

# WESTLOCK & DISTRICT MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION FAIR PLAY CODE 2009

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## WHAT IS FAIR PLAY?

Fair Play is a program introduced into minor hockey to enhance and promote SAFETY and RESPECT with all participants involved.

Fair Play has five basic principles:

1. Respect the rules.
2. Respect the opponents.
3. Respect the referees/officials and their decisions.
4. Have everyone participate.
5. Maintain self-control at all times.

Fair Play DOES NOT CHANGE ANY RULES OF THE GAME.

Fair Play ENCOURAGES ALL PLAYERS ON ALL TEAMS TO BE AS COMPETITIVE AS POSSIBLE within the rules.

**Fair Play is introduced to promote SAFETY and RESPECT, and a positive environment in minor hockey for participants involved.** The four main participant groups are; the players, the coaches, the referees/officials, and the parents. How these four groups interact at any game determines how positive or how negative the event becomes.

**In games, due to various situations such as penalties, injuries, illness and other factors, equal ice time for all players is very difficult to maintain on a game-to-game basis. Fair ice time based on everyone participating does accommodate the many factors that occur during games. Fair ice time is based on everyone participating, regardless of abilities, or level.**

There are an increasing number of concerns becoming more evident in minor hockey today. These concerns go against the principles of Fair Play, what minor hockey represents, and the objectives of minor hockey organizations.

Some concerns in minor hockey are; the lack of respect for opponents, verbal abuse of referees/officials, inappropriate spectator behavior in the stands, violence on the ice, the win-at-all-costs attitude, the increased pressure on young players to win, and the lack of FUN for many.

## **FAIR PLAY PROGRAM RATIONALE**

Why can a Fair Play program be useful to a minor hockey association?

- A Fair Play program will outline the rights and responsibilities to all participants involved in our minor hockey association.
- A Fair Play program makes all individuals aware that playing minor hockey is a PRIVILEGE.
- A Fair Play program will provide our Association with a visible commitment that promotes the concepts of SAFETY and RESPECT.
- A Fair Play program will outline a clear set of expectations and guidelines that all participants involved in our minor hockey program will follow.
- A Fair Play program will define a positive set of expectations that our minor hockey association will provide to all our participants.
- A Fair Play program will be used to educate participants by the use of our website of the many positive contributions that minor hockey offers as a recreational activity in our community.
- A Fair Play program ensures that all participants are aware of our minor hockey association's philosophies and objectives, as they are listed on our website.
- Fair Play will promote and develop a positive set of values to coaches, players, parents, and referees/officials in the association. These values can further enhance the many positive aspects of the minor hockey program.
- A Fair Play program will develop a comprehensive guide by which this Association's executive body can run its programs, in addition to existing rules, regulations and objectives, which are on our website.

***Fair Play is a win-win program for our minor hockey association***

## **BENEFITS OF FAIR PLAY**

- Increased SAFETY and RESPECT on and off the ice by participants.
- Increased positive team unity.
- more appropriate spectator behavior.
- Decrease the win-at-all-cost attitude.
- Increase of on-ice positive behavior.
- Participants take more responsibility for their actions.
- Increase in sportsmanship.
- More parents become promoters of positive attitudes.
- New participants are drawn to the game of hockey by the positive aspects of Fair Play.
- Refocusing of the intent of minor hockey as a positive program for many young players and other participants involved.

## **FAIR PLAY PROGRAM INTERVENTIONS**

Interventions are components introduced into a hockey program to enhance SAFETY and RESPECT, and the principles of Fair Play: Respect the rules. Respect the opponents. Respect the referees/officials and their decisions. Have everyone participate. Maintain your self-control at all times.

Development of a Fair Play program is a long term project. Initiating interventions at the Initiation and or Novice level allows the Association to refine their program as it gradually expands with the same group of players into other divisions over a period of years.

A minor hockey association should have a formalized coaching selection process. The criteria for coach selection should include experience, and attitude towards the principles of Fair Play.

### ***Intervention No. 1 – Coach Selection***

Selection of coaches begins prior to the end of any current season. At this time distribution of coaching applications should be made available to all possible volunteers. Applicants who have little or no coaching experience, but who maintain positive attitudes towards the principles of Fair Play should be considered. Certification, if required, could be accommodated later.

Experience alone should not be the criteria for coach selection. Fair Play can not accommodate 'win-at-all-cost' coaches. Attitude and experience are the two criteria to be considered.

- Maintain confidentiality during any coach selection procedures.
- A group is formed to act as a 'Coach Selection Committee' for the association.
- Emphasize Fair Play principles as one criteria for coach selection.
- Distribution of coach applications to all participants is made prior to the end of a season.
- Interview applicants using a set of standard questions to provide pertinent information for selection.
- Provide prospective coaches with an accurate description of responsibilities and expectations related to Fair Play.
- Applicants are notified as soon as possible once selections are made.

### ***Intervention No. 2 – Guidelines***

Guidelines are developed to clarify the rights, responsibilities and privileges of players, parents, coaches and referees/officials in the association. Guidelines reflect the Fair Play principles and the association's expectations of all participants.

The basic guidelines are reviewed and distributed annually. These are distributed to participants before team selection.

Each guideline provides a consistent rule base focused upon the goals and principles of Fair Play.

- Teams at different levels may have varying, specific needs. A Beginner hockey team's specific guideline requirements may vary from those of a Pee Wee team's.
- All coaches should be made aware that the guidelines may be referred to throughout the season to assist in resolving some team problems.
- Players, coaches and parents have their own specific guidelines.

The association provides the Fair Play principles and philosophy. The coaches provide specific team requirements.

### ***Intervention No. 3 – Team Selection***

Procedures for selection of teams may vary with associations. In player selection, 'ability' and 'attitude' should be criteria. All participants have to be made aware of these two criteria prior to selections.

Players exhibiting poor sportsmanship, lack of honesty, and lack of safety and respect for others, should be made aware that attitudes such as these are not tolerated in Fair Play. Selection criteria for any team should note solely be based upon skill level. Attitude is important.

#### ***Intervention No. 4 – Coaches/Managers Meetings***

This is an early season meeting with all coaches and team managers. The purpose is to explain the Fair Play program to everyone. Information is distributed outlining the program, the interventions and their purposes, and the roles and responsibilities team staff has in the Fair Play program.

Association executive runs the coaches/managers meeting. This meeting allows coaches and managers to ask questions, get clarification regarding any of their concerns, and allow input from team staff.

All team staff should attend to clarify their roles in the Fair Play program.

#### ***Intervention No. 5 – First Team Meeting***

Once any team is formed, a meeting is held with all parents and head coach, and another meeting with coaching staff and players is also held. Both meetings are to be held by the head coach.

The objective of these two meetings is to clarify the guidelines with the parents, players and coaches.

The coach gives his/her Fair Play guidelines to the parents and to the players. The parents and players review the guidelines. The player and parent keep the them for future reference.

The first team meeting also allows for parent and player input into the team guidelines.

**Subsequent monthly team meetings are strongly recommended to keep the lines of communication open between coaches, players, parents and the association.**

## **FAIR PLAY CODE FOR PLAYERS**

1. I will play hockey because I want to, not just because others or coaches want me to.
2. I will play by the rules of hockey, and in the spirit of the game.
3. I will control my temper – fighting and “mouthing off” can spoil the activity for everybody.
4. I will respect my opponents.
5. I will be a true team player.
6. I will remember that winning is not everything – that having fun and improving skills, making friends and doing my best are also important.
7. I will acknowledge all good plays/performances – those of my team and of my opponents.
8. I will remember that coaches and referees/officials are there to help me. I will accept their decisions and show them respect.
9. I will refrain from alcohol, drug and tobacco use.
10. I will always work my hardest for myself and my team.

## **FAIR PLAY CODE FOR SPECTATORS**

1. I will remember that participants play hockey for their enjoyment.
2. I will not have unrealistic expectations. I will remember that players are not professionals and cannot be judged by professional standards.
3. I will respect the referees/officials' decisions and I will encourage participants to do the same.
4. I will never ridicule a player for making a mistake during a game. I will give positive comments that motivate and encourage continued effort.
5. I will condemn the use of violence in any form and will express my disapproval in an appropriate manner to coaches and league referees/officials, by the use of proper protocol.
6. I will show respect for my team's opponents because without them, there would be no game.
7. I will not use bad language, nor will I harass players, coaches, referees/officials or other spectators.

## **FAIR PLAY CODE FOR PARENTS**

1. I will not force my child to participate in hockey.
2. I will remember that my child plays hockey for his or her enjoyment, not for mine.
3. I will encourage my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
4. I will teach my child that doing one's best is as important as winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of the game.
5. I will make my child feel like a winner every time by offering praise for competing fairly and trying hard.
6. I will never ridicule or yell at my child for making a mistake or losing a game.
7. I will remember that children learn best by example. I will applaud good plays/performances by both my child's team and their opponents.
8. I will never question the official's judgment or honesty in public.
9. I will make sure that my child has adequate equipment.

## **FAIR PLAY FOR COACHES & TEAM REFEREES/OFFICIALS**

1. I will be reasonable when scheduling games and practices, remember that players have other interests and obligations.
2. I will teach my players to play fairly and to respect the rules, referees/officials and opponents.
3. I will ensure that all players get fair instruction, support and appropriate playing time.
4. I will not ridicule or yell at my players for making mistakes or for performing poorly. I will remember that players play to have fun and must be encouraged to have **confidence** in themselves.
5. I will make sure that equipment and facilities are safe and match the players' ages and abilities.
6. I will remember that participants need a coach they can respect. A win at all cost attitude is not setting a good example for my players.
7. I will obtain proper training and continue to upgrade my coaching skills.
8. I will work in cooperation with referees/officials for the benefit of the game.

## THE HOCKEY PARENT CONCERNS

- **Some parents may say their association doesn't need a Fair Play program.** Fair Play says we wouldn't need programs such as Fair Play if more participants respected the rules, the opponents, the referees/officials, having everyone participate and everyone maintaining self-control at games. However, the basic principles of Fair Play are lacking in minor hockey to some degree.

As a result, many associations are confronted with spectators abusing their referees/officials, their coaches, their players and other volunteers. The win-at-all-cost attitude is still evident when players only play a couple of shifts a game. Fair Play is necessary in any association to curb such negative incidents.

- **Some parents may say that Fair Play will interfere with their child's hockey career.** Fair Play, if anything, will enhance anyone's hockey career. Fair Play does not change the rules of the game. Fair Play encourages every player to be as competitive as possible, and to win as many games as possible, but within the rules. Fair Play teaches the players those aspects that will enhance hockey ability and team play.
- **Some parents may say they don't agree with Fair Play.** The first question to ask of such parents is which one of the five Fair Play principles do they not agree with? If parents don't agree with the Fair Play principles, they do not agree with SAFETY and RESPECT in the game. Such parent's participation and purpose in becoming involved in minor hockey should be re-examined.
- **Fair Play says that every participant has the right to join a minor hockey association.** However, once a participant joins, they must abide by the rules of that association. Being a member of the association is a privilege. If participants don't wish to abide by the rules, they give up their right to belong to that association. This is consistent with other clubs, organizations, businesses, or other public facilities such as public pools and public libraries.

Participants must be informed of their rights and privileges. This is the purpose of the guidelines.



- **Some parents may say that they have always yelled at referees, that this is a tradition, and they won't stop yelling.** Fair Play says that verbally abusing a referee may have been done in the past. Abusing referees in a Fair Play program will not be tolerated. Using profanity or other forms of verbal abuse can result in that participant being ejected and/or barred from the arena under local Municipal By-Laws, or the facility rules and regulation.

Fair Play says that spectators can yell and cheer as loud as they want during games, as long as it is positive and supportive towards the participants.

- **Some parents may say they don't agree with equal or fair ice time for all players, especially at competitive levels of minor hockey.** Fair Play says that everyone who joins a minor hockey association pays a certain registration fee. If everyone pays the same amount, everyone should play the same amount. If a competitive team coach selects his/her team, all players should receive the same and fair amount of ice during the season.

In the over-all season however, each player should have fair ice time.

- **Some parents may say the association shouldn't have volunteers spending their time on programs like Fair Play when issues such as raising funds and the day-to-day running of the association are more important.** Fair Play says that including a Fair Play program into a minor hockey association reinforces the objectives of any association's program. All the goals and objectives of a Fair Play program are positive and for the benefit of all participants, especially the players. Fund raising is important. SAFETY and RESPECT however, should not take a back seat to fundraising. Fair Play can also contribute to fund raising by bringing new sponsors to the minor hockey association.

Every association has volunteers who may want to become involved in some way with their children's hockey. Fair Play provides other opportunities for volunteers who don't have much time to offer. Fair Play program does not take away from an existing volunteer base.

Fair Play enhances the positive aspects of minor hockey. Volunteers spending time on Fair Play promote the mandate of their association. The mandate of any minor hockey association is to provide a recreational opportunity for the young people of a community. These opportunities should exist in a positive, safe, respectful and fun environment.

**Young people play hockey because they enjoy the game. An association has to focus upon the program for the players. A Fair Play program encourages this.**