

# Memo



To: Hockey Edmonton Clubs, Districts, Operating Areas, Staff  
From: Joe Spatafora, President  
CC: Hockey Alberta  
Date: 3/23/2020  
RE: **Elite Hockey Update: Elite Boundaries**

For some time, the matter of inequitable draw zones for elite (formerly AA) hockey in Edmonton has been subject to review.

At our March 19, 2020 meeting the Hockey Edmonton Board of Directors approved recommendations of the Elite Hockey Management Committee regarding boundaries (draw zones) for our male elite hockey categories of play. Key aspects of the decision include:

- Knights of Columbus will now have defined territory, in the same manner as CAC, MLAC, and SSAC.
- Equitable draw zones for Elite Hockey (male AA and AAA teams). Specifically, in terms of:
  - Registered players per draw zone
  - Male athletes playing in Tier 3 and Higher in Atom through Midget divisions of play
- A commitment to review draw zones every two (2) seasons
- A one time, transitional / grandfathering option for Edmonton resident players who played on an Edmonton male Athletic Club team in 2019-20.

This memo provides Hockey Edmonton Board Members and Operating Area boards with an update on the Hockey Edmonton Executive and Elite Hockey Management Committee's efforts to meet Hockey Alberta ADM's recommendations to define equitable player draw boundaries for the 4 male athletic clubs who operate AAA and also AA teams in Edmonton.

The new boundaries will apply for male AA / AAA categories and teams ONLY.

At this time, community hockey boundaries used by Districts and Operating Areas have not changed.

Following below is a summary of the rationale for the proposed boundaries and an explanation for why they also apply to Peewee AA.

## Elite (AA/AAA) Boundaries

Inequitable draw zones and player registrations have hampered our four (4) male athletic clubs from operating the same number of teams in each division and category of play as well as impacting competitiveness, in part, given inequities in terms of size of player pools for some time. Inequitable draw zones also create unequal opportunities for players striving to play AA and AA hockey and in effect penalize players who happen to live within one of the larger current draw zones.

In the fall of 2018, the athletic club presidents agreed in principle on a few key concepts that would allow for movement towards equitable draw zones for the clubs, specifically:

- The need to establish four distinct AA/AAA (or 'club') draw zones where KC Hockey would have defined territory as opposed to a city-wide draw;
- That given Edmonton population dynamics that any new boundary system would be specific to Elite Hockey in Edmonton. Likely, as in Calgary Elite Hockey, tradition will change, and Districts / Operating Areas may no longer be aligned with a single Athletic Club;
- On a rudimentary mapping of the city that would be subject to a rigorous review of registration data to ensure that each boundary would reflect a reasonably similar number of total registrants and of similar caliber of play; and
- On a commitment to review the draw zones every second season and modify as required to maintain equitable draw zones

These four concepts were an integral component of the agenda report presented to and approved by the Board on February 13, 2019.

Since then, drawing upon the learnings of two previous committees charged with elite committee boundary review and discussion of some additional new concepts, the Elite Hockey Management Committee determined the best option to move forward was to base boundaries on City of Edmonton Communities / Neighborhoods as portrayed in the City of Edmonton Wards maps.

Total male registration numbers as well as male registration numbers for athletes in Atom through Midget Tiers 3 and above were key parameters considered when developing the proposed equitable draw zones for elite hockey. The formation of the new draw zones will achieve the first ADM directive of creating equitable draw zones and position the committee and clubs to tackle the final requirement of improving the feeder system.

## **Transition / Grandfathering**

To facilitate transition from our existing to new environments the Hockey Edmonton Board voted to support the following recommendation of the Elite Hockey Management Committee.

- A. All players having been rostered to a Club team, including PWAA where applicable, and living within the newly established boundary for that Club in 2020-21, will be obligated to play for that Club.
- B. All players having been rostered with a Club in 2019-20 but living outside the new boundaries of that Club in 2020-21 must elect and declare if they wish to continue to play for their 2019-20 Club. Such a declaration must be made in a form to be determined and be made before May 1st, 2020. Failure to make a declaration will result in the player being required to register for tryouts with the club within whose boundaries they now reside.
- C. There will be no automatic sibling transition / grandfathering. Players entering the elite system including PWAA and having a sibling or family member rostered with a Club, but living outside that Club's boundary, may make application under the Player Movement provisions of Hockey Edmonton, using that relationship as grounds for approval.
- D. In subsequent years, should there be changes in boundaries of any or all of the Athletic Clubs, transition / grandfathering provisions will be in the discretion of the EHMC.

## **Peewee AA Update**

Two years ago, a sub-committee was struck to determine the best operational model for Peewee AA hockey within Edmonton, in part given the emergence of the Hockey Alberta AA Model.

At the April 2019 General Meeting the board received the report of the committee and carried motions where 2019-20 Peewee AA teams were to be formed and operated in the same manner in 2019-20 with a full transition to Athletic Club operation in 2020-21.

SSAC and MLAC will transition to operation of Peewee AA in their clubs for the 2020-21 season (joining CAC and KC who are currently operating in this manner) with players coming from the approved elite hockey draw zones.

Peewee AA players who played for KC and CAC in 2019-20 are eligible for the transitional / grandfathering provisions outlined above.

Peewee 1 through 6 will continue to be operated within the traditional community hockey model(s) with players coming from the approved community hockey draw zones.

## **Community Hockey**

As stated previously, be assured that player registration and team formation in Initiation through Midget Community Hockey programs operated by Districts and Operating areas are not affected by the changes to the Elite Hockey Boundaries.

In most instances, relationships and processes such as player affiliation between Athletic Clubs and Districts and Operating Areas become a little more complex.