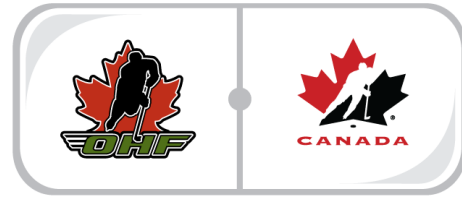


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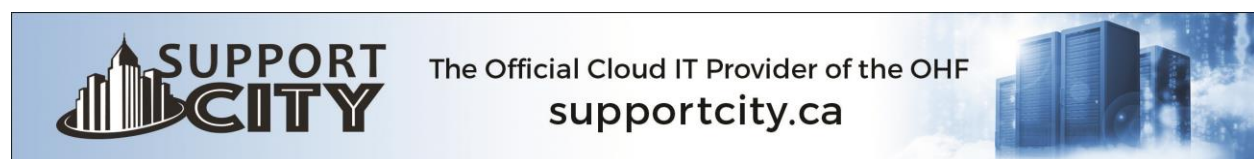
OHF Update on Initiation Program Implementation

TORONTO, ON – The Ontario Hockey Federation (OHF), in conjunction with Hockey Canada and its Minor Members, announced two solutions, Friday afternoon, to address issues faced by some minor hockey associations/clubs in the implementation of the Initiation Program in the OHF.

- 2011-born players who are on Select/Minor Development (Select) rosters of 2010-born Teams (as of September 23, 2017), are permitted to complete the season with that team. The team will not be required to participate in cross-ice hockey for the 2017-18 season.
 - In addition, OHF Members have the ability, upon request, to provide written approval from the Member to a Team to participate for this season only as a seven-year-old program, in those instances where players six-and-under are required to form a Team predominantly made up of seven-year-old players. The key criteria being that without the six-year-old players, those seven-year-old players would have no opportunity to play the game of hockey in their community.
- The Hockey Canada Board of Directors approved a request from the OHF, to delay the implementation of the Hockey Canada Initiation Program in the OHF (cross-ice hockey for game play) for Select hockey for 2011-birth year players for the 2017-18 season only.
 - Subject to above, Players who are non-residents of the GTHL are not permitted to roster with a Select team as a regular or affiliate player, if not on an approved roster by September 23, 2017.

“After reviewing and discussing the proposal put forward by the Ontario Hockey Federation, Hockey Canada’s Board of Directors has approved the requested special dispensation in order to minimize the impact on the group of young players to ensure they have an opportunity to play this season,” said Tom Renney, chief executive officer of Hockey Canada, on behalf of the board. “The response nationally to deliver age-appropriate programming has been outstanding, and we are moving forward with the recommendations and 2019-20 mandate to adjust all players from the Novice age category to cross-ice or half-ice games and practices. But to see even one player’s season called into question because of an implementation issue of our mandate is one player too many.”

The delayed implementation of the cross-ice/half-ice mandate for Select hockey at the Initiation Program level for the 2017-18 season was approved by the Hockey Canada Board of Directors based on the following conditions:





- This exemption applies only to 2011 Select level hockey. All other levels of 2011 programming will participate in the full Initiation Program with cross-ice game play.
- This exemption applies only to the 2017-18 season.
- Select Leagues players will participate in cross-ice games accounting for 25 percent of the season schedule.
- The GTHL will work with the North York Hockey League (NYHL) to have the 25 percent of scheduled games conducted in three (3) 'Cross-Ice Showcase Festivals'.
- There is a commitment from OHF stakeholders to implement the continuation of the Hockey Canada Initiation Program (modified ice programming) that is deemed age appropriate for 7-and-8-year-old players for the 2019-2020 season and, if the OHF determines modified ice programming for 7-year-old players should apply for the 2018-19 season, there is a commitment to fully support the implementation.

“Coming to these solutions has been a balancing act of meeting Hockey Canada regulations and the needs of our young participants,” said Tony Foresi, OHF President. “Many of the situations which came out of the implementation of the Initiation Program were caused by a breakdown in communication. The OHF and its Members are dedicated to putting communication to the forefront, to ensure we are never faced with a similar situation again.”

“In the end, we are so pleased all the stakeholders involved in coming to these solutions were able to agree the most important outcome was to get the 2011-born players back on the ice and commit to seeing them in age-appropriate programming, going forward,” said Phillip McKee, OHF Executive Director. “We look forward to seeing the Cross-Ice Festival demonstration in the NYHL and assisting all of our Members in successful implementation of Hockey Canada’s Initiation Program.”

The OHF wishes to thank its Minor Members and Board of Directors, for the collaborative work in creating solutions which removes the impact to players, while also ensuring the OHF is in compliance which Hockey Canada regulations.

The OHF has been in existence since 1989 and is comprised of seven Members: the Minor Hockey Alliance of Ontario (Alliance), the Greater Toronto Hockey League (GTHL), Northern Ontario Hockey Association (NOHA), Ontario Hockey Association (OHA), the Ontario Hockey League (OHL), Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) and the Ontario Women’s Hockey Association (OWHA.)

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