



HOCKEY CALGARY

Frequently Asked Questions – Atom League Structure

Why are we proposing a change to the structure in the first place?

In November 2014, Hockey Calgary hosted a workshop and engaged the membership on their views of the program and what changes Hockey Calgary could make to enhance their member's minor hockey experience. League structure was one of the big issues that was brought up during this conference. For example: Why players have to travel so far during the week, why is it so expensive, why can't we play teams closer to us, why do we have so many divisions, etc.

Who is involved with the League Structure Committee?

The League Structure Committee is a Sub-Committee of the Operations Council. The committee was made up of, 5 Association Presidents, a league governor, HC Executive Director, HC Operations Manager, HC Marketing Coordinator, and a Hockey Alberta Representative. A good cross section of people actively involved in the HC programs.

What is the goal of the Sub Committee?

The goal of the Sub-Committee is to analyze and review the existing Hockey Calgary league structure to determine if it is meeting the needs of players and families in a growing and diverse hockey population. The outcome of this exercise is to develop (or maintain) a league structure that enhances the playing experience for ALL players, thus growing the game and keeping people in the game.

What research was done to justify the recommendations?

The Sub-Committee reviewed

- The current Hockey Calgary League Structure
- Other league structures of mid to large size LMHA's from multiple associations across each province. Including: Brampton Hockey Inc., London Minor Hockey, Prince Albert Minor Hockey, Brandon Minor Hockey, Hockey Edmonton, Strathmore, Chestermere, Kelowna, Kamloops, and the Lower Mainland.
- Various formats that could be operated in Calgary
 - o Regional Play only
 - o North/South Play only
 - o 1 year age groups
 - o Hybrid models of city wide and community play with multiple iterations of each of these scenarios



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Who is affected?

All members in the atom age group within Hockey Calgary will be affected.

What will be the benefits of the new league structure?

- Minimize travel time & costs (reduce windshield time)
- Reduce the # of tiers – Calgary is most tiered LMHA in Canada
- Reduce pressure points during evaluation (5 cut points vs. 12)
- Improve access to volunteers/coaches
- Improve alignment to rest of province
- Reduce stress at evaluation time
- Increase access to game for some players
- Allow kids more time to do other activities

What is meant by Regional League?

'Regional' means the teams will play closer to their home association, in a regional model. Games will be scheduled closer to your home regions thus reducing time and travel to partake in these events.

What is meant by City Wide League?

'City Wide' means that teams will continue to play against all HC associations and compete in venues in all parts of the city.

What is different about the New Atom League Structure?

- **Division 1 - 3**
 - No significant change, league structure is same
 - Teams in these divisions play across the full city
 - # of league games will remain the same as prior years
- **Divisions 4 - 6**
 - Teams in these divisions will play within 1 of 3 regions (north, west or south), therefore reducing time, travel and cost to participate
 - Associations will be required to evaluate and select similar skilled teams for each division depending on size of the organization (see grid)
 - # of games played will remain the same as in prior years, but you will now have approximately 20 other similar skilled teams in other regions to play exhibition and tournament games against



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ATOM GRID

	City Wide				Regional			
	Tiered				Balanced Equal Teams			
	Teams are ranked according to skill, the top team being A. Second being B, etc.				#'s represent the number of balanced equal teams in each division			
TEAMS	DIV 1	DIV 2	DIV 3		DIV 4	DIV 5	DIV 6	TOTAL
5 Teams		A			1	1	2	5
6 Teams		A			2	1	2	6
7 Teams		A	B		2	2	1	7
8 Teams	A		B		2	2	2	8
9 Teams	A	B			2	3	2	9
10 Teams	A	B	C		2	3	2	10
11 Teams	A	B	C		3	3	2	11
12 Teams	A	B	C		3	3	3	12
13 Teams	A	B	2 x C		3	3	3	13
14 Teams	2 x A	B	2 x C		3	3	3	14

What region is my association in?

North Region

Crowfoot
NW Warriors
McKnight
Simons Valley
Saints

West Region

Glenlake
Springbank
Trails West
Bow River

South Region

Blackfoot
Bow Valley
Lake Bonavista
Midnapore
Southwest

Is there going to be a difference in registration costs for the City-Wide and Regional Leagues?

No there will not, the programs will have the same amount of games the only difference will be in the structure and layout of the leagues. Associations will still control the cost of their programs as in the past. The associations will be directed to offer the same cost to city wide and regional leagues within the atom division.



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How do I try out for the City Wide League?

Your home association is responsible for all evaluations, each association administers it slightly different but the goal will be to ensure that all players have the opportunity to play at the level they are best suited for.

Is there a difference in the amount of ice time for the City-Wide League and the Regional League?

There is no difference in the amount of league game times provided to each division. As in the past each team schedules and plays exhibition games and tournaments as per the decision of that team. # of practices provided to each team and age category is determined by the individual association based on the amount of ice that they have access to. Associations should provide equal ice time to all levels of atom no matter what division you play. If a specific team chooses to source more ice time on their own that is up to the individual team.

Will we be now be forced to play the same teams over and over?

Based on projections from 2015-16 teams there is no regional division that has less than 10 teams, this is no different than leagues in previous years. Depending on registration this can vary slightly, but we do not see it as an issue. Within the regional format a league will consist of 10 -12 teams, but there will be over 20 other teams of similar skill level in other regions to play exhibition and tournament games against.

What will happen to EMHW?

HC is still working out the details for EMHW, but all teams in city wide and in regional play will have the opportunity to compete in EMHW, details will be worked out over the summer months. HC will schedule the tournament as we always have to ensure the event has the same excitement that we have always had.

How will City Championships work?

Championships will run in the regional divisions as well as the city wide divisions. Details are still being worked out in this area but we are confident that this event will continue to have the same excitement as in past years.

How will we have better coaching?

In regional divisions, for example where associations have 3 teams in 1 division, they will now be able to assign their 3 best coaches to each of those teams where as in past



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if those same 3 coaches sons/daughters all ranked in the same pool, they would all end up coaching together with the possibility of the next team not having a quality coach. These coaches can then work with the less experienced coaches to help them along the process to becoming a head coach in future years.

Will there still be a 'House League'

Yes, the house league program has been very successful having grown rapidly in the last 2 years. This program differs from the regional program based on the fact that House League only offers the following:

- 1 game, and 1 practice per week
- No tournaments
- No incremental fundraising
- No EMHW
- No City Championships
- Lower base cost
- More structured times

How will evaluations work?

As in past years each association will continue to manage their own evaluation process. The difference will be that instead of ranking teams 1 – 10 (for example) they will now be required to create some 'equally skilled teams' in the 4, 5 & 6 divisions. Basically if you need to have 3 teams in the 4th division you would take the 50ish players that ranked in this range and place them evenly on 1 of the 3 teams.

The ideal scenario would be to select your 3 best coaches among the parents of these 50 kids, and then 'snake draft' the remainder of the kids to these teams based on their evaluation ranking.

How will HC prevent Associations from 'Stacking 1 Team'?

Firstly, as administrators of these programs we have to trust that our member associations would act in a responsible manner and not allow this to happen. We would hope that the associations are above corruption at this level of hockey.

Secondly, in most divisions an association will have 2, if not 3 teams in the same division, therefore if you 'Stack' one team you are in fact setting up the other team(s) for failure. If this happen it would be the Associations responsibility on how they would explain this to their members who were not able to compete.



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Thirdly, Hockey Canada rules do state that players can move teams up until January 10th, this would be a last resort and only in case of **gross injustice**, but there could be an option to force an association to move a player or two.

In the end we must all realize that there will always be winners and losers in the game, and that these young players develop at different levels. Very often teams that are created equal in September are not equal at the end of the year. Much like our present system where we see lower division teams beat higher division teams during the year, when they have improved at a faster rate.