

AEHL Memorandum 05 – 2022-23

To: AEHL Members

From: Elite Male Hockey Committee

SUBJECT: Draw Zone Structure & Education-Affiliated Programming

Date: February 1, 2023

Alberta Elite Hockey League Members,

DRAW ZONE STRUCTURE

Since November, 2022, the Elite Male Committee has been gathering information on the current Draw Zone Structure in Alberta in order to determine if changes were needed to create more choice and flexibility for Elite Male Hockey players in the province. Data collection strategies included focus group discussions with each Elite Draw Zone on the impact of different boundary structure options to their program offering, surveying current Elite Male Hockey players on the importance of and their satisfaction with various elements of elite sport including travel, and research into other boundary structures throughout amateur sport.

Of the fourteen (14) current Elite Draw Zones, twelve (12) indicated they were strongly opposed to removal of the current Draw Zone structure which would allow players to access Elite Hockey in the host community of their choosing, regardless of geographic location. When surveying players on their satisfaction with the travel required to pursue Elite Male Hockey, travel (which included distance of sport to home, school, the billeting program, etc) was the third highest rated item with an average of 1.95/5.00 (1.00 being the highest possible rating). With this information in hand, the Elite Male Committee determined the removal of the Draw Zone Structure was not necessary now, and the AEHL will retain Elite Draw Zones.

EDUCATION-AFFILIATED PROGRAMMING

Given the retainment of Elite Draw Zones, which decide for all Elite Male Hockey players in Alberta where they must begin their tryout process, programs currently offering daytime programming affiliated with schools must modify their program offering.

The current Elite Draw Zone system does not offer choice to players in where they begin their Elite Hockey tryout process. Programs that players attend a specific school to play with a AAA team reduces a parent's choice to determine the type of education their child receives, contradicting *Bill 15, Choice in Education Act, 2020*, which affirms that parents have the right to choose the kind of education they feel will be best for their children. Further, releasing a player who may not wish to attend the school required by an Elite Draw Zone is again a contradiction of the Choice in Education Act, 2020 and goes against Principle 1 of the Elite Male Hockey Model, which states, *'At all times, everyone will act in the best interest of the athlete and work to provide them with the ability to play at the highest level they can attain;'*

Given the Choice in Education Act, the Principles of the Elite Male Hockey Model and the continued existence of Elite Draw Zones, Draw Zone Hosts are no longer permitted to partner with specific schools to offer practices during the school day from Monday through Friday each week. Programs may however partner with schools to offer ice times during the school day to players attending a specific school or nearby schools as long as attendance is not compulsory or directly impactful on a player's role with a AAA team in the Elite Male Hockey Model.

Should you have any questions on how to structure your Elite Draw Zone's program to be in compliance of the above, meetings can be scheduled with Elite Male Committee leadership by contacting Mike Kraichy (mkraichy@hockeyalberta.ca)

Neil Robertson



Chair – Elite Male Hockey Committee

On behalf of Hockey Alberta's Elite Male Committee