



## **METRO WEST FORCE FAIR PLAY POLICY**

### **Message from our Board of Directors**

Metro West Female Hockey Association is an athlete-focused, recreational, grass roots organization. We aim to grow **strong leaders** through the delivery of inclusive, rewarding and unique experiences for **all** of our membership.

As such, our programming across all of our levels will strive to provide fair opportunity for all, regardless of skill level, to develop and to enjoy the overall experience of being a MWF hockey player.

In addition, we will endeavour to ensure that all our teams are competitive and that our coaches are equipped and informed such that our players can thrive in a positive environment.

The principles and expectations expressed in this guidance cannot be disregarded or circumvented by any of our players, coaches, parents or officials.

Everyone is accountable for their decisions and behaviour.

Board of Directors  
Metro West Female Hockey Association – August 2025

### **Association Principles**

- MWFHA ascribes to the tenets of the [Hockey Canada Fair Play Code \(for Players, Coaches, Parents, Officials and Organizers\)](#)
- MWFHA values player development and positive experience over winning – we will win through development and not at the cost of development
- MWFHA players, regardless of skill level, deserve the opportunity to play and develop in all situations
- MWFHA issues can be resolved through open communication and mutual respect



### **Coaching Staff Expectations**

- MWFHA coaches must follow the principles of Hockey Nova Scotia's [The Shift Forward](#) which are built upon the mutual obligations of safety and respect.
- MWFHA coaches are our most influential leaders - we expect them to be diligent stewards of this Fair Play Policy.
- MWFHA coaches are not coaching a professional team – they are coaching our children. Their goal is to develop our athletes to reach their potential in a positive safe environment.
- MWFHA coaches will ensure that all of their players will receive fair ice time. As such:
  - o Less skilled players will not be assigned less game-time.
  - o All players will be given fair opportunity to experience penalty kill and power play situations.

### **Parent Expectations**

- MWFHA parents must adhere to the [MWF Parent Code of Conduct](#).
- MWFHA parents must understand the challenges of measuring fair playing time and that absolute equity is not possible. They are to give the benefit of the doubt to our coaching staff over at least 3 games.
- If, following at least 3 games, MWFHA parents believe there is a contravention of our Fair Play policy, they must:
  1. Follow the 24 hour rule regarding coaching staff engagement;
  2. Discuss their concern first with a Team Representative (i.e. Coach, Assistant Coach, Manager);
  3. Seek resolution with the Coaching Staff;
  4. If resolution is not achieved, submit a complaint to VP Coach Development/VP Safe Sport who will work to provide an Association-led resolution.

### **Fair Ice Time Management Guidance**

See Annex A - Fair Play Table By Level.

MWFHA acknowledges that, given the dynamic and complex nature of our game, absolutely equal ice-time is impossible to achieve. Coaching staff are encouraged to clearly communicate the reasons for unequal icetime to the team and, where appropriate to the parents, either pre-emptively or at the earliest opportunity.

As the MWFHA start point, players shall not be removed from regular rotation in order to gain a perceived advantage over opponents except for very specific circumstances. The



following reasons will inform coaches' discretion/best judgement as to ice-time management and shortened benches:

For Safety Reasons

- Injury
- Player not feeling mentally or physically prepared (as determined by the player)

For Discipline Reasons. Following intentional failures by players to adhere to codes or team rules, ice time restriction can be applied after explanation to the player.

For Meaningful Games. Those games where a loss or tie would significantly affect the opportunity for a team to participate in further competition. MWFHA recognizes the following as meaningful:

- Tournament Semi-Final and Championship Games;
- Playoff Games (any); and,
- Hockey Nova Scotia's Day of Champions/Provincial Championship Games

MWFHA **does not** recognize as meaningful any regular season games or any tournament round robin games.

For Select Game Circumstances. Up to an assigned game time percentage limitation, for meaningful moments in a meaningful game where the game is close and there remains a reasonable chance of win/loss/tie. For MWFHA, meaningful moments are those points in a game that typically have a greater impact on the overall game outcome. They could include (but are not limited to):

- Face Offs at the end of a period in the opposing team's zone where a team is in a position to score;
- Face Offs at the end of a period in the home zone where a team is protecting against their opponents scoring;
- To take advantage of a delayed change by an opposing team; or
- A delayed penalty call where a goaltender has been pulled to add an additional skater.

For Goaltender Management Reasons. For teams with 2 goaltenders:

- They will be rotated on a game-by-game basis or will play split games.
- Coaches can choose to replace their goalies during a game if they judge that a pause and regroup would be beneficial. However, all efforts are to be made to return the starting goalie when possible.



- Coaches can mix up the rotation to allow for back-to-back games but with the understanding that the same opportunity will alternately be provided to the other goaltender.
- No goalie will play more than 3 games in a row unless for illness or injury.
- If an [Affiliated Goalie](#) is called up as a back-up, they will only be permitted to play if the starting goalie is ill or injured. Expectations of playing time should be clearly communicated to the coach of the affiliated goalie and their family upon the request for affiliated player opportunity.

For Overtime/Shootouts. For overtime or shootouts during a meaningful game, Coaches have full discretion as to player selection and ice time management.

Equalizing Playing Time. Coaches are to make all efforts, outside of meaningful moments, to equalise playing time such that any time a player is asked to sit, they are given alternate opportunities elsewhere in the game to recoup this playing time.

### **Association Accountability**

Monitoring. All membership – players, parents, coaches, officials and Board Members – will ensure that we adhere to our principles and to our Fair Play policy. Deliberate and systematic contraventions will be addressed accordingly.

Investigating. Allegations of failure to adhere to our Fair Play Policy will be investigated. If the complaint proves founded, the next steps will be informed by the MWFHA Path to Redemption Matrix.

### **Annex A - Fair Play Policy by Level**

Level	Meaningful Games	Select Game Circumstances	Assigned Power Play/Penalty Kill
U7/U9	N/A		
U11 - C/A/AA	Semi-Final and Championship Game of any Tournament  Playoff Games (any)  Hockey Nova Scotia Day of Champions/Provincial	Up to 10% of a meaningful game	No



	Championship Games		
U13 - C/A/AA	Semi-Final and Championship Game of any Tournament  Playoff Games (any);  Hockey Nova Scotia Day of Champions/Provincial Championship Games	Up to 10% of a meaningful game	No
U15 - C/A/AA	Semi-Final and Championship Game of any Tournament  Playoff Games (any)  Hockey Nova Scotia Day of Champions/Provincial Championship Games	Up to 10% of a meaningful game	No
U13AAA	Semi-Final and Championship Game of any Tournament  Playoff Games (any)  Hockey Nova Scotia Day of Champions/Provincial Championship Games	Up to 15% of a meaningful game	No
U15AAA	Semi-Final and Championship Game of any Tournament  Playoff Games (any)  Hockey Nova Scotia Day of Champions/Provincial Championship Games	Up to 15% of a meaningful game	Yes - only after Christmas with the understanding that all players will be assigned a role and all will have a reasonable expectation to play special teams
U18 - C/A	Semi-Final and Championship Game of	Up to 10% of a meaningful	No



	any Tournament  Playoff Games (any)  Hockey Nova Scotia Day of Champions/Provincial Championship Games	game	
U18AA	Semi-Final and Championship Game of any Tournament  Playoff Games (any)  Hockey Nova Scotia Day of Champions/Provincial Championship Games	Up to 15% of a meaningful game	Yes - only after Christmas with the understanding that all players will be assigned a role and all will have a reasonable expectation to play special teams

### **Annex B - Key Questions and Answers**

(Q) When is a coach allowed to shorten the bench to try and win a game?

(A) As stated in the MWFHA Principles, MWFHA values player development and positive experience over winning – we will win through development and not at the cost of development. With this in mind, all MWFHA players, regardless of skill level, deserve the opportunity to play and develop in all situations.

However, exceptions can be made for safety, discipline, goaltender management, overtime/shootout or during select game circumstances in meaningful games. See Table - Fair Play Policy By Level.

(Q) Is a coach expected to rotate lines during all parts of a game, including all critical moments?

(A) Yes - all MWFHA players, regardless of skill level, deserve the opportunity to play and develop in all situations.



However, exceptions can be made for safety, discipline, goaltender management, overtime/shootout or during select game circumstances in meaningful games. See Table - Fair Play Policy By Level.

(Q) Can a coach assign 1st, 2nd and 3rd lines versus striving for three wholly balanced lines?

(A) Yes - line assignment is at the coach's discretion provided that their assigned ice time respects the MWFHA Fair Play Policy.

(Q) If a line has missed a shift due to a meaningful moment, can they be cycled quicker such that their playing time is equalised?

(A) Yes. Coaches can cycle their lines in ways that are not absolutely symmetrical. It does not always have to be "1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3". For instance, it could be, "1, 2, 3, 2, 3, 1, 3, 1, 2"

(Q) Could a coach treat a face-off following an offside as a meaningful moment?

(A) As long as there is the potential of a clear advantage, any moment could be considered a meaningful moment. However, in making these types of decisions, Coaches must account for the 10 or 15% of game time limitation and also strive to find ways to give back that time to players that may be asked to sit.

(Q) Can a coach shorten their bench during overtime?

(A) Yes. For overtime and shootouts of meaningful games, Coaches can make player selection decisions that puts their team in the most advantageous position to win.

(Q) Is a coach permitted to pull their goalie?

(A) Yes, if a coach judges that a regroup would be beneficial. All efforts are to be made to return a pulled goalie once they are again ready.

(Q) Can a coach increase individual player shifts to make up for a player shortage?

(A) Yes but only when they are short players due to an absence. All efforts are to be made to use [Affiliated Players](#) to mitigate any shortage. In addition, coaches are strongly encouraged to mitigate absences across the entire team (i.e. pull up a defense to play forward or manage the hole at right wing vs at centre). In parallel, coaches are to endeavour to allocate any additional icetime when playing short across all players. For example, if a coach is rotating 2 centres through 3 lines, the wingers will be assigned penalty kills.