

ELITE MALE HOCKEY PATHWAY

ALBERTA BUILT

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The **Elite Male Pathway Guide** outlines the exclusive opportunities that are available to Alberta's elite male hockey players registered with a Hockey Alberta member organization. These opportunities include the competition, coaching and development they experience on the ice, along with the supports and services available off the ice. Member organizations include Minor Hockey Associations, Accredited Schools, and Junior Leagues.

PHOTO CREDITS

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ABOUT THE HOCKEY ALBERTA

ELITE MALE HOCKEY PATHWAY

Hockey Alberta's Elite Male Hockey pathway provides competition, development and movement opportunities to meet the needs of players and teams in Alberta.

The foundation of the Elite Male Hockey pathway is *"Made, Played and Developed in Alberta"*. The pathway establishes and promotes a provincial system of development that directs players from Tiered to AA Hockey, and then to U15 AAA, U17 AAA, U18 AAA concluding at Major Junior.

A key part of the Elite Male Hockey pathway is ensuring that the appropriate number of teams, in the right locations, operate within each division of play in the Alberta Elite Hockey League (AEHL) to provide elite level opportunities for the top players within their Elite Draw Zone.

Affiliation is an integral part of the Elite Male Hockey pathway to accommodate the developmental needs of the athlete and team by providing all players within an Elite Draw Zone the opportunity to be identified and registered as an affiliate.

Hockey Alberta's system is constantly evolving. Regular reviews examine the number of players registered at each level, where they are located, and how the system can best support and facilitate their skill development. Prime examples in the Elite Male Hockey pathway are the new U16AA division (see AA Hockey Model), and the U11 Hockey Alberta Development Pilot (see U11 HADP).



Leagues and Categories

Exclusive Benefits

U18



U18 AAA

AA HOCKEY

Northern Alberta Hockey League
South Central Alberta Hockey League
Hockey Calgary



ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

Prep Division



Team Canada
U18



Affiliation to U18,
WHL, AJHL,
Jr B/C teams



National
Championships -
Telus Cup

U17 / U16



U17 AAA

AA HOCKEY

Northern Alberta Hockey League
South Central Alberta Hockey League
Hockey Calgary



ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

Prep Division



Team Canada
U17



Affiliation to U18,
WHL, AJHL,
Jr B/C teams Team



Alberta
U16

U15



U15 AAA

AA HOCKEY

Northern Alberta Hockey League
South Central Alberta Hockey League
Hockey Calgary



ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

Varsity & Prep Divisions



Affiliation to U16 AA, U17 AAA,
U18 AA and U18 AAA teams



Alberta Cup

U13

AA HOCKEY

Northern Alberta
Hockey League

South Central Alberta
Hockey League

Hockey Calgary



Affiliation to U15



Prospects Cup

U11

HOCKEY ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT PILOT (HADP)

All Peace
Hockey League

Central Alberta
Hockey League

Edmonton Federation
Hockey League

Hockey Calgary



Affiliation to U13

Every player registered in a Hockey Alberta organization or program has exclusive access to:

- Hockey Canada Trained / Certified Coaches
- Hockey Canada Trained / Certified Officials
- Hockey Canada Insurance coverage
- Provincial, National, and International-sanctioned Tournaments



EXCLUSIVE BENEFITS OF THE HOCKEY ALBERTA SYSTEM

Participants in the Hockey Alberta system enjoy exclusive benefits as part of their membership - ranging from eligibility to participate in certain programming, to trained and certified coaches and insurance coverage.

If you aspire to higher levels of competition, learning and developing under the guidance of the best-trained coaches, and playing against the best players in Alberta, the Hockey Alberta system is where you need to be.



EXCLUSIVE ACCESS TO PROGRAMS

TEAM ALBERTA

Hockey Alberta participants are eligible to try out in Team Alberta programs.

Hockey Alberta's Team Alberta programming identifies and develops the top male players to represent Alberta at Western Canadian and National competitions, and to compete for berths on national teams representing Canada at International competitions.

In addition, Team Alberta programming features high performance development opportunities for coaches, medical professionals, therapists, administrators, equipment managers and referees/officials who are interested in representing Alberta at national and international events.

Events coordinated through the Team Alberta program can occur annually, every two years, or every four years, depending on the event. The list of events, camps, and/or tournaments includes:

- [Canada Winter Games](#)
- [WHL Cup](#)
- [Alberta Cup](#)
- [Prospects Cup](#)
- [U16 Male Provincial Selection Summer Camp](#)
- [U16 Male Elite Development Camp](#)

Hockey Alberta participants are eligible for these unique opportunities, allowing them to learn and grow through a short term, and competitive atmosphere. The mental and physical skills and character traits necessary to be successful at a competition at this level helps to prepare all participants for Team Alberta's national and international competitions.



PROSPECTS CUP

The beginning of the Team Alberta Male program where second-year U13 players from across Alberta compete for 160 positions (8 teams) at the event.

- 4 regional tryout camps, 160 players per region, 2 teams selected from region.
- Access to top coaches, director of operations.
- Position specific development at competition.
- first exposure to short-term competition to prepare for future provincial and national opportunities.
- Top coaches in the province, mentored by previous leaders.
- development opportunity for top players, administrators, coaches, officials.



ALBERTA CUP

The second stage of the Team Alberta Male program where top second-year U15 players compete for 120 positions (6 teams) to compete for the Alberta Cup.

- 3 regional tryout camps, 160 players per region, 2 teams selected from each region.
- occurs just prior to WHL Draft – final showcase opportunity for players.
- provides short-term competition experience.
- identification opportunity for the Team Alberta Summer camp (final phase in the selection process for Team Alberta).
- top coaches in the province, mentored by previous leaders.
- development opportunity for top players, administrators, coaches, officials.



TEAM ALBERTA

Third and final stage of the Team Alberta Male program.

- Begins with a week-long Summer Camp in July for approximately 80 players. High intensity program with off-ice and on-ice training, games, and personal development sessions.
- Following camp, shortlist set with players then scouted with their club team prior to final roster decisions for the 20 players selected to comprise Team Alberta.
- Those players then represent Alberta in the WHL Cup or Canada Winter Games.
- Players can continue to represent Team Canada at U17, U18, U20 and Senior National team levels.

EXCLUSIVE ACCESS TO SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

HOCKEY CANADA INSURANCE:

One of the benefits of registering with Hockey Alberta is access to an exceptional insurance program - with low premiums - through Hockey Canada.

Medical/ dental coverage is a self-administered secondary insurance program that assists members who may not have private secondary coverage for services such as dental and physiotherapy or have exhausted their limits within their private coverage.

Policy coverage areas also include:

- commercial general liability
- sexual misconduct liability
- directors and officers' liability
- accidental death and dismemberment coverage

Premiums remain low due to the total membership of players in Hockey Canada, and the ongoing focus on safety, risk and conduct management by Hockey Canada, Hockey Alberta, and member organizations.

**CHECK OUT
EXCLUSIVE BENEFITS!**

[hockeyalberta.ca/members/
insurance/national-insurance/](https://hockeyalberta.ca/members/insurance/national-insurance/)



NATIONAL COACH CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (NCCP):

Standardized, inclusive, and safe sport education to coaches and coach developers across 65 sports.

The Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) manages and delivers NCCP training through its partner network of 65 National Sport Organizations and Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations. The NCCP equips hockey coaches of all levels with the skills and knowledge of the game to work effectively with their developing athletes.

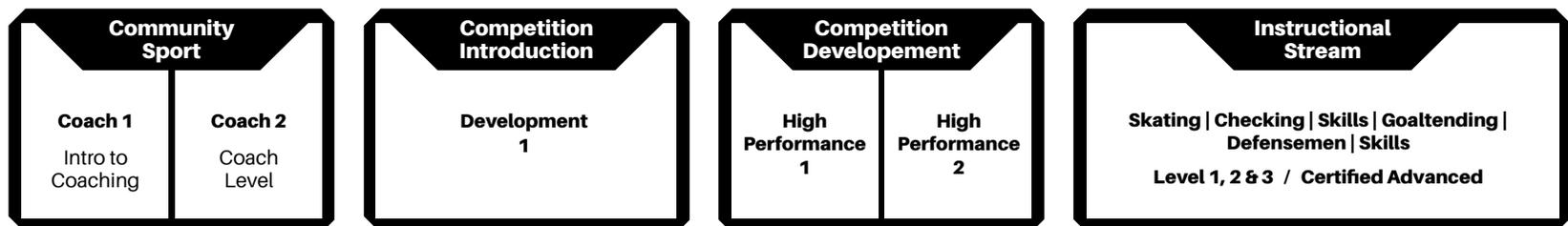
All head coaches leading teams at the AA level must be at minimum Development 1 (D1) certified. For a coach to become certified they must attend a 2 day in-person clinic, complete a written evaluation, and receive a field evaluation of a team practice. For a coach to maintain their Development 1 certification status they must complete 20 Professional Development points within 5 years of being certified. Development 1 certification focuses on:

- Team building
- Skill development
- Drill design
- Developing drill progressions
- Practice planning
- Developing athletic abilities
- Individual skills and tactics
- Making ethical decisions



National Coach Certification Program / Hockey Canada Coach and Instructional Streams

NCCP
HOCKEY
CANADA





All head coaches leading HCAS, AAA and Junior A teams must be High Performance 1 (HP1) certified.

For a coach to become certified they must attend the required national online modules and a 5 day in-person clinic, complete a written assignment, receive a field evaluation of a practice and a game, and complete the online evaluations for Make Ethical Decisions, Leading Drug Free Sport and Managing Conflict. For a coach to maintain their High Performance 1 Certification status they must complete 30 Professional Development Points within 5 years of being certified.

HP1 certification focuses on:

- Leadership in coaching
- Teaching and evaluating
- Physical preparation
- Mental preparation
- Power-play and penalty-kill
- Advanced skill analysis
- Game and bench management
- Creating a high-performance culture
- Player evaluation and selection
- Performance planning
- Defensive and offensive team play
- Effective use of technology

HOCKEY CANADA OFFICIATING PROGRAM (HCOP):

The Officiating Pathway is the foundation for training, development, and advancement for all officials across Hockey Alberta.

Certification at all levels, except Level 1, is a two-part process involving clinical and practical assessment. The official must attend all sessions and obtain the minimum mark on the examination. Once certified, it is essential that an official continue to update and be completely familiar with new rule interpretations and officiating techniques. To maintain one's present level of certification, an individual must attend a full Hockey Canada officiating program clinic and write a national examination every year with appropriate passing mark.

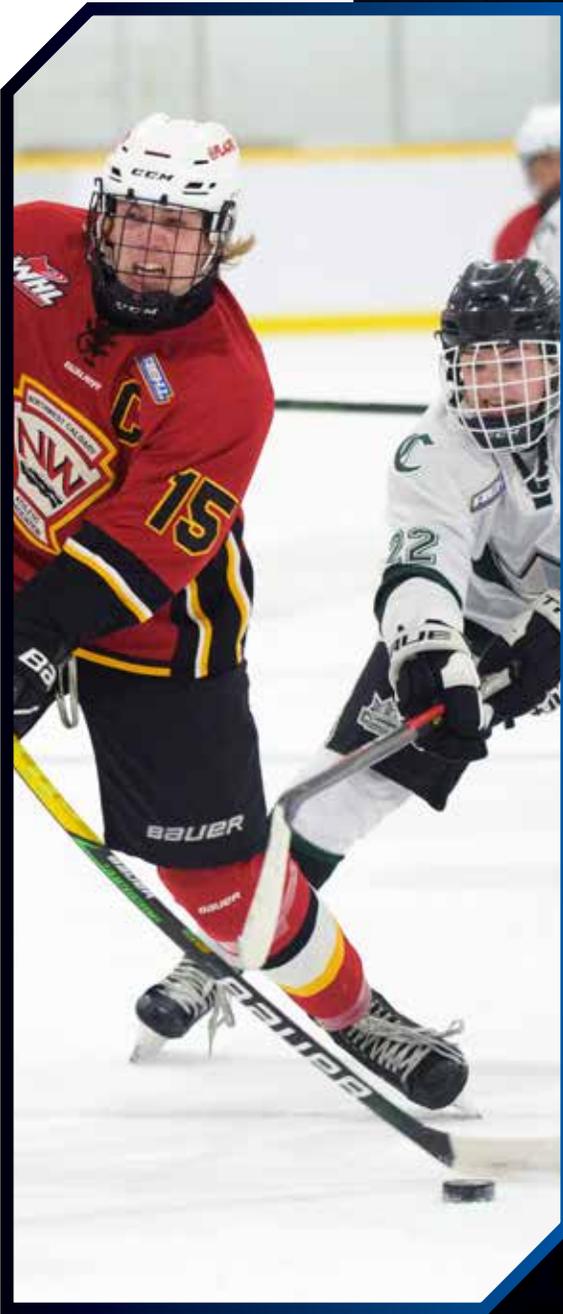
MORE ON THE STRIPES

[officials.hockeyalberta.ca/
register/officials-pathway/](https://officials.hockeyalberta.ca/register/officials-pathway/)



Hockey Canada Officiating Pathway





ALBERTA ELITE HOCKEY LEAGUE (AEHL)

The Alberta Elite Hockey League (AEHL) is Hockey Alberta's provincial AAA league and the highest category of male minor hockey in Alberta with three divisions (U18, U17, U15), 56 teams and 1,080 players.

Each division is structured to allow the top five per cent of players in each age category to complete and develop with similarly-skilled teammates and opponents.

Exclusive opportunities include:

- provincial travel transportation partner Traxx Coachlines.
- games livestreamed on HockeyTV and analyzed by InStat for review and statistic measuring by coaches and players.
- access to major tournaments ([John Reid Memorial](#), [Circle K](#), [Western Canadian Crown](#)).
- head coaches are [HP1 certified](#).
- games are officiated by [Hockey Alberta's top officials](#).
- associations must abide by league operating standards, and assessment programs ensure teams are growing and improving for the benefit of their players.



U18 AAA

U18 AAA is the highest level of minor hockey in Alberta and the pinnacle of the AEHL.

- 16 teams.
- top players from 3 birth years.
- 38 game regular season.
- early season showcase designed to get players affiliated to Junior Hockey.
- affiliation to WHL, AJHL, Junior B, Junior C.
- league champion challenges BC champions for berth at Telus Cup.



U17 AAA

New division for 2022-23. Allows majority of Elite players to remain in the AAA model from second year of U15 through third year of U18.

- 20 teams.
- 34 game regular season.
- ability for teams to black out weekends for tournaments.
- 16 teams qualify for playoffs; 5 team provincial championship.
- affiliation to U18 AAA, WHL, AJHL, Junior B, Junior C.



U15 AAA

Two-year age group offering introduction to Elite Hockey and increased competition as players begin to prepare for Junior Hockey.

- 20 teams.
- 34 game regular season.
- opportunity for black out weekends to attend tournaments.
- 16 teams qualify for playoffs; 5 team provincial championship.
- enhanced exposure to scouts for WHL, Junior A, Elite development opportunities.





AA HOCKEY MODEL

Hockey Alberta's AA Hockey model allows athletes to develop in the competitive system at a regional level, acting as a feeder system for Elite hockey.

Player opportunity and movement is done in recognition of the needs of the player and the MHAs involved. AA male hockey recognizes and supports that each athlete has the right to consider his options and be provided the opportunity to access a level of hockey that is consistent with the skill level of each player.

U18 AA

Three-year age group focused on preparing players for transition to Junior Hockey.

- three leagues offer a regional hockey model.
 - [Northern Alberta Hockey League \(NAHL\)](#)
 - [South Central Alberta Hockey League \(SCAHL\)](#)
 - [Hockey Calgary](#)
- some of the best players in the region (comprised of up to 10 MHAs) compete for 19 spots on a AA team.
- less travel and expense than AAA.
- 28-34 regular season games.
- top teams compete in a five-team provincial championship.
- affiliation to U18 AAA, all levels of Junior, U17 AAA (age dependent).
- coaches D1 Certified.

U16 AA

Provincial pilot project for 2022-23 designed to prepare first year U18 players for U17 AAA or U18 AA the following season.

- access to AA development resources.
- affiliation to U17 AAA, U18 AAA.
- top teams compete in a five-team provincial championship.
- coaches D1 Certified.

U13 AA

Introduction to the AA and Elite Model, and the first time players will try out in a recruitment area/ draw zone model. Number of teams deliberately selected to contain the top 10% of U13 players province wide.

- engaged with U15 AA and U15 AAA teams via affiliation, having coaches visit and lead practices.
- less travel than what is required at AAA, respecting principles of LTAD.
- 70 hours of practice time, focus on incremental development, age-appropriate off ice training including mental, character and physical.
- top teams compete in a five-team provincial championship.
- coaches D1 Certified.

U15 AA

Key feeder to U15 AAA as approximately 80% of all U15 AAA players do not play U15 AAA in their first year of U15.

- access to AAA resources.
- focus on preparing players for the next four years of Elite hockey and beyond.
- regional travel model, affordable cost and access to a high calibre of hockey within a reasonable distance from the player's home.
- affiliation to U15 AAA, U16 AA, U18 AA.
- coaches D1 Certified.

U13 TIER I

Key feeder to U13 AA as approximately 70% of second year U13 AA players do not play AA in their first year of U13 hockey. AA associations must work closely with U13 Tier I organizations in their recruitment area to develop and prepare players for the step to AA in their next season.

- more localized travel schedule and practices occurring in their local MHA versus the recruitment area hub.
- affiliation to U13 AA, U15 Tier I.
- provincial championship.

HOCKEY CANADA ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

A model of hockey that synthesizes education and hockey development into one program. Players participate in daytime hockey programming and compete in league play versus other Accredited schools in the Canadian Sports School Hockey League (CSSHL).

- 5 Alberta programs (Edge School and International Hockey Academy in Calgary, South Alberta Hockey Academy in Medicine Hat, and Northern Alberta Xtreme and Okanagan Hockey Academy in Edmonton).
- participate in tournaments and games across Western Canada.
- Affiliation to Jr Hockey and Major Junior.
- Full time coaches, hockey operations staff.
- Governed by national policy, held to the highest standard via an extensive assessment program.



U11 HADP

New for the 2022-23 season, the Provincial U11 Hockey Alberta Development Pilot (U11 HADP) is the new top level of U11 hockey, and a feeder to U13 Tier I and U13 AA.

Number of teams deliberately determined to bridge between Tiered hockey and AA / AAA.

- access to the top level of hockey without the travel required for AA or AAA.
- Players from associations without U11 HADP teams can try out wherever they wish that is accepting players.
- Affiliation to U13 AA, U13 Tier I.
- Coaches are Coach 2 trained.

The Central Alberta Hockey League (CAHL), Hockey Calgary and Edmonton Federation Hockey League (EFHL) will host the U11 HADP for their member associations, while the All Peace Hockey League (APHL), Northern Alberta Interlock (NAI) and North Eastern Alberta Hockey League (NEAHL) will work collaboratively together to host the U11 HADP for their member associations.

The goal of this pilot is to identify the best overall structure for the top level of U11 and to ensure alignment and progression from the levels beneath it as well as up to the levels above it.

The U11 HADP is an expanded version of a AA Pilot Project that started in 2021-22 in the NAI. This pilot offered unique scheduling opportunities considerate of league geographics, as well as a formal tryout process similar to that used in the AA Hockey Model. Results and feedback from the pilot were positive, and interest in a predetermined top level of U11 hockey continues to increase.





JUNIOR HOCKEY

Hockey Alberta's Elite players have several Junior Hockey Leagues available to them.

WESTERN HOCKEY LEAGUE (WHL)

One of the finest player development Leagues in the world and a leading supplier of talent to the NHL, Canada's National teams, USports (Canadian University) and other professional leagues. The WHL provides players with an ideal environment to develop their on-ice skills and focus on academic goals.

Hockey Alberta alumni in the WHL include:

- **Sebastian Cossa**
(Fort Saskatchewan Rangers, Edmonton Oil Kings, Detroit Red Wings)
- **Matt Savoie**
(Northern Alberta Xtreme, Winnipeg Ice, NHL Top Prospects 2022 Draft)
- **Brayden Point**
(Calgary Buffaloes, Moose Jaw Warriors, 2x Stanley Cup Champion with Tampa Bay Lightning).

Check out the WHL's Alberta-based teams:

- [Medicine Hat Tigers](#)
- [Lethbridge Hurricanes](#)
- [Calgary Hitmen](#)
- [Red Deer Rebels](#)
- [Edmonton Oil Kings](#)





ALBERTA JUNIOR HOCKEY LEAGUE (AJHL)

Alberta's Junior A hockey league, the Alberta Junior Hockey League (AJHL), provides a valuable development opportunity for players 20 years of age and younger. The AJHL is a sixteen team league that spans to all corners of the Province and offers intense competition for players who make every game a best-on-best challenge. The AJHL is heavily scouted by post-secondary coaches and NHL scouts, allowing players to improve their game and their next-level hockey outlook.

Hockey Alberta AJHL Alumni include:

- **Cale Makar**
(NWCAA Flames, Brooks Bandits, Calder Trophy Winner with the Colorado Avalanche)
- **Colton Parayko**
(St. Albert Raiders, Fort McMurray Oil Barons, Stanley Cup Champion with the St. Louis Blues)
- **Reiger Lorenz**
(Calgary Northstars, Edge School, Okotoks Oilers, Minnesota Wild Prospect)



JUNIOR B/C:

Junior B and C hockey are both ideal options for players 20 years of age and under (some 21 year-olds are eligible under the Overage Player policy) that are interested in a competitive calibre of play but with less travel and commitment than the WHL or AJHL. Many Junior B and C players are either students pursuing post secondary education or young professionals working full time jobs but still pursuing their lifelong passion for the game.

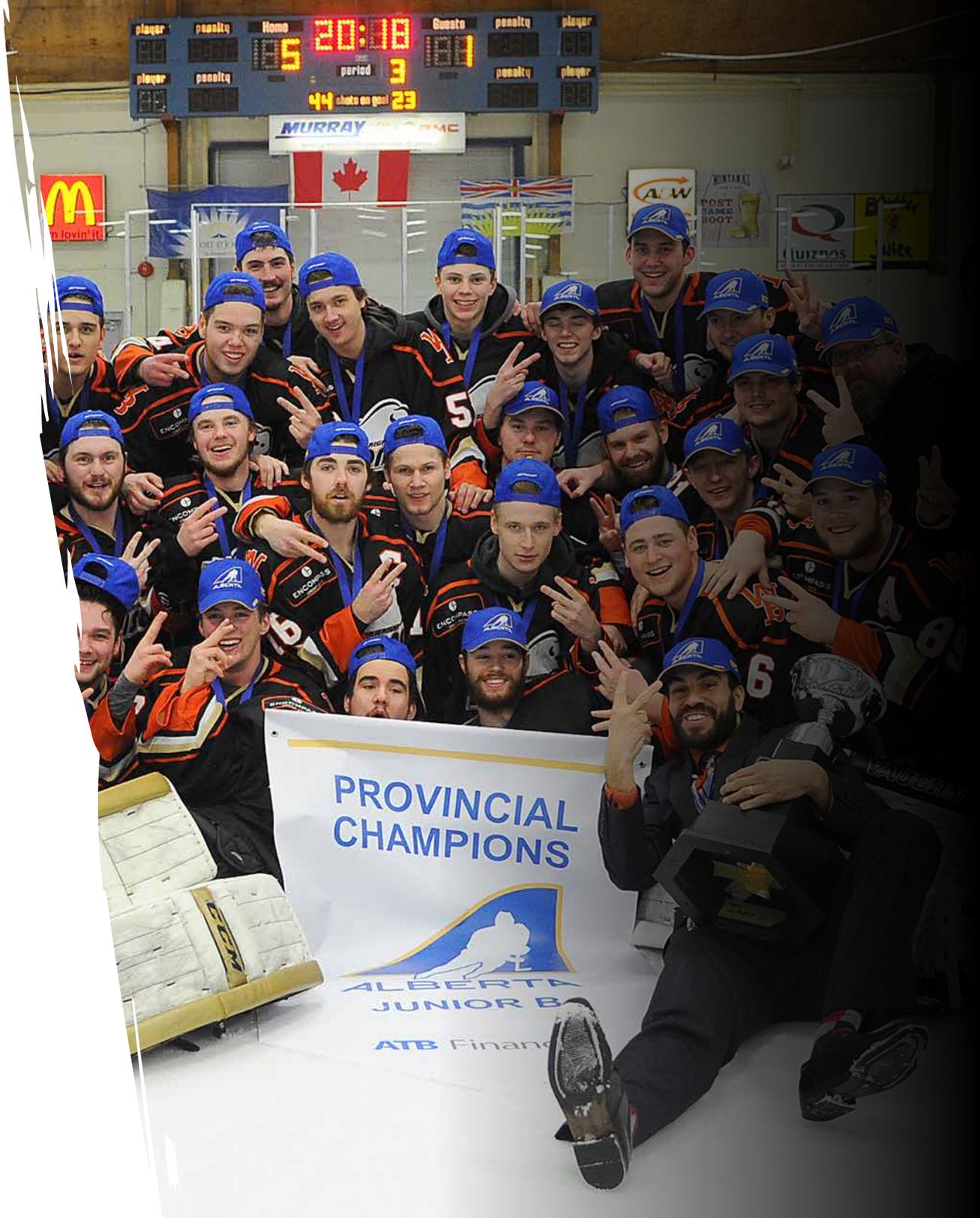
Within Hockey Alberta's Membership are five Junior B League and two Junior C Leagues. The top teams from each league compete at the Hockey Alberta Provincial Championships each season.

JUNIOR B

- [North West Junior Hockey League](#)
- [North Eastern Alberta Junior B Hockey League](#)
- [Capital Junior Hockey League](#)
- [Heritage Junior Hockey League](#)
- [Hockey Calgary](#)

JUNIOR C

- [Hockey Calgary](#)
- [NorAlta Junior C Hockey League](#)



ABOUT HOCKEY ALBERTA

Hockey Alberta was founded in 1907, and is the province's governing body for amateur hockey, from minor to senior, including the Alberta Junior Hockey League and the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference. Hockey Alberta has approximately 450 member organizations representing more than 95,000 participants.

Hockey Alberta is a customer-driven, responsive organization committed to designing and implementing, enforcing, and evaluating new ways to organize and develop players,

coaches, officials and administrators to create positive experiences for everyone involved in the game.

Hockey Alberta's head office is in Red Deer, with most services and programs based out of this office, including operations, development, communications, and the Hockey Alberta Foundation. Hockey Alberta also has regional managers who provide coaching and player development support to minor hockey associations.

ABOUT HOCKEY CANADA

Hockey Canada is the national governing body for hockey in the country. The organization works in conjunction with the 13 provincial members, the Canadian Hockey League and USports in growing the game at all levels. Hockey Canada oversees the management of programs in Canada from entry-level to high performance teams and competitions, including world championships and the Olympic Winter Games. Hockey Canada is also Canada's voice within the International Ice Hockey Federation.

ALBERTA BUILT.

HOCKEY ALBERTA // ALBERTA AMATEUR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

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