



6.54 – Non-Sanctioned Leagues – Leagues Operating Outside the Auspices of Hockey Eastern Ontario (HEO)

Effective Date: November 1, 2021

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November 28, 2023

1. Purpose:

As the governing body of amateur hockey in Eastern Ontario, HEO and Hockey Canada are committed to offering the best development programs in the world. HEO and our Member Associations and Leagues have invested significant resources in the development of officials, coaches, administrators, and players. We have a committed strategy toward a cohesive long-term athlete development model, and we feel our programs are second to none in sport.

Despite delivering quality programming throughout Eastern Ontario, other organizations operating outside our structure, form leagues that offer various levels of amateur hockey programming. These “non-sanctioned” organizations do not support the development of Hockey Canada, HEO, or our member’s programs. Further, they operate with limited, or no consideration to the impact of their programs on minor, junior, para, special, and adult recreational hockey, officiating development, coaching development, or administrator development in HEO territory and in the rest of Canada.

Because these Non-Sanctioned Leagues operate outside of our structure, HEO has no way of ensuring that those Leagues implement many of the fundamental safeguards inherent in HEO and Hockey Canada programs. As a result, those Leagues may not be using the same Playing Rules that Hockey Canada has implemented to protect player safety and may not provide adequate insurance for their participants. We also cannot ensure that the quality of play in these Leagues matches the level advertised.

HEO respects the right of every individual to choose between participating in a HEO and Hockey Canada sanctioned league or a Non-Sanctioned League at the beginning of each hockey season. Every individual who makes the choice to participate in a Non-Sanctioned League, however, must understand the ramifications of that choice, as described in greater detail in Section 3 of this policy.



2. Definitions

- 2.1 **“Cut-Off Date”** means September 30 of the hockey season in question.
- 2.2 **“Bench Staff”** means coaches, assistant coaches, managers, and trainers/athletic therapists.
- 2.3 **“Non-Sanctioned League”** includes any amateur hockey league that operates in Canada outside the auspices/sanctioning of Hockey Canada, or in any other country outside the auspices/sanctioning of the Member National Association of the International Ice Hockey Federation in that country. This currently does not include summer hockey leagues/teams, adult recreational hockey leagues/teams, high school hockey, college, or university hockey, and/or hockey schools.
- 2.4 **“Member Organization”** means any MHA, Recreational Hockey Program, Accredited School, Para/Special Hockey Program, Junior Hockey League, etc. that is approved and registered with Hockey Eastern Ontario.
- 2.5 **“Non-Sanctioned League”** includes any amateur hockey league that operates in or outside of Canada and outside the auspices/sanctioning of Hockey Canada. This currently does not include summer hockey leagues/teams, adult recreational hockey leagues/teams, high school, college, or university hockey, and/or hockey schools.
- 2.6 **“Participate”** means to engage, knowingly or otherwise, in an activity within a Non-Sanctioned League that could only be engaged in within HEO and Hockey Canada if the participant was properly registered on the Hockey Canada Registry. Such activity includes, without limitation, playing, managing, coaching, officiating, or acting as a trainer/athletic therapist.
- 2.7 **“Participation”** in a Non-Sanctioned League will be considered to have occurred if the individual takes part in one game (including an exhibition, tournament, league, or playoff game) after the Cut-Off Date.

3 CONSEQUENCES OF SUPPORTING OR PARTICIPATING IN A NON-SANCTIONED LEAGUE

3.1 PLAYERS PARTICIPATING IN A NON-SANCTIONED LEAGUE

- In recognition of the high level of commitment required from players participating in the competitive stream under our LTDP model, Hockey Canada Regulation M.3 only allows those players to register with one team if that team is eligible to compete for a Regional or National Championship. Consistent with those Regulations, any player who chooses to participate in a Non-Sanctioned League after the Cut-Off Date will be ineligible to register with or affiliate to a HEO/Hockey Canada team that is eligible to compete for a Regional or National Championship for the remainder of that season, subject to paragraph (2) below.



- **Notwithstanding the consequences listed in the 1st paragraph), any player who Participates in a Non-Sanctioned League after the Cut-Off Date and ceases that Participation at some point during the hockey season, is entitled to seek early reinstatement of their privileges within HEO/Hockey Canada prior to February 10 by appealing to Hockey Canada’s Non- Sanctioned Hockey Reinstatement Committee, which may grant early reinstatement only if it is satisfied that:**

(a) special circumstances exist; and

(b) the player seeking reinstatement will not be displacing a player from the team of the roster he or she is seeking to join.

Any player who Participates in a Non-Sanctioned League after the Cut-Off Date and is seeking reinstatement, shall be ineligible to register with, or affiliate to, any team that is eligible to compete for a National Championship for the remainder of the season. No team that is eligible to compete for a National Championship may rely on Regulation G.10 to prevent the player from returning to HEO/Hockey Canada programming in a lower Division or Category through the reinstatement process.

3.2 NON-PLAYER PARTICIPANTS (BENCH STAFF)

- Hockey Canada believes that it is important for its Registered Participants, particularly those involved in the game in the competitive stream, to subscribe to and support the principles found in the LTAD Model. This includes Bench Staff, who are expected to be role models for the players, and champions of the LTAD model. If a non-player Participant chooses to Participate in a Non-Sanctioned League after the Cut-Off Date, they will not be permitted to be a member of the Bench Staff of any Hockey Canada team for the remainder of that season.

3. Enacted

Hockey Eastern Ontario will implement the Hockey Canada Non-Sanctioned League Policy and in addition has enacted Section V (5) of the policy and has strengthened the application of that policy as set out below.

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V. Further Restrictions re. Non-Sanctioned Hockey

Members may implement more restrictive Non-Sanctioned Hockey policies for Divisions and Categories of hockey that do not compete for Regional or National Championships. Any Member implementing such a policy must take appropriate measures to ensure that no player who has Participated in a Non-Sanctioned League after the Cut-Off Date, is able to play on a team that is eligible to compete for a Regional or National Championship, either through registration with, or affiliation to, that team, for the remainder of that season, without following the reinstatement procedure described in section 3.A.2 of this Policy.



4.1 HIGH PERFORMANCE PROGRAMS

- Hockey Eastern Ontario will only accept players who are registered with a member MHA, Junior League, Residential/Accredited School into our High-Performance Programs and Development Camps (ie: U13, U14, U15, U16 Program of Excellence Camps, Ontario Winter Games, Canada Winter Games, OHL Gold Cup, Central Canada POE Events, etc.).
- Access to these programs is a privilege that is offered to and reserved for the member participants of Hockey Eastern Ontario.
- Hockey Eastern Ontario reserves the right to make choices regarding the coaches that we deem to be the best fit within our high-performance and grassroots development programs. Those participating in and/or supporting non-sanctioned programs could be perceived to pose a conflict and therefore may not be considered for Hockey Eastern Ontario programs or committees.

4.2 OFFICIATING

- An Official who works in a non-sanctioned program WILL NOT:
 - have access to the Hockey Canada insurance program for any injuries that may occur as a result of that participation.
 - be eligible to participate as an official in Hockey Eastern Ontario's Officiating Development Programs such as the U13, U14, U15, U16 Program of Excellence Camps, Ontario Winter Games, OHL Gold Cup, etc.
 - be eligible to act in the capacity of Officials Committee member and/or a Clinic Instructor or an HEO Officiating Coach.

4.3 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

This Policy should only be applied to individuals who are Participants in Non-Sanctioned Leagues. A parent or sibling should not be prevented from participating fully in HEO/Hockey Canada programming solely because their child, brother or sister is playing in a Non-Sanctioned League.

