

NORTHERN ALBERTA INTERLOCK

Executive Memorandum #3

November 13, 2022

TO: All NAI Member Associations

RE: 2022/23 Regular Season Schedules & Neutral Site Games

As the regular season schedule is underway, this memo serves to provide information on the format or season schedules and the use of neutral site games.

Regular Season Schedules (U11, U13, U15, U18)

Regular season schedule formats were developed following the final tiering placements. When developing the format, many things were considered including level of competition, travel considerations, interleague play, and local ice availability. Several things you may notice this year include:

- Schedules may be balanced or un-balanced, meaning, a team in a particular tier may not play the exact same opponents, or have an equal number of games. While efforts are made to have the total number of games close to similar, in cases where the tier does not all play the same number of games, the *winning percentage method* will be used to determine the final standings.
 - Winning Percentage Method is defined as: the teams' total number of points divided by the total number of points available to be won. The team with the higher percentage will be ranked higher.
- In many tiers, teams will play opponents both within the tier and from outside the tier. This is done to provide appropriate competition for teams in smaller tiers, as well as take advantage of close opponents.
- Schedules for all tiers have between 16 to 20 games, depending on size of the tier, travel, and interleague play considerations.
- Interleague play, being implemented by Hockey Alberta along with the NAI, NEAHL, and CAHL leagues for this season, will take place for some teams. The NAI is subject to the regulations and travel distances surrounding interleague play, which require that teams be within a certain travel radius to be eligible for interleague games. Generally, teams in the south, central, and east may have interleague games provided they are in the same tier as teams within their travel radius.
 - For teams eligible for interleague play, a home/away series will be scheduled with your interleague opponent. In some cases, this may be done by the league, but in most cases it will remain a TBA game to be scheduled by the team

managers. It is anticipated that for those teams eligible, there will be 1 or 2 opponents scheduled (2-4 games).

- As per the interleague regulations, all points gained in interleague play count towards league standings.
- Travel considerations have been at the forefront of scheduling. In certain tiers, an overnight trip has been scheduled to allow for two or more games to be played on one trip. In cases of extreme distances, some opponents will not face each other, or will be played under the neutral site game formats, covered below.

Neutral Site Games

The Tiering and Scheduling Committee developed a framework for neutral site games to reduce travel in cases of extreme distances. This was developed based on feedback from the previous season. As such, several games in various tiers have been slotted for neutral site games as a pilot for the 2022-23 season. Several teams in the NAI will take part in neutral site games this season.

The method of neutral site games will take place under one of three formats:

1. Format 1 (3/2/1): Two visiting teams attend host centre. Each team plays the other two teams (3 games played at host site) allowing for a reducing in travel.
2. Format 2 (Neutral Site): Traditional neutral site format, where two teams arrange a neutral location to play a game.
3. Format 3 (Extra): Visiting team #1 comes to a host centre that is already hosting Visiting Team #2 for a doubleheader or overnight travel trip. The two visiting teams play each other as well during this weekend at the host centre, but the host centre does not play Visiting Team #1. This allows teams of significant distance to play each other without making the extreme travel either way.

The neutral site game procedure is attached for your reference.

If you have any questions, please reach out to the league.

Neil Rogers

Neil Rogers, President
Northern Alberta Interlock

Best Practices & Procedure – Neutral Site Games

Developed by the Northern Alberta Interlock Tiering and Scheduling Committee during the fall of 2022 for implementation during the 2022-23 season and beyond.

The Objective is to provide additional options to reduce travel for member associations throughout the regular season schedule. Should the model be accepted in futures years it can be adapted to Tiering. This model can be used in any tier as required.

FORMATS:

There are three formats for neutral site games within the NAI:

1. Format 1 (3/2/1) - (3 teams, 2 games each, 1 day)

Example: Athabasca travels to Westlock (host) and play game 1, Edson travels to Westlock and plays Athabasca for Game 2, Westlock and Edson play game 3 in the same day, both Edson and Athabasca can return home following their 2-game set.

2. Format 2 (NS) – Single Neutral

Example – Athabasca is scheduled to play Jasper in Jasper and they agree to play in Westlock due to other scheduled games which help both reduce total km's travelled, evaluating the full season schedule.

3. Format 3 (JE)- Join Existing Series for extra game

Example - Wabasca is playing in Whitecourt as part of an overnight series in Whitecourt. Jasper drives to Whitecourt to play Wabasca in Whitecourt, Wabasca ends up with 3 games in Whitecourt.

PROCEDURES:

1. Format 1 – (3/2/1)

- a. Scheduled by the NAI at time of season schedule.
- b. HOST association is responsible for ensuring ICE is allotted and OFFICIALS are lined up. In the example above this would be Westlock.
- c. Each AWAY team is responsible to pay 50% of the ice and 50% of the Official cost each for the game that does NOT include the HOST team. These costs are non-negotiable and at the rate the HOST community is charged. Example above, Edson and Athabasca split the cost for their game (game 2).
- d. HOST association would cover cost of the 2 HOME games they participate in, as per normal.
- e. HOST association would collect ice and official costs and bill away associations.
- f. Schedule will allow for 1 game break between games (Tournament style format):
 - i. Example:
 - 900-1030 (U11/U13 T4-6) Game 1 - Host vs Shortest Travel (allows for earlier start)
 - 1045-1245 Open (Allows for U13 Tier 1-3 or U15 Tier 4-6)
 - 100-230 (U11/U13 T4-6) Game 2 - Longest Travel vs Shortest Travel
 - 245-445 Open (Allows for U13 Tier 1-3 or U15 Tier 4-6)
 - 500-630 (U11/U13 T4-6) Game 3 Host vs Longest Travel
 - 645-900 Open (Allows for U13 Tier 1-3 or U15 Tier 4-6 and U15/U18 T1-3)

2. Scenario 2 – (SN)

- a. Scheduled by individual Team Managers and require game change notification to NAI.
- b. NO involvement from NAI or HOST Community.
- c. Original scheduled “HOME” Team would be responsible for securing ice and officials.
- d. Original scheduled “HOME” Team would be responsible for ensuring payment is completed and costs are covered by the “HOME” Team.

3. Scenario 3- (Extra)

- a. Option 1 (preferred)
 - i. NAI schedules extra game using ice provided by host association as part of league scheduling process.
 - ii. NAI advises the host association and both opponents of the neutral site game of the neutral site game
 - iii. Host association prepares bill for ice and officials then invoices each neutral site opponent 50% of total costs.
 - iv. NAI normally not involved beyond this point.
- b. Option 2 (if needed)
 - i. NAI schedules TBA game if suitable ice cannot be found.
 - ii. NAI advised host association and both opponents of need for ice in the community on the particular date(s). If ice is found, NAI schedules game and Host invoices two neutral site opponents for 50% of total costs.
 - iii. If ice is not found, game is assessed for viability of a neutral site game under Format 1 or 2 If available, follow that procedure.
 - iv. If not viable to continue under Format 1 or 2, as determined by NAI, game is removed from schedule and assessed if a replacement game should be considered in its place.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Omittances – Tournaments – HOST Tournament teams will not be able to bill incoming NAI league teams for games at their tournament, although tournament games can be used as league games, it is the tournament HOST responsibility to cover tournament ice.