

Q: Why the change to an “A” centre currently?

A: Recently the OMHA decided to re-categorize its groupings, eliminating BB, CC, DD base categories as well as “AE” designation. Centres now have base categories of AAA, AA, A, B, C, D only. CMHA would be graded as a “B” centre under the new decision. However, CMHA had an option to appeal the base category and submit to OMHA for “Review” as an A centre. CMHA did this and OMHA’s committee reviewed the application and subsequently granted approval to transition to “A”, feeling Collingwood met all key considerations.

Q: What are the benefits to being an A centre?

A: While there are several, the most compelling benefit is improving skill development for kids. This falls under section b. for CMHA’s mission statement. This is especially true for the younger age groups where the promotion of skill development is critical. Kid’s playing at higher levels of hockey mean they improve in skills and abilities overall. Player safety is also a key factor. “A” hockey enables kids to play in their own age cohort at the representative level. Major/Minor streams allow kids to develop while feeling safe and comfortable on and off the ice. Especially noteworthy, this gives your child a better chance to make a rep team in their minor year.

Q: Why does Collingwood suit becoming an A centre?

A: There exist many reasons for this transition, however most important are the following: CMHA’s registration numbers are consistent with other A centers throughout Ontario according to OMHA data; our successes (OMHA playdowns, Tournament victories, SilverStick representation) as a BB center have been extraordinary over the last 10 years and consistently place high in standings at almost every level; the OMHA fully supports our review application and they agree that Collingwood meets their criteria for offering A level hockey; lastly, Collingwood fits well as a catchment area exactly halfway between Owen Sound and Barrie, thereby creating a more local option for families seeking to play higher level hockey.

Q: What league would CMHA play in?

A: At present we don’t have a definitive idea on our home league, as the OMHA has a Re-structuring committee reviewing current set-up. However, their mission is to reduce travel requirements for centres, as directed under Hockey Canada. Of consideration at this point is the York-Simcoe Minor Hockey League. Almost all the teams in this league are within 1 hour from Collingwood, Markham being the furthest at 1.5 hr drive. Currently, we travel Interlock to Parry Sound Muskoka which is 2 hrs.

Q: How many games would be played in a season?

A: In a normal season, CMHA teams would play 20-22 games. Under the York-Simcoe league, teams would play 23-25 games. A slight increase in game scheduling but also a greater variety of teams being competed against.

Q: With approximately 400 members in CMHA, how does Collingwood compare to other centre’s size?

A: Under OMHA data provided, CMHA aligns nicely in the middle with other centres we forecast to play in an A loop.

Q: If my child doesn’t make an “A” team, would there be other rep hockey levels available?

A: Yes, but it always depends on registration numbers. As an “A” centre, CMHA has the option to create additional representative teams which would likely be a mixed cohort competing at the B level.

Q: If Collingwood were a “B” centre, would we be able to have additional teams the same way?

A: No. As a B centre, Collingwood can officially only field a B team and a C team. We would have to make application to create a “3rd entry” which would play at the D level. Of note: there is no option to move up to “A”.

Q: Does every CMHA age group have to play at the “A” level?

A: No. If at the start of a season it is determined that the minor team will not be competitive at the ‘A’ level, the team can apply to play in the Georgian Bay ‘B’ Division, they would remain at this level for the year including playoffs – this only applies if we have entered a Major team at the ‘A’ level. Keep in mind, while this enables your kids to “win more”, doesn’t equate to “improving more”.

Q: What would Playdowns look like?

A: CMHA teams would participate in playdowns at the same level that they play the regular season. Just as in other seasons, they would be seeded for group play based on regular season performance.

Q: What would Local League look like?

A: Local League would not change. Similar to other year’s CMHA mission statement is to still offer LL hockey level for all kids to choose. The playing loop would remain Georgian Bay MHL.

Q: Would Collingwood be allowed to take NRP’s (Non-Resident Players)?

A: Yes. CMHA would have the ability to allow or not allow up to (3) NRP’s per Rep team. This would be up to the discretion of CMHA based on registration and competitiveness at each level. Please note: There are going to be new rules and regulations guiding NRP’s.

Q: Would NRP’s take my child’s spot on a team?

A: No “spots” are ever guaranteed on a team. The reality is that the better skilled players should be making the Rep spots in any hockey centre. As in other “A” centres, NRP’s help to allow them to compete at the higher level while offering it in a local setting. Please note: There are going to be new rules and regulations guiding NRP’s.

Q: What is the difference between “A” minor/major system and the “B” mixed cohort system?

A: The biggest consideration is that kids are playing in their own age group. This develops not only their skill, but confidence level. It allows for more minor kids to make the rep team in their first year and thereby develop better for their major year. 1st year kids will play the best level possible. 2nd year kids will play the best level possible.

Q: Can a Minor player play up at the Major level in “A” hockey?

A: Yes, but not immediately after transition to “A” hockey. CMHA determines this under by-law status. CMHA would like to allow the minor programs and their kids to excel at their cohort level and encourage development in the younger age groups to begin with.

Q: Does a major/minor system promote better player safety?

A: Absolutely! Kids are playing with their own cohort at the 1st Entry representative level. This is especially important when there is body contact but even incidental contact can be a contributing factor. **Example:** the (Current) mixed cohort system allows for U9-U15 players to be 24 months apart and U18 to be 36 months apart; the (Proposed) minor-major system allows for U9-U18 to be only 12 months apart. *exception is double cohort for 2nd and 3rd year U18 only.

Q: Would Registration fees go up for “A” hockey?

A: No. CMHA fees will not increase simply because of “A” Hockey. While fees would not be increased, it is important to understand that representative hockey does cost more money and there is always a “rep fee”. These fees may have to increase to cover the additional games. CMHA strives to always keep their rep fees reasonable and compared to similar centres, has always succeeded in this regard.

Q: Will teams be selected in the Spring or Fall?

A: CMHA will not be hosting Spring tryouts and prefers to host late Summer tryouts. At this time, the OMHA is transitioning away from Spring tryouts, and aiming to phase out completely within next 4 years.

Q: What is the CMHA doing to continue to improve skill development?

A: Over the past 2 years, with the centre rebrand to the Blues, CMHA has established its online merchandise store. Because of this, we have generated funds geared solely for kid’s development. Now that provincial restrictions are easing, CMHA is planning to continue it’s skill development for kids to improve in all areas, including skating, checking, edging, goaltending, etc. Furthermore, we are investigating hockey training academy’s which can also help the kids develop.

Q: Will Collingwood be competitive immediately in an “A” centre?

A: In this, the BOD is optimistic yet realistic. Although not initially strong, our focus is on the hockey development for kid’s and what is best for the future. Having said this, in any given year, we are never certain of our predicted performance regardless of A, BB or B hockey. Registration is critical to determining this as well as continuing our focus on skill development. We have consistently grown in our hockey successes over many years and can continue to do so at the next level.

Q: If we are a B center and have a really good team, can we apply to play as an A team?

A: No. “B” center associations cannot move up a level. However, an “A” centre can have teams play down a level.