



NORTHERN ONTARIO HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

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Date: November 2, 2022

To: NOHA Associations and Single Entry Teams

From: Sue Shepherdson

Re: Freedom of Movement

For many years within the NOHA, Freedom of Movement has been a hotly contested topic, both amongst the NOHA Executive and at NOHA Annual General Meetings (AGM). The NOHA withdrew its proposed amendments at the 2022 AGM due to continue concerns regarding the impact of COVID-19 on programming.

The NOHA Board has again discussed this topic, and we wish to advise our Membership that we will again be putting forward a proposed amendment for Freedom of Movement within the NOHA boundaries at the 2023 Annual General Meeting being held in Timmins in May.

Once the registration process has ended for the season, the NOHA will also be reaching out to families via survey to obtain their opinion(s) on freedom of movement. The results from this survey will be shared with the Membership prior to the AGM.

Rationale

- It is the position of our Board that families should have the choice of where they register their child in programming;
- It is also the position of the Board that Players being allowed to participate in the program of their choosing will benefit recruitment and retention of Players;
- The NOHA is the only Member Partner in the OHF that does not have freedom of movement at House League/Recreational Hockey;
- While we now have all AA Teams competing in the same League, we have had Associations not provide releases to Players wishing to compete at a higher level and subsequently they played "A" when there were other opportunities to play AA within another Association;
- The majority of appeals received by the NOHA are requests for releases. While most families have valid reasons, such as work, or requiring family support to bring their Player to practices/games, the Appeals Committee generally has supported the NOHA Constitution and subsequently, our Minor Hockey Associations;



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- There are several Associations in the NOHA who have their own internal agreements, which allows for a form of freedom of movement. Some examples include,
 - Timmins and Porcupine
 - Copper Cliff and Sudbury
 - Soo Peewee and Sault Major
 - Manitoulin Minor Hockey
 - Blind River and Elliot Lake
 - Hearst and Kapuskasing

- There have been multiple situations where the NOHA has been compelled to resolve disputes between Associations due to issues surrounding the movement of Players. As a Board, we feel that this is an inefficient use of the NOHA Board's time as well as that of our Associations. Freedom of movement will allow the Board to focus on other issues;

- While registration is still ongoing, the number of U7 Players who have gone to other organizations outside of their residential boundaries has been limited. The NOHA will be able to provide further details on this later this season.