

# CAHA STRATEGY PLAN EFFECTIVE 2020-21 SEASON

At the 2018 and 2019 CAHA Annual Meetings, the Associations expressed a need for a CAHA Strategic Plan to help guide us and to address how to best grow hockey in the Carolinas. The CAHA Board of Directors put together a Strategy Committee that did a deep dive into the data to review growth and retention trends, reviewed the state of youth sports, looked at what other USAH Affiliates were doing, and looked at the success of approaches to growing youth hockey in countries like Finland and Sweden. Some of the most important data came from the following sources:

**ADM Best Practices** – we reviewed ADM Best Practices for all age groups and looked at how we are doing in the Associations at implementing these. There are challenges to implementing them fully that include turnover in Hockey Directors, lack of communication, parental pressure, coach resistance, and the confusing amount of information.

**CAHA & USA Hockey Registration Growth** –CAHA registrations for youth players (0 to 18 years of age) have increased by 23.3% in the last 5 years (2014-15 to 2018-19 seasons). This exceeds the USA Hockey national average for this time period where total youth player registrations increased by 7.6%.

**CAHA & USA Hockey Player Retention** – CAHA player retention from one age group to the next has been strong for 6U moving to 8U (50% average growth in last 4 years), 8U moving to 10U (22% average 4 year growth) and 10U moving to 12U (7% average 4-year growth). After 12U, our retention declines to -9% for 12U to 14U, -17% from 14U to 16U and -30% for 16U to 18U. The concerning thing for CAHA is that our retention flattens out when players move from 10U to 12U and our 2018-19 retention is the lowest it has been in 4 years. This is concerning as we look to the future.

**Studies on the Growth of Youth sports** – many studies have been done on why kids are not playing sports and are not staying in sports past the age of 12 or 13. The Aspen Institute’s Project Play - see Sport for All, Play For Life –did a large study on youth sports that we embrace and agree with. We have seen the same trends in hockey in CAHA and want to address and reverse some of these trends. Some of the key findings that apply to our strategy include the fact that kids are quitting the sport and telling us that our model is broken. We have increased travel teams at the detriment of our House programs, focused on too much on winning, separated kids out too early, and not allowed everyone to play. According to the kids, it isn’t fun. The chart (along with the rest of the report) shows what kids are telling us.

MORE FUN	LESS FUN
Trying your best	Winning
When Coach treats player with respect	Playing in tournaments
Getting Playing time	Practicing with specialty coaches
Playing well together as a team	Earning medals or trophies
Getting along with teammates	Traveling to new places to play
Exercising and being active	Getting pictures taken

## What are other sports doing?

In general, other major sports begin introducing youth players to the adult-sized game at 13 or 14 years old. Hockey does this at age 9. This is a big disconnect with ADM and maximizing skill development and athlete retention.

	Age that the sports considers players adults to play on adult-sized surfaces	Number of Progressions in Size of Game
US SOCCER	13 years old	4
LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL	13-14 years old	4
US LACROSSE	13-14 years old	2
USA HOCKEY	9-10 years old	2

**10U Skill Development Study** – in 2015, a study was done in Prague looking at the best skill development options for 10U players. The conclusion is that full-ice 10U hockey is the worst format for skill development and any cross-ice or half-ice option is better at developing skills.

• Best results for different activities are:

puck control	changes of direction	starts	stops	passing	passes received	shooting	1-1
4-4 H ice	5-5 X ice	5-5 X ice	5-5 X ice	3-3 X ice	3-3 X ice	3-3 H ice	5-5 X ice

This data and research resulted in a Strategic Plan that was shared with the Associations for their input, ideas, and feedback. This Action Plan is the culmination of these efforts and represents the views of the CAHA Strategic Committee, input from the Associations, USAH input (especially ADM Regional Managers Scott Paluch and Joe Bonnett and Diversity & Inclusion Manager Stephanie Jackson), input from the NHL Hurricanes and AHL Checkers. The plan consists of 5 strategies to grow hockey in the Carolinas in the next 10 years.

TOTAL RESULTS (WHOLE GAME)								
/s/	puck control	changes of direction	starts	stops	passing	passes received	shooting	1-1
3-3 X ice	48,8	29,5	38,1	31,0	19,2	19,5	13,4	23,3
4-4 X ice	25,3	36,9	43,7	31,7	18,9	16,9	8,6	35,9
5-5 X ice	18,0	59,1	50,0	45,4	9,5	13,5	2,3	55,0
3-3 H ice	71,3	21,8	39,4	14,2	15,5	8,2	15,6	16,7
4-4 H ice	77,2	25,6	36,8	23,7	12,9	8,9	11,0	18,1
5-5 H ice	66,2	15,3	37,7	11,8	8,4	4,5	10,4	12,4
5-5 full ice	58,7	27,1	29,3	21,8	13,5	10,3	8,1	18,2

# CAHA STRATEGIC VISION

By 2025, CAHA's goal is to meet or exceed national growth and retention rates across all ages and demographics. Our vision is that the majority of CAHA Associations will meet the national/CAHA standard for implementation of ADM Principles by 2025. Our Associations and coaches will lead the implementation of the best coaching methods, create a fun environment, and work to grow the sport. Our programs will deliver fun, skill development, and competitiveness while preparing players for the highest level of hockey that they desire. We do the right thing to instill the love of hockey in every player to play HOCKEY FOR LIFE.

## STRATEGIES

**STRATEGY 1: Focus on the on-ice content or execution so that ADM Best Practices are implemented in every age group in every Association with a primary focus on 6U/8U/10U/12U and Goaltending** - this includes maximizing ADM execution on the ice, growing house programs, investing in the growth and development of coaches and referees, and developing a "Model Association" program to communicate Best Practices and reward Associations for success.

**STRATEGY 2: Improve the Value that Families Receive By Playing Hockey** - this includes improving the overall experience like having more fun, improving our coaching expertise to deliver better on-ice content in practices, reducing travel and associated costs, reducing games played, and maximizing skill development especially at the 8U, 10U, and 12U age groups.

**STRATEGY 3: Hockey is for Everyone: Equity & Inclusion to grow our sport in all areas to include everyone – Girl's Hockey, Adult, Sled, Disabled, Multi-Cultural, etc.** - improve our reach and our membership to include everyone. Embrace the NHL's Hockey is for Everyone. Grow these areas of hockey, partner with USA Hockey Diversity & Inclusion Manager to pilot some community outreach, reach out to different types of people for involvement in CAHA leadership positions, expand the Hurricanes/Checkers OneGoal program to all markets.

**STRATEGY 4: Improve the local marketing of the sport to all groups** - explore a Social Media campaign to focus on fun, excitement, energy, teamwork, friendships that hockey provides. Also, looking a possible CAHA-wide charity foundation event work to focus on certain communities.

## SPECIFIC ACTION STEPS TO IMPLEMENT THE STRATEGIES

- **6U & 8U Cross-Ice or Quad-Ice Games Only**
- **10U Half-Ice Games in 25% of House, House Select, and B Travel games**
- **8U Development Programs – replaces 8U Select with open registration for players who want more development**
- **Coaching Education – Coaching Symposium, Positive Coaching Certification**
- **ADM Guidelines & Recommendations for ages & levels plus reporting for roster approval**
- **2 CAHA/Association meetings annually**
- **ADM & Goalie Market Managers to work with Hockey Directors**
- **CHL Improvements**
- **Host 8U Team & Scramble Jamborees**
- **Host 10U Team & Scramble Jamborees**
- **Marketing Partnerships**

The areas where we can get the biggest impact are changes to maximize skill development and add more value to families. These include clear communication of ADM guidelines & recommendations, improving practice to game ratios, improving on-ice content in executing ADM, improving the pathway to hockey, and marketing the game more effectively.

- Rename 8U Select “8U Development” to focus on the inclusion of all players into this additional level of development. CAHA will support scramble and team Jamborees. Associations are encouraged to have open registration/sign-ups for 8U Development. After registration, Associations may put together teams at 2 levels – Beginner and Intermediate/Advanced. Current 8U Travel Guidelines will remain in effect for any 8U Development teams that are formed.
- 6U & 8U Age Groups will be Cross-Ice or Quad-Ice games beginning in 2020-21.
- We will implement 10U Half-Ice Games in 25% of all 10U House & House Select/B Travel games in 2020-21 season with the goal of reaching 50% across CAHA over time. We will collect data and Association input from this test. CAHA will also support 10U Team Jamborees and hold CAHA Tournaments throughout the Affiliate for House teams and Travel teams.
- In the 8U, 10U, 12U, 14U, 16U, 18U age groups (boys and girls), we will communicate the ADM Best Practices guidelines & recommendations for practice to game ratios, game maximums, and geographic travel boundaries. With geographic recommendations, teams will be encouraged to play more CHL games to keep travel more local.
- Implement a team registration system where Associations will provide information on all their teams to include practices, games, off-ice program, practice to game ratios, travel plans, and game counts. House programs will be asked to provide the details of their house programs and not every team. Travel programs will be asked to provide this for each of their travel teams. This will be requested at the beginning of each season and will be a requirement for approval of rosters.
- We will add a 2<sup>nd</sup> CAHA/Association meeting in January per the request of the Associations.
- We will work closely with the CHL to help them improve the satisfaction of the Associations so the Associations have more confidence that the CHL will provide a competitive and effective local option for playing games.
- CAHA will add a team of Market Goalie Managers and Market ADM Managers who will work directly with Associations on goalie development and ADM implementation.
- We will add people to Committees from outside the Board and add some Committee positions with specific responsibilities – recruit more people to help. This includes diverse leaders.
- CAHA will develop an “Association of Excellence” program to help with the deployment of the new guidelines/recommendations and the ADM Best Practices.
- Coaching Education Supplement—we will add more ADM Education to Coaches via communication, clearer guidelines, Coaching Symposium, & Positive Coaching Alliance Certification
- Equity and Inclusion: Hockey is for Everyone – embrace equity and inclusion in the sport by including everyone. This includes developing approaches, attitudes, and initiatives that include everyone in hockey. Examples include adding diverse leaders to CAHA Committees and reaching out to diverse talent to add them to our leadership.
- Marketing – improve our marketing of the sport to include using USA Hockey data, focusing on diverse populations, partnering with other sports, and embracing a charity umbrella like “Hockey Fights Cancer” to create awareness of the sport and give back to the communities.

## USAH/CAHA GUIDELINES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL AGE GROUPS

The key principles for all age groups is to align with USA Hockey's ADM best practices for practice to game ratios, maximizing skill development, increasing value to families, and playing more games locally while minimizing overall travel costs. Most House programs currently use a 1:1 practice to game ratio so any movement towards a 3:1 practice to game ratio will increase overall skill development. USAH ADM Best Practices and are communicated in the form of Guidelines and Recommendations for 2020-21. Game Format for 6U and 8U continue as Cross-Ice and 10U Half-Ice games are introduced as rules in 25% of games in House, House Select/B for 2020-21.

### **ADM GUIDELINES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SEASON STRUCTURES BY AGE GROUP/LEVEL EFFECTIVE 2020-21 SEASON**

AGE GROUP	TARGET # PRACTICES (50-60 mins)	OFF-ICE SESSIONS PER WEEK	GAME DAYS OR GAMES - RECOMMENDED FOR ALL AGES IN 2020-21	GAME FORMAT FOR 2020-2021	TARGET PRACTICE TO GAME RATIO	RECOMMENDED MAXIMUM TRIPS OUTSIDE OF CAHA
<b>6U/8U</b>						
6U	50-60	1	16-20 GAME DAYS	Cross or ¼ ice	3:1	0
8U	50-60	1	16-20 GAME DAYS	Cross-Ice	3:1	0
8U Development	60-75	1	20-25 GAME DAYS	Cross-Ice	3:1	0
<b>10U</b>						
10U House	50-60	2	20-25 GAME DAYS	25% Half-Ice	2:1	0
10U B/Select	50-60	2	20-25 GAME DAYS	25% Half-Ice	2:1	1
10UA	75-80	2	20-25 GAME DAYS	Full-Ice	3:1	2
10UAA	75-80	2	20-25 GAME DAYS	Full-Ice	3:1	3
<b>12U</b>						
12U House	60-70	2	30-35 GAME DAYS	Full-Ice	2:1	0
12U B/Select	60-70	2	30-35 GAME DAYS	Full-Ice	2:1	1
12A Travel	80-90	2	30-35 GAME DAYS	Full-Ice	3:1	2
12AA/AAA Travel	80-90	2	30-35 GAME DAYS	Full-Ice	3:1	No limit
12U Girls Travel	80-90	2	30-35 GAME DAYS	Full-Ice	3:1	No limit
<b>14U</b>						
14U House	80-100	2	40-50 GAMES	Full-Ice	2:1	0
14UB/Select	80-100	2	40-50 GAMES	Full-Ice	2:1	No limit
14A/AA/AAA Travel	120-130	2	40-50 GAMES	Full-Ice	3:1	No limit
14U Girls Travel	120-130	2	40-50 GAMES	Full-Ice	3:1	No limit
<b>16U/18U</b>						
16/18 House	80-100	2	50-60 GAMES	Full-Ice	2:1	0
16/18 B/Select	80-100	2	50-60 GAMES	Full-Ice	2:1	No limit
16/18 A/AA/AAA Travel	120-130	2	50-60 GAMES	Full-Ice	3:1	No limit
19U Girls Travel	120-130	2	50-60 GAMES	Full-Ice	3:1	No limit