

**FAIR PLAY CODE FOR SPECTATORS**

1. I will remember that participants play hockey for their enjoyment. They are not playing to entertain me.
2. I will not have unrealistic expectations. I will remember that players are not professionals and cannot be judged by professional standards.
3. I will respect the Officials’ decisions and I will encourage participants to do the same.
4. I will never ridicule a player for making a mistake during a game. I will give positive comments that motivate and encourage continued effort.
5. I will condemn the use of violence in any form and will express my disapproval in an appropriate manner to Coaches and league Officials.
6. I will show respect for my team’s opponents because without them, there would be no game.
7. I will not use bad language, nor will I harass players, Coaches, Officials or other spectators.

**FAIR PLAY CODE FOR PARENTS**

1. I will not force my child to participate in hockey.
2. I will remember that my child plays hockey for his or her enjoyment, not for mine.
3. I will encourage my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
4. I will teach my child that doing one’s best is as important as winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of the game.
5. I will make my child feel like a winner every time by offering praise for competing fairly and trying hard.
6. I will never ridicule or yell at my child for making a mistake or losing a game.
7. I will remember that children learn best by example. I will applaud good plays/ performances by both my child’s team and their opponents.
8. I will never question the Official’s judgment or honesty in public.

**FAIR PLAY CODE FOR COACHES & TEAM OFFICIALS**

1. I will be reasonable when scheduling games and practices, remember that players have other interests and obligations.
2. I will teach my players to play fairly and to respect the rules, Officials, and opponents.
3. I will ensure that all players get equal instruction, support, and playing time.
4. I will not ridicule or yell at my players for making mistakes or for performing poorly. I will remember that players play to have fun and must be encouraged to have confidence in themselves.
5. I will make sure that equipment and facilities are safe and match the players’ ages and abilities.
6. I will remember that participants need a Coach they can respect. I will be generous with praise and set a good example.
7. I will obtain proper training and continue to upgrade my coaching skills.
8. I will work in cooperation with Officials for the benefit of the game.

**THE HOCKEY PARENT CONCERNS**

**Some parents may say their Association doesn't need a Fair Play Program.**

Fair Play says we wouldn't need programs such as Fair Play if more participants respected the rules, the opponents, the Officials, and having everyone participate and everyone maintaining self control at games. However, the basic principles of Fair Play are lacking in minor hockey to some degree. As a result, many Associations are confronted with spectators abusing their Officials, their Coaches, their players, and other volunteers. The win-at-all-cost attitude is still evident when players only play a couple of shifts a game. Fair Play is necessary in any Association to curb such negative incidents.

**Some parents may say that Fair Play will interfere with their child's hockey career.**

Fair Play, if anything, will enhance anyone’s hockey career. Fair Play does not change the rules of the game. Fair Play encourages every player to be as competitive as possible, and to win as many games as possible, but within the rules. Fair Play teaches the players those aspects that will enhance hockey ability and team play.

**Some parents may say they don't agree with Fair Play.**

The first question to ask of such parents is which one of the five Fair Play Principles do they not agree with? If parents don't agree with the Fair Play Principles, they do not agree with SAFETY and RESPECT in the game. Such parent's participation and purpose in becoming involved in minor hockey should be re-examined.

**Some parents may say they don't have to sign any Association and/or team Contract/Guidelines.**

Fair Play says that every participant has the right to join a Minor Hockey Association. That is a right. However, once a participant joins, they must abide by the rules of that Association. If participants don't wish to abide by the rules, they give up their right to belong to that Association. This is consistent with other clubs, organizations, businesses, or other public facilities such as public pools and public libraries. Participants must be informed of their rights and privileges. This is the purpose of the Contracts/Guidelines.

**Some parents may say that they have always yelled at Referees, that this is a tradition, and they won't stop yelling.**

Fair Play says that verbally abusing a Referee may have been done in the past. Abusing Referees in a Fair Play Program will not be tolerated. Using profanity or other forms of verbal abuse can result in that participant being ejected and/or barred from the arena under local Municipal By-Laws, or the facility rules and regulations. Fair Play says that spectators can yell and cheer as loud as they want during games, as long as it is positive and supportive towards the participants.

**Some parents may say they don't agree with equal, or fair ice time for all players, especially at competitive levels of minor hockey.**

Fair Play says that everyone who joins a Minor Hockey Association pays a certain registration fee. If everyone pays the same amount, everyone should play the same amount. If a competitive team Coach selects his/her team, all players should receive the same and fair amount of ice during the season.

In games, due to various situations such as penalties, injuries, illness, and other factors, equal ice time for all players is very difficult to maintain on a game-to-game basis. Fair ice time based on everyone participating does accommodate the many factors that occur during games. Fair ice time is based on everyone participating, regardless of abilities, or level. In the over-all season however, each player should have equal ice time.

**Some parents may say the Association shouldn't have volunteers spending their time on programs like Fair Play when issues such as raising funds and the day-to-day running of the Association are more important.**

Fair Play says that including a Fair Play Program into a Minor Hockey Association reinforces the objectives of any Association's program. All the goals and objectives of a Fair Play Program are positive and for the benefit of all participants, especially the players. Fundraising is important. SAFETY and RESPECT however, should not take a back seat to fundraising. Fair Play can also contribute to fundraising by bringing new sponsors to the Minor Hockey Association.

Every Association has volunteers who may want to become involved in some way with their children's hockey. Fair Play provides other opportunities for volunteers who don't have much time to offer. A Fair Play Program does not take away from an existing volunteer base.

Fair Play enhances the positive aspects of minor hockey. Volunteers spending time on Fair Play promote the mandate of their Association.

The mandate of any Minor Hockey Association is to provide a recreational opportunity for the young people of a community. These opportunities should exist in a positive, safe, respectful, and fun environment.

Young people play hockey because they enjoy the game. Young people do not play hockey to entertain the parent group in the stands. An Association has to focus upon the program for the players. A Fair Play program encourages this.

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**Appendix A: Meadow Lake Minor Hockey Association Member Acknowledgement**

I (print name) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ acknowledge that I have reviewed a copy of the Meadow Lake Minor Hockey Association Code of Conduct, which identifies the standard of behavior that is expected of all Meadow Lake Minor Hockey Association Members.

I understand the Code of Conduct includes all players, guardians, parents, Coaches, Officials, volunteers, Directors, Officers, Committee Members, Commissioners, Team Managers, Trainers, Administrators, and employees involved in Meadow Lake Minor Hockey Association and MLMHA activities and events.

I understand that failure to comply with this Code of Conduct and the Constitution, Policies, and Bylaws of Meadow Lake Minor Hockey Association may result in loss of membership and privileges which come with membership in MLMHA including the opportunity to participate in MLMHA and Meadow Lake Minor Hockey activities and events both present and future.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Member of: