



AUGUST 13, 2020

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Return to Hockey Plan-Community Hockey

1.0 Introduction

Health and safety have been at the forefront for Hockey Edmonton's Staff and Board of Directors as they have been thoughtfully planning what a return to hockey participation will look like. Hockey Edmonton has actively engaged with Hockey Canada and Hockey Alberta in developing this "Return to Hockey Plan".

We are in a very fluid, changing environment as new rules and regulations are updated and put in place by our governing authorities, Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta. This plan is updated as of August 13, 2020 and will continue to evolve as we enter different stages as outlined by Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta.

This plan relies heavily on the honesty and integrity of associations, athletes and their families and a commitment by all participants to abide by the rules of the plan.

This plan is subject to change based on orders from the Chief Medical Officer, the Province of Alberta, the City of Edmonton, Hockey Alberta and all Hockey Edmonton and EFHL Participants.

As you review the documents provided in this information package, please note, this is our "New Normal" in our current Covid-19 environment and will not be a typical hockey season as it will look different. It is our belief that the program provided will allow for continued individual player and team development and allow our players to grow on and off the ice. We currently have four phases to the Hockey Edmonton "Return to Hockey" Plan that are outlined throughout this document:

1. **Off Season Skill Development and Training Phase** – The main focus of this phase is on enhanced skill development and conditioning to provide players the opportunity to prepare for the upcoming season for their evaluations and tryouts, this phase will take place during the month of August and early September.
2. **Skill Development and Evaluations Phase** – This phase will take place during the month of September and will continue to focus on skill development, training and conditioning and will facilitate creating like skilled 'Cohort Groups' of less than 50 players. The Skill Development and Evaluation phase should be completed through 'Physically Distanced' skill-based evaluations
3. **Development Season Phase** – Once players have been sorted into 'Cohort Groups', they will now be permitted to practice and compete in mini-game environments within their 'Cohort Groups'. As per Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta Cohort rules and regulations, players will not be permitted to play against teams or players outside of their 'Cohort Group' until Government Restrictions are lifted. This phase would begin in early October.
4. **Regular Season** – This would be a return to regular EFHL season play and is the final stage of our plan. Depending on the current rules in place by Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta, this stage could be pushed back or moved ahead during the fall period. Various proposals are available to implement depending on the start date of the regular season which are included Appendices 1, 2 and 3.



2.0 Program Objectives

The Covid-19 Pandemic has forced us to think differently about the way we operate for the 2020-2021 season and into the future. While there will be differences in some of the programming this season, it was developed to meet the needs of the players as we remain focused on the following key objectives:

1. **Safety!** Create a safe and healthy hockey environment for our players, coaches, officials, volunteers and spectators.

- Safety is paramount, this plan was built in compliance with Alberta Health Services, Hockey Canada and Hockey Alberta guidelines to minimize the risk for all participants.

2. **Fun!** Maintain a culture of Fun! Ensure Participants can enjoy the game they love in a safe environment.

- Hockey Edmonton is returning to Train and Play in a way that allows kids to have fun and be kids.

3. **Development!** Facilitate a competitive environment that allows players to develop and grow both on and off the ice.

- Skill and Team Development is essential and can be accomplished in all phases of the Hockey Edmonton's return to Hockey Plan.

4. **Tiering!** Facilitate an environment where players may be grouped in appropriate skill levels.

- Some tiering ranges may differ slightly than in previous seasons, however, we believe they will be within an acceptable range for skill and team development.

5. **Game Play!** Facilitate an environment where 'Game Play' exists beginning with limited small area games during phase two and three until phase four resumes with regular season game play.

- Games will operate in a number of different formats up to the point that the regular season phase may resume. Some of these formats will include the following, 5v5, 4v4, 3v3, etc..

6. **Flexibility to Transition!** These phases will provide us with the flexibility to transition our program as things evolve during the season by way of changes with Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta requirements and protocols.

- This will ensure we continue to adhere to all Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta guidelines and protocols while providing a safe and healthy environment for all of our participants.



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3.0 Requirements

1. Within the current Alberta Health Services Phase two, there are two different formats that can be considered to operate our programs. Hockey Alberta and Hockey Edmonton will utilize both of these formats in facilitating our programs:
 - **With Physical Distancing** – All participants must remain 2 metres apart at all times including coaches and team personnel.
 - ◆ Skill and Development based programming.
 - **Using Cohort Groups** – A Cohort Group allows up to 50 participants to group together to participate in a program where physical distancing cannot be achieved for on ice activities. However, physical distancing is still required, and players and coaches must maintain a 2 metre distance apart on the players bench and in dressing rooms.
 - ◆ Cohort Groups must remain together for the duration of 'Stage 2' unless participants enter a two-week (14 day) isolation period, after which an athlete may establish themselves as part of a new 'Cohort Group'.
 - Programs should operate within a specified community, zone or region where travel is limited.
2. Any Member Association operating during phase one and two will be required to track all participants and interactions while maintaining records of each session in a secured location for thirty days from the completion of the activity. This will be completed when players complete their daily check in to ensure they are symptom free (More detailed information is found in the Protocols and Safety section of this document).
3. There will be no competition or any interaction between other teams/cohorts during phases one, two and three. Only pre-season camps, skill development and conditioning, systems training and mini games will be permitted within phases one, two and three and only within the same 'Cohort Group'.
4. All Member associations must follow Facility Guidelines
 - Facilities are required to adopt standards as per Alberta Health Services, which may differ slightly depending on the facility and municipality.
 - All Member associations must understand these standards and ensure they are followed.
 - Facilities, not 'Member Associations' will determine spectator access, dressing room use and may have stronger requirements with regards to participation.



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5. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - Team Officials and Players are required to wear face masks in facilities and dressing rooms prior to on-ice activities
 - Team Officials are required to wear face masks on the bench when social distancing cannot be achieved.

6. League Play
 - Traditional EFHL League Play is not permitted during phases one, two or three.
 - Mini games are only permitted within your 'Cohort Group' and can consist of 3v3, 4v4 or 5v5. (Considered SAG "Small Area Games" in Appendixes 1-3)

7. Travel Permits and Tournament Participation
 - Tournaments are not permitted during **STAGE TWO** of Alberta Health Services relaunch during the Hockey Edmonton Development season.
 - No exhibition games, travel or tournament permits will be approved prior to the approval of Hockey Alberta sanctioning for member organizations.



4.0 Protocols and Safety

Prior to the Season, Scheduling Training or Development Sessions:

- All athletes must register with Hockey Edmonton or one of its Clubs, Districts or Operating Areas via their internal HCR for season registration or Associations registration system for any camps or training sessions during the Off-Season Skill Development phase.
- Hockey Edmonton Associations running training sessions during Hockey Alberta Off Season Skill Development and Development Season phases, will be required to submit permit information related to their sessions. This is necessary for Hockey Edmonton Administration to acquire a Hockey Alberta permit to sanction the event and provide Hockey Canada insurance coverage while also ensuring all Hockey Alberta return to train policies are being followed.
- A link to the Hockey Edmonton permit application is provided below.

<http://www.hockeyedmonton.ca/form/4336>

Responsibilities of Coaches or Event Leaders

Prior to each training Session:

- Communicate with athletes a minimum of 24 hours prior the sessions to provide the session plan so players can review and be aware for social distancing purposes.
- Communicate to see if athletes or family members are feeling unwell or showing signs of COVID-19 symptoms and if so, they are not to attend practices for 14 days. A players who has a negative Covid-19 test and their symptoms have resolved are permitted to return within the 14 day period.
- Remind athletes and their families of social distancing guidelines; the need to label all equipment; and gathering restrictions both on the ice, in the arena and the parking lot.
- Send practice plan outline (if applicable).
- Disinfect all training equipment.
- Instruct players to eat and use the washroom before they leave home.

During the training Session:

- Upon arrival, all athletes must complete and be recorded on the Hockey Alberta Contact Tracking Spreadsheet which will be administered by the Association running the event and made available to Hockey Edmonton, Hockey Alberta or AHS within 12 hours of request.
https://www.hockeyalberta.ca/uploads/source/Return_To_Hockey/Appendix_4-Daily_Checklist.pdf
- Set up all training equipment and sanitize as needed.
- Set up hand sanitizing stations for participant use before, during and after training if not provided by the Arena facility.
- Consider wearing PPE. PPE must be worn if social distancing cannot be maintained (eg. looking after an injured player). PPE is only acceptable if in a situation in which social distancing cannot



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be maintained. Do not use PPE to allow participants to break social distancing rules during the sessions.

- Ensure only team pucks are used at the practice and that they are sanitized prior and after the practice.
*Note, athletes can share the team pucks, but this sharing should be limited with no direct hand contact
- Remind athletes not to touch their face during activity.

After Training Session:

- Ensure athletes have retrieved all their personal equipment. (Water bottles, etc)
- Do not touch their equipment unless you are in the same household.
- Ensure athletes and coaches wash or sanitize hands again.
- Sanitize all training equipment, including team pucks and all commonly touched surfaces e.g. locks.
- No post training meeting communication on the ice, in the arena or in the parking lot. Please communicate virtually using email, text, team snap or another form of electronic communication.
- Association Event Managers must ensure that their list of event participants is uploaded using the Hockey Alberta link provided by Hockey Edmonton (in the email containing the event sanction information). This is required as soon as the event has been completed.

[https://cloud.rampinteractive.com/hockeyedmonton/files/2020-21%20Season/Copy%20of%20Copy%20of%20Appendix 3-Contact Tracing Form HEDM.xlsx](https://cloud.rampinteractive.com/hockeyedmonton/files/2020-21%20Season/Copy%20of%20Copy%20of%20Appendix%203-Contact%20Tracing%20Form%20HEM.xlsx)

COVID Check –In

24 hours prior to each session, or when arriving at the session, the coach or leader will communicate with all players and families to do the Hockey Alberta health status check. If any athlete or family member of the athlete is or has experienced any of the following symptoms in the previous 14 days, they will not be permitted to participate in any events, training etc. for the next 14 days or until 14 days after the last symptom, whichever is longer. This information will be held in confidence by the coach:

https://www.hockeyalberta.ca/uploads/source/Return_To_Hockey/Appendix_4-Daily_Checklist.pdf

- Fever, cough, sneezing or sore throat.
- Mild to moderate shortness of breath.
- Inability to lie down because of difficulty breathing.
- Have been in close contact with a person who has seen a doctor and has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Have travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days or has been ordered to self-isolate since returning from travel.
- Have been ordered to self-isolate or is living with someone who is self-isolating.
- Any person who develops symptoms while at a Hockey Edmonton\Hockey Alberta sanctioned event should leave immediately, seek medical attention and inform the coach or manager within 2 hours of leaving.



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https://www.hockeyalberta.ca/uploads/source/Return_To_Hockey/Appendix_5-Positive_Test.pdf

What to do if a participant answers YES to any of the mandatory check in questions or begins to show symptoms during the training session:

- The participant is immediately removed from the session and sent home as safely as possible
- Hockey Edmonton Discipline needs to be notified immediately following any participant being removed from any session
- Hockey Edmonton Discipline will contact Hockey Alberta to facilitate the required AHS protocols under the contact tracking guidelines

https://www.hockeyalberta.ca/uploads/source/Return_To_Hockey/Appendix_5-Positive_Test.pdf

General Stay Safe Measures:

Please follow the current provincial stay safe measures as well as the following:

- Driving alone or with people they are living with (no carpooling).
- Staggered approach to the site e.g. physical distancing of 2 meters.
- Avoiding touching common surfaces while in public.
- Come straight to the Arena from home and go straight home.
- Practice good hygiene by:
 - Coughing into a sleeve.
 - Sneezing into a tissue.
 - Avoid touching your face.
 - Washing hands thoroughly and frequently with soap and water.
 - When water and soap is not immediately available, using hand sanitizers with a minimum concentration of 60% alcohol.
 - Wash hands prior to and immediately following practice/ training, using the washroom, after handling equipment.
 - Sanitize your phones and devices often, leave them in the car or at home when possible.
- Help each other with helpful reminders, this is new to everyone.

Practice/ Training Protocol for Physical Distancing:

Physical distancing has been identified as one of the most effective strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19. With that in mind the following are the minimum protocols that MUST be adhered to for team training/ practice:

- All participants will wash their hands before coming to training.
- All participants will use hand sanitizer:
 - At the beginning of all events.
 - During all breaks prior to drinking water or touching any personal items.
 - Prior to leaving the sessions.



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- All participants are required to maintain at least 2 meters distance from each other and avoid person to person contact unless they are participating in a practice within their designated 'Cohort Group'
- Coaches will coach from a safe distance at least 2 meters from athletes.
- Nonessential activities that require close contact between individuals will not be permitted.
- NO SHARING OF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:
 - Sticks, gloves or any other personal equipment.
 - water bottles.
- NO SPITTING.
- Participants will avoid touching the face.
- All participants will be expected to follow the social distancing rules put in place by the City of Edmonton for Arena Users or the rules set by non-City of Edmonton facilities. (ie. Argyle or River Cree Arenas)
- Player equipment and clothing must be cleaned with disinfectant where appropriate and or washed prior to each session.
- No unnecessary physical contact e.g. high fives.
- All commonly touched surfaces will be disinfected after each session by Arena Staff.
- Gear, equipment etc. must be sanitized prior to each use.
- Coaches may request the support of an assistant coach or parent to help with sanitizing or ensuring physical distancing is occurring throughout the session.

Spectators of Hockey Edmonton and Hockey Alberta sanctioned events must maintain physical distancing with people who are not from the same household and adhere to the following:

- Staggered approach to the facility
- No yelling or cheering
- No SPITTING
- Avoid touching your face.
- Wash your hands frequently and/or use hand sanitizer often.
- Disinfect clothes and equipment following attendance at a session.
- Wipe frequently touched surfaces including cell phones, tablets etc.
- Please consult the following website for more information about COVID 19: <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>



5.0 Facilities

All Hockey Edmonton Member Clubs, Districts and Operating Areas are required to follow the guidelines set forth by the facility they are utilizing whether a Municipality owned facility or a Private Arena. City of Edmonton Facility Guidelines are posted below for your reference.



As we relaunch City of Edmonton Arenas, we ask for your full cooperation and commitment to follow the new facility guidelines of the Phase 2 reopening of Arenas and the Alberta Health Services guidelines. Our first priority is the health and safety of our customers, users, and employees. Please review the new guideline below:

Physical Distancing: Maintain 2-meter physical distancing between people, except those who reside in the same household or who belong to an existing cohort.

Limit Contact only 50 people: Where sports and activities cannot be modified to maintain distance, groups must limit the number of contacts between different participants. This is done by playing within sport cohorts of up to 50 people including participants, officials, coaches, and trainers. Only 50 people will be allowed on the ice at one time.

Pre-screening measures: Stay home if you are sick or displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. Follow the prescreen procedures outlined by your organization or Alberta Health Services.

Cleaning and Sanitizing - Additional cleaning and sanitizing measures will be in place to ensure a safe and health environment for everyone. Arena staff will be disinfecting all areas of the arena and common touch points in between users.

Arrival Times: Players and coaches can enter the facility 15 minutes before their booking and must exit the facility 15 minutes after their booking. Facilities will promote physical distancing by promoting one-way traffic flow to reduce interactions between groups. Common area chairs and tables may not be available to reduce gathering areas and to promote physical distancing.

Arrive ready to train or play: Participants are encouraged to arrive with their required equipment on, as dressing room space will be limited to accommodate physical distancing. Groups or teams may be provided with more than 1 dressing room to allow for adequate space where possible. Bring a pre-filled, labelled water bottle. Bottle fillers are available but drinking fountains are not available.

Dressing Rooms limited: Dressing room space will be extremely limited in order to provide greater physical distancing between individuals and groups. Shower facilities are not available. Try to minimize contacting high-touch point surfaces such as door handles and going in and out of dressing rooms. Indoor warm-up space is not available at this time.



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Additional support required: User Groups with younger children requiring assistance with skate tying should consider how to manage this within physical distancing guidelines. Skate tying prior to arrival and the use of skate guards is strongly recommended.

Limited Spectators: Spectators will not have access to the facility until the scheduled booking time, and should exit the facility as soon as the booking time slot has ended. Spectators will not be allowed in the participant areas. Physical distancing should be maintained and masks are recommended for spectators. There is limited spectator space. Spectator areas are restricted to 25% of total seating to a maximum of 100 people as per the Alberta Health Guidelines.

All Arena Users: Sport and recreation organizations are responsible for keeping track of all participants for each activity for the purpose of contact tracing in the event of an outbreak. Please refer to the Alberta Health Services Guidelines for **COVID-19 Relaunch Guidance for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation - Stage 2** for more information: [Return to Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation](#)

Welcome back: We look forward to welcoming you, your organization, and its members back to City of Edmonton arenas within the new guidelines and facility procedures. Your collaboration and communication is very important as we go through the reopening and relaunch phases in Arenas. The health and safety of everyone is our priority. If you have any questions please let us know.

Many sport governing bodies have developed, or are in the process of developing sport-specific guidelines to provide direction on how their sports' activities can be modified to comply with Alberta Health Services (AHS) and Government directives regarding physical distancing and avoiding the sharing of common equipment. Groups are expected to follow the sport governing body's guidelines with respect to these modifications. It is also the group's responsibility, if applicable, to ensure that sanctioned activities are permitted through their association and/or sport governing body.

Please note: The City of Edmonton will continue to monitor the virus and its impacts to public health, in partnership with the [The Government of Alberta](#) and the [Government of Canada](#). As this situation changes, we will keep you informed. Information about the City's response can be found on City of Edmonton website [COVID-19 PAGE](#).



6.0 Refunds

This is an unprecedented time which makes predicting the future incredibly difficult. There are still many unanswered questions and uncertainty around what may lie ahead in the future which makes it difficult to have concrete answers about refund policies in the event of a lockdown, quarantine or other event that impacts the season.

Each Club, District or Operating area is responsible for their own refund policies. If you are interested in learning more, please contact your Club, District or Operating Area.



7.0 Return to Hockey

Facilitating a safe return to Hockey that meets the guidelines of Alberta Health Services relaunch strategy for stage two is paramount. As we have mentioned previously, Hockey Alberta and Hockey Edmonton will be utilizing two distinct procedures in delivering programming, either **Physically Distanced** or using **Cohorts**. Hockey is a contact sport and while we can operate skill development sessions using physical distancing, we understand that in order to meet all of the key objectives of our program, we will need to use 'Cohort Groups' for various phases of our Return to Play.

Hockey Alberta Return to Play Plan of June 30, 2020 states that in order for players to change 'Cohort Groups', they must self isolated for a 14-day period prior to joining a new 'Cohort Group'

Cohort Information from Alberta Health Services for Sports Teams

Definition of Cohorts:

A COVID-19 cohort – also known as bubbles, circles, or safe squads – are small groups of the same people who can interact regularly without staying 2 metres apart.

A person in a cohort should have little to no close contact with people outside of the cohort. Keeping the same people together, rather than mixing and mingling, helps reduce the chance of getting sick, and makes it easier to track exposure if someone does get sick.

Under Stage 2, cohort types and sizes include:

- **core cohorts** (families and households) – up to 15 people
- childcare programs – up to 30 children and staff
- sports teams – up to 50 players and coaching staff
- performing groups – up to 50 cast members or performers

You should only belong to **ONE CORE COHORT**, which is your family or household cohort. It is safest to limit the number of other cohorts you belong to reducing the risk of getting sick or spreading COVID-19.

Sport Team Specifics:

With modifications, team sports are permitted under Stage 2, including contact sports.

Sports teams can play in region-only cohort groups of up to 50 players or “mini leagues”.

If participating in or organizing a sports activity as part of a cohort group:

- avoid travel outside of regions
- tournaments and large events are prohibited
- clean shared equipment regularly
- maintain physical distancing when not in play (for example, players on the bench)
- decrease/eliminate use of shared locker rooms



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EFHL 2020-2021 Season Timelines

The province remains in a restricted state, and the primary concern for Hockey Edmonton is that any programs offered as part of its Return to Play plan focus on the health and safety of all participants. The intent is not to re-create the regular season structure, but to offer local/regional training and development opportunities before proceeding to the regular season. Safety, not competition, is paramount.

Stage of Return to Play	Dates	Activities Permitted
Off Season Skill Development and Training	August 1-31st	<p>Activities permitted for Skill Development and Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-ice sessions • Skills camps • Development programs • Hockey schools <p>Programs may be delivered using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical distancing; <p>Associations must ensure that permit is obtained from Hockey Alberta through the Hockey Edmonton application process</p>
Skill Development and Evaluations	Sept 1-30th	<p>Activities permitted for Evaluation and Team Formation</p> <p>Skills Sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-Ice Practices • Off-Ice Training • In Association Game Play (3v3, 4v4 or 5v5), Players can be grouped by age and/or skill level. <p>Programs may be delivered using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Distancing; or • Cohort Programming can assist associations to determine skill levels of players.
Development Season	October 1-TBD	<p>Activities Permitted During Development Season</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Sessions • On-Ice Practices • Off-Ice Training • In Association Game Play (3v3, 4v4 or 5v5), Players can be grouped by age and/or skill level. <p>Programs may be delivered using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Distancing; or • Cohort Programming to allow game play between associations if November 1st league play date is delayed and/or cohort sizes increase.
Regular Season	November 1, 2020 (TBD)	<p>Return to Normal Game Play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Sessions • On-Ice Practices • Off-Ice Training • League Play



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A. Off Season Skill Development and Training

The purpose of phase one, off season skill development and training is to provide Club and District members and their Administrative Operating Areas the ability to hold skill and conditioning camps during the month of August 2020. This phase will be in place from August 1-31st inclusive and will be entirely Physically Distanced.

This will allow members and players to complete any off ice, on ice, skill development and hockey school training during the month of August prior to the start of the Skill Development and Evaluations phase.

B. Skill Development and Evaluations

The purpose of the Skill Development and Evaluations phase is to group players of similar skill. This process will be similar to the evaluation and tiering processes that occur each year in our Clubs, Districts and Operating Areas. One key difference this year is that to ensure the safety of the players and to help reduce the number of player-to-player contact situations, these sessions will be entirely Physically Distanced. Once we are able to place the players in Hockey Edmonton Cohort Groups, players will be permitted to engage in drills where they will come into close contact with other players.

When associations have completed their initial skill sessions to determine skill rankings among their players, they will create 'Cohort Groups' of between 45-50 players (age category and registration dependent). We will communicate further on numbers of coaches and team officials who should join the 'Cohort Group' and those that should remain Physically Distanced. It is the expectation that all Coaches and Team Officials will remain Physically Distanced during the initial skills evaluation sessions.

Evaluation Guidelines

- All Associations follow a similar plan (not necessarily the same drills)
- All Associations will use 'Physical Distancing', skill-based drills to evaluate players into organization 'Cohort Groups'
- U7: Minimum of two evaluation sessions prior to assigning 'Cohort Groups'
- U9 – U13: Minimum of three evaluation sessions prior to assigning 'Cohort Groups'
 - Associations are free to further evaluate players in scrimmages and close contact drills after they are placed in 'Cohort Groups'. However, once in a 'Cohort Group', players cannot change 'Cohort Group's without a 14 day isolation period as per Hockey Alberta Guidelines.
- U15 – U18: Minimum of two evaluation skills skates prior to assigning "Cohort Groups"
 - Associations may use previous years playing experience to assist in forming 'Cohort Groups' through the evaluation phase.
- Atom Pathway
 - Every effort should be made to offer all aspects of the U11 Player Pathway. However, Hockey Edmonton and Hockey Alberta understand the complexities around hockey for the upcoming season. Associations should keep an open line of communication with Hockey Edmonton Development and Operations as it pertains to any deviation from the U11 Pathway.
 - Minimum of two pre-evaluation sessions (previously four).



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- Start dates included in the U11 Player Pathway should be followed.
- Hybrid Goalies – Minimum two evaluation sessions at each position.
- Goalies
 - Associations will determine how many goalie-only sessions are offered, however, like player sessions, a minimum of three evaluation sessions should be offered.
- Once the Evaluation sessions have been completed, players and goalies should be ranked and 'Cohort Groups' created
- All coaches and evaluators must remain physically distanced during the evaluation sessions

C. Development Season

Club, District, Operating Area or Interlock MHA Based Play

During the Skill Development and Evaluation phase, associations will create similar sized 'Cohort Groups' of no more than 50 players and team officials based on rankings from the physically distanced evaluation sessions. All players and team officials included in the registered 'Cohort Group' will need to ensure they remain in the same 'Cohort Group' during the Alberta Health Services phase two relaunch, or until a two week break can be facilitated in order to create new 'Cohort Groups' as per the Hockey Alberta return to hockey plan.

Cohorts

- 45-50 players and team officials (depending on age category and registration breakdown)
- Players will now have the opportunity to compete as a group (practice and play together)
- Associations may choose to practice with the entire 'Cohort Group' on the ice, as long as the facility requirements are being followed, or, split them into smaller groups
- Within the 'Cohort Group' players do not need to be physically distanced on the ice but need to separate on the players bench and dressing room facilities
- Within this 'Cohort Group', 'Mini Teams' will be created to facilitate game play

Mini Teams

- Associations are encouraged to create four evenly balanced 'Mini Teams' of between 9-12 players (with goalies) within each 'Cohort Group'
- Associations have the ability to rebalance 'Mini Teams' if they are not competitive as long as players remain within their 'Cohort Group'
- Associations have the ability to assign specific coaches to a 'Mini Team' or move them between teams to share resources and experience
- 'Mini Games' would be scheduled by each Association, in partnership with Hockey Edmonton for ice availability
 - Hockey Edmonton will provide guidelines for number of games, length, uses of officials, bench protocol, etc



1. U7 Timbits

Regular programming

- Maintain Discovery, Junior and Senior one-year age groups in U7 Timbits
- Maintain Cross-Ice games for Senior Timbits
- No changes to formal game start times
- Game play will be 4v4 or 3v3 if short players
- No Officials

Cohort Groups

- Use skill based physical distancing sessions to evaluate players into 'Cohort Groups'
- 'Cohort Group' sizes for U7 should be 34-40 as Coaches will form part of the 'Cohort Group'
- Allows Coaches to be in contact with younger players to better assist with their development, injuries, etc.
- Teams will not change with transition to regular season and 'Cohort Groups'



2. U9 (formerly Novice)

Regular Programming

- Maintain two-year age groups in U9
- Maintain half-ice games
- 6 'Tiers' in U9 (assist in transition to regular season)
- Game play will be 4v4 or 3v3 if short players

Cohort Groups

- Use skill based physical distancing sessions to evaluate players into 'Cohort Groups'
- 'Cohort Group' sizes for U9 should be between 35-40 players as coaches will form part of the 'Cohort Group'
- Allows coaches to be in contact with the younger players to better assist with their development and injuries, etc.
- Ease of moving to two teams once regular season phase begins without any further evaluation required
- Mini Teams within each 'Cohort Group' of 9-10 players (no goalies) to allow for three or four mini teams per 'Cohort Group'



3. U11 and U13 (formerly Atom and Peewee)

Regular Programming

- Maintain two-year age groups
- Maintain full ice game play
- Tiering structure and grid will remain the same (transition to regular season)
- Game Play will be 5v5, 4v4, 3v3 during the 'Development Season' phase

Cohort Groups

- Use skill based physical distancing sessions to evaluate players into 'Cohort Groups'
- 'Cohort Group' sizes for U11 and U13 are 40 – 48 players
- Coaches will not be part of the 'Cohort Group' and must physically distance on and off the ice
- Ease of transition to three teams of 15-16 players for 'Regular Season' play
- 'Cohort Groups' created based on evaluation rankings
- Mini teams within each 'Cohort Group' of between 9-12 players (with goalies) establishing three or four Mini teams per 'Cohort Group'
- Practice and Play games within the 'Cohort Group'



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4. U15/U18/U21 (formerly Bantam, Midget and Junior)

Regular Programming

- Maintain current age categories
- Maintain full ice games
- Tiering Structure and Grid will remain the same (transition to regular season)
- Game play will be 5v5, 4v4, 3v3 during 'Development Season' phase

Cohort Groups

- Use skill based physical distancing and previous playing experience to evaluate players into 'Cohort Groups'
- 'Cohort Group' sizes for U15/U18 are 36-48
- Coaches will not be part of the 'Cohort Group' and must physically distance on and off the ice
- Ease of transition to two or three teams based on registration numbers once we return to 'Regular Season' play
- Create 'Cohort Groups' based on evaluation rankings
- Mini teams can be utilized within each 'Cohort Group' of between 9-12 players (with goalies) establishing three or four Mini teams per 'Cohort Group'
- Practice and Play games with the 'Cohort Group'
- U21 (JR C) may follow a different path. To be determined

Body Checking and Non-Body Checking

- There will be both body checking and non-body checking 'Cohort Groups'



D. Regular Season

Hockey Edmonton and Edmonton Federation Hockey League will continue to follow the lead of Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta in order to determine an appropriate time to transition from the 'Development Season' to a normal return to hockey 'Regular Season'. We remain optimistic that we will be able to transition to a traditional 'Regular Season' in accordance with past season guidelines but will only do so once it is safe for all of our participants and we have received approval from Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta.

By evaluating players during the Skill Development and Evaluation Phase, we are able to transition from the 'Development Season' to 'Regular Season' without any further evaluation of players. Coaches and Team officials will be able to take into account hockey IQ, competition level, and improvement over the 'Development Season' prior to splitting the players into formal teams. Therefore, formal teams will not be created solely based on the skill evaluations and players will be able to advance on their previous rankings. In this scenario, teams should be more accurately evaluated for the 'Regular Season' than they have in the past with the benefits of both the Evaluation and Development Season phases.

8.0 Referees

Clarification still needs to be made with regards to the use of referees. Hockey Canada, Hockey Alberta and North Region Referee Committee Executives will determine training and clinic protocols.

Hockey Edmonton is waiting for further clarification from Alberta Health Services and Hockey Alberta regarding several important clarifications regarding referees, including:

- Are Officials considered part of the 'Cohort Group'?
- Can they effectively do their job while Physically Distancing?
- Are there enough Officials who would be able to commit to officiate all games within a 'Cohort Group' to ensure appropriate scheduling?

9.0 Coaches, Team Officials and Off-Ice Officials

Clarification still needs to be determined with regard to coaches, team officials and off-ice officials. Hockey Canada and Hockey Alberta will determine clinic protocols and certification requirements for coaches and team officials.

Hockey Edmonton will provide guidelines to assist in determining proper usage for coaches, managers and other team officials such as:

- How will the roles of coaches and team officials change?
- Who will be responsible for contact tracking and symptom screening prior to session arrival?
- Who will need to use PPE to protect players and stakeholders?

Hockey Edmonton will continue to work with the City of Edmonton and Interlock MHA's to determine the appropriate usage of off-ice officials.



10.0 FAQ's Hockey Edmonton Return to Play

General Questions

1. Are players allowed to opt out of the Skills and Evaluation and Development Phases and rejoin their association for the Regular Season?

No, players must be registered with a Hockey Edmonton Club, District or Operating Area from the beginning of the season in order to participate in all phases of Return to Play including the Regular Season.

2. Can my child be apart of multiple 'Cohort Groups' As an example, can they belong to a school based Cohort as well as a Hockey 'Cohort Group'?

Alberta Health Services Cohort guidelines state that "Athletes should not belong to multiple sport mini-leagues; they should select one sports cohort for the duration of Stage 2." They would be permitted to belong to another sports cohort that is operating under the 'Physical Distancing' guidelines. For example, a power skating or skills program that is utilizing 'Physical Distancing.'

3. Do athletes and coaches have to maintain social distancing at all times, or can it just be minimized?

When using 'Physical Distancing' procedures, it is imperative that all participants remain 2 metres apart during the training session. When using 'Cohort Group' procedures, participants are reminded to minimize the amount of contact during off ice and dressing room situations.

4. Why is Physical Distancing mandatory on the players bench and in dressing rooms if they are within their 'Cohort Group'?

This is an Alberta Health Services guideline and a Hockey Alberta mandate.

Technically, there should be no activities with any close contact. However, if the activity must have close contact, such as hockey, then the contact should only take place when it is necessary. All other efforts to 'Physically Distance' must be taken including on players benches and dressing rooms.

5. Why do we have mini-teams? Why can't we just do regular team sizes our designated 'Cohort Groups'?

There is not enough room on the players benches or in dressing rooms to accommodate full teams and allow them to 'Physically Distance' safely. As per Alberta Health Services "Note: Even while using cohorting, physical distancing must be maintained in all aspects of hockey activity except while participants are on the ice. (For example, dressing rooms, benches, and in public areas)."



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Skill Development And Evaluations Questions

6. Why are the initial skates just based on individual skill evaluations?

This is in order to adhere to the 'Physically Distanced' guidelines in order to evaluate players and place them in further 'Cohort Groups'. More skills based sessions mean a larger sample size for the evaluators. If a player has an abnormally poor or good skate, it will impact their overall rankings less, creating a more accurate score of the players' average ability.

7. Would players released from Elite Clubs need to isolate for 14 days prior to participating in community evaluations?

No, technically they would be going from a 'Cohort Group' to 'Physically Distanced' evaluations at their District or Operating Area. However, for later releases and depending on the stage of the District or Operating area evaluations, the player may need to isolate before engaging with their assigned community 'Cohort Group'

Contact Tracing and Screening Questions

8. How will Hockey Edmonton handle contact tracing and symptom screening?

Hockey Alberta has set guidelines to follow to ensure all interactions are tracked and that symptomatic players do not participate in any activities. We are actively considering different solutions to make this process as efficient as possible for athletes, parents and associations. However, regardless of the process, this will be a required step prior to participation in any session.

9. What happens if a player answers yes to any of the symptom screening questions?

Any player who answers YES to any of the questions may no longer participate in the program until a minimum 14 day quarantine period has elapsed or they have provided a negative Covid-19 test and all symptoms have been resolved.

10. What happens if there is a positive test within a 'Cohort Group'? If that participant gets tested again and the result is negative, can they return to Hockey activities?

There is a formal reporting process if any participant contracts Covid-19. Hockey Edmonton will take all direction from Alberta Health Services. We do not have any more clarity at this time and may not have more clarity as our programs begin. Alberta Health Services is treating each situation differently and are not providing any concrete 'what if's'. We must simply follow the established reporting guidelines and take direction as it is provided to us.



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11.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 (November 1st, 2020 Regular Season Start Date)

EFHL Proposed Season Structure and Monthly Schedule																
Division	September Schedule		October Schedule		November Schedule		December Schedule		January Schedule		February Schedule		March Schedule		Totals	
	Practices	SAG	Practices	SAG	Practices	RND 1	Practices	RND 2	Practices	RND 2	Practices	RND 2	Practices	RND 2	Practices	Games
U7 Initiation	4	N/A	4	N/A	4	N/A	2	N/A	2	N/A	4	N/A	2	N/A	18	N/A
U9 Novice	4	4	4	4	2	5	2	2	3	4	3	4	2	3	18	18
U11 Atom	4	4	4	4	2	6	2	3	3	4	3	5	0	PO	18	18
U13 Peewee	4	4	4	4	2	6	2	3	3	4	3	5	0	PO	18	18
U15 Bantam	2	2	4	4	2	6	2	3	3	4	3	5	0	PO	18	18
U18 Midget	2	2	4	4	2	6	2	3	3	4	3	5	0	PO	18	18
Recreational	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	3	0	4	0	4	0	2	1	18

Assumptions:

- Season Practice totals include practices and SAG sessions held during October
- Full league play would not commence until November 1st, Development and SAG within association cohort up until that point
- Minor Hockey Week would continue to be a fixture between January 8-17th as a celebration of hockey
- With delayed season starts there would be limited or no break weekends
- Season end date of March 31st cannot be pushed into April-unless City of Edmonton accommodates
- Very few or no tournaments will be offered if at all during the 2020-2021 season due to travel and group gatherings
- Immediate Cancellation of Timbits Fall Festival due to large gatherings and consideration for future years if warranted
- Potential Cancellation of Timbits Spring Jamboree due to large gatherings
- Novice Jamboree/Games continue due to no large gatherings or events
- Playoffs would continue in March 2021 for U11 to U18 divisions



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Appendix 2 (December 1st, 2020 Regular Season Start Date)

EFHL Proposed Season Structure and Monthly Schedule																
	September Schedule		October Schedule		November Schedule		December Schedule		January Schedule		February Schedule		March Schedule		Totals	
Division	Season Structure		Season Structure		Season Structure		Season Structure		Season Structure		Season Structure		Season Structure		Season Structure	
	Practices	SAG	Practices	SAG	Practices	SAG	Practices	RND 1	Practices	RND 2	Practices	RND 2	Practices	RND 2	Practices	Games
U7 Initiation	4	N/A	4	N/A	4	N/A	2	N/A	2	N/A	4	N/A	2	N/A	18	N/A
U9 Novice	4	4	4	4	2	5	2	2	3	4	3	4	2	3	18	18
U11 Atom	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	6	1	5	1	7	0	PO	18	18
U13 Peewee	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	6	1	5	1	7	0	PO	18	18
U15 Bantam	2	2	4	4	4	4	0	6	1	5	1	7	0	PO	18	18
U18 Midget	2	2	4	4	4	4	0	6	1	5	1	7	0	PO	18	18
Recreational	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	3	0	4	0	4	0	2	1	18

Assumptions:

Season Practice totals include practices and SAG sessions held during October and November

Full league play would not commence until DECEMBER 1st, Development and SAG within association cohort up until that point

Minor Hockey Week would continue to be a fixture between January 8-17th as a celebration of hockey

With delayed season starts there would be limited or no break weekends

Season end date of March 31st cannot be pushed into April-unless City of Edmonton accommodates

Very few or no tournaments will be offered if at all during the 2020-2021 season due to travel and group gatherings

Immediate Cancellation of Timbits Fall Festival due to large gatherings and consideration for future years if warranted

Potential Cancellation of Timbits Spring Jamboree due to large gatherings

Novice Jamboree/Games continue due to no large gatherings or events

Playoffs would continue in March 2021 for U11 to U18 divisions



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Appendix 3 (January 1st, 2021 Regular Season Start Date)

EFHL Proposed Season Structure and Monthly Schedule																
	September Schedule		October Schedule		November Schedule		December Schedule		January Schedule		February Schedule		March Schedule		Totals	
Division	Season Structure		Season Structure		Season Structure		Season Structure		Season Structure		Season Structure		Season Structure		Season Structure	
	Practices	SAG	Practices	SAG	Practices	SAG	Practices	RND 1	Practices	RND 2	Practices	RND 2	Practices	RND 2	Practices	Games
U7 Initiation	4	N/A	4	N/A	4	N/A	2	N/A	2	N/A	4	N/A	2	N/A	18	N/A
U9 Novice	4	4	4	4	2	5	2	2	3	4	3	4	2	3	18	18
U11 Atom	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	3	1	5	1	7	0	PO	23	12
U13 Peewee	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	3	1	5	1	7	0	PO	23	12
U15 Bantam	2	2	4	4	4	4	2	3	1	5	1	7	0	PO	23	12
U18 Midget	2	2	4	4	4	4	2	3	1	5	1	7	0	PO	23	12
Recreational	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	2	0	4	0	4	0	4	1	18

Assumptions:

Season Practice totals include practices and SAG sessions held during October, November and December

Full league play would not commence until JANUARY 1st, Development and SAG within association cohort up until that point

Minor Hockey Week would continue to be a fixture between January 8-17th as a celebration of hockey

With delayed season starts there would be limited or no break weekends

Season end date of March 31st cannot be pushed into April-unless City of Edmonton accommodates

Very few or no tournaments will be offered if at all during the 2020-2021 season due to travel and group gatherings

Immediate Cancellation of Timbits Fall Festival due to large gatherings and consideration for future years if warranted

Potential Cancellation of Timbits Spring Jamboree due to large gatherings

Novice Jamboree/Games continue due to no large gatherings or events

Playoffs would continue in March 2021 for U11 to U18 divisions



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Appendix 4 (U9 Cohort Groups Example and Transition)

U9 Cohorts (3 and/or 4 mini teams)							
Balanced Mini Teams in each Cohort							
Players	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	Cohort 5	Cohort 6	Total
60-80	30 or 36-40	30 or 36-40					2
90-120	30 or 36-40	30 or 36-40	30 or 36-40				3
120-160	30 or 36-40	30 or 36-40	30 or 36-40	30 or 36-40			4
160-200	30 or 36-40	30 or 36-40	30 or 36-40	30 or 36-40	30 or 36-40		5
202-240	30 or 36-40	30 or 36-40	30 or 36-40	30 or 36-40	30 or 36-40	30 or 36-40	6

Notes:

- Cohorts can have either 3 or 4 mini-teams
- Cohorts do not need to have the same number of players and mini-teams (ex. Cohort 2 has 4 mini-teams and Cohort 3 has 3 mini-teams)
- Mini-team sizes should fall within 9-12 players each
- If numbers fall outside these ranges, please consult with Hockey Edmonton
- Cohort Groups can be transitioned to Alberta One Tiering Grid once formal team formation is considered.
- Teams within Cohort Groups should be evenly balanced
- Small associations have the ability to place like skilled players in mini-games against like players to ensure competition is fair

Examples of Cohort to Tiering Transition

U9 Cohorts (3 and/or 4 mini teams)							
Mini Teams to Tiering Transition Examples							
Players	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5	Tier 6	Total
60-80		Cohort 1A	Cohort 1B	Cohort 2A	Cohort 2B		4
90-120	Cohort 1A	Cohort 1B	Cohort 2A	Cohort 2B	Cohort 3A	Cohort 3B	6
120-160	Cohort 1A	Cohort 1B	Cohort 2AB	Cohort 3AB	Cohort 4A	Cohort 4B	8
160-200	Cohort 1A	Cohort 1B, 2A	Cohort 2B, 3A	Cohort 3B, 4A	Cohort 4B, 5A	Cohort 5B	10
202-240	Cohort 1AB	Cohort 2AB	Cohort 3AB	Cohort 4 AB	Cohort 5 AB	Cohort 6AB	12

Notes:

- Initial sizes of 'Cohort Groups' will impact above example
- Association may select different tiering levels where Hockey Alberta Tiering Grid provides choice between to different tiers for placement
- This is an example only and any questions should be directed to Hockey Edmonton Operations



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Appendix 5 (U11 and U13 Cohort Groups Example and Transition)

U11 and U13 Cohorts (3 and/or 4 mini teams)							
Balanced Mini Teams in each Cohort							
Players	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	Cohort 5	Cohort 6	Total
72-96	36-48	36-48					2
108-144	36-48	36-48	36-48				3
144-182	36-48	36-48	36-48	36-48			4
180-240	36-48	36-48	36-48	36-48	36-48		5
216-288	36-48	36-48	36-48	36-48	36-48	36-48	6

Notes:

- Cohorts can have either 3 or 4 mini-teams
- Cohorts do not need to have the same number of players and mini-teams (ex. Cohort 2 has 4 mini-teams and Cohort 3 has 3 mini-teams)
- Mini-team sizes should fall within 9-12 players each
- If numbers fall outside these ranges, please consult with Hockey Edmonton
- Cohort Groups can be transitioned to Alberta One Tiering Grid once formal team formation is considered.
- Teams within Cohort Groups should be evenly balanced
- Small associations have the ability to place like skilled players in mini-games against like players to ensure competition is fair

Examples of Cohort to Tiering Transition

U11 and U13 Cohorts (3 and/or 4 mini teams)							
Mini Teams to Tiering Transition							
Players	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5	Tier 6	Total
72-96	Cohort 1A	Cohort 1B	Cohort 1C	Cohort 2A	Cohort 2B	Cohort 3C	6
108-144	Cohort 1A	Cohort 1BC	Cohort 2AB	Cohort 2C	Cohort 3 AB	Cohort 3C	9
144-182	Cohort 1AB	Cohort 1C, 2A	Cohort 2BC	Cohort 3AB	Cohort 3B, 4A	Cohort 4BC	12
180-240	Cohort 1AB	Cohort 1C, 2AB	Cohort 2C, 3A	Cohort 3BC, 4A	Cohort 4BC	Cohort 5ABC	15
216-288	Cohort 1ABC	Cohort 2ABC	Cohort 3ABC	Cohort 4ABC	Cohort 5ABC	Cohort 6ABC	18

Notes:

- Initial sizes of 'Cohort Groups' will impact above example
- Association may select different tiering levels where Hockey Alberta Tiering Grid provides choice between to different tiers for placement
- This is an example only and any questions should be directed to Hockey Edmonton Operations



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Appendix 6 (U15 and U18 Cohort Groups Example and Transition)

U15 and U18 Cohorts (3 and/or 4 mini teams)									
Balanced Mini Teams in each Cohort									
Body Checking Cohort					Non Body Checking Cohort				
Players		Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3		Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Total
0-71		Even Split				Even Split			2
72-96		36-48				36-48			2
108-120	Option 1	36-48				36	36		3
	Option 2	36	36			36-48			3
121-144	Option 1	48				36-48	36-48		3
	Option 2	36-48	36-48			48			3
144-192		36-48	36-48			36-48	36-48		4

Notes:

- Cohorts can have either 3 or 4 mini-teams
- Cohorts do not need to have the same number of players and mini-teams (ex. Cohort 2 has 4 mini-teams and Cohort 3 has 3 mini-teams)
- Mini-team sizes should fall within 9-12 players each
- If numbers fall outside these ranges, please consult with Hockey Edmonton
- Cohort Groups can be transitioned to Alberta One Tiering Grid once formal team formation is considered.
- Teams within Cohort Groups should be evenly balanced
- Small associations have the ability to place like skilled players in mini-games against like players to ensure competition is fair

Examples of Cohort to Tiering Transition

U15 and U18 Cohorts (3 and/or 4 mini teams)									
Mini Teams to Tiering Transition Examples									
Body Checking Tiers					Non Body Checking Tiers				
Players		Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3		Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Total
0-71			Cohort 1A	Cohort 1B			Cohort 1A	Cohort 1B	4
72-96		Cohort 1A	Cohort 1B	Cohort 1C		Cohort 1A	Cohort 1B	Cohort 1C	6
108-120	Option 1	Cohort 1A	Cohort 1B	Cohort 1C		Cohort 1A	Cohort 1B, 2A	Cohort 2B	7
	Option 2	Cohort 1A	Cohort 1B, 2A	Cohort 2B		Cohort 1A	Cohort 1B	Cohort 1C	7
121-144	Option 1	Cohort 1A	Cohort 1B	Cohort 1C		Cohort 1AB	Cohort 1C, 2A	Cohort 2BC	9
	Option 2	Cohort 1AB	Cohort 1C, 2A	Cohort 2BC		Cohort 1A	Cohort 1B	Cohort 1C	9
144-192		Cohort 1AB	Cohort 1C, 2A	Cohort 2BC		Cohort 1AB	Cohort 1C, 2A	Cohort 2BC	12

Notes:

- Initial sizes of 'Cohort Groups' will impact above examples
- Associations may select different tiering levels where Hockey Alberta Tiering Grid provides choice between different tiers for placement
- This is an example only and any questions should be directed to Hockey Edmonton Operation

