

U14 ZONE REPRESENTATIVE DIVISION GUIDELINES

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Authors:

Nicole Robb, BA

Becky Adams, BKin

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1. Introduction

High performance ringette in BC has struggled for a number of years to gain traction with participants and to develop an athlete pool. While overall player numbers have been fairly static over time, the number of players in the youth and children's divisions have declined significantly. Under the current model, there is limited opportunity for most athletes wishing to play competitively. This reduces the pool of competitive athletes each season as each cohort moves up. This leads to challenges in forming high performance teams at the U16 and U19 divisions.

Ringette BC has created a new U14 Zone Representative Division that merges together U14A and U14AA into geographically-representative zone teams. The zone team formation model is similar to BC Winter Games zone team model. BC Winter Games has evolved into an event that introduces athletes to high-level competitive ringette. The new U14 Pathway will use the BC Winter Games model as a guideline for registration and team formation.

Athletes participating in the U14 Zone Representative Division will be on an Athlete Pathway working towards competing at Western Canadian Ringette Championships, BC Winter Games and, ultimately, Canada Winter Games, while playing a competitive level of ringette in BC. If an athlete exits the division during the season, they will be able to join a Community Division team within their Club Association.

However, it is hoped that through increased opportunities to play at a competitive level while also providing competition at the Community level, all athletes will be more engaged. In turn, this will increase retention, attract more players and improve the quality of the sport played within and outside the province.

1.1. Why Change U14?

Drop-out rates for athletes, especially female athletes, is high at U14. Ringette in BC loses 40% of its participants between the beginning and end of the U14 age division. The current high-performance entry model is not sustainable and may be contributing to the dropout rate by streaming athletes out of competitive play too early while limiting access to development opportunities. Too few athletes have access to high performance competition and training opportunities under the current model.

The current high-performance model has existed in BC since the 1990s. There have been very few changes to its overall framework since its initial inception. Ringette Canada hired a consulting firm to review the structure of competition across Canada. The U14 Zone Representative Division is largely based on the recommendations from this independent third-party review. These changes align BC with Saskatchewan and are similar to New Brunswick, and come in anticipation of cross-Canada changes resulting from Ringette Canada's Competition Review.

1.2. What is the U14 Competitive Division?

The U14 Zone Representative (“Zone”) Division is for U14-aged athletes who are seeking to play at a higher level and are in the late stages of the *Train to Train* stage of the Long-Term Athlete Development model. The U14 Zone Division is comprised of regional teams that are roughly based on the BC Winter Games geographic zones; however, as the BC Winter Games Zone boundaries do not directly match the distribution of Ringette players across BC, the boundaries will be adjusted based on participant registration. The teams will train and practice within their Zone to help limit travel and increase access to facilities. Preference for Head Coach selection for each team will be given to Coaches that reside in the Zone to assist in training and developing Coaches for the long-term benefit of the sport.

U14 Zone Teams will be female only or male only. It is hoped that BC will have male only teams to compete with each other at Western Canadian Championships in 2020.

1.3. Strategic Initiatives

The introduction of the U14 Zone and Club Pathways are meant to engage more athletes by allowing players to self-declare and participate at the level of their own choice, while increasing engagement levels and enhancing the athlete experience.

These changes to U14 align with several strategic initiatives within the Ringette BC 2019 – 2023 Strategic Plan:

- the athlete pathway is clearly defined and accessible;
- female and male participation is encouraged and facilitated;
- there is stronger alignment with principles of long-term athlete development; and
- the program facilitates increased engagement with a goal to improve athlete retention and registration numbers.

1.4. Program Principles

Ringette BC, Leagues and Club Associations will be guided by the following principles in program delivery as stewards of the U14 Zone Division:

- Athletes, Coaches and Administrators will be guided by the *True Sport Principles* and will be ambassadors of *True Sport* in Ringette;
- the program guidelines and policies will work to promote the principles of meaningful competition;
- the program guidelines and policies will work to promote the creation of a network of Coaches who will follow the competitive pathway; and
- the program guidelines and policies will build a competition structure that can evolve with increased participants and support a growing sport.

2. GOVERNANCE

The U14 Zone Division will require cooperation between Club Associations, Leagues and Ringette BC. Ringette BC will be responsible for program oversight, creation of program guidelines and enforcement of policy. The Leagues will be responsible for player evaluations, organizing a Coach and Team Staff Selection Committee and general scheduling. Club Associations will secure ice and facilities and will work with the Leagues to ensure standardization of player evaluations.

Program guidelines and program expectations will be produced annually by Ringette BC with assistance from the Leagues and Club Associations as necessary.

2.1. Roster Sizes

Teams are formed primarily by Zones using the BC Winter Games boundaries as a foundation. Flexibility will be used to address participant registration numbers. Players will be required to declare, evaluate and participate in their geographic-representative zone, as confirmed by Ringette BC, and will be required to produce proof of address at evaluations.

Teams will have limited roster sizes. Smaller rosters assist with the following player development initiatives:

- increased engagement of all players as they are more active during competitions and practices;
- increased opportunities to experience playing different positions;
- increased opportunities for skill development;
- increased opportunity for players to experience different game situations; and
- increased opportunities for Coaches to train and develop all of the athletes on their team while recognizing individual skill levels of players.

Each Zone Representative Team will have a maximum of 13 players for any exhibition, League or tournament game. Teams electing to participate in games and tournaments with less than 13 players may do so, provided they have at least 9 players. Each roster will include 1-2 goalies to ensure development opportunities. A third goalie may be affiliated.

The following numbers reflect the minimum number of teams that should be formed within a zone depending on the number of athletes present at zone evaluations:

Number of athletes at Selection Camp	Minimum Number of Teams	Roster Sizes
11-35	1	11-13
36-50	2	11-13
51-70	3	11-13
71+	4	11-13

If a Zone is able to create more than one Zone Representative Team, the teams will be created as equally as possible. This can be done via player draft between the Head Coaches, and supervised by the Associations in the zone.

If a Zone does not have enough interested players to form a Zone team, any player wishing to try out in another Zone is eligible to obtain a release to attend evaluations in the appropriate adjacent Zone (subject to any applicable Ringette BC Policy). Once released, a player is treated as a player within the new Zone for evaluation purposes.

2.2. Team Zone Boundaries

There should be a minimum of seven to eight U14 Zone teams formed within BC based on the current zone boundaries (Appendix 2). It is estimated that there will be four teams in the Lower Mainland, two teams in TORL and two teams in the North. The number of teams formed each year will be driven by the number of players that register to participate in the Competitive Athlete pathway.

Teams will be formed using the BC Winter Games Zones as a guideline; however, the Zone boundaries can shift depending on registration numbers and the geographic diversity of participants. Ringette BC recognizes that the BC Winter Games Zones are not perfect representations of ringette registration numbers within the local Ringette Associations. Ringette BC therefore reserves the right to realign the Zone boundaries as necessary depending on registration numbers each season.

2.3. Team Formation

All Zone Representative Team selection processes will be conducted across the province during the same time period. Zone team selection should be completed no later than September 5th each season. Selection processes will be organized by the individual Leagues with assistance from the Club Associations within each Zone. It is expected that the Coaching Staff will run the evaluation drills and organized scrimmage(s). Players must be evaluated on their skills according to the Ringette BC U14 skill matrix and assigned a corresponding player ordinal. Players will pay an evaluation fee that is intended to cover the cost of the evaluation and selection process.

The Head Coach, in consultation with the League, will make the final player selection decisions for each Zone Representative team. Final player selection should reflect player ordinals with only minor variation. 80% of the roster will include the players with the highest ordinals while 20% of the roster, as well as any affiliate players, may be determined by the Head Coach¹. The Head Coach will submit the final roster to Ringette BC with confirmed compliance to the 80% rule. The evaluators, Head Coach, League, and Ringette BC must keep the individual player ordinals confidential.

¹ The roster may be formed by position at the discretion of the Head Coach. I.e. The team may have 80% forwards and 80% defense provided through formal evaluations, and the Head Coach fills in the remaining spots. Or, the Coach can simply take the top 80% and then fill out the rest of the roster.

Zone Representative Team rosters must be submitted to Ringette BC by September 5th of each season (or any other date agreed to in writing by Ringette BC and the League). Roster changes after this date must be submitted directly to Ringette BC and no changes will be approved after the Ringette BC roster deadline of November 1.

2.4. Affiliate Players

At the Head Coach's discretion, the Zone Representative Team may pick-up players from the Community Division as replacement for injury or relocation under a designated affiliate model.

Each Competitive U14 team is permitted to name three (3) affiliates and one (1) affiliate goalie to their roster. Affiliate players and a goalie are able to participate with the team at practices and can be picked up for games and tournaments. However, affiliate players/goalie must make their Club Division Team their priority. Attending practices, games and tournaments as an affiliate is in addition to their participation on their Club team. The Coaches of the two teams should communicate in the event of a conflict to ensure that the affiliate players and goalie are being given opportunity to participate with the Zone team without disadvantaging their Club team.

Affiliate players are not eligible to participate at Ringette BC Provincial Championships with the Zone Team unless the player is replacing a season-ending injury (as per the current Ringette BC Technical Package and related Provincials policies). Teams will be able to pick up a goalie if they only have one goalie on their roster for Western Canadian Ringette Championships, as per the WCRC Technical Package. Teams will be permitted to replace injured athletes for WCRC with their affiliates in accordance with the current WCRC Technical Package and Policy.

Affiliate players/goalie are limited to participating in a maximum of 10 games in a season, not including participation in Western Canadian Ringette Championships.

3. COACHING AND TEAM STAFF

3.1. Certification

Coaches for U14 Zone Teams will follow the Competitive Coaching Pathway. Teams in the U14 Zone Division are permitted to have one (1) Coach-In-Training on their bench. The Coach In-Training must be registered and an active member of the Team Staff.

The minimum certification requirements for a U14 Zone team are as below:

Position	Coaching Level Required	Concussion Training	Respect in Sport or Equivalent
Head Coach	CI Certified	Required	Required
Assistant Coach	CI Certified	Required	Required
Coach-in-Training	CI Trained	Required	Required

Other team staff such as Managers and Trainers must meet the standards outlined by Ringette BC under the Coaching Development Policy.

All team staff must have completed a criminal record check and participated in a screening process as per Ringette BC Policy. Each team must follow the Female on the Bench requirements as set out by Ringette Canada. This includes have a female Coach on the bench for all games.

Team staff are defined as all coaching staff including the coach-in-training, team manager, trainers and sport science personnel. Team staff that are able to access field of play is defined in competition technical packages. Typically the Head Coach, two Assistant Coaches (including a Coach-in-Training), and a Trainer (if desired) may be on the bench during games.

3.2. Team Staff Selection

Head Coaches must be selected by July 1st of each season and adhere to Ringette BC's Coach and Team Staff Selection policy. For the U14 Zone teams, the Coach and Team Staff Selection Committee will include one representative designated by the League, one representative designated by each Club Association in the Zone, and one representative from Ringette BC.

Coaching staff who reside within the geographical zone/district of the team will be given priority for selection. This is to assist with developing coaches under the Competitive Athlete Pathway from different areas of the province.

All coaches will be required to submit an application form, with references, to express their interest. Additional Team Staff will be recommended by the selected Head Coach, and approved by the Selection Committee prior to the start of player evaluations.

4. COMPETITION

4.1. Provincial Competition

All U14 Zone Teams will participate in Provincial Championships and compete for the right to attend Western Canadian Ringette Championships. Ringette BC will commit all teams to Western Canadian Ringette Championships and the top two teams will attend. If more teams are eligible to attend (through a wildcard allocation), the next highest placing team will be required to attend. Competing at the Provincial Championships and Western Canadian Ringette Championships will be the season goal of every U14 Competitive Zone team.

The Ringette BC U14 Provincial Championships will take place in February or March of each year. Western Canadian Ringette Championships typically occur in March.

4.2. Season Competition (Divisional Play)

The U14 Zone teams will compete against each other throughout the season. All U14 Zone teams are required to attend a minimum of one tournament held in the Lower Mainland, Thompson Okanagan, and Northern Ringette Leagues each season. Players and their families must therefore be aware that there is an obligation to travel as a U14 competitive athlete.

Teams should expect to compete against each other a minimum of three times in a season. Each team should play no less than 25 inter-divisional games and no more than 30 inter-divisional games in a season. Each of the leagues may schedule League competition for the U14 Zone teams within their League. These games will follow League rules for competition. Leagues will be responsible for ensuring that the U14 Zone Teams follow the rules governing League play such as player pick up rules, additional sanctions for committing major infractions, etc.

Ringette BC sanctioned tournament games and organized play weekends will also count as inter-divisional games. Organized play weekends must be played with the knowledge and consent of the Leagues to which each team belongs, and the League is responsible for enforcement of the rules governing League play. Any tournament sanctioned by Ringette BC may choose to offer a U14 Zone Division.

U14 Zone teams are able to participate in exhibition games against other U14 Zone teams as part of training, and these non-League organized extended play weekends may be facilitated around the province.

Standings for the Ringette BC Provincial Championship tournament will be based on the winning percentage of each of the U14 Zone Division teams in all inter-divisional games played against other U14 Competitive Division teams. A copy of all scoresheets will be held by the Leagues in which counter games occurred, and a copy submitted to Ringette BC for maintenance of the Zone Division standings.

4.3. Deposit

Each U14 Zone team will provide a \$5,000 refundable deposit to Ringette BC by October 15th of each season. This deposit will be held until the team successfully attends a tournament in each of the Northern, Thompson Okanagan, and Lower Mainland Ringette Leagues, the Ringette BC Provincial Championships and the Western Canadian Ringette Championships (if the team qualifies). If a team fails to attend these competitive events or the team does not attend Provincial or Western Canadian Championships (if applicable), the deposit will be forfeited. If the team does not attend a tournament or play weekend within each League in the province, a portion of the deposit will be paid by Ringette BC to the League in which the team did not attend an event.

5. Other Considerations

5.1. Player Pick Ups

Teams may pick up designated affiliate players within their geographic representative zone in the event that they have an injury or are missing players for sanctioned events or league competition. The affiliates must be submitted to Ringette BC by November 1st as part of the official roster deadline.

5.2. Team Finances

U14 aged players wishing to participate on a U14 Zone team register as a U14 player with their Club Association. Registration fees will be maintained by the players' Club Association to cover ice costs, player fees, etc.

In addition, U14 Zone Teams will also have team costs that are not covered by registration fees. A season budget must be prepared by the Team Staff, and provided for consideration of parents and guardians of players. The final budget will be submitted to a League designated representative for approval prior to November 1st. The season budget should include items such as the cost of inter-league tournament registration, team apparel and a portion of the team deposit.

The budget may be altered throughout the season, though Team Staff must provide any changes to families for consideration. Information regarding Team Sponsorship and fundraising should also be clearly communicated.

Team bank accounts must require two signatures. These signatories should be the Head Coach and Team Manager provided they are not spouses. The budget and bank statements must be available for review throughout the season upon request.

5.3. Training

Any Zone teams will train at facilities that exist within their Zone. The Club Associations that make up the Zones will be responsible for contributing a proportional amount of ice to the Zone team for practices and games based on the number of players from within a Club Association participating on each team. For example, if 45% of players come from Club A and 55% from Club B, each Club Association would allocate ice for practices and games following these proportions.

U14 Zone Representative teams are expected to have three (3) team events per week, including ringette games. Exceptions are for tournaments or extended play weekends, which create additional ice time. Teams should work to reduce ice time following heavy competition to assist with recovery time.

Teams will follow the Long-Term Athlete Development standards for U14 aged athletes and will strive to achieve the required practice and '*training to competition*' ratios found in the Long-Term Player Development section of the Long-Term Ringette Development Framework.

- 3-4 sessions per week of 60-90 minutes each;
- no more than 2-3 training sessions each week with their team; and
- the remaining 1-2 training sessions are individual training sessions, which could include dryland or multi-sport training

U14 Zone teams will have development focuses during the season in the following areas:

- Technical Skills
- Tactical Skills
- Psychological Skills

Please see the attached resource for specific skill benchmarks and development (Appendix 3).

6. Appendix 1 – Program Responsibilities

The general responsibilities and/or leadership for specific areas of responsibility are as in the table below:

	Ringette BC	League	Club Association	Head Coach	Team Staff
Program Guidelines	X				
Coach Selection	X	X	X		
Team Staff Selection				X	
Team Staff Approval	X	X	X		
Program Promotion	X	X	X	X	X
Player Try-Outs		X	X	X	
Team Formation				X	X
Team Roster	X				
Team Budget				X	X
Tournament Registration				X	X
Ice Allocation			X		
Regular Scheduling		X			
Extended Play Weekends		X		X	
Affiliate Player Tracking	X			X	X
Staff / Player Discipline	X	X	X		
Scoresheets		X			
Standings / Provincials	X				

7. Appendix 2: 2019/2020 Competitive Zones

Thompson Okanagan Ringette League:

Zone 5: Greater Vernon Ringette Association, Shuswap Ringette Association

Zone 6: Kelowna Ringette Association, Westside Ringette Association

Northern Ringette League:

Zone 7: Terrace Ringette Association, Houston Ringette Association

Zone 8: Prince George Ringette Association, Quesnel Ringette Association

Lower Mainland Ringette League:

Zone 1: Coquitlam-Moody Ringette Association, Port Coquitlam Ridge Meadows Ringette Association

Zone 2: Richmond Ringette Association, Delta Ringette Association, Vancouver Ringette Association

Zone 3: Burnaby New Westminster Ringette Association, North West Vancouver Ringette Association

Zone 4: Surrey White Rock Ringette Association, Chilliwack Ringette Association, Fraser Valley Ringette Association

Island Ringette League:

Zone 9: Comox Valley Ringette Association

8. Appendix 3 – Training to Train

Abbreviated from the [Ringette Canada Long Term Player Development Program](#)

Training to Train is an important stage for the athlete, in which there are opportunities for players at both the community and competitive level. Players who have the desire and ability to move into more advanced levels of Ringette will play in competitive programs, while players who do not wish to move into more advanced levels can continue to improve their skills and enjoy playing Ringette in community programs. For all players, this is a time of solidifying skill performance, physical and mental preparation and learning to play the game. Most players will go through the growth spurt during this stage and it is very important to be flexible with training programs to ensure appropriate challenges and to meet the needs of players who are growing rapidly.

8.1. General Objectives

- To consolidate fundamental ringette skills in controlled and semi-controlled conditions
- To develop and consolidate simple tactics
- To further develop general physical fitness training and mental skills
- To introduce and develop advanced ringette skills
- To introduce and develop strategies (game plan)
- To introduce and develop decision making skills in varied situations
- To learn to cope with the challenges of competition and to strive to succeed and do their best

8.2. Guiding Principles

- Fun (competitively motivated), maintain a balance between participation and competition
- Tiering begins
- Coaches empower athletes and include them in the decision making process
- Throughout this stage, athletes gradually become more autonomous on the ice

8.3. What does a Train to Train Competitive Program look like?

- Season is 24-25 weeks
- Players play 1-2 positions, with “fair and reasonable playing time; identify 2 goalkeepers per team
- Single or double peak periodization; peak for provincial and national championships
- Pre-season = 2-4 weeks for pre-season training, evaluations, team formation and team practices
- Preparation period 7-15 weeks
- Competition period 8-14 weeks
- Transition period 1-2 weeks
- Training to competition ratio = 60:40; 3 trainings to 2 competitions weekly
- 3-4 sessions of 60-90 minutes each weekly (1-2 trainings with the team, 2-3 training on own) ·
- 22 days of competition
- Events – exhibition games, league games, tournaments, playoff games, provincials (by classification)

- Toward the end of this stage players may also participate in provincial qualifiers for Easterns/Westerns/CRC (A and AA); Eastern/ Western (Regional) Championship for A category; CRC (National) Championship for AA category
- During off-season
 - Players are encouraged to participate in an activity that will aid in their development and preparation for the beginning of the fall season (i.e. running for cardio as well as dry land shooting practice or attending a summer session of power skating, light weight training** under supervision; early in the stage using own body weight, later in the stage may use light weights)
 - Encourage involvement in a variety of school and summer sports or activities throughout the year
 - May play rep or high caliber sports, without a specialization in one specific sport
- Players are expected to maintain their physical training program
- For top competitive athletes, the services of an integrated support team may be included to enhance training and recovery
- Competition Format
 - Female vs female, male vs male
 - Organized league games based on age level and/or ability
 - Weekly games with some tournaments
 - Tournaments and other championships should be modified round robin or other format that allows for maximum number of games for each team within the weekend
 - Emphasis on learning and staying health
- Encourage daily participation in sport and physical education, minimum 60 minutes per day
- Team social activities focused on fun and teambuilding
- Players may be encouraged to become coaches in training or referees

8.4. Skill Development Guidelines

8.4.1. Skating

Early in the stage: starting, stopping, forward and backward (stride, acceleration, crossovers, sharp turns, double sculling, two and one foot slalom), transition skills.

Later in the stage: as above, plus develop ability to do quick changes in direction, two and one foot Mohawk pivot, consolidation of ring skills, acquisition of position specific skills, carrying and protecting the ring, passing, receiving, checking, shooting, deking within a varied environment.

8.4.2. Goalkeeping

Early in the stage: consolidation of skills; goalkeepers specialize but can still alternate; general goalkeeping drills, mobility (lateral and forward/backward), stick work, skating and ring skills, positioning, ring distribution, communication and interaction, style.

Later in the stage: Goalkeepers specialize, specific goalkeeping drills and training.

8.4.3. Tactical Skill Benchmarks

Consolidation of offensive games skills:

- Skills are refined so players are able to perform with quick, concise movements
- Understand concepts and implement on a reliable, consistent basis
- Understand offensive concepts of open ice, learning to read and react, incorporating defense in the offensive zone during play, wrist shots, shot clock awareness and usage, reversing the play, breakouts, communication, support, creating options, maintaining possession
- Individual skills and team tactics

Consolidation of defensive game skills with primary focus on fun and execution of basic ring, skating and game skills:

- Skills are consolidated so players are able to perform skills with quick, concise movements
- Understand individual defensive skills and tactics concepts and implement on a reliable and consistent basis
- Understand team tactics concepts and implement on a reliable and consistent basis

8.5. Psychological Skill Development

Early in the season acquisition of:

- Coping strategies, relaxation strategies
- Skills that prepare the player to deal with success and failure
- Skills for sharing leadership opportunities

Early in the season consolidation of:

- Focus management/ attentional control – concentration
- Anxiety and stress management / Emotional Control –visualization (mental rehearsal of game situations)
- Decision training – decision making in some competitive situations
- Goal setting – individual and team, long and short term, process and outcome
- Self-Awareness – positive thinking, attitude and adjustment
- Team Dynamics – teamwork, fair play, sportsmanship, ethics
- Game Preparation and Routine – game strategies
- Team building and social development activities

Competition Phase acquisition of:

- Arousal strategies
- Becoming more independent, understanding personal strengths and weaknesses
- Developing effective communication strategies, understanding team roles and identifying where they fit in

Competition Phase consolidation of:

- Decision Training - decision making in some competitive situations
- Goal setting – individual and team, long and short term, process and outcome (C)
- Focus management / attentional control - concentration, coping strategies

- Anxiety and stress management / emotional control – visualization (mental rehearsal of game situations), relaxation
- Game preparation and routine – specific game strategies
- Self-awareness – positive thinking, attitude and adjustment, preparing to deal with success and failure
- Team dynamics – teamwork, fair play, sportsmanship, ethics, shared leadership opportunities

8.6. Things to consider in the Training to Train Stage

- Strength: sensitive period for strength development in females after the onset of menarche
- Speed: sensitive period for speed development in females at approximately 11-13 years and in males at approximately 13-16 years
- Endurance: sensitive period for endurance (stamina) development in males with the onset of peak height velocity
- Pay special attention to maintaining flexibility during periods of rapid growth