



SSMHA-GMHA Executive responses to end of season survey questions and comments

Why cannot teams have set schedules instead of moving the slots around every week?

Currently, the following reasons are why set schedules are not utilized:

- Balance ice time between rinks,
- DJHL, IHL, and Female schedules that we can't always control,
- Tournaments and special events that require flexibility in the schedule and ice time allocations,
- Coaching work commitments,
- Technical director availability and distribution of hours
- Allocation of less desirable hours (8 & 9 am, 5-5:30 pm weekday).
- Weather-related cancellation and rescheduling of games

Can we get Equal time at both rinks for pooled teams?

Every effort is made to schedule all teams equally in both rinks for practice sessions however on occasion due to other outside schedules, tournaments, or internal schedule conflicts we are forced to utilize available ice time, and an imbalance is the result.

To the best of our ability, all home games are scheduled in the home rinks. If you are a Southern Shore team your games are scheduled in the Southern Shore arena and vice versa. As the teams alternate yearly the time is viewed to balance out over the minor hockey life cycle in most cases.

Efforts to schedule 20-30 teams across 6 age groups in minor and girls with equal ice time for both games and practices while meeting all other requirements set out by DJHL, IHL, and away game schedules is a tremendous undertaking that is in some respects impossible. We try our best.

Provincial teams need to be picked earlier

Picking provincial teams earlier in the year is something that some associations have started doing and is definitely being discussed and considered by the executive of both associations.

There are pros to picking provincial teams early as there is increased time for team chemistry and development. However, there are also cons to picking teams early such as players that may develop in the first few months of the season but did not make a provincial team, coaches being asked to potentially coach two teams, and trying to find ice time for additional teams in our already busy hockey rink schedule. Additionally, as per IHL (MCHL) bylaws, if players are a member of a selection-based team, they cannot participate in that league. This would negatively affect our teams in those leagues.

All provincial teams should have 2 sets of jerseys

Having two sets of jerseys for provincial teams is also a recent requirement. Prior to COVID, the host association would provide a backup set of jerseys for any color clashes. Jerseys have become quite expensive and both associations have made significant investments in new jerseys over the last couple of



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years. These new sets have primarily replaced jersey sets that were no longer usable. The associations will continue to purchase new sets of jerseys each year as finances allow but it will take time to develop an inventory of jerseys.

Can we send every player to provincials?

Each year the Executives of both associations aim to send as many players as possible to provincials. The number of teams that can be sent from each division is determined by several factors:

- the ability of the host team and their community to have additional teams in their tournament
- the number of goalies that decide to participate in the provincial tournaments, and at times, by the number of skaters.

HNL requests that each provincial team have two goalies, and then each team with two goalies can have up to 15 skaters, and in certain situations, if necessary, can have 17. Our associations, and many others, are limited by goalie participation and have introduced some initiatives that we hope will entice and retain players to the goalie position. This may lead to us being able to send more teams to provincial tournaments, provided there is space for them.

In addition, teams are mandated to have full rosters whenever possible so we must send 15 skaters unless we do not have them. (The minimum is 10 skaters and one goalie to ice a team) In a case where 24 kids try out for provincials, we are not allowed to send two teams of 12 skaters as governed by the HNL rules. We must send a team of 15 skaters and the remaining 9 are unable to form a team. Please note that if the remaining 9 still want to participate in provincials the option is there for us to reach out to other associations to allow them to be placed on teams that do not have full rosters. This could mean the participant could be picked up by any team in Newfoundland or Labrador for the provincial tournament and is not at the discretion of our associations.

Regardless, we will continue to send as many players to these tournaments as we can.

There seems to be some politics when picking teams

We strive to get independent evaluators that are not connected to any of the players, potential coaches, or executive members of the associations, to pick both all-star and provincial teams. There are rules that are followed for players who may miss all or part of the tryouts and can not be evaluated. There are no politics involved in the picking of teams. All players are treated equally and evaluated independently. The independent evaluators are not even provided the player names for the tryouts, just jersey numbers that are assigned to the players as they enter the rink for tryouts.

Significant effort goes into securing evaluators every year for the selection of teams. Quite often concern is raised over the selection based on the evaluators knowing some of the kids from time as a coach, technical director, private hockey, or involvement in the community. In addition to the measures taken above the executives make every effort to ensure there are no relations or close personal friendships between evaluators and tryout participants/parents.



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The evaluators must then have a reasonable knowledge of the game and how to perform selection evaluation over a short period of time (1 Skills session & 2 Games). The pool of personnel that can perform such a task in our area is limited, and we must keep in mind that all other associations are competing for people at relatively the same time. We have U11/13/15 Minor and U11/13/15 Girls all trying out at the same time. The time commitment from evaluators is also very demanding and decreases the available pool yet again. We believe we have put forward our best effort to obtain fair and qualified evaluators for all team selections to date. If any of the membership have qualified people with the available time to participate, we encourage you to put their names forward for the upcoming season as it is always a struggle to obtain them.

Can we get some non-identifiable gear during tryouts, socks, etc.? For example, if a high school player wears high school socks the belief is they could be picked over another player based on the selection to the high school team.

The short answer is both associations have the confidence in the evaluators that they would not rank a player based on the equipment they are wearing, and do it based on the skill level they observe over the time given to them. If the concern is held by the majority of the membership, it can however be addressed by the purchase of new jerseys and socks for all tryout players. Please note this would result in an increased cost for tryouts as the socks and jerseys will have to be accounted for in the tryout fees.

Provincial fees to be included in registration. 40 hours of ice should not include away games, or misleading registration sent out in the fall.

Playoff fees (IHL) have traditionally been collected once the fee for these tournaments has been finalized and communicated to the associations by the IHL league towards the end of the season. It is hard to collect IHL fees during the initial registration window. At that point, we do not know what team a lot of kids will be playing on (Allstar, IHL/MCHL or other).

These fees can also depend on which rinks/associations host which tournaments and this is not known until later in the season. Provincial fees can not be included in registration as not all players participate in provincial tournaments.

Hours for away games are part of the cost of registration and are therefore included in the ice time paid for and provided to the players. The fact that away games are included in the hours provided will be noted in future communications on registration.



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We need better communication for games and planning for provincials

Games

Unless it is a makeup game or exhibition game, the schedule is usually posted to the respective site (DJHL, IHL, Girls Metro, etc...) well in advance. It seems to be an issue when playing in U11 for the first time and not knowing where to find the information. We will put together a new "How do I know when my game is?" FAQ (frequently asked questions) guide for next season.

Provincials

Agree that there needs to be a better system in place for provincials. We intend on taking learnings from the 8-team U11 girls, 8-team U-18 minor and the 5-team U15 minor tournaments hosted by both associations to develop a "How to Host a Tournament" guidance document to support the hosting committee and outline expectations. Similarly, we could also develop a document to highlight expectations and communicate info regarding teams who have to travel for provincials.

Branding changes from year to year is tough

We agree. Some of the questions in this survey were targeted at getting our parent's thoughts on this and which way they would like to see the associations move forward. We will look at the answers from this survey and further engage with the memberships of each association once we interpret the initial data.

Driving from Gould's to SS and SS to Gould's can be tough

We understand the drive can be an added challenge, both financially and from a risk perspective. However, it is a necessary part of providing enough ice time required for all teams, ensuring parity amongst our shared teams, and fielding competitive teams.

Skating under 1 logo would be better

There are several directions our associations can move in that were highlighted in the end of season survey.

- 1) Keep the arrangement as is
- 2) Merge into 1 association with a new logo/brand
- 3) Both associations merge into the Pacers organization
- 4) Both associations merge into the Breakers organization
- 5) Both associations go their own ways

We think merging into 1 association, however, that looks, is the best way forward for our kids. How that



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looks will depend on what the majority of our memberships tell us. Engaging in these surveys and whatever future surveys or meetings are held on this topic is very important, so we encourage all of our association members to participate in these discussions.

We need 1 organization and 1 executive

This has been a significant topic of discussion between both executives in recent years with many differing opinions. The current survey is designed in part to gauge the position of the membership, as the executive will only act on something of this nature with the majority support of the memberships. Completing the survey is the first step in better understanding this so we thank you for your input and we will be sharing the survey results and next steps throughout the Summer.

The Website is not user friendly

It was the first year that we decided to use a single website for both associations. We think it improved throughout the year but there are definitely opportunities to make it easier to use for folks. There are some improvements being made in the offseason. The feedback we heard the most is parents seem to struggle with where to find a schedule for their kid's practices and games. We can add this to a FAQ (frequently asked questions) to help parents out next season.

Rink issues in Gould's compared to SS

We share your concerns over the issues but regrettably, the rink is not operated by the minor hockey association and is in fact operated by an independent board GOULDS ARENA ASSOCIATION INC. We are however happy to report that a new ice resurface machine is on the way for the 2023-24 season and other improvements to the rink are being explored.

Junior coaches need to be included and involved more consistently

There are a lot of topics to cover and improvements to make during the offseason. We will try to have a more structured Jr. Coach program/guideline in place for the upcoming season. Taking learnings from what some other associations are doing.

More training for coaches to help the kids excel

We are looking at opportunities to help out in this area prior to the next season. We can share details at a later date once the approach is agreed upon between both associations.



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Weekly or monthly communication to give updates on the teams/rinks and improvements to Gould's rink

This is something we can consider. The amount of time volunteered to make it all work is already pretty demanding, but we agree that this would add value.

Allow kids to play for either association if they want and do not force them to merge

We aim to keep as many kids as we can on their "home" team while maintaining parity across our teams in each respective division.

Use some of the fundraising money to lower the costs of registration

Unfortunately, reducing registration fees using funds raised under a lotto license in NL is not permitted. Below is an excerpt from the NL rules. If you have heard that this was what a Minor Hockey Association did in Nova Scotia, it is because NS lotto rules likely allow it. You can read the full list of LottoNL rules here - <https://www.gov.nl.ca/dgsnl/lotteries/#q5>

Lottery Proceeds

Money raised through a charitable lottery may only be used toward programs and activities that help the charity meet its goals.

Proceeds are not approved for:

- membership fees for organizations, their members, or staff in professional or recreation associations;

Can we create "B" teams?

The creation of "B" Teams is always a topic of debate for both executives and is discussed in detail yearly. With the difficulty our "A" teams have encountered competing over the past couple of years, it has been difficult to justify putting forward a "B" team. Understanding what division the team would play in, and if that would be available in the Avalon region is another consideration. The executives are considering the selection of provincial teams earlier in the season for 2023-24 so this would, in fact, represent the selection of "B", "C", etc.... teams.

All-Star teams should have affiliate players named and included in practices to develop

Over the past several seasons the associations have done a variety of things in this area. Alternate players are selected and allowed to practice with the team and alternatively, we have not selected alternates and allowed IHL coach recommendations throughout the season to dictate who is called up based on level of play. In both instances, a variety of players are used to afford the opportunity to multiple players. There are also regulations present in the DJHL league around the use of alternate players that must be abided by.



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Alternate players at the time of the selection camps are a clean way to do things and easier on coaches as there is no effort needed to decide who has the opportunity to play throughout the year. They simply pick who is next on the list.

The second option however affords the opportunity for more players to be given a chance to play and allows for players who put in extra effort and develop over the first half of the season the chance to play at the higher level.

As you can see there are positives to both scenarios so again this will be a topic of discussion at the annual AGM where we would welcome member participation in the discussion.

Goalie Development in female hockey / Goalie coaches for each team could be U15 or 18 goalies

There is currently a goalie clinic provided free of charge to all kids interested in playing the position. Free equipment is provided on loan to all participants from U11 down when requested and an extensive incentive plan is in place for all levels of hockey to level the playing field on equipment costs for goalies.

In addition, the executives are exploring having more of our coaches obtain the Hockey Canada Goaltending Level 1 certification for the 2023-24 season. This course is provided free of charge to any coach and the basic description is as follows. The Goaltending Level 1 certification is a clinic that is suited for any coach or hockey person to take. It explains the basics of the goaltending position and key areas of emphasis for skill development.

We can surely explore the option of having our older goalies register as junior coaches and attend practices with the younger groups moving forward for added development. This is something that was started towards the end of last season.

U9 should have a house league to better prepare for games in U11

We can look at ideas on how to implement this for next season if there is interest to do so and it aligns with Hockey Canada pathways for this age group. Some of these teams did do inter-association scrimmages last season.

Tiering IHL teams from the beginning of the year

Bylaw 4 of the IHL ruleset is in place to ensure associations balance teams as best we can.

We realize that some teams are often better than others despite our best efforts. Several factors can affect the composition of a team. We had a large number of travel requests this year after teams had already been picked (basically parents wanting their kids on a specific team for carpooling and travel purposes). Throughout the year, there can also be injuries, kids losing interest and quitting, or choosing to



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prioritize playing on another team (High School) or another Sport over showing up for the IHL team to which they were assigned. This all negatively affects the initial balance/parity we had among teams in a division.

At the end of the season, IHL (now the MCHL) teams are tiered based on standings and the end-of-year IHL tournaments usually have similarly skilled teams playing each other, and the games are close.

We'll try to do a better job of communicating the process of submitting a "travel request" prior to picking teams. These requests cannot always be accommodated as it sometimes requires the consent of the person being traded from a team.

Here is a link to the IHL Ruleset and below is the excerpt covering the comment on tiering teams at the start of the season -

http://www.ihlhockey.ca/uploads/documents/ihl_rules_updated_october_2021_revision_1-423.doc?v=202305141016

By-Law 4: Balancing of Teams and Roster Parity

Prior to the start of each season, each member Association shall, by some demonstrable means, divide each division's players into teams of equal capacity and capability such that balanced teams with Roster Parity are submitted for play within the League. It shall be the prerogative of the member Associations to ensure the balancing of teams (Roster Parity) occurs. If Roster Parity and balanced rosters are not apparent after one-quarter of the season, the League shall request information from member associations regarding the distribution mechanism employed for achieving the Roster Parity By-Law.

The decision to tier the IHL is made based on votes from all associations. It is not a decision that the Gould's or Southern Shore can make unilaterally.

Minor and girls costs should be the same

Different divisions and age groups within those divisions have different costs associated with them based on ice time requirements, some of which are governed by HockeyNL or the respective league in which they are competing. For example, last season the U11 all-star team was mandated to have 1-hour games while the U13 and U15 all-star teams are mandated to have 1.5-hour games. This results in different costs for those divisions. Referee costs also vary depending on the skill level and age group being reffed, which results in further differences in registration costs between our teams.

Here is what was communicated at the start of the season (taken from the registration flyer). For the most part, costs were the same for minors and females at respective skill levels and age groups.

*U11 Co-ed, U13 Co-ed, U15 Co-ed, U18 Co-ed, U11/U13/U15 Female
40 hours minimum home ice practice and game time per season.
\$680 registration fee.*

Does NOT include any year-end or provincial tournament fees. These fees would be separate and



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collected at a later date if applicable.

Additional comment on the last line of that registration flyer excerpt (in bold).

This seemed to catch a lot of parents off guard, and we get it - being asked for additional money at the end of a long year is yet another financial burden.

It would be difficult to have a start-of-season fee for these tournaments set in stone as it is difficult to predict which player is playing on which team at which rink at which time. Additionally, Ice time and ref rates can sometimes be different between associations, which can result in a different year-end or provincial tournament fee.

Can we get access to the full arena schedule of ice time? Including available slots and scheduled ice time.

Each arena would have to provide this. Minor and Girls' practice and game slots are already posted on our site and/or on a respective league website.

Continue to show that fair play for all kids is needed in their (coaches') respective positions

There are rules in place covering fair play that we all should be stewarding the best we can.

What a lot of folks may not realize is, these rules are different depending on which age group you are in, and the level of hockey you are playing (selection-based team vs non-selection-based team vs regional team). There are also further allowances for gold medal games or elimination games. Here is an excerpt from the rule set.

Equal

Is defined as equal ice time every game. There has to be a variable allowed due to the uncertainty in the frequency of stoppages of play. Goaltenders have the option of changing during the mid-way point of each game or playing full games as long as they have equal game time throughout a season and/or provincial championship. Goaltenders are restricted to a one-game differential throughout the season or tournament. The championship game in a provincial tournament is excluded from this definition for goaltenders only. Coaches may play either goaltender.

Discretion 1

is defined as equal ice time in every game for the first and second periods, however, there is the ability for a coach to use select players in the following situations:

- (a) in all special team situations in the third period;
- (b) in the last three (3) minutes of the third period; and



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(c) in any overtime period(s) that ensue.

Discretion 2

is defined as the ability for a coach to use players anytime during the game as they decide; however, each player must receive a minimum of 3 shifts per period.

Here is a link to the HockeyNL Ice time Allocation policy - <https://www.hockeynl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/HNL-Ice-Time-Allocation-UPDATED-9-9-14.pdf>

We need to bring back power skating. This was beneficial and inexpensive.

This year was the fullest the schedule has been in years due to the high number of combined registrations between the associations. We can look for opportunities to reestablish power skating if the majority of folks want it and if there is ice time available for it, something which ended up being a deciding factor in not offering power skating this season. If we end up with the required ice time capacity and we do decide to offer power skating for the 2023-2024 season, we will also need a core group of committed volunteers to run it in addition to some oversight from a technical director. This was one of the main challenges the last time we offered power skating during the 2021-2022 season.

Sometimes qualified coaches may not be picked to coach

We aim to include as many coaches as we can and assign them to teams when we receive responses via the coach's registration in the system. Each year, the associations have to actively seek coaches for teams so if you have registered as a coach and are not contacted by the executive, please reach out to us. It may be that you did not register properly, or the listing was not complete. We will keep an eye on this for the 2023-2024 season.

The kids would get more learning out of taking turns playing offense and defense.

Until the players play on a selection-based team or reach U13, they should aim to rotate through forward and defense, respecting that some kids prefer to play one over the other. It is important to understand all positions as part of their development.

From our experience, most players prefer to play forward for the goalscoring opportunities and the status that follows, rather than defense. Players usually settle into the position they were meant to play by U13. Until then we should aim to give them exposure to each position when there are opportunities to do so.

Communication on how the 50/50 money was spent

This was touched on at each association's AGM.



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Promote more training to entry-level coaches

We will discuss this in the offseason and try to put something in place for the start of next season.

U18 pay the same registration costs and did not get their ice time allotment.

This was a difficult division to manage due to it being one of the biggest (5 teams) and having competing interests that the other divisions do not have such as having to schedule minor hockey activities around two very busy high school teams (Mobile and St. Kevin's), as well as weekend jobs and other older teen activities.

After registration had been paid and the season started, these U18 teams decided that they did not want to practice and requested a weekly scrimmage where 4 of these 5 teams would play against each other each week. This division also requested referees for this scrimmage which was an additional cost not captured in registration. In some cases, our normal U18 referees were playing in these games, and we had to bring in U18 referees from other associations to cover it. In short - these teams were given at least 2x weekly skates and additional money was used to offset the cost of these referees.

We also had to cancel these scrimmages a lot on short notice due to one of the above-mentioned competing priorities or lack of interest. When we cancel on short notice like that (sometimes the day of the skate) we still get billed for that ice time because we did not give the arena 48 hours' notice (cancellation policy = give 48 hours notice or you get billed for the ice time you had scheduled). We can have another look at how we structure this program for next season.