

NGHA Fair Ice Policy

Statement of Purpose

The NGHA values player development for all players over individual game results. The NGHA considers fair ice a core component of a team – regardless of individual skill level, all players are part of the team and as such should be provided an equal opportunity to develop and contribute to the success of the team. Coaches are strongly encouraged to develop all players for specialty units such as power play and penalty killing.

What is meant by fair ice?

It is impossible for all players to receive the exact same number of shifts or minutes of play time in a single game. The flow of the game, penalties, power plays and penalty killing may occasionally result in unequal playing times. Coaches should strive to have fair ice time over 4-5 games. Fair ice applies to affiliated players.

AA Teams: At the AA level, it is recognized that, to a reasonable extent, coaches may use ice time as a motivational tool.

Coaches may also choose to use certain players in key situations or during the last few minutes of a close game to give the team its best chances to win. This could result in some players finishing games with more ice time than others but only on a limited basis.

Players' ice time may not be fair in each and every game, but should be roughly equal over the course of 4-5 games.

Competitive Teams Ranked below AA: All players on Competitive teams will receive fair ice time with the exception of the last two minutes of close games. If a coach expects this strategy will be used during the season, he/she is strongly encouraged to:

- Have a discussion with parents/players at the beginning of the season so it is clear that should such a decision be made, it's for the net benefit of the team;
- Consider waiting until the second-half of the season to determine if it's even a strategy that would truly benefit the team;
- Impart such decisions amongst different players throughout the season
- Be discriminate about this latitude, and give all players an opportunity to develop in all parts of the game.

House League Teams: All players on House League teams will receive fair ice time, including play-offs. Except in the case of injury or absences resulting in incomplete lines/ pairings, fair ice must be enforced each game. In case of injury or absences resulting in complete lines/ pairings, coaches must create a rotation that produces near parity for all players.

Deviation from the Fair Ice Policy – for all levels (House League and Competitive)

Acceptable reasons for coaches to deviate from the fair ice policy include:

- Reduced player ice time for disciplinary reasons (e.g. repeated violations of the NGHA Code of Conduct, non-compliance with team rules or repeated absences from team activities)
- Reduced player ice time due to repeated penalties involving risk of injury (e.g. checking from behind or to the head, cross-check) and ‘bad taste’ penalties (e.g. unsportsmanlike, roughing after the play)

Duration must be dependent on, and directly proportional to, the behaviour.

The team’s Convenor must be informed of such a denial of fair ice time.

There will also be practical instances through-out the season where ice time will be different amongst players in any given game, including:

- For games with numerous penalties, line rotations can sometimes be difficult to organize or maintain, and because of these circumstances it is not uncommon for some players to arbitrarily end up with more, or less, playing time.
- Depending on the skill level of the opposing team, players can sometimes get ‘boxed in’ to their defensive or alternatively, generate sustained pressure in the offensive zone. Both of these situations can make it difficult to change lines within the expected shift lengths set by the coach

Concerns Regarding Ice Time

First and foremost, take the time to determine if your concerns are warranted – consider ice time over 4 -5 games and possible acceptable explanations for ice time variations. If you still have concerns, arrange to speak to the head coach about your concerns. If you are not satisfied after discussions with the coach, contact the appropriate Convenor.

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