



Fair Play Policy

The following document outlines MBDAA's *Fair Play Policy* so that all stakeholders understand the mandate set out by MBDAA's Board of Directors and Executive Members in relation to communicating The Association's vision of fair playing time for all members of Mt. Brydges Minor Hockey.

Key Factors/ Principles Leading to the Creation and Implementation of the Fair Play Policy

1. MBDAA identified a need to inspire and support coaches to continue to develop all players' strengths and weaknesses rather than focusing on developing strong players and forsaking those deemed to be weaker.
2. MBDAA follows the Hockey Canada Development Model as well as endorses the Hockey Canada Fair Play Code for Players and Coaches. Line three of the Hockey Canada Fair Play Code for Coaches states: "I will ensure that all players get equal instruction, support **and playing time.**"
3. MBDAA believes that development comes from experiencing all situations.
4. MBDAA is dedicated to creating an environment that has a strong focus on the player and what they are taking away from the game at any given time. If the player's experiences are negative, they are less likely to continue on in the sport and will be more likely to seek other recreational activities.
5. MBDAA values player development over game results.

MBDAA's Vision for Fair Play Policy

All Players-All Lines-Every Opportunity

5.5 Fair Play Policy

Mt. Brydges Minor Hockey believes that all players within our association regardless of skill level deserve the opportunity to play in all situations in order to maximize their development.

Rep, AE and Local League Teams

It is not acceptable for a coach or assistant coach to remove a player from a regular rotation on the bench in order to gain an advantage over their opponent. We ask that all coaches embrace the spirit of the Fair Play Policy and encourage the development of all players to succeed in all game situations.

- Forward lines and defense pairings should be rotated.
- Goaltenders will start and play every second game. Younger divisions may choose to split games or other arrangements (goalies playing out when not in net).



Interpretation of the Fair Play Policy

Mt. Brydges Minor Hockey recognizes there will be instances when a player will not receive equal ice. We realize that minute for minute playing time is not a reality due to the complex nature of the game of hockey. Situations will arise where it may be necessary for a coach to make difficult decisions involving their players. The following points are included to assist coaches and help them determine if action is required.

1. Safety of a player is being compromised (possible injury, player has become a target on the Play by opponent(s) etc.)
2. Disciplinary reasons as identified by the head coach. If a player intentionally displays poor conduct towards his teammates or opponents or is in breach of Mt. Brydges Minor Hockey's Respect Matters Policy the coach has the authority to use Play time as a discipline tool. *If a player is being kept off the Play for a disciplinary reason the coach must discuss the action with the player. Based on the severity of the incident coaches should use their best judgment as to the amount of shifts a player should miss. We recommend no more than 1-2 shifts per period.*
3. A player is not feeling confident in certain game situations
 - Player feels uneasy about being played in certain games situations
 - Player is not confident about a certain play the coach/s request
 - Player feels not prepared mentally or physically

When the above instances take place it is imperative that the player be communicated to directly and coached through the issues so the reasons can become clear to the player who can then alter their behavior and communicate to the parent. Mt. Brydges Minor Hockey does not expect any of these instances to become chronic. We believe that most issues can be solved through open lines of communication and the display of mutual respect.

Accountability and Management of the Fair Play Policy

Mt. Brydges Minor Hockey will continue to rely on our coaches and coaching staff to use their best judgment relative to the Fair Play Policy. Based on the complexity of the game of hockey and the countless scenarios that arise we trust our coaches, players and spectators to work together and communicate as often and openly as possible.

As a parent or guardian, if after 2 or 3 games have passed and you have waited out the 24 -hour rule and you believe your child has not experienced Fair Play you are asked to follow this process.

1. Discuss your concern with your team manager
2. Try and bring resolution on a team level

If resolution is not achieved at the team level

3. Team manager will contact your division director
4. Division director will communicate concern to the Fair Play Committee. The committee and director will investigate concern and coordinate a resolution
5. Resolution will be communicated back to parent, player and coach within 72 hours.



Regardless of the number of training sessions we watch, articles we read or contracts we sign we realize that there will still be situations where a coach's will to win may lead them to go down the path of winning at all costs and shortening the bench.

After an investigation, if a coach is found to have shortened his/her bench, short shifted their players or played one goaltender over the other the coach will receive.

1st offence- A verbal warning

2nd offence- A written warning

3rd offence- Released from their position as head coach with Mt. Brydges Minor Hockey

If a parent confronts or harasses a coach about playing time and does not follow the steps outlined above, that parent will be subject to discipline under Mt. Brydges Minor Hockey's Respect Matters Policy.

Responsibilities and Promises

As a coach, you have the responsibility to encourage all players to be the best they can be, and provide equal opportunities for them to develop self-esteem and sport skills. When you play your talented athletes more often, you make other players feel less important and deny them the chance to improve their skills.

As a parent, you have the responsibility to understand the challenges of fair play time and speak up if you feel it is abused. Give our coaches some latitude and consider your position over at least 3 games. Please don't bring your stopwatch to the game. We respectfully ask parents to realize that it is impossible for all players to receive the exact same number of shifts or minutes of play time in a single game. Many times the shift length depends on whistles or what end the puck is in. We should strive to have equal and fair Play time over 2-3 games.

As an Association, we promise to put a greater emphasis on the spectator, player and coach's code of conduct as outlined by Hockey Canada, making our expectations clear and concise. We will continue to ensure our teams are as competitive as possible, our coaches are equipped and informed and our players are thriving in a positive environment.

Q and A's from a Coaching Perspective

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

A) A coach is to develop all players in all situations regardless of the game or situation. A coach is expected to allow players to play during all times of the game and not sacrifice a player's confidence and place a greater emphasis on winning.

Q) Can a coach develop roles for individual players?

A) A coach should develop all players in order to experience all aspects of the game (ie power play and penalty kill)



Q) Is a coach expected to rotate all lines during crucial parts of the game?

A) It is important to develop all players in all situations in order to maximize their skill level in the future.

Q) Am I allowed to play goalies against certain teams vs going with a rotation?

A) A coach is expected to follow a rotation. Goalies are hockey 'players' and the Fair Play policy applies to them as well

Q) Am I allowed to pull a goalie and replace him with the one on the bench?

A) Only to allow him to regroup, then the expectation is to put him back into the game after allowing time for him/her to regain their focus. You can of course pull your goaltender for an extra attacker.

Q) Is a coach or assistant coach allowed to "sit" any player for poor performance ie "bad game"

A) It is not acceptable for coaches to sit players for poor performance (i.e. having a bad game) this also applies to goaltenders.

Possible Parent Concerns Regarding Fair Play

What about those parents who don't agree with Fair Play?

We ask these parents exactly what they don't agree with. By not agreeing to any of the 5 principles as outlined at the beginning of this document, parents are not agreeing with respect and development.

Fair Play is going to ruin my player's hockey career!

Win at all costs attitudes and focusing on the development of a select number of players will ruin your child's minor hockey experience faster than Fair Play. Fair play does not change the rules of the game or change the fact that our main focus is on developing our players, not winning hockey games.

This isn't reality because they don't have Fair Play in the NHL

Good point. Because AMHA is made up of volunteers, none of whom have played or coached in the NHL, we have asked Calgary Flames Head Coach Bob Hartley to address this issue.

"Minor hockey players look to NHL players for inspiration. They all have their favorite players and teams. But when minor hockey coaches look to NHL coaches, that's where the biggest mistake is made. The NHL is only about winning. Success is based on wins and losses at the professional level. In minor hockey, the coach should be one of the biggest reasons why kids want to come back to rink day after day. Because it's the coach's responsibility to help make every day FUN for the kids! There are ways in which a coach can ensure that every kid gets a fair amount of Play-time and at the same time allow for his best players to play in crucial situations. There's NO need to shorten your bench in minor hockey. If we take the fun out of the game, kids will lose interest and thus less kids will continue to play our great game."

-Bob Hartley July 2014



Fair Play Policy-Steps to Implementation

Mt. Brydges Minor Hockey believes that coaches are our most powerful leaders. They have the ability to set the tone for the season. We expect our coaches to be stewards of this policy and support the implementation of it going forward.

1. **Coach Selection Process**
During the Mt. Brydges Head Coach interview on understanding of the MBDAA's Respect Matters and Fair Play Policy will be a factor. MBDAA representatives will provide coaching candidates with an accurate description of the policies and the expectations that surround them.
2. **Coaches/Manager's Meeting**
During the pre-season coaches and manager's meetings the policy will be presented and clarification surrounding the policy can be given at this time.
3. **Initial Team Meeting**
At the initial team meeting coaches and managers will review and sign the Coaches, Spectators and Players code of conduct. Signed copies will be handed in to the MBDAA officials. Behaviour standards as outlined in the MBDAA Respect Matters policy will be identified at this time.
4. **Continuing Education and Monitoring**
Throughout the season MBDAA will continue to educate our coaches, players and parents on the guiding principles behind the Fair Play Policy.