

## **HMBHL Team Equalization Policy**

While every effort is made to ensure that the teams selected are of relatively equal strength, the League deals with this issue in most divisions every season. As we note in our rules once teams have been selected some players may be traded in an attempt to equalize team strength. Team equalization will be done at the discretion of the League Officials and head coaches.

### **What is equalization?**

Ideally, we would like all games in every division to be close. We would like every team to have a realistic chance of beating the other teams in its division. If after the season has started it is apparent that one (or more) team is markedly stronger (or weaker), equalization is the process we go through to try to rebalance the teams. Because Squirt/Tyke age children usually are more interested in playing with friends, we may not equalize these teams.

### **Why equalize?**

The Halton Minor Ball Hockey League is a house league program. For the stronger players who are so inclined, we will try to offer a select program for which an all-star team is chosen to represent the league at the minor provincial ball hockey championships. We hope the kids enjoy their experience and want to return (and look forward to returning) the following season - and the seasons after that. Let's face it, winning and losing games by large margins is no fun for anybody, and one of the League's central tenets is "fun". Player movement between teams is in no way intended to punish anyone. These moves are done for the betterment of the division, so that as many kids as possible enjoy the season.

### **What is the process?**

Prior to the season commencing, the HMBHL team reviews all of the registered players and assigns them to the teams in that division. After the season starts, he/she keeps tabs on the games and scores. If after the third game it is apparent that there is an imbalance that needs to be corrected, the League Officials will consult with the coaches to determine a plan of action. After an agreed plan of action is settled - which children will be moved -, the parents of the players involved are contacted. The convenors, coaches and the members of the Board are all parents with children in the League, and we fully appreciate that moving kids around can be a difficult and sensitive issue.

### **When does equalization take place?**

As noted above, equalization typically takes place after the third game of the season (i.e., after each team in the division in question has played 3 games).

What are we doing to minimize equalization?

We are actively taking steps to try to minimize equalization. This year we are instituting player evaluations, with the League Officials and Coaches required to grade each of their players. We intend to make that a more rigorous exercise this year and every year.

### **Final Note**

Selecting teams of equal strength is more art than science. Kids mature at different rates and every season sees the dynamics of a division change as half the kids move up to the next division and an influx of kids from the division below or who are new to the League. Kids with great ice hockey skills are sometimes at a disadvantage because they lack speed and fast kids with limited hockey skills can be impact players. In the end, we try to use all the tools at our disposal to try to achieve team equality.