

HEO AAA Reset Plan 2023-24

Objectives

- To provide unified AAA Program U12-U18 AAA that aligns with Hockey Canada (HC) player development standards to achieve the following desired outcomes: ensure and enhance player development; increase player retention; address declining participation numbers; improve the player experience and increase exposure for HEO High Performance players.

HEO AAA Unified Program Design U12-U18 AAA – including but not limited to:

Cohorts

- U12-U18 AAA including a new U16AAA cohorts.

Player Development

HEO AAA programming must adhere to Hockey Canada player development standards. Participation in the HC Gold Medal Pathway is mandatory. Operator(s) must provide the following player development:

- 16hrs of practice ice per month (September until team season ends – including playoffs, provincial representations and/or late tournament entries).
- Program for position-specific (forward/defence/goaltending) skills development (1-2hrs per month September through January inclusively) approved by the AAA Technical Director.
- Weekly 1hr video sessions (September until team season ends – including playoffs, provincial representations and/or late tournament entries) – coaches to be supplied with subscription to game analysis software (similar but not limited to “In-Stat”) – if video equipment purchase is required for use by the coach, expenditure must be noted, and receipt supplied with the budget and financial statements. Requests to deviate from 1h per week to be submitted to Technical Director and subject to HEO AAA BOG approval.
- Weekly dryland training (2hrs/week in 1hr sessions)– optimally scheduled in conjunction with practices to limit travel time for players
- Coach must conduct at minimum 2 player progress meetings.
- Mid-season evaluation and player exit reviews.

Scheduling

- Operator to populate and publish a balanced schedule for the teams on operator website by the third Friday of August.

- Season dates (Regular season games to start between September 1-5. Regular season to end last week of February. Playoffs to follow in March, concluding by April 30th with scheduling concessions for Provincial representation (including Ontario Winter Games).
- 28-35 regular season games with traditional series format for playoffs.
- Playoff format to be proposed by Operators working with AAA Technical Director and ratified by AAA BOG (or designate) on or before November 30th of the current season.
- Practice Ice Hours (16h per month) – ice contracts to be submitted to HEO AAA BOG or designate (AAA Technical Director) by August 15th of the current season.
- Deadline for teams to submit scheduling blackout dates (August 1, 2023).
- Operators responsible for booking or to designate booking (i.e.: to team manager/coach, etc), of tournaments and hotel rooms.
- Operator(s) responsible for paying and scheduling referee/scorekeepers for all games.
- Operator must have a dedicated AAA website and manage all aspects of the website, including cost – schedules to be posted on website(s) upon release (third Friday of August).

Bench Staff Requirements and Deliverables

- Minimum requirements per team = 1 Head coach per team; 2 assistant coaches per team who attend all practices and video sessions -1 or both who attend all games, including tournaments). 1 trainer at practices and all games (more than one can be listed on the team list)
 - There will be random checks to confirm teams are sufficiently staffed by AAA Technical Director or designate.
 - Coaches must be announced on operator(s) website by March 31st of the same year as the current season. ***NOTE: April 19, 2023 for 2023-24 coaching announcements.
 - Coach Recruitment / Criteria
 - Coaching course requirements or proof of enrollment by Hockey Canada and HEO rules and regulations (proof of completion must be supplied to the AAA Technical Director prior to the first league game).
 - Coaches must possess knowledge of how to use video equipment and associated game analysis software (i.e.: In Stat).
 - Coaches must declare their assistant coaches with contact information for verification of commitment by AAA Technical Director or delegate.
 - Parent applicants must receive special dispensation from the HEO AAA BOG via the HEO AAA Technical Director.
 - Please see Conflict of Interest Guidelines for coach selection in the event the Operator has a player trying out or a relative applying for a coaching position.

Player Equipment Deliverables

- Players must be supplied with the following equipment [hockey bags, 2 jerseys (home/away), gloves, pants, track suit].
- Players to purchase own helmets in the color approved by the AAA League (s)
- Operators must ensure matching equipment is provided to players prior to the first regular season league games.

- Name bars must be placed on player jerseys prior to the second weekend following the end of Free Agency/Combine

Tournament Requirements

- Operator(s)/Teams to register for tournaments and book the accompanying hotel rooms.
- Tournament Play to consist of a minimum 4, maximum 5 tournaments per team per season (Ontario Winter Games, Provincial and National Championships, OHL Cup U14 excluded from the count).
- Tournament participation and corresponding player fees for the season to be posted a minimum of 7 days prior to tryouts on operator website(s).
- Requests for dispensation from tournament requirements subject to approval by HEO AAA BOG.

AAA Cohort Specific Tournament Requirements

- U12 tournament participation (minimum 4, maximum 5).
- U13, 14 & U15 tournament participation (must select 2 from the list with 4-5 tournaments per season) – Toronto Red Wings Early Bird (September U13-U15), Marlies Friendship (October U12), Shanahan International (November – U12-U15), Whitby Silver Stick (November U12/U14/16), Toronto Marlies (December U13-U16), Sudbury Big Nickel (U12-U18). Requests for dispensation to HP Committee.
- U16 tournament participation (must select 3 from the list with 4-5 tournaments per season) – Toronto Titans Prospects (September), Wendy Dufton (London – October) Whitby Silver (November) Stick, Toronto Marlies (December), Waterloo Gold Puck (December), OHL Cup (if applicable). Requests for dispensation to HP Committee.
- U18 tournament participation (minimum 4, maximum 5 with Provincial and National Championships excluded from the count).
- U16/U18 Showcase(s) – minimum 2 per season with invites to OHL team scouts (ideally 3-4 on Saturdays over the course of the season).

Miscellaneous Program Requirements (U12-U18AAA)

- Dress code (players and coaches) subject to approval by HEO AAA BOG.

HEO AAA Program Design

5 Teams U12-U16 AAA –Operators: Cyclones, Myers, 67s, Titans, Wild

U12-U16 AAA cohorts

- 5 teams structured within current AAA boundaries and operated by Cyclones/Myers/67s/Titans/Wild.
- Player movement strategy to be established by HEO AAA BOG and ratified by HEO BOD (See Schedule A).
- Free Agency or Combine process to enable players to move freely from one AAA team to another if released. Teams must allow a minimum of 4 days to finalize team lists from the completion of tryouts to permit player releases and movement. – retention strategy to enhance the player experience.
 - **Please see Schedule A for the Player Movement/Retention – Combine Procedure.**
- Roster size (17-18 total per team – request for dispensation to AAA BOG on case-by- case basis)
- All U16 players must try out for HEO U16AAA teams and be released before trying out for U18AAA teams.
- For U16AAA, there are new requirements:
 - A player movement policy is to be developed by the HEO AAA Board of Governors for ratification by HEO. (See Schedule A).
 - Annual demographic and performance data evaluations are to be done with a view to establishing the annual number of teams in this category.
 - A boundary review by the HEO AAA Board of Governors is to be conducted every five years, with the first review to be scheduled at the end of 2023-24.
- For U18/U16/U15/U13/U12AAA, there is a new requirement:
 - A boundary review by the HEO AAA Board of Governors is to be conducted every five years, with the first review to be scheduled at the end of 2023-24.
- The CCHL priority selection draft is to be revised to U16 from U15.

5 Team U18 AAA Cohort – Operators: Cyclones, Myers, 67s, Titans, Wild

- 5 teams structured within current AAA boundaries and operated by Cyclones / Myers / 67s / Titans / Wild.
- Player movement strategy to be established by HEO AAA BOG and ratified by HEO BOD.
- Free Agency or Combine process to enable players to move freely from one AAA team to another if released. Teams must allow a minimum of 4 days to finalize team lists from the completion of tryouts to permit player releases and movement. – retention strategy to enhance the player experience.

- NEW: Players who are transferred because of a release from their “home” AAA team, will have the option of trying out for the AAA team for which they played their most recent AAA season. The player can also choose to tryout for their home AAA association. The preference must be indicated to the AAA BOG prior to the onset of tryouts. – enhances the player experience and reduces equipment costs.
- Roster size (17-18 total per team – request for dispensation to AAA BOG on case-by- case basis).
- NEW - No limit on third year players.
- NEW - U18 cohort plays against other U18 AAA teams – including HEO Schools with Residence teams (ie: OHA).
- NEW - U18 AAA tryouts begin 4-5 days after U16 AAA and continue 4 days after U16 Free Agency/Combine.
- Rational - Players released from U16 AAA can choose to tryout for U18 AAA – NEW.
- NEW - U16 & U18 games will be scheduled on shared game nights (ie: a U16 game and U18 game with be scheduled back-to-back on shared night).
- NEW - Monitoring of adherence to HEO Affiliation Policy by AAA BOG – players cannot be refused the opportunity to affiliate with a higher-level team unless the player’s regular team has a game or practice.
- Mandatory Showcases (minimum of 2 Saturday showcases per season).
- The CCHL priority selection draft is to be revised to U16 from U15.
- All U16 players must try out for HEO U16AAA teams and be released before trying out for U18AAA teams.

Governance – AAA Board of Governors (BOG)

Composition and mandate of HEO AAA BOG, by transition team (current AAA Chairs – formerly known as Zone Chairs – project leads), for activation by January 15, 2023 and ratification by HEO BOD.

Transition plan and timeline for migration of U15/U14/U13/U12 associations to District 14 (Approval of plan by HEO BOG, ratification by HEO BOD, formal Bylaw revisions for consideration by HEO voting members at AGM or special meeting of members.

All U16 players must tryout for HEO U16AAA teams and be released before trying out for U18 AAA teams.

New Requirements

1. All U16 players must try out for HEO U16AAA teams and be released before trying out for U18AAA teams.
2. For U16AAA, there are new requirements:
 - a. A player movement policy is to be developed by the HEO AAA Board of Governors for ratification by HEO. (See Schedule A).
 - b. Annual demographic and performance data evaluations are to be done with a view to establishing the annual number of teams in this category.
 - c. A boundary review by the HEO AAA Board of Governors is to be conducted every five years, with the first review to be scheduled at the end of 2023-24.

3. For AAA, there is a new requirement:
 - a. A boundary review by the HEO AAA Board of Governors is to be conducted every five years, with the first review to be scheduled at the end of 2023-24.
4. The CCHL priority selection draft is to be revised to U16 from U15.
5. An annual directive is to be provided to operators by the HEO AAA Board of Governors, once ratified by the HEO Board.
6. Player movement strategy to be established by HEO AAA BOG and ratified by HEO BOD (See Schedule A).

BOG Mandate (for finalization by AAA Chairs by January 15, 2023 and ratification by HEO BOD)

- To oversee the Operator(s) compliance delivery of the AAA program.
- To work with the AAA Technical Director, ensure operator compliance with delivery and reporting requirements to HEO BOD, HEO Finance Committee and HEO HP Committee.
- To finalize the Technical Director work description, hiring committee (for approval and subsequent use in recruitment by HEO AAA BOG once ratified by HEO BOD).
- To work with the HEO Finance Committee to determine a salary for the AAA Technical Director– for ratification by HEO BOD.
- Identify COIs with Operator(s) and ensure that the coach selection is assumed by the Technical Director for the impacted cohorts.
- Technical Director ensures adherence to HC player development standards (i.e. GMP, Conflict of Interest (COI) Guidelines, oversight with Coach selection and player selection in the event of COI.
- AAA Boundary review every 5 years – starting with boundary review 2023-24 with implementation 2024-25 (if any boundary adjustments required as a result of review).
- Annual demographic and performance data evaluations are to be done with a view to establishing the annual number of teams in this category.
- Rule and respond to requests for special dispensation that do not require approval from Hockey Canada or HEO BOD (i.e.: approval of parent coach) to be recommended by AAA Technical Director and ratified by AAA BOG.

Player Risk & Safety

- Player safety is of utmost priority.
- Maltreatment, bullying, and harassment are offenses that will not be tolerated.
- AAA player complaints of maltreatment, bullying and harassment will be managed in accordance with the HEO Maltreatment Policy, Hockey Canada Code of Conduct, and Hockey Canada Discipline & Complaints Policy (Mandatory reporting of misconduct via the Independent Third Party (ITP) outlined in the aforementioned policies). HEO BOD will action all follow up requirements that result from the ITP process.
- Mandatory education of parents/players at the onset of the season about the HEO Maltreatment Policy, Hockey Canada Code of Conduct, and Hockey Canada Discipline & Complaints Policy [Mandatory reporting of misconduct via the ITP (i.e.: during initial team meetings by the coach or collectively by the Operator)].

HEO AAA League Technical Director description - NEW:

- NEW - salaried role – standards officer and coach/player development expert functioning under HC, HEO rules, regulations, and policies.
- Provides direction to all operators and works with HEO staff to ensure compliance with Hockey Canada and HEO rules/regulations/policies and player development standards (Gold Medal Pathway is mandatory).
- Salary and job description to be ratified by HEO BOD and disclosed to membership.

- Support coach and player development in keeping with HC standards.
- Is the HEO designate when operator(s) has a COI issue (assumes coach selection and/or player evaluations for the age cohort that the operator is in conflict with) – this role is automatically triggered for the age group impacted upon identification of COI.
- U12-U18AAA Player fees would cover the cost of this employee thus employee would be dedicated to AAA operations and player/coach development pathways exclusively.
- Roster size (17-18 total per team – request for dispensation to AAA BOG on case-by- case basis).

COI Guidelines re: Coach selection and Player selection - NEW:

- Operators must abide by all Hockey Canada & HEO COI rules and regulations.
- If an operator has child “trying out” or a relative applying for a coaching position clause:
 - The AAA Technical Director automatically assumes the responsibility to oversee coach selections for the level (includes advertising for coaches; receiving the applications; assembling hiring committee and hiring the coach).
- Free Agency or Combine process to enable players to move freely from one AAA team to another if released. Teams must allow minimum of 4 days from the completion of tryouts to permit player releases and movement prior to team lists being finalized.
- Successful coach applicants are recommended for ratification to the AAA BOG and subsequently advised of their success by the AAA Technical Director.

Operator(s) Financial Transparency Requirements – NEW

HEO AAA hockey is a not-for-profit entity. HEO AAA programming will be monitored to ensure that all monies generated as a result of tryouts, conditioning camps, skills development, and player fees are accounted for on a per team basis. All monies in excess of operation costs must either be re-invested into player/coach development or refunded to players/parents/guardians. Itemized receipts are required for all team related expenditures.

- Honorariums and operational staff/team salaries are acceptable expenditures, but details must be reported to HEO Finance Committee via the AAA BOG and AAA Technical Director. Financial statements will be distributed to the HEO AAA membership (parents/guardians) by the AAA BOG

Budgets.

(Per team/association Budget required by the third Monday in July prior to the start of the season and subject to AAA BOG review and HEO Finance Committee review and approval. Itemized Season Budget to be provided by Operator to AAA BOG who will provide to parents at the start of the season (by October 1) – followed by actual cost summary at season end (prior to the third Monday in April) – refunds if applicable must be issued by April 30th.

- To include proposed player fees per team/association and itemized revenue and expenditure reports to support the player fees (including but not limited to: tryout revenue, conditioning camp or skills session revenue; ice receipts from the City or Municipality required; receipts from equipment manufacturer required; receipts from tournament operators for entry fees required; bench staff itemized salaries/reimbursements/honorariums).

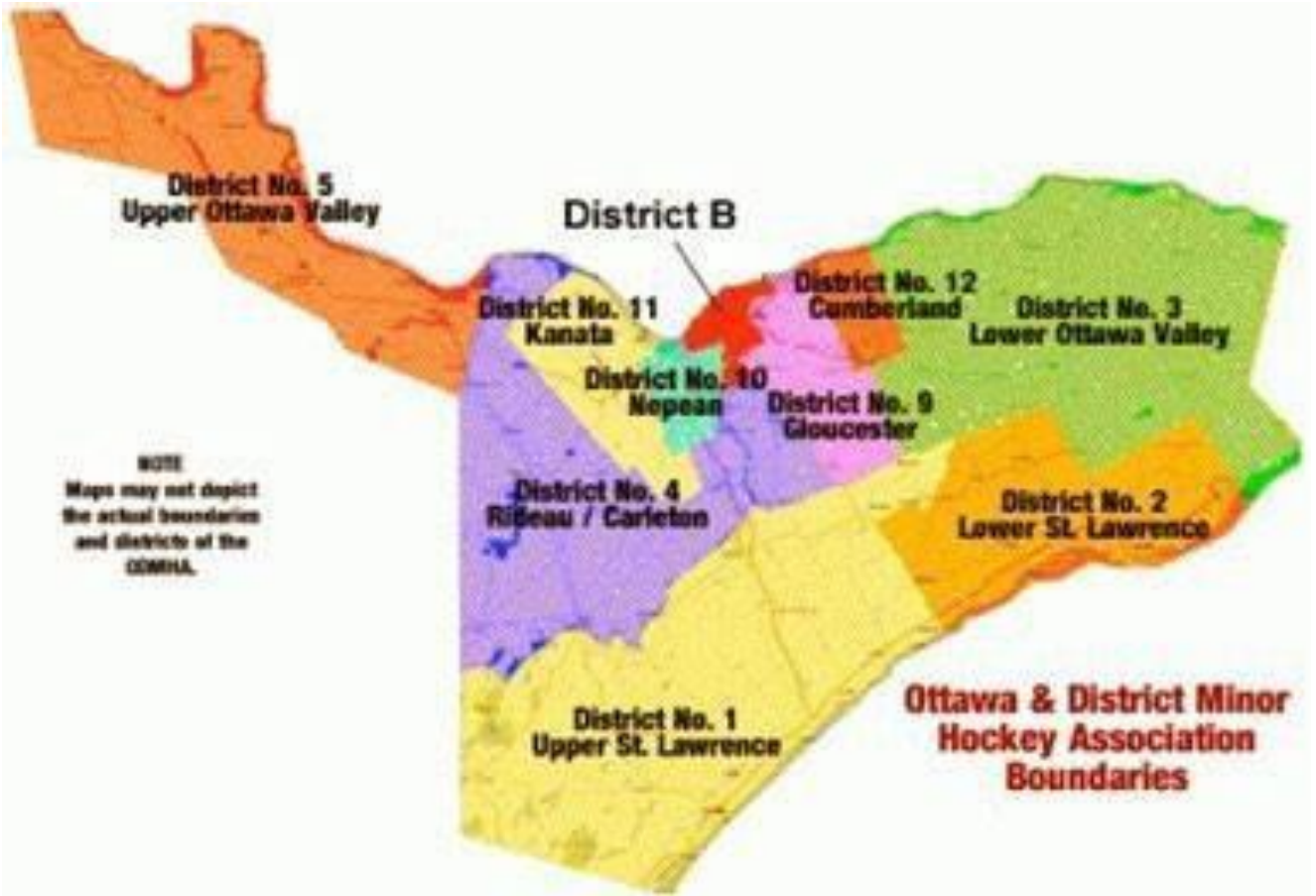
- Proposed Player fees to be submitted by operators to AAA BOG and ratified by HEO Finance Committee by July 1 – based on per team ice costs, tournament participation, deliverables (equipment, honorariums, etc).

******Per team Budgets to be posted on Operator website once ratified by HEO Finance Committee**

Financial Statements (Mandatory) – NEW

If the Operator/Applicant has other teams/associations within their structure – each team/association must have a dedicated bank account. Monthly statements are to be provided to HEO Finance Committee via the AAA BOG /AAA Technical Director at the end of each month.

- Itemized Season Budget (1 per team) to be provided by Operator(s) to HEO Finance Committee via AAA BOG for review and approval. Once approved, the budget is to be posted on the Operator(s) website at the start of the season (by October 1) – followed by actual cost/revenue summary with corresponding receipts at season end (prior to the third Monday in April) – refunds if applicable must be issued by April 30th.
- Proposed Player fees to be submitted by operators to AAA BOG and ratified by HEO Finance Committee by July 1 – based on per team ice costs, tournament participation, deliverables (equipment, honorariums, etc).
- Player Fees (must be itemized = league fees, tryouts, team/tournament fees, equipment costs with receipts from supplier) – include all deliverables [hockey bags, 2 jerseys (home/away), gloves, pants, track suits].
- Annual audited (or can be reviewed) financial statements are required (per team or per association- TBD by HEO Finance Committee -depending on operator structure).
- Financial reports for each team must include all team income and expenditures, reconciled with bank statements – for review and approval by HEO Finance Committee.
- Submitted prior September 1 to HEO Finance Committee via the AAA BOG / AAA Technical Director.
- An operator/team who does not supply all financial documents requested, will be immediately suspended from operations pending investigation by the HEO Discipline and Appeals - Minor Council Committee.



SCHEDULE A

One of the main objectives of the Combine portion of tryouts is to provide improved opportunities for the strongest players in the HEO branch to be able to make a AAA team. This will form the only player movement policy for the HEO AAA League.

The combine process will make it easier for coaching staffs to evaluate talent from all Associations. In addition, the associations are communicating closely together, to ensure the greatest opportunity possible for players released from one association to have a more meaningful chance to participate with interested teams during the combine weekend, prior to final team selections. Each team will carry a minimum of 21 and a maximum of 25 players going into the Combine of which 3 must be goaltenders.

AAA rostered players from the most recent prior season will start their tryout process with their home associations. They cannot be released from their home Association prior to the Combine, nor are they allowed to skate with another AAA team prior to the start of the Combine”. AAA incumbent players will be eligible to attend the Combine.

At the start of the Combine, families will receive a link to a form to fill out indicating if there is interest to play for a different AAA team than their home one, should they be released, or if they would rather proceed to their home AA team tryouts. The form link will be from Google Forms.

The practices/games /tryouts to be held by each Association leading up to the Combine form an integral part of the tryout process **and are mandatory**. Each player will be guaranteed a minimum of 2 games during the Combine.

During the combine week, the coaches at each level will be communicating with each other and AAA League Executives and HEO AAA League Technical Director and will manage a “release list”. Coaches will be aware of which players **might be available** for a combine transfer based on if they are released by their original team. Combined with the feedback from the player form (above) releases and combine transfers might occur at any point after Game 2 of the Combine. No transfers will be allowed without the knowledge/approval of the Association Presidents, Convenors, Executives, AAA League President, and HEO AAA League Technical Director.

If there is **interest** in a combine transfer of a player on the “release list” **by more than one team**, the **player’s priority selection** from the form **will be used**. A player on the “release list” could end up skating with one or more teams, in addition to their original “home” team if there is interest.

The final transfer paperwork will only be required for players ultimately selected to play on a team outside of their home boundaries.

Players who are on a “release list” but who are not claimed by another team will remain with their original team for the Combine 2-game minimum.

- In such a case, no player will be informed of their final release until the 2-game minimum is met.
- The Head Coach or Liaison will be responsible for informing the player of their release through the most professional means possible (in person, by email, website or by phone and taking an appropriate amount of time).
- The original Head Coach of the released player will be responsible for following up with that player after the Combine at a date and time that is convenient to all parties to discuss the release and to possibly offer them an affiliation.

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- Any player that is released following the Combine will join the AA tryouts of their home association.
 - No parent or player will need to contact another team if they are released. All the AAA teams are aware of who is being released. If another team is interested, a player or parent will be contacted.