

***Return to Hockey – Regulatory Review Task Team***  
***Recommendations***  
***December 14, 2020***

- 1. The Task Team recommends that US players registered on Canadian teams below Major Junior where the league’s regular season has not yet started, should be eligible to request their release effective immediately, and teams could not ask for a fee that is more than what they paid originally to obtain the player.**

Background: Page 37 of the Task Team’s original Report referenced the concept of “soft” and “hard” dates by which US players would be allowed to seek releases from their Canadian teams if their team had not started its regular season. As we are now several months past the ordinary start date of the regular season in those leagues, and the Canada/US border remains closed indefinitely, it was felt that US players (non-Major Junior) who have transferred to Canada this season should have the option of playing hockey in the US this season, if they no longer wish to wait for their Canadian team’s season to begin. To ensure that disputes regarding compensation are not an impediment to the player being released, the Task Team is recommending that the compensation not exceed the amount that the Canadian team originally paid for the player.

- 2. The Task Team recommends that an Affiliate Player’s games will not count towards their maximum number of ten (10) allowed, if their league has not yet started play this season, and the relevant public health authority allows the player to move from team to team.**

Background: Our Affiliation Regulations exist to provide an opportunity for higher Division or Category Teams to dress the maximum number of Players allowable for a game under our Playing Rules (currently 18 skaters and 2 goalies in Junior hockey). Under our Regulations, teams are permitted to have up to 19 Affiliated Players (Regulation F.1(b)). This season, however, many Junior teams may have limited access to affiliated players, due to COVID protocols. Blainville Boisbriand in the QMJHL, for example, currently has 1 Affiliated Player on its HCR roster. With limited Affiliate Player options to draw from, and with the possibility that U18 programming could run much later than usual this season (delaying a team’s ability to affiliate a player an unlimited number of times after his registered team’s season ends (Regulation F.16)), concerns were expressed at the Junior level about the 10 game affiliation limit (Regulation F.15(a)). In an effort to provide some relief to teams that may face those issues, the Task Team is recommending that any games played by a Player as an AP prior to the start of his registered team’s regular season, not be counted towards the 10 game affiliation limit.

The Task Team wishes to be clear that its recommendation does not supersede any limits placed by Public Health Authorities on a player's ability to play for more than one team or to associate with players outside his designated cohort.

- 3. The Task Team recommends that the same deadline for international transfers of foreign players would be applied to all CHL leagues, regardless of when the league started. Under our sliding scale, the relevant Cutdown Date would be February 25<sup>th</sup>, but we will need clarification from the IIHF as to whether they will permit international transfers after their typical February 15 deadline and, if so, how far will they extend that deadline.**

Background: Canadian Border Authorities currently are not permitting Non-North American players to enter Canada for the primary purpose of playing hockey. Under normal circumstances, an international player would have to transfer to a Canadian team on or before January 10. Previously approved recommendations from this Task Team include a sliding scale for the January 10<sup>th</sup> date based on the start of a League's Regular Season. Because the QMJHL has already started its season, the January 10<sup>th</sup> Cutdown Date applies to that League, while the deadline for transfers in the other 2 CHL Leagues will be February 25 (see slide 19 of the Task Team's original Report). Given that the issues with our borders are unlikely to change by January 10, and in order to ensure that there is a level playing field among the three CHL leagues, the Task Team is recommending that international players be permitted to transfer to a Canadian League until February 25 regardless of that Canadian League's start date.

The Task Team's recommendation does not supersede the IIHF's February 15<sup>th</sup> transfer deadline. Discussions are ongoing with the IIHF regarding the possibility of moving that February 15<sup>th</sup> date.

- 4. The Task Team recommends that for players playing in the US because they are unable to play in Canada, (particularly 16 year old players and new Junior players), Hockey Canada will review the release date deadline of January 10<sup>th</sup> with USA Hockey; possibly moving this back to "extend the runway", and also explore whether USA Hockey would consider permitting players who have signed CHL Standard Player Agreements to transfer to Canada after their US team's season ends.**

Background: Players who sign a CHL Standard Player Agreement are not ordinarily subject to the transfer and release rules contained in the USAH/HC/CHL Agreement (section C.2 of Article II of Regulation/Appendix H2). Nevertheless, the CHL has permitted some of its players to join US teams this season, while they wait for the CHL season to begin. As members of US teams, the players now fall within the scope of the USAH/HC/CHL Agreement and must transfer back to Canada by the deadline for US/Canadian Transfers specified in that Agreement (January 10). As at least one CHL League will not have started by January 10 (OHL's current training camp start date is January 23 and regular season start date is February 4), the Task Team is recommending

that HC have discussions with USAH seeking to move the January 10<sup>th</sup> date back for this season. The Task Team is also recommending that HC be permitted to explore with USA Hockey the possibility of permitting players who have signed CHL Standard Player Agreement to transfer to Canada from US Leagues after their US season is over, rather than having to leave their US team mid-season.

**5. The Task Team recommends a consistent Cutdown date (Junior/Senior [non-Female] only) and Final Registration date (for all Divisions) this season. Dates proposed are as follows:**

- a. Cutdown Date: February 25, 2021**
- b. Final Registration Date: March 7, 2021**

Background: In its June Report, the Task Team recommended a sliding scale for the Cutdown Date and Final Registration Date (see slides 17-19 of the Report), based on the date when the League started its Regular Season. Many Junior A Leagues, and the QMJHL started their seasons earlier this year, but have now had to shut down until the New Year. Requiring the QMJHL to follow the January 10 Cutdown Date, while the other two CHL Leagues only have to cutdown from 45 to 25 cards by February 25 could create an imbalance at the CHL level. In addition, because several Junior A Leagues are subject to the same January 10<sup>th</sup> Cutdown Date and February 10 Final Registration Date, those teams will not be able to release a player to add a player released by any of the CHL Leagues after those dates. We could also find ourselves in an unusual situation in which a Maritime Player released by a QMJHL team on January 10, would have to find a roster spot with a Maritime Junior team within that same day if he wanted to play at home for the remainder of the season (because the MJHL has already started), but a Quebec Player released by a QMJHL team would have until February 25<sup>th</sup> to find a roster position with a Quebec team (because the Quebec Junior AAA will not start its regular season until the new year). As we want to ensure that any player released by a CHL team has a place to play within our system (preferably as close to home as possible), and as the current shutdown of Junior A hockey across most of the country may continue beyond the January 10<sup>th</sup> date, the Task Team is recommending that we adopt one Cutdown Date and one Final Registration Date, rather than the variable dates recommended in June.

*\* All recommendations are subject to Hockey Canada Board approval and must adhere to all respective public authority health guidelines within the applicable jurisdiction.*