

Female Hockey Parents Information Meeting – June 19, 2019

Questions Raised & Points Made

Questions:

1. Can a carded player, play for a recreational team?

No. A carded player (ie Predators) must remain with their carded team for the entire year.

2. Will there be increased travel if we switch to the new Female Hockey model?

As with any minor hockey team, travelling is an expectation. The amount of extra travel to a girl from DCMHA should be minimal if any compared to any other team in an All Peace League. The creation of “Zone” teams from the entire North District allows it to be easier for girls from a smaller Minor Hockey Association without female only hockey to join another Minor Hockey Association’s female only hockey team. Or if a female team from another association does not have enough players to attend a hockey tournament, then your daughter may be asked to join this team on a tournament. This would cause an optional increase in travel for your daughter.

3. Will a girl be able to opt out of female only hockey?

Unless there is extenuating circumstances, a girl will not be able to opt out of female only hockey, if DCMHA mandates female only hockey in a particular season.

4. Will females be welcome in an integrated team?

As previously stated, if the numbers in DCMHA allow for a female only program, there will be no integration. That being said DCMHA will allow (and encourage) female players to try out for any Rep/Development team.

Points:

- One parent spoke up and explained how she played hockey with the boys until midget. She noted that she never really developed as a hockey player until she switched to female only hockey. Her and the 3 other female players were welcomed by the male players on her team, but there was that little bit of division between the males and the females.
- Another parent spoke up and explained that he had one daughter that played only female only hockey and another daughter that played integrated hockey. The travel commitments for each were about equal.
- A current female hockey player talked about how she loves playing female only hockey. Playing on a female only hockey team gives her the opportunity to be a true leader on her team, and also allows her to be one of the best players on her team. She feels her confidence as a hockey player is definitely due to her experience in female hockey.

Female Hockey Model Summary

- ▶ The implementation process is underway to restructure the operational model for female hockey in BC and the Yukon, with the release of the BC Hockey Female Hockey Report.
- ▶ Within each district, there are female hockey players in each age division but the residency-based divisions between associations makes it difficult to form teams. The Female Lead would work directly with the District associations and MHAs to combine athletes to create “zone” based teams that are not restricted to traditional MHA boundaries. This would allow more female teams to form during a transitional period until registration is sufficient to support the creation of an FHA in the zone.
- ▶ A Central Registry will help improve the administration of the female game in BC. By signing up earlier in the year, players allow Zone Leads to organize and get teams on the ice sooner.
- ▶ Players will first register with their home associations. Once registered with their home associations, any players who plan on playing female hockey in BC must register themselves by July 1, 2019, through their HCR.
- ▶ When players have signed up with their respective Female Hockey Zone, they will be placed on teams by the Zone Leads. Female teams will partner with MHAs who would assign ice and allow the female athletes to dual card to the integrated teams to ensure the integrated teams have sufficient number to ice teams. The female athlete’s first priority is the female team, and will be able to play with the integrated team when their schedule allows for it. Players will pay their registration to their Minor Hockey Association.

Additional notes from BC Hockey Female Seminar:

- It was noted that if a female player wants to play at a higher level of hockey (ie. college, U17) they must play on an all female team to even be considered. Many schools will not even look at females that play integrated hockey.
- Suggested to make teams based on skill, not necessarily age. (Prince George h senior female & junior female).
- Air North will charter flights for tournaments. Whitehorse minor can assist in facilitation. If there are male teams already going to Whitehorse, work with the associations to take the females as well.
- U12/U14 will possibly be in Quesnel this year.
- Quesnel female teams are willing to travel to PG & Chetwynd to play games and possibly a round robin situation with Dawson Creek/Clearview/Fort St John teams.
- This opens the boundaries and gives a clear path for Predators to compete in OMAHA.
- This central registry helps facilitate goalie movement in the district.
- Predators and MHAs will need to work together to establish competitive and recreational streams.

Hockey Canada Female Registry

Any players who plan on playing female hockey in BC in the East Kootenay, North Central, North East, North West, Okanagan, Vancouver Island or West Kootenay zones for the 2019 -2020 season must register through the Central Registry by **July 1, 2019**.

When players have signed up with their respective Female Hockey Zone, they will be placed on teams by the Zone Leads. Female teams will partner with MHAs who would assign ice and allow the female athletes to dual card to the integrated teams to ensure the integrated teams have sufficient number to ice teams. **The female athlete's first priority is the female team, and will be able to play with the integrated team when their schedule allows for it.** Players will pay their registration to their Minor Hockey Association.

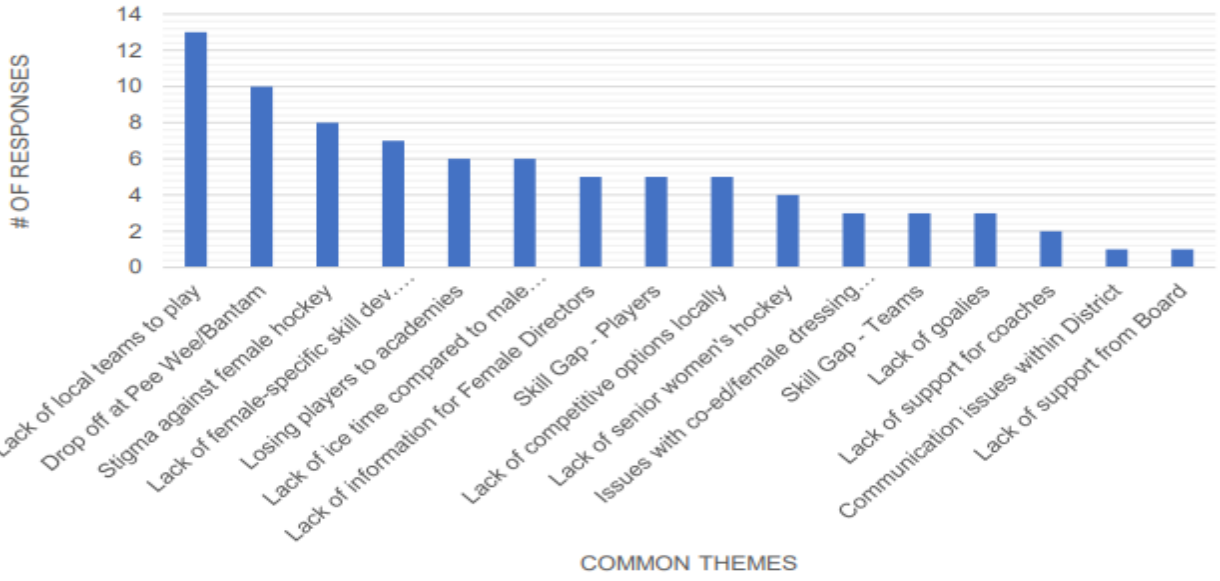
Within each district, there are female hockey players in each age division but the residency-based divisions between associations makes it difficult to form teams. The Female Lead would work directly with the District associations and MHAs to combine athletes to create "zone" based teams that are not restricted to traditional MHA boundaries. **This would allow more female teams to form during a transitional period until registration is sufficient to support the creation of an FHA in the zone.**

BC Hockey Female Survey

All responses from MHAs were reviewed during an in-person meeting of our staff, including our Female Hockey Programming Coordinator, Cindy Secord. An internal SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis was conducted and, based on the information obtained in our interviews, the following common themes were identified as challenges:

- Lack of Local Teams to Play
- Drop off at Pee Wee/Bantam
- Stigmas against female hockey
- Lack of female-specific skill development opportunities
- Losing players to academies
- Lack of ice time compared to male teams
- Lack of information for female directors
- Skill gap between players
- Lack of competitive playing options locally
- Lack of senior women's hockey
- Issues with co-ed/female dressing rooms

Survey Responses





DCMHA

Female Hockey

JUNE 19, 2019, PARENT INFORMATION SESSION

Female Hockey Model

BC Hockey

- ▶ The implementation process is underway to restructure the operational model for female hockey in BC and the Yukon, with the release of the BC Hockey Female Hockey Report.
- ▶ Within each district, there are female hockey players in each age division but the residency-based divisions between associations makes it difficult to form teams. The Female Lead would work directly with the District associations and MHAs to combine athletes to create “zone” based teams that are not restricted to traditional MHA boundaries. This would allow more female teams to form during a transitional period until registration is sufficient to support the creation of an FHA in the zone.
- ▶ A Central Registry will help improve the administration of the female game in BC. By signing up earlier in the year, players allow Zone Leads to organize and get teams on the ice sooner.
- ▶ Players will first register with their home associations. Once registered with their home associations, any players who plan on playing female hockey in BC must register themselves by July 1, 2019, through their HCR.
- ▶ When players have signed up with their respective Female Hockey Zone, they will be placed on teams by the Zone Leads. Female teams will partner with MHAs who would assign ice and allow the female athletes to dual card to the integrated teams to ensure the integrated teams have sufficient number to ice teams. The female athlete’s first priority is the female team, and will be able to play with the integrated team when their schedule allows for it. Players will pay their registration to their Minor Hockey Association.

North East/Yukon Growth over 3 years

North East/Yukon				
Association	2015-2016 Total Female Players	2016-2017 Total Female Players	2017-2018 Total Female Players	3 Year Growth %
Chetwynd MHA	40	41	38	-5%
Clearview MHA	38	34	45	18%
Dawson City MHA	22	18	18	-18%
Dawson Creek MHA	61	64	64	5%
Faro MHA	15	12	0	-100%
Fort Nelson MHA	34	39	55	62%
Fort St John MHA	49	64	67	37%
Haines Junction MHA	18	20	22	22%
Hudson's Hope MHA	10	12	11	10%
Peace River District	0	0	42	42%
Taylor MHA	7	13	19	171%
Teslin MHA	5	9	7	40%
Tumbler Ridge MHA	5	10	13	160%
Watson Lake MHA	0	1	2	50%
Whitehorse MHA	48	73	57	19%
Total	352	410	460	31%

*Based on BC Hockey Annual Reports

Female programming in the North East and Yukon appears to be on a positive trajectory. In the past three (3) seasons, registration has grown by over 30%. Both Peace River District and Yukon AHA are adept at utilizing events such as Jamborees to maximize exposure for the female game and retain players, and both regions have also started female-specific programming.

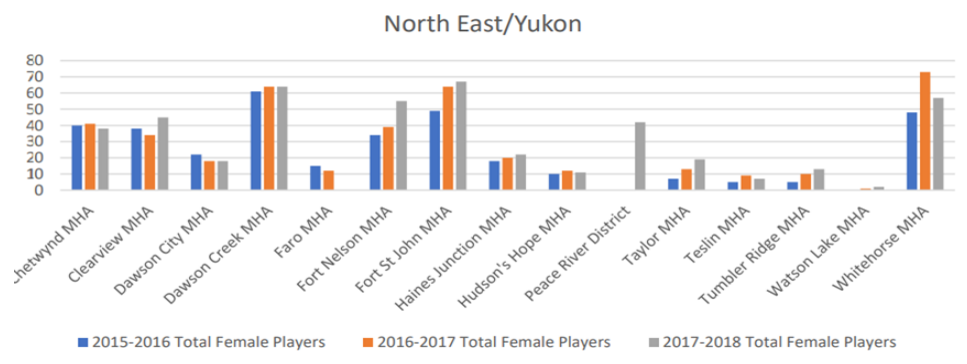
In the Yukon, the grassroots programming has a strong foundation – the "Girls Hockey Club" has approximately 40 skaters who come out for a regular weekly ice time. However, there are still not quite enough females to be able to ice a female team at any division.

There is a good base of Pee Wee, Bantam, and Midget players, but the competitive options are somewhat lacking. The Yukon Mustangs U18 team has a range of players between the ages of 12 and 18, and regularly travel for tournaments. At home, they compete against the Whitehorse Women's Hockey League and local Pee Wee and Bantam recreational teams. Elite players often make the choice to move to academies to pursue further competitive opportunities. There is a strong senior female league that has operated for over 40 seasons and is very welcoming to players of all levels.

In the North East, the "North East Predators" program has addressed a lack of competitive female hockey. They have iced teams at the Pee Wee, Bantam, and Midget levels, however, they are concerned about the small player base – approximately 30-40% of players in the District are playing "rep" level hockey. Another concern is a lack of places to play – their closest BC-based competition is four (4) to five (5) hours away in Prince George, and the Alberta-based All-Peace Hockey League does not always allow them to play.

At the minor hockey level, Fort St. John and Dawson Creek both have a healthy number of females playing at the Atom and Pee Wee levels, but not enough to ice female teams. The numbers on the male side often necessitate that females play integrated to round out the rosters.

At the senior female level, there is a lack of organized teams. There is one recreational group in Dawson Creek, and one competitive team, the North Peace Eagles, based out of Fort St. John.



North West Growth over 3 years

North West				
Association	2015-2016 Total Female Players	2016-2017 Total Female Players	2017-2018 Total Female Players	3 Year Growth %
Burns Lake MHA	18	34	47	161%
Fort St James MHA	14	18	19	36%
Fraser Lake MHA	32	18	26	-19%
Hazleton MHA	20	22	30	50%
Houston MHA	20	14	10	-50%
Kitimat MHA	11	12	16	45%
Prince Rupert MHA	33	33	36	9%
Smithers MHA	29	26	42	45%
Stewart MHA	5	3	4	-20%
Stikine MHA	13	8	13	0%
Terrace MHA	44	28	22	-50%
Vanderhoof MHA	48	52	55	15%
Total	287	268	320	11%

*Based on BC Hockey Annual Reports

The District executive has placed a strong emphasis on female hockey, and has pushed for these regional teams and more skill development opportunities. Due to the geography of the District, these regional teams are typically split into "East" (Fraser Lake to Vanderhoof) and "West" (Prince Rupert to Fraser Lake). At times, sparse numbers means teams meet in Smithers. The District schedules "league weekends" for these female teams to play each other in a central location, and also schedules skill development camps for female players during the off-season.

Only two (2) MHAs, Vanderhoof and Burns Lake, have rostered female teams on their own. It was noted by Vanderhoof MHA that individual MHAs often get "territorial" about their players at the District level, causing some issues with the District teams. There is also a lack of nearby opponents and tournaments.

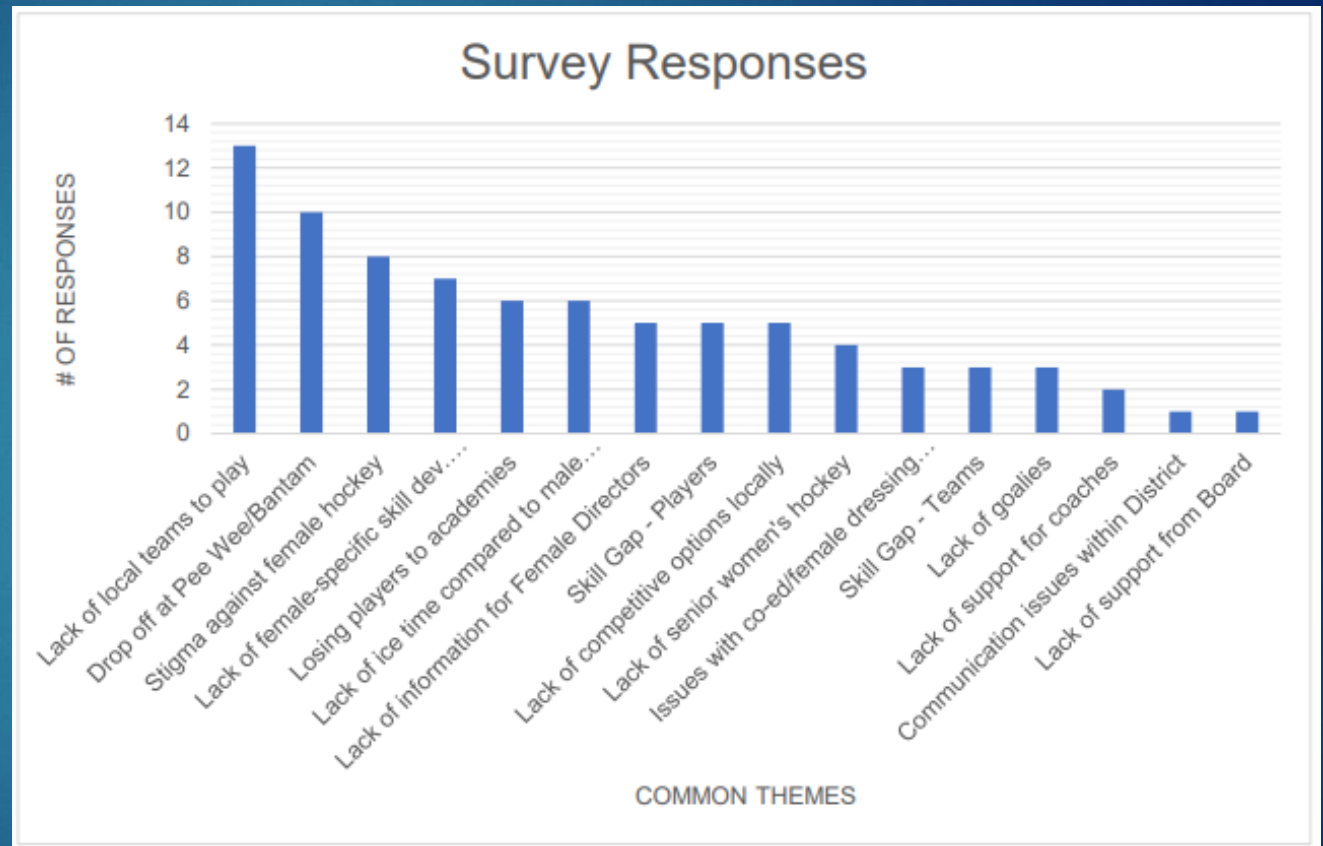
Hockey Canada Branch Comparison



Branch	# of Female Players (Minor)*	# of Female Players (Senior)*	# of Female Officials*	# of Female Coaches*	# of Midget AAA Teams	# of Jr Teams	# of Academies	Female Hockey Associations?
BC	5,628	2,382	388	299	5	1	4	Yes
Alberta	8,034	2,030	381	786	6	9	3	Yes
Saskatchewan	4,571	384	258	187	8	0	0	Yes
Manitoba	4,027	1,148	156	246	8	7	3	No
Ontario (HNO, OHF, HEO)	31,066	1,350	810	2,578	24	20	2	Yes
Quebec	5,729	305	137	326	8	8	0	Yes
New Brunswick	1,609	263	69	92	3	0	0	Yes
Nova Scotia	2,733	677	64	153	4	0	1	Yes
Prince Edward Island	1,037	197	42	41	4	0	1	No
Newfoundland & Labrador	1,591	126	58	45	2	0	0	No
North	309	117	0	33	0	0	0	No

Analysis & Findings

Common Themes



Lack of Local Teams to Play (13 responses)

The most common response amongst our calls was a lack of local teams to play. This was a common theme in every area of BC and the Yukon aside from the Lower Mainland. Even in areas such as the Okanagan and Vancouver Island, where there have previously been a modest number of female teams, certain divisions (particularly Bantam and Midget) are struggling.

Drop Off at Pee Wee/Bantam (10 responses)

Based on registration figures, the largest drop-off of players is from Pee Wee to Bantam, and then Bantam to Midget. A lack of female-only playing opportunities factors into this drop-off, which also relates to another common issue – dressing room policies. It was often stated that girls lose the desire to play on integrated teams at this age because they are no longer part of the dressing room atmosphere, and arenas often don't have adequate female dressing rooms.

Stigma Against Female Hockey (8 responses)

This response was alarmingly common in every area of the province. In many areas, integrated hockey is seen as the more competitive option, and therefore it is recommended by parents that players choose that stream in order to best develop their skills.

Lack of Female-Specific Skill Development Opportunities (7 responses)

Many MHAs noted a lack of female-specific skill development opportunities, specifically clinics and hockey camps. A few MHAs have set aside skill development ice throughout the season that is dedicated to females, but the majority would like to see more branch-led initiatives in their areas.

Losing Players to Academies (6 responses)

Particularly at the Bantam and Midget levels, a number of community-based teams have folded due to players leaving for playing opportunities away from home, such as Hockey Canada Sport Schools.

Lack of Ice Time Compared to Male Teams (6 responses)

A number of female directors noted that female teams receive less ice time than equivalent integrated teams. If they do receive an equal amount of ice, it is often at undesirable times and/or locations.

Lack of Information for Female Directors (5 responses)

Many Female Directors noted that they would like more resources available to them via BC Hockey's website, especially for those who are unable to attend the Annual Congress. Commonly requested resources include a directory of Female Directors/contacts, lists of female teams, and "how to" manuals for recruitment initiatives.

Skill Gap Between Players (5 responses)

In areas where they are able to form female teams, there is often a significant skill gap between players. Veteran players are often playing alongside new skaters. This can contribute to retention rates, as more skilled players would prefer to play in a competitive stream (such as integrated) and newer players quit the sport.

Lack of Competitive Options Locally (5 responses)

This was particularly prevalent in the Kootenays, where the Female Midget AAA team folded prior to the 2017-2018 season. In Districts such as the North West, East Kootenay, and West Kootenay, there are a limited number of carded female teams.

Lack of Senior Women's Hockey (4 responses)

Areas such as the North East, North Central, and Vancouver Island have limited options for female players after they graduate from Midget. In Prince George and Fort St. John in particular, there are no recreational senior female teams or leagues.

Issues with Co-Ed/Female Dressing Rooms (3 responses)

Many arenas (especially older facilities) have a lack of female dressing rooms, meaning female players often have to get changed in inadequate places such as closets or washrooms. In areas where females have no other option than playing on integrated teams, Hockey Canada's Co-Ed Dressing Room Policy (Hockey Canada n.d.) often leads to a lack of "dressing room atmosphere" or not feeling like a part of the team often contributes to increased drop-off rates.

Skill Gap Between Teams (3 responses)

Smaller communities that manage to put together female teams often cannot compete with female teams from larger areas such as the Lower Mainland, Kelowna, and Kamloops. It was often noted that "C1" teams from other Districts are often equivalent to a "C3" or "C4" team from the Lower Mainland. This is also reflected at the "A" level, as teams from the Lower Mainland often dominate at BC Hockey's provincial Championships.

STRENGTHS

- Champions (the ones we have are great)
- Opportunities for elite-level players
- Alumni
- Programming at elite level (increasing number of athletes invited to Hockey Canada camps, making U18 Team Canada, etc.)
- Performance of Team BC at national level
- National strategic plan (funding)
- Team Canada success
- Lots of opportunities for females to play (dual carding, APs, exemptions, etc.)
- Flexibility for players and teams

WEAKNESSES

- District oversight / district control
- Lack of identity/culture
- Poor perception compared to integrated hockey
- Current recruitment initiatives and programming (or lack thereof)
- Lack of female playing opportunities
- Local collaboration (ice compared to integrated MHAs)
- Follow up programming at grassroots level
- Visibility of females players and alumni in marketing materials/website
- Female-specific coach/official training
- Not many female coaches/bench staff
- FMAAA open zones in Vancouver
- Unmotivated MHAs

OPPORTUNITIES

- Open for change, more champions
- Female programming (recruitment, skill development)
- Alternate season programming
- Marketing/culture/posters
- Branding opportunities with FMAAA
- Mentorship programming / Alumni
- Connecting minor hockey and POE events (i.e., having minor players attend Team BC exhibition games)
- Mentorship
- School programming, floorball
- Volunteers
- Hosting championships/major events (U18s, etc.)
- BC Hockey Championships – combined events
- Senior female programming
- CanSkate > transition programming
- Funding at provincial, national level

THREATS

- Ringette, other winter sports (i.e. soccer)
- Cost
- Male coaches (can be a “deal breaker” for some female athletes, especially at certain ages)
- Intimidation (social environment)
- Social aspect
- Evaluations
- “No” (Some athletes don’t handle rejection well)

SWOT Analysis

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats

Recommendation #1: Implement a Structure for Female Hockey Programming

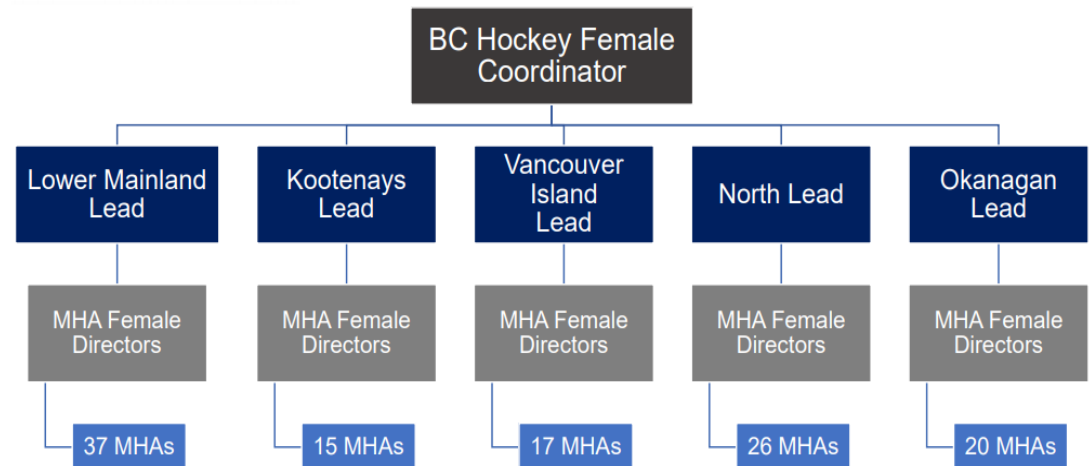
To ensure that the recommendations from this report move forward, the most important recommendation is to create a structure for Female Hockey Programming. This would be run in a structure similar to the current Zone Programming.

BC Hockey would implement a Coordinator role to oversee female hockey programming within the different Zones. They would work directly with the Zone Leads to ensure the programming and recommendations are happening at the local level. The Female Coordinator would work directly with the BC Hockey Staff resource in creating programming that can be run with in the MHA.

The Female Zone Leads would work with the local MHAs to create zone teams that would play against other teams in their geographic area. Right now, there are not enough players in many MHAs to create one (1) team but if they combine with surrounding associations, they will be able to create enough teams to support a "league" structure. By doing this and having the Zone Leads assist, they will be able to work through policy, regulations and any exemptions that may be needed and report back to the Coordinator.

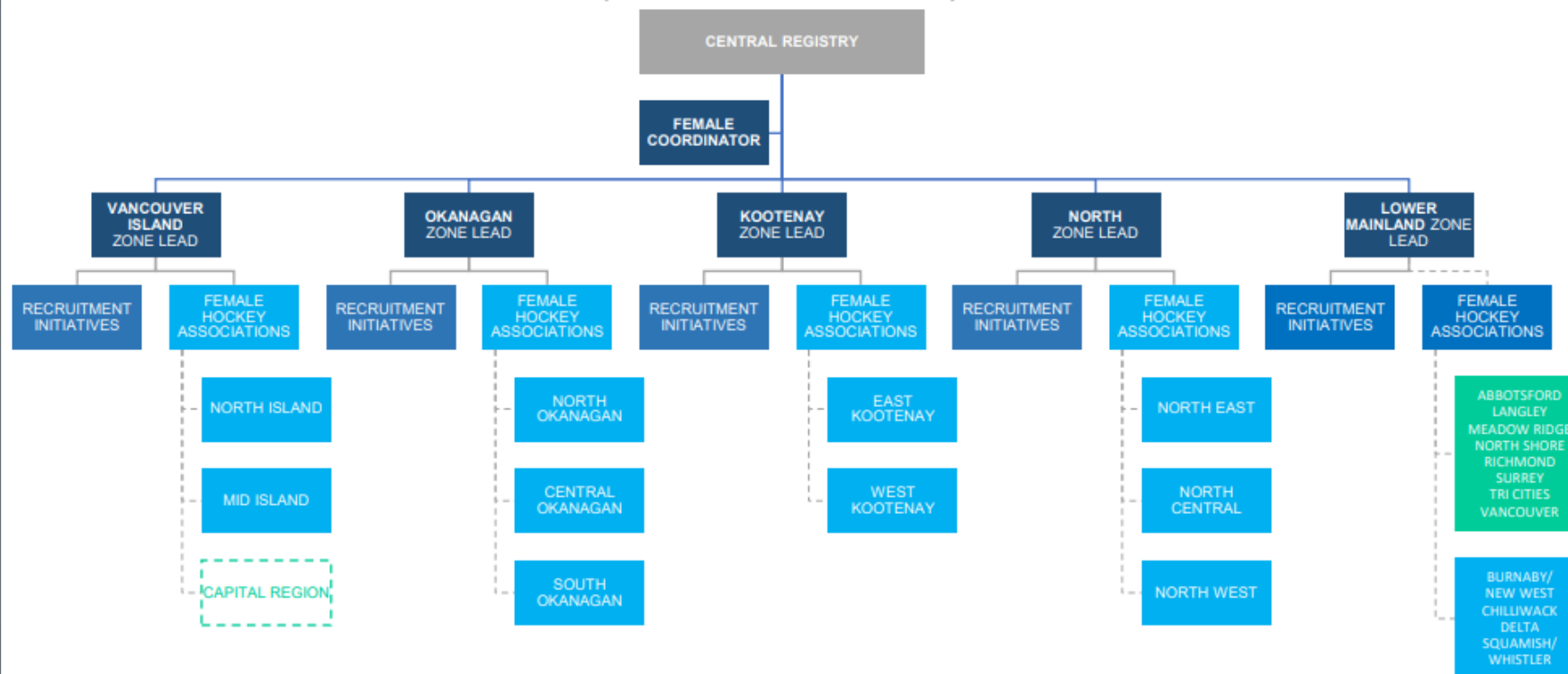
BC Hockey Female Programming

Organizational Chart



FEMALE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION STRUCTURE

(ANTICIPATED - 2019 – 2020)



Retention

In an effort to retain the current female players in our associations, BC Hockey recommends that each Minor Hockey Association has their own dedicated female director focused on female hockey. With female hockey as a leading priority on both BC Hockey and Hockey Canada's strategic plans, a focus needs to be made at the minor hockey level. The Female Director's role within their association would solely be on female programming and would include:

- Promoting BC Hockey, district, and association female programs
- Hosting Try It and ESSO Fun Day events
- Working with district leads to create teams
- Working with district leads to examine and propose policy exemptions
- Attending webinars and meetings as needed
- Representing female programming on local MHA Boards

Branding & Culture

Hockey is not just a sport, but an identity and culture for young female athletes. As a social sport, an athlete feels included if they are wearing the same logo and apparel as their friends and teammates. With the proposed restructure of the Female Hockey Associations, BC Hockey will create a brand that represents all of our participants.

Female athletes want the stickers, pins, toques and apparel with our logo on it. Creating an excitement around BC Hockey Female Programming will begin to create a culture that will gain the interest of new participants and will retain athletes already involved in the game.

This branding would be used within all female programming from jamborees and recruitment events to the Program of Excellence, and Championships. If a program has a connection with female hockey it will utilize this branding on some level.

The major visual point for our branding our website. We will be looking at a full restructure of the female web pages. This was a common theme from the calls that were facilitated that it was very hard to find information on female hockey. This will be updated to have a one point of reference with all female programming based off that page. This will streamline all communication and programming resources.

How Will Female Associations Work?

We plan to implement a model similar to Hockey Nova Scotia. In areas where there are currently no FHAs (i.e., every District but the Lower Mainland), "zones" will be formed to create female teams wherever possible. Players wishing to participate in female hockey will register through a "central registry" early in the summer.

After the central registry has been updated with all interested players, BC Hockey's zone leads will form female teams based on geographic areas within their zones, keeping in mind driving times and distances. Where possible, both recreational and carded teams would be formed. In the case of carded teams, BC Hockey would administer a standard try-out/evaluation process across all zones.

Female teams would then be assigned to "host" MHAs, who would assign ice to the teams. The players' registration fees would be paid to these host MHAs to cover the costs of ice.

Eventually, FHAs would form within these zones – for example, a South Okanagan FHA could form out of the Okanagan zone. This has occurred in Nova Scotia – in three (3) seasons, the branch has gone from zero (0) FHAs to three (3) – two (2) in the Halifax Metro Area and one (1) in the more rural Annapolis Valley.

This model follows what Hockey Nova Scotia has implemented over the last two (2) years. All females outside of the Lower Mainland (where Female MHAs already exist) would be registered under one of the four (4) zones:

- Vancouver Island
- Okanagan
- Kootenays
- North

Dawson Creek Minor Hockey Association

- ▶ We are committed to supporting a successful Female Hockey program with guidance from BC Hockey, Hockey Canada and, ultimately, support from the parents and players of our association.