



ELITE FEMALE HOCKEY MODEL





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1. INTRODUCTION

The Elite Female Hockey Model ensures that players across Alberta have an opportunity to access 'AA' and 'AAA' hockey, establishing a structure for the top levels of hockey and providing players with the ability to play at the highest level they can attain. The model focuses on the development of players, bridging the gap between grassroots programs and 'AAA', and helping them get to the next level. The model is designed around guiding principles that require all parents, coaches, and Minor Hockey Association's (MHAs) to always act in the best interest of the athlete to help them develop and progress through the hockey system.

This document outlines regulations that apply to the Leagues, MHA's, Teams, and Players that are operating and/ or participating in 'AAA' and 'AA' hockey. All Minor Female Hockey Regulations apply to 'AAA' and 'AA' hockey, unless specific regulations within this model alter the meaning for the purpose of 'AAA' and/ or 'AA' Hockey.

2. LEAGUE STRUCTURE

- 2.1 Hockey Alberta has identified the Alberta Female Hockey League (AFHL) as the sole league operating 'AAA' and 'AA' female hockey (U18 AAA, U18 AA, U15 AA and U13 AA) in Alberta. Hockey Alberta has established the Elite Hockey Committee to implement and oversee AFHL operations. The committee implements and monitors the day-to-day operations of League play in accordance with the established Bylaws, Regulations, Policies and Procedures.
- 2.2 The AFHL may use conferences and/ or divisions to operate the Elite Female Hockey Model across the Province. If an MHA or organization operates a conference or division, they will follow the Elite Female Hockey Model, as well as their own Bylaws, Regulations and Policies while operating the conference or division.
- 2.3 The member MHA's and/or Teams that have been assigned to each specific conference or division will have voting rights at league, conference and/ or division meetings.

3. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions for words and phrases are to be applied solely for the purposes of the Elite Female Hockey Model and may or may not be the same as those definitions as outlined in other sections of the Hockey Alberta and Hockey Canada Bylaws and Regulations.

- (a) **"Elite Female Hockey Model"** means the regulations established to govern 'AAA' and 'AA' Female hockey.
- (b) **"Recruitment Area"** is the area of MHAs that makes up the feeder system from which each 'AA' Team can recruit and/ or affiliate registered Players.
- (c) **"Import Player"** shall be defined in elite hockey as a 'AA' registered player who accessed the Elite Player Movement process and/ or an additional tryout.

4. CRITICAL DATES

April 1	MHAs can begin operating spring player identification camps
May 1	Elite Player Movement Application process opens
July 1	Deadline for Elite Player Movement Applications to be submitted
August 15	'AAA' Try-Outs can start
September 1	'AA' Try-Outs can start



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October 1	All Second Try-Outs for 'AAA' must be completed 'AAA' Regular Season schedule can begin
October 15	All Second Try-Outs for 'AA' must be completed 'AA' Regular Season schedules can begin
December 1	Deadline to submit Applications to expand or contract the number of Teams
January 10	Final date to Release a Player from a Team
January 15	Deadline for MHA's to file Affiliation at 5:00PM MST
February 10	Final date to Register a Player to a Team
March	Provincial Championships
April	Pacific Regional Championship (U18 'AAA') Esso Cup (U18 'AAA')

** These dates reflect the ideal state and actual dates may alter somewhat from these targets.*

5. RECRUITMENT AREAS

To establish a fair and equitable structure within Elite Female hockey, *Recruitment Areas* have been established. Recruitment Areas ensure there is an opportunity for all players that want to, and have the skill to, play 'AA' hockey to access it. The Recruitment Areas establish a consistent development system for players throughout the Province by structuring a feeder system from Minor Hockey up through 'AA' and into 'AAA'.

- 5.1 For 'AA', MHAs are assigned to one specific Recruitment Area (Recruitment Areas do not overlap) and the players registered within those MHAs make up the feeder system for the team(s).
- 5.2 Hockey Edmonton and Hockey Calgary, as MHA's, may have structured smaller Recruitment Areas within their boundaries.
- 5.3 Each Recruitment Area has a Host MHA identified within it and this Host MHA is responsible for operating the 'AA' Team(s) identified for the area, in accordance with this Elite Female Hockey Model.
- 5.4 Recruitment Areas are based on registration numbers, geographic locations and travel time to the Host MHA.
- 5.5 There are no Recruitment Areas for U18 'AAA', however Host MHAs have still been identified by Hockey Alberta to host each U18 'AAA' Female Team. Players new to U 18 'AAA' are eligible to tryout for any of the teams within this category.



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U18 'AA' AND U15 'AA' RECRUITMENT AREAS

North West		West Capital		Edmonton		East Capital	
Beaverlodge Clairmont East Smoky Fairview Fox Creek Grande Cache Grande Prairie Grimshaw Grovedale High Level High Prairie Horse Lake Hythe La Crete	La Glace Loon River Manning Nampa Peace River Rainbow Lake Rycroft Savanna Sexsmith Slave Lake Smoky River Spirit River Valleyview Wembley	Athabasca Barrhead Boyle CNN CR Fort McMurray Lac La Biche Mayerthorpe Plamondon St. Albert Sturgeon Swan Hills Thorhild	Wabasca Westlock Whitecourt	Hockey Edmonton U18 AA *1 Team* U15AA - *2 Teams*		Elk Island Fort Saskatchewan Holden Redwater Sherwood Park Smoky Lake Strathcona Tofield Vegreville	
North East		North Central		Central		South Central	
Battle River Bonnyville Chauvin Cold Lake Edgerton Elk Point Frog Lake Glendon Goodfish Lake Hughenden Irma Kitscoty	Lloydminster Mallaig Mannville Marwayne-Dewberry Onion Lake Paradise Valley Provost Saddle Lake St. Paul Two Hills Vermilion Viking Wainwright	Beaumont Camrose Devon Drayton Valley Edson Enoch Hinton Jasper Leduc Maskwacis Millet New Sarepta	Pembina Spruce Grove Stony Plain West 39 Wetaskiwin	3C's Bashaw Big Valley Blackfalds Blindman Valley Caroline Clive Delburne Endmoor Innisfail Lacombe	Ponoka Red Deer Rocky Spruce View Stettler Sylvan Lake Thunderstars	Airdrie Banff Beiseker Bowden Canmore Cochrane Cremona Drumheller Hanna Kneehill Morrin Olds Oyen RMAA Sundre	
Calgary		Foothills		South			
Hockey Calgary * U18 AA 2 Teams * * U15 AA 3 Teams *		Chestermere East Wheatland Foothills High Country Indus Nanton Okotoks Rockyford Siksika Strathmore		Bassano Bow Island Brooks Cardston Claresholm Coaldale Crownsnest Pass Duchess Foremost Fort MacLeod Irvine Kainai Lethbridge			

- MHA's Hosting U18 and U15 "AA" programs are listed in **bold**



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U13 'AA' RECRUITMENT AREAS

Grande Prairie	St. Albert	Sherwood Park	Bonnyville
Beaverlodge Clairmont East Smoky Fairview Fox Creek Grande Cache Grande Prairie Grimshaw Grovedale High Level High Prairie Horse Lake Hythe La Crete La Glace Loon River Manning Nampa Peace River Rainbow Lake Rycroft Savanna Sexsmith Slave Lake Smoky River Spirit River Valleyview Wembley	Athabasca Barrhead CNN CR Mayerthorpe St. Albert Sturgeon Swan Hills Thorhild Wabasca Westlock Whitecourt	Elk Island Fort Saskatchewan Holden Redwater Sherwood Park Smoky Lake Strathcona Tofield Vegreville	Bonnyville Boyle Cold Lake Elk Point Fort McMurray Frog Lake Glendon Goodfish Lake Lac La Biche Mallaig Onion Lake Plamondon Saddle Lake St. Paul Two Hills
Lloydminster	Leduc	Camrose	Red Deer
Chauvin Edgerton Hughenden Irma Kitscoty Lloydminster Mannville Marwayne-Dewberry Paradise Valley Provost Vermilion Viking Wainwright	Beaumont Devon Drayton Valley Edson Enoch Hinton Jasper Leduc Millet New Sarepta Pembina Spruce Grove Stony Plain West 39	3C's Bashaw Battle River Camrose Maskwacis Stettler Thunderstars Wetaskiwin	Big Valley Blackfalds Blindman Valley Caroline Clive Delburne Endmoor Innisfail Lacombe Ponoka Red Deer Rocky Mountain House Spruce View Sylvan Lake
Airdrie	Okotoks	Lethbridge	Calgary
Airdrie Banff Beiseker Bowden Canmore Cochrane Cremona Drumheller Hanna Kneehill Morrin Olds Oyen RMAA Sundre	Chestermere East Wheatland Foothills High Country Indus Nanton Okotoks Rockyford Siksika Strathmore	Bassano Bow Island Brooks Cardston Claresholm Coaldale Crowsnest Pass Duchess Foremost Fort MacLeod Irvine Kainai Lethbridge Magrath Medicine Hat Picture Butte Piikani Nation Pincher Creek Raymond Redcliff Taber Vauxhall Vulcan	Hockey Calgary * 3 Teams * <hr/> Edmonton <hr/> Hockey Edmonton * 2 Teams *

- MHA's Hosting U13 "AA" programs are listed in **bold**



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6. PROGRAM PROMOTION AND PLAYER RECRUITMENT

- 6.1 Teams are permitted to host “Spring ID” camps for prospective players **starting April 1**.
- 6.2 Players who are registered to a team that has not yet completed their season are not eligible to be recruited and/ or to participate in camps, practices, information days, etc. until their Team’s season is complete.

7. PLAYER AGREEMENTS

- 7.1 To be eligible to play for a ‘AAA’ or ‘AA’ Team during the regular season, playoffs, and provincials, MHAs must obtain a commitment, in writing, from all players via a “Player Agreement”.
- 7.2 U18 ‘AAA’ teams are permitted to commit to a maximum of **six (6) players (any position)** prior to August 15. These commitments must be completed through the “Player Agreement” process.
- 7.3 Underage players must participate in tryouts to be eligible to register with a Team, and are not able to sign a “Player Agreement” prior to doing so.

8. TRY-OUT PROCEDURES

The top, eligible, players should be selected for each U18 ‘AAA’ team regardless of where they reside, and for each ‘AA’ team regardless of where they reside within the Recruitment Area. An objective of the Elite Female Hockey Model is to provide opportunities for the best players to play at the highest levels.

- 8.1 To align the different levels of hockey, supporting player pathways and the established feeder system within Alberta, Teams are not permitted to begin the player evaluation and selection process for the current season until *August 15* for ‘AAA’, and *September 1* for ‘AA’.
- 8.2 One week prior to tryouts beginning, a list of the names of players trying out and their Resident MHA must be sent to all associations in a ‘AA’ Host MHAs Recruitment Area and all associations that have players participating in tryouts. An updated list must be sent for any players accepted on second tryouts.
- 8.3 U18 ‘AAA’ Tryouts
 - (a) A player may choose a maximum of two (2) U18 ‘AAA’ teams to tryout for.
 - (b) Players are eligible to access their tryouts with any team that is defined and approved to operate U18 ‘AAA’ hockey.
 - (c) If the player does not make the first team they are trying out for, they will be provided with an Elite Waiver from the Host MHA ‘cutting’ them. After receiving an Elite Waiver:
 - i. the Player can contact the second U18 ‘AAA’ team they requested to tryout for; or
 - ii. the Player can return to their Resident MHA to obtain permission to tryout for a ‘AA’ program; or
 - iii. the Player can return to their last registered MHA to access other minor hockey programs.



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8.4 U18 'AA' and U15 'AA' Tryouts

- (a) Players are expected to access their first tryout within the Recruitment Area that draws from their Resident MHA.
- (b) If extenuating circumstances apply (i.e. considerably closer for travel, move without parent transfers), Players may apply to access their first tryout within a different Recruitment Area.

Applications must be submitted using the Elite Player Movement form and supporting documentation must be included. Applications will be accepted from May 1 to July 1 and all decisions will be rendered by **July 15**.

- (c) Host MHAs operating Teams under the Elite Female Hockey Model must allow Players to have the opportunity to tryout and register with a team they are eligible for.
- (d) MHA's hosting Recruitment Area Teams must ensure that there are no restrictions on players from outside that respective MHA, but within the Recruitment Area, from making the 'AA' Team.
- (e) If the player does not make their Recruitment Area Team, they will be provided with an Elite Waiver from the Host MHA that is 'cutting' them and they must return to their last registered MHA.
- (f) Second tryouts are permitted in cases where specific circumstances dictate the need for player movement to improve the competitiveness of another Recruitment Area team. Second tryouts are not guaranteed and will only be granted if it is determined that there is a need to enhance a nearby recruitment area team. Second tryouts will only be considered if:
 - i. prior to September 1, a Recruitment Area declared to Hockey Alberta that they need players due to a low turn-out of eligible players registering for tryouts; or
 - ii. prior to September 15, a Recruitment Area declared to Hockey Alberta that they need players due to a low number of players attending tryouts that can play at the 'AA' level; and
 - iii. the player requesting a second tryout did not make the first team they tried out for and was provided with an Elite Waiver from their Recruitment Area team.
- (g) Players will be notified whether their request for a second tryout was granted and, if applicable, which Recruitment Area the second tryout has been granted for. If a Second tryout is approved, a player must be evaluated for a minimum of two (2) ice times before being cut, and a decision must be made to cut or roster the player by October 15th.
- (h) Host MHAs can only charge a maximum tryout fee of \$50.00 for players approved for a second tryout.
- (i) Host MHAs must ensure they have a plan for accommodating players that are selected to their Teams. This includes living arrangements for players that need to be billeted, coordinating schedules with schools so players can maintain their academics, and scheduling tryouts to ensure out of town players can properly participate.



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9. PLAYER ACCELERATION

One of the objectives of the Elite Female Hockey Model is to develop players within their specific age group, and not to displace the players from their age Division by facilitating the movement of underage players.

- 9.1 Each 'AAA' and 'AA' Team within the Elite Female Hockey Model is provided the ability to register a maximum of one (1) underage Player, at any one time during the season, provided the underage Player:
- For U18, is a second-year U15 aged player (14-year-old);
For U15, is a second-year U13 aged player (12-year-old);
For U13, is a second-year U11 aged player (10-year-old);
 - participated in the tryout process and is selected for the Team;
 - is otherwise eligible to be registered to the Team.
- 9.2 Underage Players are not eligible for a second tryout at the accelerated Division.

10. TEAM REGISTRATION

Each Team is provided the opportunity to utilize Exhibition and Pre-Season games for the purpose of Team roster declaration.

- 10.1 Teams will not be required to have all players registered in the Registry when playing Exhibition and Pre-Season games that take place prior to the first scheduled League Game, and/ or prior to November 15.
- 10.2 Each U18 'AAA' Team will be permitted to register a maximum of 18 skaters and 2 goaltenders at any one time during the season. Of the 20 player allotments, the team can only register a maximum of **seven (7) first year U18 players (15-year-olds) or six (6) first year U18 players (15-year-olds) and one (1) underage player.**
- 10.3 Each U13 'AA', U15 'AA' and U18 'AA' Team will be permitted to register **a maximum of 18 skaters and 2 goaltenders** at any one time during the season.
- 10.4 Each U13 'AA', U15 'AA' and U18 'AA' Team is required to register a minimum of 15 skaters and 1 goaltender at any one time during the season.

11. AFFILIATION

To facilitate athlete development under the Elite Female Hockey Model, Affiliation is permitted regionally.

- 11.1 U18 'AAA' Teams are eligible to affiliate U18 aged Players from any registered U18 Team in the Province.
- 11.2 U18 'AA', U15 'AA', and U13 'AA' Teams are eligible to affiliate players that are registered on a lower category or division team within the Team's Recruitment Area.
- 11.3 To be approved as an affiliate player for a 'AAA' or 'AA' Team, players must be eligible in accordance with the Hockey Alberta and Hockey Canada Regulations.



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- 11.4 Providing affiliation has been properly filed, an affiliated Player may play with the Hockey Team to which the Player is affiliated up to a maximum of ten (10) games, excluding exhibition and tournament games.

Should an affiliated Hockey Player play more than ten (10) games with the Hockey Team to which the player is affiliated, they shall be considered an “Ineligible Player”.

If the player’s registered team completes its regular season and playoffs before the player’s affiliated team, the player may thereafter affiliate an unlimited number of times.

- 11.5 All Players must agree to register as an affiliate by completing a “Named Player Affiliation Agreement” with the ‘AAA’ or ‘AA’ Team. The Agreement must be uploaded to the request for affiliation in the registry.

12. PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

- 12.1 Provincial Championships for each Division and Category within the Elite Female Hockey Model will be operated by Hockey Alberta and teams participating in the Championship will be determined through League play.
- 12.2 Only Hockey Alberta Teams approved to participate within the Elite Female Hockey Model will be eligible to play for the Provincial Championship.

13. EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION OF TEAMS

The Elite Female Hockey Model has defined the number of Teams at each Division and Category of ‘AAA’ and ‘AA’ female hockey within Alberta. Teams have been allotted based on registration statistics and historical data. The annual review process provides an opportunity to identify any need to expand or contract the number of teams within this model.

- 13.1 A Host MHA can apply to Hockey Alberta for expansion or contraction of the number of teams they operate. Applications must be submitted by December 1 to be considered for the following season.
- 13.2 It is the responsibility of the Elite Hockey Committee to review requests made by Host MHA’s for any expansion or contraction of teams, and/ or to develop recommendations for changes themselves and submit them to Hockey Alberta’s management for review and approval.
- 13.3 Applications for expansion or contraction will be assessed based on the following:
- (a) Registration numbers, by Division, of the Host MHA and all MHAs within the Recruitment Area (if necessary).
 - (b) Historical statistics on how competitive the Team(s) have been within the Province.
 - (c) Potential impact to player development and/ or the player pathways and feeder system.
 - (d) Possible effects to other teams and programs in the area.