

St James Assiniboia Minor Hockey Association

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Coach's Fair Play Policy for Players' Ice Time

A1, A2, A3 Winnipeg West League

The Coach's Fair Play Policy for Players' Ice Time sets SJAMHA's guidelines for coaches to manage players' ice time and it will assist coaches in setting expectations to players and parents. Coaches are expected to administer this policy and communicate it and their intentions to their players and parents.

- SJAMHA mandates that **all** players receive balanced amounts of ice time and opportunity on a game-to-game basis. All players are to participate in special teams (power play, penalty killing) on a frequent basis over the course of the season.
- Initiation, novice, minor atom, and atom players must be given opportunities to play a variety of positions.
- Except for the purposes of discipline, a coach will be seen as being delinquent in his/her responsibilities, if they deny a player the opportunity to receive an equitable amount of playing time.
- The Executive expects coaches to discipline the behaviour of all players both on and off the ice. It is therefore acceptable for a coach to use playing time as a consequence of inappropriate behaviour – **when used as a last resort strategy only**. It is recommended that a summary log of when and why a player was benched be kept. Unacceptable behaviour may include unsportsmanlike conduct, being disrespectful, inappropriate behaviour that is disrespectful of team goals, selfishness, actions that cause or have the intention to cause harm to individuals.
- Under some conditions, it may be necessary for a player to receive less ice time for health or safety considerations.
- Coaches must exercise good judgment for determining player rotations during close, critical games and key situations. "Shortening the Bench" is the coach's decision but an age appropriate rotation must be implemented. The coach must define his/her intention of this practice to the parents and players prior to the start of the season and prior to entering playoffs and tournaments. "Shortening the Bench" must only be implemented for a short duration during the game. Coaches are to provide additional opportunities in other games to players whose ice time is adversely affected in these situations.

“Shortening the Bench” is to be an exception, not the norm, throughout the season (e.g. implemented only when a team is facing elimination from competition – playoffs or tournaments). It is recommended that a summary log be kept of when and why the bench was shortened.

- As a last resort, it may become necessary for a coach to use benching as a wake up call if a player demonstrates an “I don’t care attitude” through a consistent lack of effort or focus on a task that is reasonable for that player’s ability.

- The Executive recognizes the degree of difficulty in providing absolute equal playing time and opportunity on a game-to-game basis, however, in an effort to provide a clearer picture, the following situations will not be tolerated:

- Double shifting player(s) on a recurring basis.
- Certain players or units receiving longer shifts than other players or units.
- Consistently having only select players on the power play or penalty killing units.
- Benching, sitting or giving less ice time to players because of a lack of confidence or inability to execute skills and tactics.
- Giving more ice time to affiliate players (temporary promotion) over roster players.
- Balancing forward and defensive units unfairly (e.g. 5 defensemen and 10 forwards)
- Consistently letting certain players on the ice first when changing on the fly regardless of their position.

- Goaltenders must receive equitable ice time through out the year. It is recommended that a log of playing time be kept. At the initiation and house league level, willing players should be given an opportunity to be a goaltender. No player should be encouraged to play in net for more than their desire or against their will.

Conclusion

Communication and the practice of setting expectations are vital to the success of a program. The Coach’s Fair Play policy intention is to inform coaches on how to treat players fairly so that players receive a balanced amount of ice time over the course of the hockey season.

The Fair Play policy is one of many tools and initiatives that the SJAMHA has developed to assist in fostering the relationships between, coaches, players, parents, and officials and to create an enjoyable and productive hockey experience for everyone.