



MEMORANDUM

November 10, 2016

**TO: BC Hockey District Associations
BC Minor Hockey Associations**

**FROM: Barry Petrachenko
Chief Executive Officer**

SUBJECT: Cross Ice Hockey - Update

As we move further into the first season of our cross ice mandate, there are a few items requiring our collective attention moving forward.

It is important to note that our member Minor Hockey Associations are generally to be commended for their implementation plans and support of this initiative. The following information will address some of the questions we have received along the way and will emphasize the importance of this initiative to the development of players and their participant experience:

Team Balancing: We fully support the balancing of teams below the Atom level, even within game scenarios. If cross ice games become lopsided, coaches are encouraged to identify certain players and have them switch teams. Doing this is in the best interest of the players and ensures the best possible experiences for all. At this level of minor hockey, associations and teams should be doing their part to encourage fair play, fun and fundamental skill development.

Atom Transition Plan: We will be producing a plan for the Atom level involving the transition to full ice hockey:

- We are looking at a number of best practices for this and will have a thorough plan in place by March 15, 2017.
- Much of the concern expressed from members with respect to the Novice cross ice initiative stems from a fear that the initiative will cause harm players transitioning to Atom next season. ***In fact, it is my belief that if we have a solution for this transition then all MHA concerns over the initiative will dissipate.*** We will include this topic in our Engagement Strategy discussions in each of our Districts this winter and will use the input to help formulate our plans for next season. This is clearly our most important action item moving forward.
- Most of the concerns we have received in terms of Atom transition revolve around three (3) aspects of the game that have very little to do with core skill



development: offsides, icing and changing on the fly. The understanding and awareness of these three (3) elements of the game is very teachable in a short amount of time.

- It is important to remember that the emphasis on player development below the Atom level should focus on on-ice skill, not on rules and systems. Our young players need coaches to emphasize skating, passing, puck control, angling, and shooting above all else. Minor Hockey Associations may need to adjust their programming in order for this focus to take hold.
- It should also be noted that the BC Hockey Board of Directors has addressed a request for BC Hockey to reconsider the cross ice mandate for below Atom hockey and allow for a transition to full ice in the second half of this season (after December 1). After receiving input from both the Development and Minor Committees (neither were in support of the request), the BC Hockey Board has decided not to alter the cross ice mandate for 2016-2017. This information is provided here only to ensure that everyone is aware of the results of the Board discussion on this matter.

Information Flow/Rollout of Programming: There seems to be some misinformation with respect to the timelines of the development of the cross ice mandate/policy. The following summary is provided to assist Districts and Minor Hockey Associations in addressing any questions or concerns from their members in this regard:

Timeline of the Cross Ice Mandate

April, 29 2016: Notification from Hockey Canada regarding a national seminar on the re-branding of the Initiation/Cross Ice program.

May 2016: Discussions on cross ice hockey at the Minor Committee meetings.

June 2016: The concept of cross ice hockey below the Atom level was identified as a major issue by the Presidents of our District Associations. All Districts supported the concept of a cross ice mandate below Atom for the 2016-2017 season.

June 10, 2016: Presentation to our membership on the benefits of cross ice hockey at the 2016 Annual General Meeting by Hockey Canada Vice-President, Paul Carson.

June 24-26, 2016: BC Hockey representatives attend national seminar on the Initiation Program and cross ice hockey.

July 7, 2016: BC Hockey Board of Directors direct to mandate cross ice at the below atom division for the 16-17 season.

July 12, 2016: Cross Ice Mandate communicated to the BC Hockey Membership (Media Release - MR 003).

July 18, 2016: Cross Ice Resource Page became live and was announced to the membership.



July 27, 2016: Cross Ice Hockey Lead position announced via memorandum to all District Presidents.

August – November: Release of the following documents.

- Cross Ice Frequent Asked Questions (FAQ) Document
- Cross Ice Lead Meeting
- Cross Ice Officiating Guideline
- Affiliate and Tournament Sanctioning Information

I hope that the above information is helpful. It is critical for us to work together toward ensuring that the implementation of this mandate takes place as effectively as possible. All member associations are urged to clearly communicate the mandate and move forward in the positive direction that has been set forth by the BC Hockey Board of Directors. The end result will be an improved experience for our players.

Should you have any questions or require more information, please contact your District Cross Ice Lead.

