



INFORMATION BULLETIN

Bulletin No: 15/34

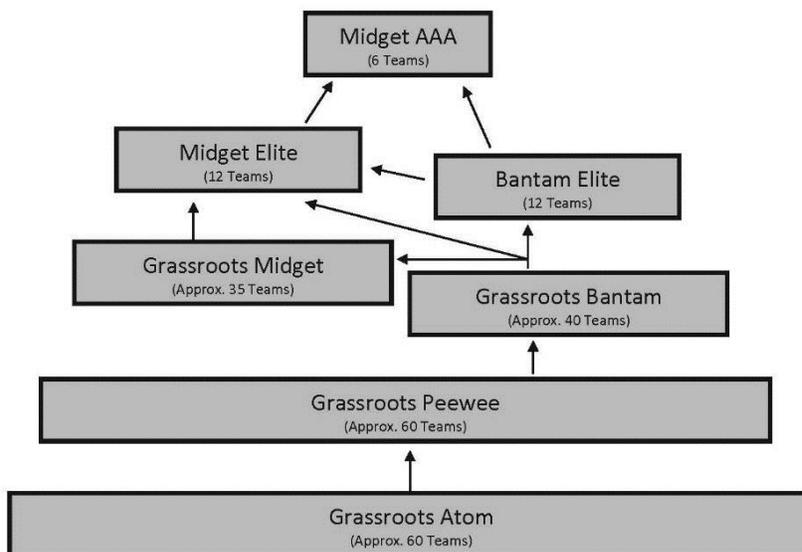
Date: February 11, 2016
To: Minor Hockey Associations
From: Kevin Macrae
Senior Manager, Hockey Operations

SUBJECT: Female Hockey Review update

As outlined in Bulletin 15-23, the Female Elite Implementation Committee was accepting applications from associations interested in hosting Midget AAA franchises within the new Female Hockey Model. A total of 12 applications were received, and each applicant participated in an interview and in-person presentation process overseen by the committee.

The committee has determined that the new Midget AAA league will start with six teams. Hockey Alberta is in the process of confirming these locations, including the process to ensure that all communities selected sign a three-year agreement.

In addition, the Midget AAA centres are to host Midget Elite and Bantam Elite teams, as part of the new athlete development structure at the top of the Female Hockey Model. The Midget and Bantam Elite divisions are to have a total of 12 teams at each level. The associations targeted to host Midget and Bantam Elite teams have been informed, and the Elite Implementation Committee is working with those associations to confirm their commitment to hosting these teams.



The new Female Hockey Model for Alberta, which outlines a clear progression through the system. Player development is the single most important consideration in the creation of this model.



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There will be no defined boundaries for Midget AAA teams, with players able to choose the team for which they wish to try out. Elite division teams will have defined regions that determine the team for which a player is eligible to try out. Elite divisions will utilize a North and South Conference format to help reduce travel time and costs.

The number of teams in each division and category was determined based on current female hockey programming, geography of the areas, and registration demographics. In order to provide the best environment for athlete development, it was determined that approximately 10 per cent of all female hockey players should be playing at the Midget AAA level. For the Midget and Bantam Elite levels, which are designed as a bridge between the Grassroots and AAA Midget programs, it was determined that approximately 20 per cent of players, or 12 teams, should be playing at that level.

That leaves 70 per cent of female hockey players playing in the grassroots model within tiered league play. Based on previous years' participation numbers, Grassroots Female hockey would see approximately 60 teams playing at each of the Atom and Pee wee levels across the province, with approximately 40 Bantam and 35 Midget Grassroots teams.

The focus for the Grassroots Implementation Committee is to provide female players with access to teams within close proximity to their home. The goal is to have peers playing with peers where a player moves up no more than one age division for the purpose of creating teams. If players are needed to form a team, a regional approach would be taken rather than a combination of age divisions within one association.

Work has been ongoing for three years on developing a new Female Hockey Model. Last year, a Female Review committee presented a number of recommendations to Hockey Alberta's Board of Directors. Those recommendations led to the creation of the Elite and Grassroots Implementation committees. The committees were tasked with finalizing a new structure for Female Hockey for the 2016-17 season. Once in place, the new Female Hockey Model in Alberta will provide a standardized, province-wide system of hockey and the opportunity for female players to develop and progress from grassroots through to the Elite level and into Team Alberta's high performance programs.