

Smoky Lake Minor Hockey Association (SLMHA) Handbook

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1. Objectives

1.1 Vision

The Smoky Lake Minor Hockey Association (SLMHA) dedicates itself to foster an environment so that any individual wishing to participate in minor hockey can do so in a safe, sportsmanlike, and fun manner.

1.2 Mission

To encourage, promote, coordinate, improve and provide the support to enhance the experience of all who wish to play or be involved in the sport of hockey within the SLMHA boundaries as registered with Hockey Alberta.

1.3 Respect

SLMHA is committed to providing a safe, enjoyable, and educational hockey program in which its players, coaches, managers, trainers, and volunteers are treated with respect and dignity. SLMHA follows guidelines set forth by Hockey Alberta and Hockey Canada, including without limitation, the principles outlined in the Respect in Sport program mandated by Hockey Alberta.

1.4 Governing Bodies

SLMHA recognizes Hockey Canada and Hockey Alberta as governing bodies of the sport of hockey and abides by all rules and regulations instituted by these bodies.

2. Player Registrations

2.1 Boundaries

In alignment with the current Hockey Alberta regulations, traditional geographic boundaries no longer restrict new registrations. First-time registrants may now choose to register with the Minor Hockey Association (MHA) of their preference, regardless of residential location. However, players who have previously registered with an MHA and wish to transfer to another association must still obtain a formal release in accordance with Hockey Alberta's player movement policies.

2.2 Non-Resident & Imported Players

SLMHA accepts imported players, defined as players who reside outside the traditional Smoky Lake Minor Hockey Association area and whose designated home association is different from SLMHA. These players must obtain the appropriate Hockey Alberta player movement documentation (e.g., Player Movement Form, Notification of Tryout, or Player Release) prior to registering and participating with SLMHA.

2.3 Registration of Players

Prior to registration, all players and parents must read and sign the Registration Package, which includes the Fair Play Policy, Bullying Policy, Social Media Policy, Parent Code of Conduct, Coach Code of Conduct, and Athlete's Grievance Procedure.

The following rules apply to U7 through U18 levels:

Discovery/U7: Open to players aged 6 and under on or before December 31 of the current season.

U9: Open to players 7 or 8 years of age on or before December 31 of the current season.

U11: Open to players 9 or 10 years of age on or before December 31 of the current season.

U13: Open to players 11 or 12 years of age on or before December 31 of the current season.

U15: Open to players 13 or 14 years of age on or before December 31 of the current season.

U18: Open to players 15, 16, or 17 years of age on or before December 31 of the current season.

2.4 Player Fees:

- **Discovery/U7:** \$450
- **U9:** \$600
- **U11:** \$675
- **U13:** \$725
- **U15:** \$775
- **U18:** \$850

2.5 Payment

Payment must be made to SLMHA Treasurer through the following options:

Credit Card Through Spordle, via Sportspay

E-Transfer to smokylakeminorhockey@gmail.com

External Funding through Kidsport/JumpStart

2.6 First-Time Registrant Incentive

New players registering with SLMHA for the first time are eligible for a 50% fee reduction at the Discovery/U7, U9, and U11 levels. This incentive is offered once per player to encourage new participation in our hockey programs.

2.7 Hockey Jersey Ownership and Deposit Policy

All jerseys are the property of Smoky Lake Minor Hockey Association. Players are responsible for jerseys during the season and must return them in good condition at the end of team activities. For teams without a designated jersey carrier, a \$250 deposit is required prior to jersey distribution.

Players are responsible for any Association-issued equipment and must return or replace it if lost or damaged.

2.8 SLMHA Outstanding/Unscheduled Fee Payment Policy

If a player has outstanding or unscheduled fees after January 1st of the current hockey season, the player shall be suspended until a payment plan is agreed upon between the parent/guardian and SLMHA. All fees

must be fully paid by February 15th of the current hockey season. Failure to establish a payment plan or settle outstanding fees by this date will result in the immediate suspension of playing privileges.

2.9 Financial Assistance Programs

Smoky Lake Minor Hockey Association has programs to help assist with the cost of fees for children in sports. These programs include the KidSport Hockey Assist Program as well as an in-house, SLMHA player assistance fund. Please contact an executive member for more information on the eligibility of these programs.

2.10 Refund Policy

- **Prior to October 1st:** 100% refund.
- **Before October 31st:** 85% refund.
- **Before November 30th:** 50% refund.
- **After November 30th:** No refund unless a long-term injury occurs.
 - **Long-Term Injury:**
 - If a player misses at least 2 months of the season, a one-time credit proportionate to the time missed will be applied to the next season's registration fees (e.g., missing 1/3 of the season results in a 1/3 credit).
 - Requires a doctor's note confirming the injury lasting at least 60 days.
- Refunds will not be granted for expulsion or suspension due to breach of the code of conduct.

3. Coach and Managers

3.1 Policy

- SLMHA Head Coaches, as chief team officials, are responsible for all activities of their team. Delegation of responsibilities to Assistant Coaches/Trainers, Managers, and parents is necessary, desirable, and encouraged; however, ultimate responsibility for all activities rests with the Head Coach. Supervision over delegated responsibilities is necessary.
- Only properly registered team officials may be on the bench during games.
- Only SLMHA approved skill instructors may be on the ice during practices.
- Team officials must read and sign the Coach Registration package to be eligible to coach within SLMHA.

3.2 Coach Registration Application

All coaches are required to submit an application if they wish to coach.

The coach selection process is an extremely crucial part of the responsibility of the Executive committee. This decision impacts its players in their development, their growth, and their enjoyment of the game. It also impacts the families of these players, the community and the image and reputation of the SLMHA and its members. Coaches are required to meet and support the SLMHA expectations and its members By-Laws. Persons interested in applying for a coaching position should consider these before submitting their application.

The Coach's responsibility as instructor/ teacher include:

- Teach hockey skills appropriate to the age.
- Teach using the proper sequences and progressions.

- Communicate to players in appropriate language and tones.
- Teach to players varied learning styles, aptitudes and levels of ability.
- Providing a disciplined environment for the player to learn and grow in.
- Teach the SLMHA and its members strategies and objectives at each level.
- Planning effective practices well in advance of actual practice times.
- Attend all in house coaching clinics.
- Always provide proper supervision in dressing rooms and on ice.
- Review player equipment on a regular basis for defects and advise parents.
- Report any abuse to the Executive.
- Quickly resolve disagreements and increase team unity.

3.3 Eligibility to Coach

All coaches must provide the following:

- Completed Coach Registration Application
- Criminal Record Check & Vulnerable Sector
- Completion of Respect in Sport: Activity Leader
- All required coaching credentials outlined by Hockey Alberta

3.4 Coach Selection

Coaches will be selected based on specific coach selection criteria and factors that include but are not limited to:

- Coaching credentials and qualifications
- Implementation and execution of a coaching strategy that adheres to the SLMHA Code of Conduct
- Feedback

3.5 Coaching Evaluations

SLMHA will focus on the growth of our coaches' knowledge, leadership, and effective coaching skills in order to advance the program, players, and philosophy of SLMHA.

Evaluation Process

The SLMHA Coach Evaluation Process is based upon the collection of evaluation data which can then be processed into constructive feedback for the coaches. The objective is to improve the quality of SLMHA coaches by identifying areas of strength and areas for improvement, in conjunction with the SLMHA Coach Development initiative.

Data is collected using (primarily) surveys and interviews. Data is processed by SLMHA Executive, and constructive feedback will be available for each coach. Coach evaluation feedback will also be reviewed as part of the SLMHA Coach Selection Process.

Anonymity of the individuals who have completed the evaluations will be maintained. Upon request, the Coaches Selection Committee will be provided access to the summarized reports in the database in relation to a coach applying for a coaching position.

3.6 Coaches Expectations

- Maintain a professional, positive attitude in all matters related to hockey, both on and off the ice. SLMHA Coaches are expected to be examples of professionalism in our communities in the off-season as well. Failures to do so will be factored in when selecting coaches.
- Follow and, where applicable, respond to, directives of SLMHA and operate the team within established policy and guidelines.
- Attend the Coaches/Managers meeting at the onset of the season and all other meetings as required by SLMHA.
- Ensure that all appropriate Coaching Certification courses are taken, in accordance with the level being coached.
- Respond to the needs and skills of individual players ensuring that each player has the maximum opportunity to develop his potential.
- Recognize their responsibilities as leaders, educators, and role models for young players. Conduct towards players, parents, officials, and other persons should be based on mutual respect and be fair and reasonable. Physical abuse, verbal abuse, or profanity is strictly prohibited.
- Be sensitive to parent concerns and prepared to respond when warranted.
- Establish regular communication with parents regarding games, practices, schedules, fundraising, etc.
- Recognize that while hockey may be the major winter activity of the player, it is not the only priority of the player. In priority, it comes after family and educational responsibilities and reasonable accommodation to these factors is expected.
- Commit themselves to the continued development of all players for the full season, once players are selected to a team.
- Deal fairly with players at all times.
- Ensure proper supervision of the team, before, during, and after games and practices, and accept reasonable responsibility for the conduct, safety, and well-being of their players.
- Develop a set of rules for the team which are clearly communicated and enforced equally on all players.
- Encourage and motivate their players towards the enjoyment of the game, team concept, and skill development.
- Pursue objections to directives or policy through appropriate channels and in a manner that is not detrimental to the team, league, or SLMHA.
- Comply with normal administrative directives by:
 - Holding a beginning-of-the-season parent meeting
 - Attending all meetings as required
 - Completing a coaching application and attending an interview if requested
 - Ensuring that the team has adequate support personnel
 - Reviewing current Hockey Alberta rules, SLMHA Policy & Procedures Manual, and Coach's Manual

3.7 Manager's Policy

SLMHA Team Managers are directly responsible to the Head Coach, who shall be responsible for delegating specific duties. In general, Team Managers should assume responsibility for most of the off-ice, organizational, and administrative tasks, allowing the coach to concentrate on instruction and player development. All Team managers must have proper certification.

3.8 Manager's Responsibilities

- Respond to directives of SLMHA and operate the teams within established policies, guidelines, and regulations.
- Ensure financial requirements of SLMHA are fulfilled, monthly reporting and AGLC reporting requirements.
- Assist the Head Coach in monitoring off-ice conduct by team members and team followers to ensure that the team's role as a community and SLMHA ambassador is maintained.
- Establish, maintain, and enhance communication with league commissioners, representatives, and participants.
- Arrange for referees for exhibition games and notify the Ref-In-Chief of any changes in league games. A team must give 24 hours' notice of cancellation of referees or the team will be responsible for paying the referee fees.
- Report to SLMHA Executive, any violation of Hockey Alberta or SLMHA rules.

3.9 Manager's Tasks

- Gather relevant player medical history data and highlight relevant information for the Head Coach and/or trainer.
- Obtain travel permits, exhibition permits, and special event permits where necessary (Home & Away games).
- Manage the team's schedule.
- Organize parent meetings.
- Participate in the formulation of team objectives.
- Supervise and monitor the collection of money and fundraising.
- Arrange for all Raffle Licenses in accordance with AGLC.
- Arrange for team transportation, accommodation, and meals for away tournaments.
- Arrange for additional ice if desired.
- Arrange for unwanted ice to be used by another team.
- Organize and obtain help to fulfill the following duties, among others:
 - Team treasurer
 - Timekeepers/scorekeepers
 - Jersey Carriers
 - Fundraising
 - Apparel
 - Tournaments

3.10 Team Bank Account Policy

Each Smoky Lake Minor Hockey Association team is required to have a team bank account with two authorized signers.

At the beginning of the season, each team will be issued \$1,000 from the Association. This advance is intended to help float early-season expenses such as tournament fees, tournament travel expenses, and other team-related costs until the team has had an opportunity to fundraise or secure sponsorships.

Cheques and deposit books required for each team will be purchased and supplied by Smoky Lake Minor Hockey Association.

Teams must maintain detailed financial records throughout the season, which must be made available to parents upon request.

All team bank accounts must be balanced back to \$1,000 by April 30. Individual teams will be liable for any shortfall in their accounts as of April 30. Any surplus funds remaining as of May 1 will be donated back to the Smoky Lake Minor Hockey Association.

4. Roster Building

4.1 Rosters

Athletes will be placed on the team that corresponds to their age group/birth date. Once maximum roster size has been met and exceeded any additional registrations will defer to SLMH Registration Flow Chart. Teams must have a minimum of 8 athletes to register a team.

4.2 Overage Players

In certain circumstances, a player may be considered to play in a division below their age category. All overage player requests must be submitted in writing by the player's parent or guardian no later than **August 15** of the current season.

Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and must comply with all applicable Hockey Alberta regulations. Approval of any overage request is at the sole discretion of the Smoky Lake Minor Hockey Association (SLMHA) Board of Directors. The Board will consider factors such as player safety, skill level, team composition, and overall program impact.

The Board reserves the right to approve, deny, or revoke overage status at any time.

4.3 Affiliation

Affiliation of players to the next highest team will be allowed under the following conditions:

- Player is deemed capable of playing at a higher level.
- Player must have permission granted by both coaches (registered team and affiliated team coach) prior to playing any game.
- Approved by Hockey Alberta

If conflict arises between affiliate players and team scheduling, the affiliate player must first fulfill his/her commitment to their regular team.

All Hockey Alberta Regulations on affiliation will be followed.

4.4 Player Movement

- Player movements will be issued if Smoky Lake Minor Hockey does not have a team at the player's age level or if there are no available spots on the team. If a Player Movement Form (PMF) has been requested but a team exists, the request will be reviewed and approved or denied after an executive vote.
- All Hockey Alberta Regulations on player movement will be followed regarding notice of tryouts and subsequent movement of players into elite streams of AA and AAA.
- No permanent player movement will be issued for Junior B unless a U18 team does not exist within SLMHA. If a U18 team exists, a Hockey Alberta Affiliation agreement can be issued with a majority vote by the SLMHA executive.

4.5 Splitting Teams

In the event that SLMHA receives sufficient registrations to consider forming multiple teams within a division, the association may proceed with a team split, provided it aligns with Hockey Alberta regulations and is in the best interest of player development and team sustainability.

A minimum of **10 players per team** is required to move forward with any split.

SLMHA is committed to maximizing ice time and creating an environment that supports player growth, team manageability, and family accessibility. All decisions around team splits will be guided by the following principles and factors:

- **Skill & Player Development**
- **Building Complete Coaching Staffs**
- **Parent Communication**

When teams are split, they will be **based on skill** to ensure appropriate development levels. To maintain transparency and fairness, **an independent third-party evaluator with no affiliation to SLMHA** will be engaged to assess players and assist in roster formation. This step ensures impartiality and removes any potential conflicts of interest.

All parents will be notified in advance of any proposed team split. A meeting will be scheduled to explain the process and answer questions. The final decision will be made collaboratively by the SLMHA executive in consultation with coaches and managers, with the goal of balancing competitiveness, development, and logistics.

5. Ice Times & Tournaments

5.1 Ice Allocation

SLMHA will allocate ice time proportionally across all teams, aiming to provide equitable access for practices and games while maximizing development opportunities within the constraints of the association's budget.

Practice schedules will be released as early as possible and will typically begin the week following Labour Day Weekend, or as soon as the ice becomes available. SLMHA reserves the right to adjust schedules as needed throughout the season.

The ice schedule—including practice and home game slots—will be created in collaboration with the Smoky Lake Agricultural Society and other local user groups to ensure fair and efficient use of the Smoky Lake Complex. Any team requests for additional or unscheduled ice time must be submitted for approval by the SLMHA Board of Directors. Teams may also secure additional ice time at their own expense.

5.2 Tournaments

Each team is responsible for covering 100% of the ice costs associated with their home tournaments.

Teams in the U7 to U13 divisions are expected to host a home tournament annually. Tournament dates will be selected at the Coach and Manager Meeting held at the start of each season.

6. Fundraising

6.1 Association Fundraising

All fundraising initiatives undertaken by SLMHA must be approved by the Executive Committee. Each season, these initiatives will be outlined at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in alignment with the budget presented by the Treasurer.

SLMHA reserves the right to modify or expand fundraising efforts throughout the season if necessary to meet the financial needs of the association or to respond to unforeseen circumstances.

6.2 50/50s

Each season, the SLMHA membership will determine the method of 50/50 fundraising at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Options may include in-game sales, online 50/50 draws, or a combination of both.

SLMHA reserves the right to manage and administer the chosen method in a way that ensures maximum participation and benefit to the association.

All proceeds support SLMHA programming, development initiatives, and association expenses.

6.3 Casino

The primary fundraising activity of SLMHA is our Fort McMurray casino event, which significantly supports the operational and developmental needs of our association.

Volunteers who work a casino shift on behalf of SLMHA will receive the following:

- Fuel or Mileage Reimbursement
- Hotel Accommodation (covered by SLMHA)
- Meal Expenses (covered by SLMHA)
- \$50 in Casino Credits per day volunteered

Casino Credit Usage:

- Casino credits can be applied toward registration fees for the current hockey season.
- Credits are only valid if the casino takes place prior to November 1st of the current hockey season. This supersedes any existing payment plans, meaning registration must be fully paid by November 1st to use the credit.
- If the casino occurs after November 1st, and a payment plan is already in place, the credit will be deferred to the following season, and the existing payment plan will remain valid.

This structure ensures transparency, encourages volunteerism, and helps families offset registration costs while supporting the broader goals of SLMHA.

6.4 Bingo

As part of our ice agreement with the Smoky Lake Agricultural Society, SLMHA members must work Bingo shifts on select Wednesday evenings throughout the year. Shifts will be assigned to each team manager at the beginning of the season, and managers will coordinate the scheduling.

6.5 Team Fundraising

Throughout the season, individual teams may choose to fundraise for various needs such as team travel, extra ice time, and other expenses. Teams can conduct ongoing fundraising activities provided they:

- Clearly indicate that the fundraising is for a specific team, not for SLMHA. Any advertising should only reference SLMHA or minor hockey to indicate the league the team is associated with.
- Avoid any fundraising activities that conflict with major SLMHA fundraising efforts.

7. Additional Association Details

7.1 Referees

- Referees must be properly certified with Hockey Alberta.
- All Junior (Minor Hockey Aged) Referees must be more than one level above the game they are officiating. For example, U15 referees can officiate U11 games. A one-time exception may be made if there are no other officials available.
- SLMHA will reimburse all required courses for local referees.

7.2 Logo

Any use of the SLMHA Logo shall adhere to the following rules and restrictions:

- If an SLMHA logo is to be used by a team or committee of SLMHA, the SLMHA logo shall be obtained from the SLMHA Executive Committee and shall be used without alteration. No revised or altered versions of the SLMHA logo are authorized or approved for use by any party.
- The SLMHA logo must be provided to any supplier on the basis that it remains the sole property of SLMHA and is not to be altered or used for any purpose other than the provision of the goods in relation to which the logo is provided.

7.3 Association Social Media

The Smoky Lake Minor Hockey Association (SLMHA) maintains a structured approach to communication through both association-wide pages and team-specific pages, ensuring timely, relevant, and appropriate information is shared with members and the public.

- **The Association Page** serves as the central hub for broad updates, including registration info, policy announcements, fundraising efforts, community events, and official statements. It represents the public face of SLMHA and maintains a formal, professional tone.
- **Team Pages** are managed by team staff and focus on individual team updates such as game schedules, player highlights, and team-specific announcements. These pages may adopt a more casual tone appropriate to their audience, while still adhering to association standards.

All communication must follow privacy guidelines, reflect consistent branding, and be respectful in tone. Content that impacts multiple teams or the association as a whole belongs on the Association Page, while team-specific content should remain on the Team Page.

For the complete policy, including content criteria, tone guidelines, and privacy considerations, please refer to the full SLMHA Social Media and Communications Policy.

8. Incidents

8.1 Chain of Command

Should you have an issue, complaint, or incident involving coaches, managers, other players, parents, or spectators, it is important to follow the proper chain of command.

- Report the issue directly to the Coaches or Manager.
- If the Coaches or Manager are unable to resolve the issue, escalate it to the President of SLMHA or another Executive member.
- If the Executive members are also unable to assist, the next step is to contact Hockey Alberta.

8.2 Reporting for Disciplinary Action

Coaches and Managers shall report all incidents that may result in disciplinary action to the President of SLMHA as soon as possible after they occur, but before the next game or immediately after a tournament.

Incidents which must be reported and warrant disciplinary action are:

- Profanity by players, team officials, club representatives, or parents.
- A player who receives a game misconduct, gross, or match penalty.
- A team assessed two or more bench minors in one game.
- A coach or bench assistant who is ejected from a game.
- A team member or team follower who brings discredit to the team and SLMHA through violent, abusive, or gross behavior.

8.3 Injuries

Coaches and bench officials shall get injured players off the ice surface as quickly as possible within the normal realms of responsible safety. If an injury occurs the coach must fill out an Injury Report.

8.4 Reporting

The SLMHA Incident Report (available on the SLMHA website) should be used to report disciplinary incidents, other forms of protest, or for cases where officiating is deemed to be less than satisfactory. All incidents must be reported forthwith following the occurrence of the incident, but in any event, within 30 days of the incident.

If making a report on officials:

- Do not speak to the officials about your concerns during or after the game.
- Provide the complaint in writing to the President, signed by the coach, within 48 hours.

8.5 Disciplinary Procedure

Outlined in SLMHA Bylaws, the procedure that is set forth gives time for each level to attempt to resolve the problem. If the problem is unable to be resolved. The Disciplinary grievance procedure will be used and followed, as per the bylaws.

9. Board of Directors

9.1 Policy

SLMHA shall ensure that its business and affairs are conducted in accordance with its Bylaws and Policies and Procedures.

9.2 Duties

Among other things, the Board of Directors shall:

- Attend meetings of the Board of Directors.
- Determine the general policies with respect to the organization, administration, and operation of SLMHA.
- Provide an environment to develop the abilities of individual players.
- Provide a fun and safe environment for all players.
- Make rules respecting enrollment and programs available to players.
- Purchase all necessary equipment to carry on its objectives.
- Assess fees to members as needed to efficiently achieve SLMHA's objectives. Operate teams at the Discovery, U7, U9, U11, U13, U15, U18 level as registrations allow.
- Manage, lease, sell, mortgage, or otherwise handle any property owned or controlled by SLMHA.
- Make rules for player enrollment and access to SLMHA programs that are fee-based.
- Consider questions promptly and carefully, taking into account the opinions of the petitioners.
- A member of the SLMHA Board of Directors may be removed in accordance with the provisions of the SLMHA Bylaws.

9.3 Financial Records

SLMHA financial records, including reporting and inspection rights and procedures, are detailed in the SLMHA Bylaws. SLMHA follows generally accepted accounting principles for non-profit associations. The fiscal year-end is May 31.

9.4 Remuneration and Expenses

SLMHA Treasurer will reimburse under the following circumstances:

- Travel to league and Hockey Alberta meetings will be reimbursed at the provincial government per kilometer rate.
- Personal expenses incurred for conducting SLMHA affairs will be reimbursed upon submission of an expense receipt and approval by motion at a regular association meeting.
- Team officials can request reimbursement for all required courses to ensure team eligibility.

Team coaches, managers and board of directors are volunteer positions without remuneration.

9.5 Expenditures

All expenditures over \$300.00 require Board approval unless they are pre-approved in the association's season budget.

Team Reimbursements from SLMHA back to teams do not need board approval. This would include use of proceeds from raffles, etc.

9.6 Disbursements

Requests for payment or reimbursement will be processed by the Treasurer as soon as possible. All requests for reimbursement must be accompanied by a receipt. All requests for payment or reimbursement, along with supporting documentation, must be submitted on or before May 31st of the current season.

9.7 Meetings

Meetings of SLMHA shall follow the SLMHA Bylaws. Matters needing review and approval between meetings can be presented by email or other means of communication. Resolutions must pass according to the requirements set out in the SLMHA Bylaws.

9.8 Reimbursement of Third-Party Expenses

Teams will be responsible for reimbursing SLMHA for all amounts billed to SLMHA by third parties related to the team's conduct. This includes, but is not limited to, charges for property damage, dressing room repairs, and game forfeitures.