



FAIR ICE TIME POLICY

What does “Fair Ice Time” mean to LMHA?

Our Definition: LMHA acknowledges that registration fees are the same for all players within a division and that the game of hockey is intended to be a healthy form of recreation that is to be shared amongst all members of the association. LMHA considers the “fair ice” concept to be a core component of team sports. This means that, regardless of individual skill level, all players should be provided an equitable opportunity to develop and contribute to the success of their team, wherever possible. As such, LMHA expects that its coaches and assistant coaches take reasonable and practicable steps to ensure that all LMHA players on their team(s) receive *equitable* amounts of playing time in any game or practice, while taking the following considerations into account:

Expectations for all C-Level (House) Hockey, U11 A Hockey & U6-U9 Hockey

- LMHA expects that its coaches and assistant coaches take reasonable and practicable steps, in consideration of the factors outlined below, to ensure that all LMHA Players receive *equitable* amounts of playing time during games and practices through-out the season.

Expectations for U13A, U15A, U18A and U21A Level (Rep) Hockey

- LMHA recognizes that there are intrinsic differences between the competitive and recreational hockey streams in these divisions and that a coach may need to make reasonable adjustments to player ice-times throughout the season to ensure that a proper balance between rep player development and team competitiveness is achieved over the course of a season.
- Several circumstances *may* require a rep coach in these divisions to adjust ice-times to make the team/players more competitive and/or where a specific player skill set may be needed. Some examples of these circumstances may include, but are not limited to:
 - penalty killing/powerplays
 - important face-off situations
 - overtime/shootouts
 - adjusting lines to competitively match an opposing team’s strengths/weaknesses
 - adjusting lines in the final minute(s) of a play-off/championship game to ensure a competitive advantage is maintained
 - adjusting starting goaltender rotations
- While reasonable ice-time adjustments may be necessary to ensure the competitiveness of the team, the coach must ensure that all players receive exposure to, and the opportunity to develop in, as many tactical and situational aspects of the game as possible. Over the course of the season,

this approach will allow for the establishment of specialty teams for both competitive reasons and to allow players to play to their strengths.

- While this approach may result in some players finishing certain games with more ice time than others and player ice time may not be equal in each game, it is expected that coaches will endeavor to ensure that all players receive equitable ice over the course of the season.
- The intent of the LMHA fair ice-time policy for these divisions is to provide a reasonable degree of fair ice-time to all players, in consideration of the factors outlined in this section and below, while ensuring that, throughout the course of a season, their players are adequately exposed to, and prepared for a future in, competitive hockey.

Impact of Gameplay Dynamics & Other Factors – All Levels/All Divisions:

- LMHA recognizes that hockey is a dynamic and fast-paced game and that several gameplay and/or other factors beyond the coach's ability to control will impact a coach's ability to ensure that equitable ice-time is received by each player. Some of these factors may include, but are not limited to:
 - player fatigue
 - penalties
 - injuries
 - Illnesses, absences, or other factors resulting in an uneven roster (for example, a team with an odd number of players for the defense positions. If you only have two centers, then they may receive more ice.)
 - single vs. two goalie teams
 - gameplay resulting in protracted time in the defensive zone which prevents a shift change
 - equipment failure
- LMHA recognizes that for these (and possibly other) reasons, it may be impossible for a coach to achieve truly equal ice for every player.
- In instances where these and/or other factors may present themselves, it is LMHA's expectation that the coach will take reasonable steps, where feasible, to help mitigate the impact these factors have on balancing the ice-time of his/her players.

Discipline & Conduct Detrimental to Team Play Factors – All Levels/All Divisions

- Coaches are permitted the discretionary authority, *within reason*, to restrict/reduce player ice-time in instances where a player has displayed behavior which is contrary to LMHA team level discipline guidelines, team rules, LMHA player code of conduct or has displayed a pattern of conduct which undermines the team's ability to effectively compete.
- An ice-time restriction/reduction imposed by a coach should be reasonable under the circumstances and proportional to the behavior being addressed. For example, a 'selfish' penalty might result in the player missing a single shift, whereas disrespectful behavior towards a coach or other team official might result in the player being ejected from a practice or sitting for the remainder of the game.
- Examples of behavior which may warrant a disciplinary ice-time restriction/reduction may include, but are not limited to:
 - bullying of team-mates either on or off the ice
 - excessive/inappropriate penalties
 - disrespectful language directed towards a coach, team official or teammate

- disrespectful language directed towards an on-ice official
 - inappropriate displays of unsportsmanlike behavior
 - violence or other behavior which is likely to cause injury to another player/participant
- Use the team level discipline guideline as a resource to use for examples of disciplinary ice-time restriction. [LMHA Team Level Discipline Guidelines.](#)
- Following an instance where a disciplinary/conduct related ice-time restriction/reduction is imposed, coaches and parent(s)/guardian(s) of the player concerned are encouraged to discuss the situation, considering any team code of conduct and/or expectations which require that a suitable period has elapsed between the time of the occurrence and the follow-up discussion.
- Coaches are to notify their Division Managers in the event a chronic pattern of such behavior is encountered and/or multiple ice-time restrictions/reductions are imposed. The Division Manager will also include the VP of Risk and Human Resources to make sure all players are treated equally.

Dispute Resolution – All Levels/All Divisions

- Players/parents must first attempt to informally resolve disputes over ice-time with the team Parent Liaison who will work with the coaching staff if needed. Team rules for dispute resolution must be followed. All attempts must first be made to informally resolve ice-time related disputes at the team level before a formal request for mediation is made to LMHA. All correspondence with LMHA must be directed by the head coach.
- In the event an ice-time related dispute is unable to be resolved informally at the team level, players/parents must notify the appropriate LMHA Division Manager in writing.
- Formal complaints regarding breaches of the LMHA Fair Ice Time Policy will first be addressed by the LMHA Division Manager responsible for the division from within which the complaint arose, in consultation with the LMHA VP of Risk and Human Resources. The LMHA Division Manager and the VP of Risk and Human Resources will first attempt to mediate a resolution to the dispute, if appropriate. Should attempts at a mediated resolution by the Division Manager and the VP of Risk and Human Resources be unsuccessful, the matter will be referred to the LMHA President for a decision.
- For matters not requiring formal LMHA Disciplinary proceedings, the decision of the LMHA President will be final.
- All matters for which a formal investigation is required, the LMHA president will create a discipline committee composed of existing board members and chaired by the VP of Risk and Human Resources as laid out in the LMHA Discipline Policy.