

## **The Ontario Hockey Federation Announces Key Changes to Player Movement Regulations**

*After over a year of consultation and study, the Ontario Hockey Federation and its Minor Hockey Members agreed to a historic change to the Minor Hockey landscape.*

Cambridge, Ontario – December 17, 2024 –The Ontario Hockey Federation (OHF) has announced a series of updates to its Player Movement Regulations to enhance the participant’s experience and accessibility, effective for the 2025–2026 hockey season. These changes aim to update current policies and create a structure that better serves players and families across the province.

On Saturday, December 14 in Toronto, all Members of the OHF attended a meeting of Members. There was a vote that was carried to remove residency regulations in Minor Hockey for the U10 age group and above in all categories from AAA to House League inclusive. Specifically, the four (4) Minor Hockey Members include the Minor Hockey Alliance of Ontario (ALLIANCE), the Greater Toronto Hockey League (GTHL), the Northern Ontario Hockey Association (NOHA) and the Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA).

*“This is a transformational and historic moment for hockey in the OHF,” said Phillip McKee, Executive Director. “These changes are designed to create a more inclusive and player-focused system, ensuring every participant has fun and the opportunity to thrive. Through collaboration and listening to our hockey community, we are shaping a stronger future for the game.”*

Residency rules (play where you live) has been in place for decades, and in many cases, dating back to the inception of minor hockey in Ontario. The GTHL and NOHA had fewer restrictions, and this decision gives the same privilege to all players in the U10 age group and above in the OHF.

*“These changes are the result of extensive feedback and unprecedented collaboration with our Members, Minor Hockey Associations, and participants, and we are confident they will positively impact hockey families across the OHF.” John Kastner, Chair of the Board*

This initiative aligns boys' and co-ed hockey with the structure of the Ontario Women’s Hockey Association (OWHA) and the standards followed by most sports organizations across Ontario and Canada.

The conversation around removing residency rules began in 2022, leading to the formation of a dedicated committee in March 2024. Chaired by former OHF Chair of the Board, Tony Foresi, the committee included representatives from all four (4) Minor Member Partners, along with OHF Board Members. The process involved gathering input through parent surveys and town hall meetings with Associations. Most recently, on Saturday November 30, over 200 Minor Hockey Representatives joined the conversation in Toronto as the final details were discussed.

### **Key Points and Regulation Changes**

#### **Enhanced Player Movement**

Beginning in the 2025–2026 season, OHF Minor Hockey Players in the U10 age group and above will have the opportunity to participate with the Association of their choice regardless of Category (AAA, AA, A, BB, B etc.).

### **House League for U9 and Below Participants**

House League players in the age group of U9 and below can continue to play anywhere within OHF.

### **Local Programming for Younger Participants in MD and Select**

Players in the U9 age group and below will participate within their Member (ALLIANCE, GTHL, NOHA, and OMHA) under Member Regulations for Select and Minor Development hockey.

### **Pause on addition of Representative Teams for U10 and Above**

The OHF is implementing a temporary hold on the addition of Rep teams at U10 age group and above by Associations and OHF Members. This hold will allow for a thorough review and adjustment of the number of teams at each age group and Category.

### **Development of Geographically Structured Leagues**

To improve accessibility and participation, the OHF, in conjunction with our Minor Members, will work to establish geographically structured leagues. This new framework will reduce travel burdens and promote a more inclusive hockey environment across all regions.

### **Increased Penalties for Tampering**

The OHF and its Minor Members will introduce timelines and increased penalties for recruiting players, during the current season, on other teams for the next season. Such penalties will apply to anyone involved with a team.

### **The Work is Not Done**

The Player Movement Committee will remain active, adjusting the Rules and Regulations for the 2026-2027 season and addressing any unintended consequences that may arise.

### **Immediate Application of Adopted Regulations**

The adopted Regulations will be effective immediately, with the exception that rostering and affiliation for the 2024-2025 season will remain in effect for the remainder of the 2024-2025 season.

### **Upcoming Engagement Sessions**

- OHF All-Association Call: Monday, January 13, 2025
- Coaches Session to cover team formation instructions: Monday, January 20, 2025

### **A Vision for the Future of Hockey in Ontario**

*The Player Movement rule changes will bring about a new era for the sport, where players will have the choice to play for the association that they best align with or that offers a level of play they don't currently have in their home center, while extending the opportunity for engagement and development in the sport they love. Amanda Chapman, NRP Parent and Member of Oro Minor Hockey*

From the beginning, this initiative has focused on prioritizing the player and their family. The OHF and its Minor Members remains dedicated to fostering the growth and sustainability of hockey in Ontario while ensuring the sport remains fun, inclusive, and accessible for everyone involved.

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### **About Ontario Hockey Federation**

The Ontario Hockey Federation (OHF) is the largest member of Hockey Canada operating alongside Hockey Eastern Ontario (HEO) and Hockey Northwestern Ontario (HNO) as the Hockey Canada governing bodies for amateur hockey in Ontario. Recognized as a Provincial Sport Organization for the sport of hockey by the Province of Ontario, the OHF operates within a structure that is comprised of seven Members: the Minor Hockey Alliance of Ontario (ALLIANCE), Greater Toronto Hockey League (GTHL), Northern Ontario Hockey Association (NOHA), Ontario Hockey Association (OHA), Ontario Hockey League (OHL), Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA), and Ontario Women's Hockey Association (OWHA). From season to season the OHF provides administrative resources, coordinates programs, services and events for hockey participants and the Members.

**For more information about the upcoming changes or the review process, please contact:**

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