

## **St. Albert Ringette Association (SARA), Mission AA Program**

### **FAQ**

#### **1. What is Mission AA ringette?**

AA ringette is an opportunity for our athletes to compete at the highest level against the best players in the sport. It provides high level competition and training, outstanding coaching, a fun and supportive team environment, and promotes a healthy active lifestyle for athletes.

AA ringette is for athletes that want to pursue competitive ringette and:

- Are committed to their team and sport
- Want to work hard
- Want to learn
- Want to improve
- Want to compete at the highest level

AA Ringette is more than just the highest tier at a given age level. It involves additional training, both on ice and off, instruction and development. Because it is a competitive stream for which many players strive to play, it requires a strong commitment and dedication from all players to participate in all team activities. As such, being a member of a SARA AA team will place an increased demand on your time and financial obligations.

#### **2. Why should my player consider trying out for a Mission AA ringette team?**

If your player is the kind of athlete that wants to challenge herself and play against other top ringette athletes in Alberta and in Canada, then Mission AA ringette is the choice for her. Mission AA ringette offers the opportunity to:

- Play with like-minded athletes
- Receive high level coaching instruction
- Participate at the highest level available for her age group
- Learn and live valuable, transferrable life skills, such as: responsibility, dependability, time management, etc.
- Travel within Canada, and potentially internationally, and play against other top ringette athletes

### 3. What is the financial commitment?

The total financial commitment will vary amongst the Mission AA teams at the U14/U16/U19 levels. Registration fees are higher for all Mission AA athletes due to the increased practice and training requirements at this level. There are some basic costs such as tournament registration fees, dryland training, and mandatory team apparel that are standard, but some other costs are team decisions. Variables that affect cost include:

- The number of tournaments, both home and away – in general, AA teams will choose to attend as many tournaments as possible
- The additional type of training a team may wish to add to their own program (goalie instruction, power skating)
- Off-ice instruction (classroom sessions), additional team bonding functions or additional optional team apparel
- Coaching costs for non-parent coaches (apparel, travel, accommodations)
- Participation in Provincials, with the potential to advance to post-Provincial play at Western Canadian Ringette Championships (WCRC) for U14AA or Canadian Ringette Championships (CRC) for U16AA and U19AA (depending on host location/province)
- Amount of fundraising the team chooses to do

Please note that first year Mission AA players may have some additional costs, for example for apparel that returning players already have.

Financial commitment, through team fees and fundraising is integral to AA ringette. Team fees (excluding registration fees) can include the following expenses and typically range between \$1750-\$2500 per player:

- Administration costs required to run the team
- Development (dryland training, mental and nutritional training, power skating, goalie training, team building activities, etc.)
- Additional practice ice time
- Tournament registration costs (including bus or car rentals)
- Mandatory team clothing / equipment
- Team photos



For the 2021-22 season the approximate team fees (excluding registration fees) for the Mission AA teams were as follows:

- U14AA - \$1750/player for the team's season play (attended Provincials, but not WCRC). This budget did not include travel or hotel costs. The team completed one fundraising activity to help offset costs and received approximately \$2500 in corporate sponsorship. The team attended six tournaments.
- U16AA - \$2250/player for the team's season play (attended Provincials, but not Nationals). This budget did not include travel or hotel costs. The team completed one fundraising activity to help offset costs. The team attended six tournaments.
- U19AA - \$2750/player for the team's season play (attended Provincials, Nationals). This budget did not include travel or hotel costs. The team completed multiple fundraising activities to help offset costs and received approximately \$3000 in corporate sponsorship. The team attended six tournaments.

Additional financial info:

- Team fees can be offset in part or whole depending on amount of team fundraising.
- When a team qualifies through the Provincial play downs by placing in a top position, they will be offered the chance to go to WCRC or CRC (depending on how many teams are able to go from the province). Teams should budget for this possibility, or expect an additional cash call to cover this expense.

#### **4. What is the time commitment for Mission AA ringette?**

Like the financial commitment, the time commitment can vary from team to team and between age levels. However, the following can generally be expected:

- 1-2 regular practice ice sessions per week of 60 to 75 minutes. Coaches are required to follow Ringette Canada's LTAD principles with respect to practice and playing time.
- 1 dryland session per week of 60 to 75 minutes
- Approximately 12 to 16 league games
- Approximately 3-5 exhibition games
- Participation in 4 to 6 tournaments
- Athlete volunteerism – varies from team to team. AA athletes are expected to give back to the sport of ringette and to the community
- Fundraising – athletes and families are expected to participate in fundraising opportunities at various points during the season to offset the costs of AA ringette. AA ringette requires a strong commitment by both the athlete and the family.

#### **5. Fundraising**

Individual teams are encouraged to establish their own fundraising committees and initiatives. Examples of successful fundraising options are:

- Corporate sponsors
- 50/50 sales
- Silent auctions
- Raffle sales
- Bottle drives

**6. Is there special teamwear for Mission AA ringette players?**

To help the athletes of all age groups to represent the Mission consistently at tournaments and in the community, athletes are required to purchase and maintain a base kit of Mission branded clothing. Additional teamwear will be decided on by individual teams, in conjunction with the coaches/team staff. As of the 2022-2023 season, Mission AA players will also wear Mission AA specific jerseys in all competitions.

**7. Are Mission AA athletes permitted/encouraged to play other sports during the ringette season?**

SARA recognizes that athletes are required to balance many commitments. These commitments often include family, school and other sports. SARA supports that family and school commitments take priority over ringette. Although participating in other sports is encouraged to develop and promote increased athleticism Mission AA ringette should be considered as the first sports priority.

A lack of participation will impact individual player development and team performance as a whole. Communication between players and parents and player, parents and coach are essential for a successful a competitive atmosphere to take place. Players must prioritize time and activities effectively regarding team commitments.

Commitment is year-round. While activity varies by month, players should view ringette activities as a full year process. Development at highly competitive levels does not permit long layoffs. Training during the winter and summer months is important. We expect players (and families) to honor their commitment to the team when offered a spot with the Mission AA. Where a player chooses to play multiple sports, the coach(es) will work with the family and the athlete to balance ringette with other sports and commitments.

**8. What are the Mission AA season timelines?**

Timelines vary from season to season depending on a number of factors. Typically:

- Tryouts and team selection for AA are before other evaluations, typically mid to end of August (depending on Ringette Alberta sanctioning)
- September to mid-March – regular season practices, games and tournaments
- Early to mid-March – Provincials\*
- Late March – Western Canadian Ringette Championships (WCRC)\*
- Late March to early April – Canadian Ringette Championships (CRC)\*

\*It is expected that teams will strive to attain a berth and compete in post season play (i.e., Provincials, WCRC, and CRC). Commitments to these events must be confirmed by December 15<sup>th</sup> of the current season. Locations and dates for post season competition will be announced by December of the current season or earlier if known. Note: Given the size of CRCs dates and location are generally known a year in advance – please see the Ringette Canada website for information.

## 9. What are the expectations of players

Player responsibilities include:

- Team Activities - Attendance at games, training and team activities is mandatory and absences should only occur on account of illness, injury, or special circumstances on a limited basis. Coaches should always be informed in advance where players can't attend team activities.
- Time Management - Players are expected to be punctual for team activities. Arrival time for training and games is determined by the coaching staff to ensure athletes have time to prepare physically and mentally for competition.
- Demonstrate Sportsmanship – Players represent their team, Mission AA Ringette and SARA, and are expected to demonstrate sportsmanship in all activities, whether on or off the ice. Players must treat coaches, teammates, referees, and opponents with respect. Poor or disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.
- Growth Mindset – Players are expected to be open to constructive feedback, to ask questions and maintain an open communication with the coaching staff. Open communication is essential for development.
- Physical Fitness/skill development - Players are expected to take ownership of their physical fitness and skill development. In addition to team activities, athletes should be prepared to undertake their own off-ice training to enhance fitness and skills to be ready for competition.

## 10. Social Media

Mission players represent their team, the association and the St. Albert community playing the sport of Ringette. The association expects the athletes to conduct themselves on Social Media in a way that acts as an ambassador to the sport.

Disrespectful behavior is becoming a growing concern in our rinks and during tournament events. SARA cannot realistically control what individuals post on their personal sites, however, SARA strongly encourages such communications and photos or images to be respectful to teammates, coaches, officials, opposing teams, and the sport of Ringette.

A full copy of the SARA Social Media Policy can be found here:

<https://cloud.rampinteractive.com/stalbertringette/files/Code%20of%20Conduct/SARA%20Social%20Media%20Expectations.pdf>

**11. How does a player get considered for a Mission AA team?**

Tryouts are organized by SARA in mid to late August each year. Players interested in competing to play competitive ringette with Mission must register and compete for positions in AA tryouts during evaluations.

Every position on each AA team is open. Regardless of where athletes played the prior season, they must prove themselves at the evaluations.

Independent evaluators with experience and knowledge about competitive ringette will assess the AA evaluations. Typically, AA evaluations will include a mix of drills to demonstrate ring and skating skills, together with game sense and team play during scrimmages. Goaltenders will be evaluated at these sessions and will also attend a separate goalie specific skills evaluation.

Additional information on SARA evaluation process and policies can be found on the SARA website.

Non-resident players at all levels will be considered, depending on the availability of SARA resident athletes eligible to play at that level. Preference will be given to SARA athletes who demonstrate the ability to compete at the AA level at evaluations, bearing in mind the program's focus is to develop competitive AA teams.

The RAB residency policy for non-resident players can be found below. If you are a non-resident player who wishes to tryout for Mission AA, please ensure you comply with this policy.

RAB Residency Policy:

<https://ringettealberta.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/3.0-Residency-Policy-August-2021.pdf>

Appendix B (Player Release Form - referred to in the policy):

<https://ringetteab.wufoo.com/forms/z1kzs5a0aeroc8/>

**12. When is Mission AA registration and how do I indicate my player's intent to play at the competitive level?**

All interested athletes will register via the SARA website through Ramp. This typically occurs early July.

There is a \$75 nonrefundable evaluation fee.