



## NORTHERN ONTARIO HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

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NORTH BAY, ONTARIO P1A 2A8  
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### **Novice Programming Frequently Asked Questions**

As you have no doubt heard, the OHF is making the transition to half ice games in the Novice division beginning in 2018/2019 – in advance of the Hockey Canada mandate that will take effect in 2019/2020.

We can understand there is an interest from families and from Minor Hockey Associations to better understand the delivery of the Novice Program next season, so we have addressed the three (3) most frequently asked questions below.

#### **Question #1 – Will there be Rep Hockey at Novice in 2018/2019?**

Hockey Canada recommends that Novice players/teams be tiered; that is, players of like ability are grouped together.

Keeping in mind that we are in a different position than our friends in Southern Ontario – where Major Novice teams will be playing full ice in 2018/2019 – the NOHA Board of Directors is supportive of not changing the structure to the NOHA program next season, and therefore “Rep” will be available at Novice next season for Associations who wish to deliver this programming.

With that being said, the NOHA is committing to working with the OHF and the other Minor Members on a consistent tiering structure for 2019/2020 which could ultimately impact the structure of the Program at that time.

Please note that Rep programs will be required to follow the half ice mandate; full ice games may take place after January 15.

In determining the plan for the Association in 2018/2019, we encourage you to take the following into consideration;

- Would we be in a better position to tier our Novice players internally to participate in a local league?
- Is it worth travelling a considerable distance in some situations to play a 2x25 minute game?
- If there is considerable travel involved with participating in a league, are there opportunities to host multiple games in a centre over the course of a weekend as opposed to travelling for one game?
- Are there opportunities to work with neighboring communities to participate in games?



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### **Question #2 – Are we able to keep scores?**

The OHF Player Development Model for players 5-8 years old, which was recently shared, recommends that scores not be kept in the mixed programming structure for Novice.

Based on question #1, with no change to the potential Representative programs at Novice, the NOHA Board of Directors supports the Hockey Canada recommendation of not keeping score but have agreed to leave it up to the Leagues and Associations to decide whether they wish to keep scores in Novice games next season. Again, however, there will likely be a need to make further changes in 2019/2020 when the rest of the OHF makes the full transition to half ice programs.

Keeping in mind that when games are being played half ice, there will be two (2) games taking place at the same time. If a League or Association decides to keep score in these games, it is recommended that the scores of both games be combined. Two (2) timekeepers are recommended for those games to be able to keep track of the scoring.

**Question #3 – My child is a 2010 born player who has played full ice this past season. It is a step back for them to play half ice in 2018/2019 and they should be grandfathered.**

**OR**

**In Southern Ontario, 2010 born players will be playing full ice in 2018/2019. Our 2010 born players should be doing the same.**

Per the correspondence sent to our Minor Hockey Associations on December 5, 2017 ([http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/19e5e5\\_161f8354dfd04f0aba4a46903b60730a.pdf](http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/19e5e5_161f8354dfd04f0aba4a46903b60730a.pdf)), the NOHA does not have the ability to deliver separate programs (i.e. Minor Novice, Major Novice) within all of its Minor Hockey Associations and such will follow the mixed programming implementation where 2010 and 2011-born players will play half ice games in 2018/2019. While this is a different strategy than the other members of the OHF, it is the same implementation process that the majority of the other Branches have already followed.

Keeping that in mind, 2010 and 2011 born players will also transition to full ice games after January 15, 2019 under this implementation plan.

While we understand that some may feel this plan is a step back for 2010 born players, it is important to note the many benefits of the smaller playing surface, which include:

- Increases the emphasis on skating skills including elements like agility, balance, coordination and quickness.
- Number of puck battles increases significantly.



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- Puck control and puck protection skills are enhanced which will help players succeed at higher levels.
- All the fundamental skills of skating, puck control, passing, and shooting are reinforced at a greater rate through game play.
- The increase in incidental body contact requires players to play with their head up, better preparing players for proper use of body contact and checking skills in the future.
- Less time and space increase the frequency of making hockey decisions. Better environment for teaching ice awareness and boosts hockey sense.
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- Over time, the intensity level of competition increases with the progressive skill improvement of players.

Further information on the benefits of cross-ice and half-ice programming are available on the NOHA, OHF and Hockey Canada websites.

Should you have any questions about the above information, please contact the NOHA Office (705-474-8851 or [initiation@noha.on.ca](mailto:initiation@noha.on.ca)).