



## **OWHA MEMORANDUM TO U22 ELITE TEAM CONTACTS AND PRESIDENTS**

April 18, 2022

As we wind down the 2021/22 hockey season, we are sending this memo to sincerely thank everyone who has been involved in providing hockey throughout this challenging season as we continue to work through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. As you know, we remain in the pandemic and, although the situation has improved, we still face some uncertainty as we move forward.

As such, we are moving into the 2022/23 season with a positive approach and also the realization that the season will be a season of recovery. Our focus will remain on providing maximum programming for all participants and levels of play throughout Ontario.

We look forward to working with associations as we plan positive updates for the 2023/24 hockey season. There will be opportunity for input through various channels as we combine best practices before and during the pandemic while making hockey stronger for all involved.

Please be advised of the following updates:

### **COVID-19**

It is critical to move forward with the understanding that, at any time, restrictions could be imposed from various levels of government, municipalities, PHUs, facilities and from the OWHA itself. These could include specific requirements such as mandatory vaccinations, masking, screening contact tracing and complete shutdowns. It is important to know that OWHA is committed to providing hockey opportunities to participants.

Following the completion of the 2021/22 hockey season and commencing with tryouts for the 2022/23 hockey season the OWHA's position, until further notice, is as follows:

**Vaccinations:** The OWHA strongly recommends everyone eligible to be vaccinated is fully vaccinated prior to participation in OWHA sanctioned activities. Any participant who is not fully vaccinated and chooses to register must understand that, if mandatory vaccinations return, they will be no longer eligible to participate.

**Masks:** OWHA encourages the use of masks as per the provincial, PHU and facility requirements. OWHA and its Members may mandate the use of masks as deemed appropriate.

**Screening:** Passive screening, in accordance with provincial requirements is in place. OWHA and its Members may mandate the use of screening as deemed appropriate.

**Contact Tracing:** Contact tracing is not required at this time. OWHA and its Members may mandate the use of contact tracing as deemed appropriate.

### **LEAGUE PLAY**

OWHA sanctioned leagues will have some modifications and will operate in the 2022/23 season in a similar fashion as they operated in the 2021/22 season. OWHA will work with individual leagues to maximize scheduling and opportunities for the season and to plan for transition to the 2023/24 hockey season.

### **INFORMATION FOR THE 2022/2023 HOCKEY SEASON FOR LEAGUE PLAY**

League play in the 2022/2023 season will be based on a combination of registered level of play, calibre of the team and geography with the continuing pandemic being the major factor. It is our hope that the Province of Ontario will be able to remain open and there will not need to be major restrictions, but we do know that it is not possible to predict and plan with certainty.

## PARTICIPATING TEAMS

1. Teams are divided into 3 divisions – East, West and Development.
2. Teams play round robin games within their division, and also play 1 interlock game with all teams not in their division, as per the “Game Format section of the chart.
3. All games count in standings and standings are tabulated within each division.
4. East and West Division teams play a total of 43 games.
5. Development division teams play a total of 40 games.
6. Where there is an unbalance of home and away games (such as each team in east plays 1 game against each team in west), the schedule will be addressed to provide a balance of travel for each team for those games (as an example, consideration will be given so Ottawa based teams and teams in the far west are travelling reasonable times to the play the farthest teams).
7. Playoffs – the top 6 teams in east and west will play in Group 1 (title of group to be named later). The next 4 teams in east and west will play in Group 2 (title of group to be named later). Development teams will play in Development playoffs.
8. Provincial Championships – 23 teams (not including OHA and Ridley)

TEAM	DIVISION	TEAM	DIVISION	TEAM	DIVISION
Bluewater	WEST	Barrie	EAST	Gloucester	DEVELOPMENT
Brampton	WEST	Central York	EAST	North York	DEVELOPMENT
Burlington	WEST	Durham	EAST	OHA Jrs	DEVELOPMENT
Cambridge	WEST	Etobicoke	EAST	OHA Tardiff	DEVELOPMENT
KW	WEST	Kingston	EAST	Ottawa 67s	DEVELOPMENT
London	WEST	Nepean	EAST	Ridley	DEVELOPMENT
Mississauga	WEST	Ottawa Sens	EAST		
Oakville	WEST	Toronto Aeros	EAST		
Southwest	WEST	Toronto Leaside	EAST		
Stoney Creek	WEST	Whitby	EAST		

GAME FORMAT	DIVISION	In Division	Inter div	Inter Div	Total
	DEV	4x5 teams	1x20 v E & W		40
	EAST	3x9 teams	1x10 v west	1x6 v D	43
	WEST	3x9 teams	1x10 v east	1x6 v D	43

PLAYOFFS	Group	Division	Teams
	Group 1	EAST	Top 6
	Group 1	WEST	Top 6
	Group 2	EAST	Bottom 4
	Group 2	WEST	Bottom 4
	DEV	DEV	All 6

<b>PROVINCIALS</b>	23
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## **GAME LENGTH**

Game length for single games is 3 x 20- minute periods with a 5-minute warm up. Tie games stand and there is no overtime. Games should fit into a 2-hour time slot with line-ups announced during warm up.

## **SEASON LENGTH**

League games may start any time after September 19, 2022 and are to be completed in time for the playoff weekend that will take place at the end of March 2023.

Teams will be asked to submit available ice by July 1, 2022, as we will have a person put the schedule together.

## **ROSTER SIZE**

Roster size remains as per the 2021/2022 season. Each team is permitted to dress 20 players (includes skaters and goaltenders) for each game. Any team that does not have 20 players signed on its roster or that has injuries, illness or a shortage of players for other reasons may pick up to a maximum of 20 players per game. If a team has 1 or more suspended players, they must shorten the number of players dressed to meet the number of players under suspension. In other words, if a team has 2 suspended players, they may dress a maximum of 18 players (includes skaters and goaltenders). It is the responsibility of each team to ensure that players signed on their roster are to play and healthy scratches are not permitted.

## **ON-ICE OFFICIALS**

Since the pandemic began, there is a critical shortage of on-ice officials in Canada. We do propose going with the 4-official system for the U22 Elite league whenever possible. Teams should budget accordingly and also factor in an increase in fees, as a result of the escalating gas prices.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

OWHA will be setting up various Task Groups and committees to work through what we hope to be a close to the pandemic and a full return in the 2023/2024 hockey season. There will be a thorough review of best practices that includes the U22 elite level, the player experience, the competition, the feeder system and impact on other players and associations.

We congratulate all teams and associations on the commitment to the players throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and for the excellent work throughout the 2021/22 hockey season. We wish everyone a happy, healthy summer and a rewarding 2022/2023 season.

Note: Please be advised that information contained in this memorandum is subject to change.