



NOVA SCOTIA U13 AAA  
HOCKEY LEAGUE  
Operations Handbook  
2025-2026 Season

# 1.0 Introduction

This handbook has been developed to provide guidelines and directions for the operation of the Nova Scotia U13 AAA Hockey League. The policies stated herein are for the NSU13AAAHL operational use in conjunction with the Rules and Regulations of Hockey Nova Scotia and Hockey Canada as they pertain to minor Hockey.

## 2.0 Objectives of NSU13AAAHL

- To provide a high caliber of play for skilled players under the age of 13 in all areas of Nova Scotia.
- To provide a competitive level of hockey under minor hockey rules that provides for an emphasis on education, skill development and sportsmanship.
- To enable skilled players to compete against players of a similar level, while limiting the impact on family activities and travel for players.

## 3.0 Structure

The NSU13AAAHL will consist of fifteen (15) area teams located in the following Regions or as otherwise assigned by Hockey Nova Scotia.

Team 1: Cape Breton Region [Glace Bay, Sydney, New Waterford MHA's]

Team 2: Cape Breton Region [CB County, Northside & District MHA's,]

Team 3: Strait Region [CB West, Strait-Richmond MHA's]

Team 4: Antigonish Region [Antigonish, Canso MHA's]

Team 5: Pictou Region [Pictou Co., Tatamagouche MHA's]

Team 6: Truro Region [Truro, Cumberland, West/South Colchester MHA's]

Team 7: Cole Harbor Region (Eastern Shore, Cole Harbor MHA's]

Team 8: Dartmouth Region [Dartmouth MHA]

Team 9: Halifax Region [Halifax MHA]

Team 10: Chebucto Region [Chebucto MHA]

Team 11: TASA Region [TASA MHA]

Team 12: Sackville Region [Sackville MHA]

Team 13: Bedford Region [Bedford MHA]

Team 14: Valley Region [Acadia, Western Valley, West Hants, Clare/Digby MHA's]

Team 15: Western Region [Yarmouth, Shelburne, Queens, Chester, South Shore MHA's]

## 4.0 COMPETITION

### 4.1 League Schedule

A NSU13AAA hockey league schedule will be developed and then approved by HNSMC on an annual basis ensuring that all teams play in an active schedule commencing in early October and concluding two weeks before the HNSMC Provincial Championship tournament. The Provincial Championship will be held two weeks prior to the Atlantic Championship tournament.

At the HNS Provincial Championship tournament, the four person officiating system shall be used.

Dates for the HNS Provincial Championship (April 2nd-5th) and Atlantics' dates April 16th-19th , 2026 have been confirmed.

The fifteen teams will each play a 28-game schedule. During the season each team will play a home and home set against each of the other teams in the league. The League schedule will reflect all possible opportunities to reduce travel and could possibly include some tournament formats and/or neutral site games.

All scheduled games must be played, under no circumstances will games be forfeited.

Any Changes to the League schedule must be approved by the League scheduler in consultation with the HNSMC Regional Director[s] and/or the HNSMC Conference Coordinator.

#### **Game Start/ End Parameters:**

No game involving a Team that must travel 100 km (distance between home rinks) shall start before 12 noon unless mutually agreed upon by both Teams involved. Games on "school" nights need to be concluded in time for players to return to their host area by 9:30 PM.

At the conclusion of the NSU13AAA League play, there will be a play-off round to determine teams who then advance to a Provincial Championship tournament. (Provincial host will not play in the play-off round)

**Format as follows:**

Playoff Round: Lower seed will host game 1. Higher seed will host games 2 and 3 (if necessary). Series will be best 2 out of 3. Each team winning their playoff round will advance to Provincials.

1vs14

2vs13

3vs12

4vs11

5vs10

6vs9

7vs8

**Provincial Tournament**

8 team format with two divisions of 4 teams each, all playing three games and a crossover for semi-finals. See Provincial schedule format in Appendix A.

Tie Breakers formulas outlined in HNS Regulations.

The top seven teams and the host will advance to the HNS Provincial Championship Tournament. The Provincial Championship Banner and the League Championship Banner will be presented to the winning team. All HNS rules and Regulations as per HNS Regulation #24 will apply during this tournament.

If at the conclusion of the NSU13AAAHL Regular Season two or more teams are tied for a play-off position the HNSMC Executive committee will make a tie breaking decision. The method used to determine the outcome will follow the order outlined below.

**4.1.1** The team with the highest number of wins during the regular season.

**4.1.2** The record of the teams in games against each other, [total points]

**4.1.3** If still tied, the higher standing will be determined based on the ratio of total number of goals for divided by the total number of goals for and against to three decimal places. In calculating this ratio only, the records of the teams against each other will be considered. The higher ratio will be given the higher standing.

**4.1.4** If still tied, the goal spread in games between the tied teams only. (Goals for minus goals against)

**4.1.5** If still tied, the team scoring the most goals in the games against each other will finish higher.

**4.1.6** If still tied, repeat steps 2 to 4 but include the records of all teams in the league.

**4.1.7** If still tied, a single game will be played to determine the highest placed team, at a site to be determined by the HNSMC Executive Committee, each team will share the cost or surplus revenue, whichever is applicable.

All teams are to provide the League President with available dates and times for home games by May 1<sup>st</sup> each year. A final league schedule will be approved by the League Scheduler and HNSMC Executive by September 30<sup>th</sup> each year.

All Teams will also be responsible for providing the League President with Team contact (Head Coach and Manager) information.

## 4.2 Game Structure

Each league game will consist of:

- Three fifteen-minute stop clock periods with one ice resurfacing between the second and third period of each game.
- The ice resurfacing will allow for one 10-minute intermission per game.
- A five-minute warmup period is to be provided before each game.
- All regular season games ending in a tie will remain a tie, one point for each team.
- Every effort shall be made to have games begin on time.
- Home teams shall wear light colored jerseys, visitors to wear dark.
- No timeouts in regular season

## 4.3 Game Day Cancellations

HNS Winter Travel Protocol Regulation is in place

**4.3.2** - All reasonable efforts shall be made to reschedule cancelled games as soon as possible. Should the participating teams be unable to reschedule the game(s), then the League scheduler and the appropriate HNSMC Regional Directors will decide on a date, time and place for the game(s) to be played.

## 5.0 Team Responsibilities

All Team Bench staff members must have completed the required HC/HNS coaching certification before being permitted to be on the bench at the start of the hockey season.

All teams are required to have a Safety Rep

### 5.1 Team uniforms to include:

- Two sets of sweaters – home and away
- Matching socks
- CSA approved helmets
- Pants or Shells

### 5.2 Player Uniform Protocol

- League President and Conference Coordinator are to approve all team colors
- Teams will comply with HNS requirements to have the “STOP” patch properly affixed to each game and practice jersey.
- Sponsor bars and/or logos are to be placed in such a position as to appropriately display the sponsor’s name, however, not to interfere with team name bars, numbers and league badges.
- League patches are to be worn by all players and must be placed on the right chest area at a height equally opposite the “C” or “A” on the left side.
- Sweaters are not to be tucked inside the pants:
- Pant legs are to be zippered or sewn closed, open or ripped pants are not permitted.
- All helmets must be either black or comply with team colors.

## 6.0 Discipline

The NSU13AAHL operates under the Hockey Nova Scotia Code of Discipline as applicable to minor hockey players and team officials. All Disciplinary action will be coordinated through the HNS Suspension Director.

It shall be the responsibility of the Head Coach of each team to ensure that players who have received a HNS suspension or who have been assessed a penalty that will lead to a suspension do not play until the suspension has been served.

The onus for control of all league teams rests with the officials of each team or any person(s) acting for the designated officials of the team.

They are therefore responsible for ensuring that, without further notice from anyone players and/or team officials serve their minimum suspensions.

## 7.0 NSU13AAAHL TEAMS

- Teams within the league may consist of a maximum of 20 players, 18 skaters and two goaltenders, as per HNS Regulations.
- All teams within the League shall strive to achieve a practice to game ratio of two practices for each game played.
- Teams in the League can only sign players from the MHA[s] as outlined in the fifteen [15] Region structure in this document. Players who have been released from their home MHA are eligible to try out for one other U13 AAA team as approved by the HNSMC Regional Director and Conference Coordinator as per HNS Regulations.
- League teams may draw affiliate players from, U13 AA, U13 A, U13 B
- and U11 AA as per HNS Regulations.

## 8.0 NSU13AAAHL PLAYERS

- Players aged 11 and 12 years of age as per HNS Regulations.
- All players/parents who do commit to playing with a NSU13AAAHL team shall make themselves aware of the HC and HNS dates and regulations around leaving a team or seeking a release from that team.
- The player/team selection process shall be an open and fair process for all to see, it is highly recommended that all teams include experienced players and coaches from outside the team coaching staff to evaluate players when team selection is taking place.
- Parent coaches shall not be permitted to participate in the player selection process where their child is involved.
- It is highly recommended that the coaching staff meet with all parents before the final selection of players is completed. At this meeting an outline of the plans for the season including travel, time commitment and financial obligations should be fully reviewed. This will provide all parents with the opportunity to fully consider their options before the team selection process is completed.

## 9.0 League Governance

The NSU13AAHL shall be administered by an Executive Committee elected by the League membership and approved by Hockey Nova Scotia. The Executive Committee is to consist of: President/Chair (appointed by Hockey Nova Scotia) Vice President, and Secretary (appointed by U13AAHL President upon approval of HNS nominated and voted in by the membership). Treasurer as appointed by the President upon approval by HNSMC (Non voted in member due to geographical restraints and ease of banking requirements).

**9.1 League Meetings:** At an annual meeting, to be held in May of each year, the Executive Committee will set a schedule for a minimum of quarterly meetings to be attended by members of the Executive Committee and Presidents of each of the League teams for the purpose of conducting the business of the League. Attendance at the meetings is mandatory for each team President or designate.

### 9.2 Financial:

**9.2.1 League Administration Fee:** An annual fee will be assessed to each team and be payable by October 31st. The fee is set by the Executive Committee in an amount to offset the operational costs of the League and approved by HNSMC. Each team will be assessed a 1/15th share of the overall cost to operate the League. Should a team be in default of payment of League fees the team will be considered to not be in good standing and therefore lose its privilege to vote at League meetings, and may at the discretion of the League Executive, be ineligible to receive event permits. League fees will consist of \$650 per team for an annual operating allowance of \$9750 (Ice Scheduling, Administrative & Misc Executive Expenses). This can be revisited as required with inflation costs and does not include any potential overruns due to unforeseen league requirements during an annual season (example: investigations, travel overages etc.).

**9.2.2 Annual Budget:** for each fiscal year for the period from July 1<sup>st</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup> the President and Treasurer will be responsible to prepare an annual operating budgets. The budget is to be presented at the annual meeting, at which time approval of the membership will be requested.

If over the course of the operating year, a projected shortfall occurs in the overall operating budget, the Treasurer will provide an explanation of the overage and



request approval to increase league fees in an amount sufficient to offset the shortfall. Each team will be required to pay its 1/15<sup>th</sup> share of the overage within 14 days of the request.

**9.2.3 Accounting:** The President and Treasurer shall be responsible to maintain adequate financial accounting and present financial statements at each quarterly meeting.

**9.2.4 Banking:** The League Committee shall be authorized to open a bank account for the purpose of making deposits and writing cheques as required for the operation of the League. Executive Committee members will be authorized as signatories with a minimum of two of the following signatures required for each cheque. The authorized signatories are the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary

**9.2.5 Expenses:** Expenses incurred for the approved official business of the league will be covered by reimbursement of the expense through League Expense claims, submitted to the League President for approval, with appropriate receipts. Meal Allowance: While traveling on League business, an allowance for meals will be paid as follows: Breakfast \$20.00, Lunch \$20.00, and Supper \$30.00 Mileage: Will be reimbursed at a rate of \$0.50 per kilometer.

**9.2.6 Communication Allowance:** A monthly allowance of \$25.00 (from the annual budget) will be paid to Executive Committee members to offset normal costs associated with long-distance charges, fax charges, internet charges, etc. Receipts for these expenses are not required.

**9.2.7 Administrative Costs:** To include such items as postage, stationery, courier costs, etc., will be reimbursed. Receipts are required. Submission of expense reports is required within 60 days of the expense being incurred.

**9.3** NSU13AAAHL meetings if required, will be Chaired by the League President and attended by the Conference Coordinator and one representative from each of the fifteen [15] league teams. If an issue requires a vote during a meeting each representative noted above will have one vote, the Chairperson will vote only if the vote is tied. Any changes, additions or deletions to the policies and procedures in this document require the approval of the HNS Board of Directors.

**9.4** All disciplinary matters will be dealt with by the HNS Suspensions coordinator as per HC and HNS Regulations.

**9.5** All complaints from league members to HNSMC must be dealt with utilizing the HNS Official Complaint Form and process.

## **9.6 Team Registration and Host MHA's**

Team 1: Cape Breton Region [this team shall be registered with and hosted by Glace Bay MHA]

Team 2: Cape Breton Region [this team shall be registered with and hosted by Cape Breton County MHA]

Team 3: Strait Region [this team shall be registered with and hosted by Cape Breton West MHA]

Team 4: Antigonish Region [this team shall be registered with and hosted by Antigonish MHA]

Team 5: Pictou Region [this team shall be registered with and hosted by Pictou County MHA]

Team 6: Truro Region [this team shall be registered with and hosted by Truro MHA]

Team 7: Eastern Shore /Cole Harbor Region [this team shall be registered with and hosted by Cole Harbor MHA]

Team 8: Dartmouth Region [this team shall be registered with and hosted by Dartmouth MHA]

Team 9: Halifax Region [this team shall be registered with and hosted by Halifax MHA]

Team 10: Chebucto Region [this team shall be registered with and hosted by Chebucto MHA]

Team 11: TASA Region [this team shall be registered with and hosted by TASA MHA]

Team 12: Sackville Region [this team shall be registered with and hosted by Sackville MHA]

Team 13: Bedford Region [this team shall be registered with and hosted by Bedford MHA]

Team 14: Valley Region [this team will be registered with and hosted by Western Valley MHA]

Team 15: Western Region [this team will be registered with and hosted by South Shore MHA]

## 9.7 NSU13AAAHL Team Coaches / Bench Staff

In the Regions listed below the coaches/bench staff shall consist of the following.

- Head coach from the host MHA
- Two bench staff from the other MHA's
- Two others as selected by the team

Any changes or request to alter this bench staff structure must have the approval of the HNSMC through the Regional Director and the Conference Coordinator.

The Teams affected by this regulation are listed below.

1. Cape Breton [Glace Bay host]
2. Cape Breton [Cape Breton County host]
3. Strait Region [Cape Breton West host]
4. Truro Region [Truro host]
5. Valley Region [Western Valley host]
6. Western Region [South Shore host]

## 9.8 Home Game and Practice Sites.

NSU13AAA teams that are made up of players from more than one MHA shall have some home games and practices in other areas of the region besides the host MHA site, this sharing of game and practice sites will be monitored by HNSMC.

The teams affected by this regulation are listed below.

1. Cape Breton Region [Glace Bay]
2. Cape Breton Region [Cape Breton County]
3. Strait Region [Cape Breton West]
4. Truro Region [Truro]
5. Valley Region [Western Valley]
6. Western Region [South Shore]

HNSMC, NSU13AAA Hockey League and affected MHA's will participate in a review of their "Regionally comprised" Teams every 3 years (Next review, summer 2026) to ensure host opportunities among member teams are fully explored.

APPENDIX A: (May be altered by host committee if required and approved by the U13AAAHL & HNSMC).

| U13 AAA PROVINCIALS ICE SCHEDULE |          |               |          |            |                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------|---------------|----------|------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                                  |          | THURSDAY      | FRIDAY   | SATURDAY   | SUNDAY                           | SUNDAY                           |
|                                  |          | 12pm-9pm      | 12pm-8pm | 9am-8pm    | 9am-4pm                          | 9am-11pm                         |
| 9AM                              |          |               |          | #4 (H)     | SEMI 1                           | SEMI 2                           |
| 10AM                             |          |               |          | #6 (V)     | 1st (H) Pool A Vs 2nd (V) Pool B | 1st (H) Pool B Vs 2nd (V) Pool A |
| 11AM                             |          |               |          | #7 (H)     |                                  |                                  |
| 12PM                             |          | #1 (H)        | #5 (H)   | #1 (V)     | BRONZE                           |                                  |
| 1PM                              |          | #5 (V)        | #7 (V)   | #3 (H)     | BRONZE                           |                                  |
| 2PM                              |          | #2 (H)        | #2 (H)   | #5 (V)     | GOLD                             |                                  |
| 3PM                              |          | #4 (V)        | #6 (V)   | #8 (H)     | GOLD                             |                                  |
| 4PM                              |          | #3 (H)        | #1 (H)   | #2 (V)     |                                  |                                  |
| 5PM                              |          | #7 (V)        | #3 (V)   | SKILLS     |                                  |                                  |
| 6PM                              |          | OP CEREMONY   | #4 (H)   | SKILLS     |                                  |                                  |
| 7PM                              |          | #6 (H)        | #8 (V)   | AWARDS ICE |                                  |                                  |
| 8PM                              |          | #8 (V)        |          |            |                                  |                                  |
| 9PM                              |          |               |          |            |                                  |                                  |
| TOT                              | 16 Games | 102 Ice Hours |          |            |                                  |                                  |

APPENDIX B:



# 2025-2026 SEASON MINOR SEASONAL STRUCTURE CHART

| DATES           | NATIONAL  | ATLANTIC  | PROVINCIAL  | REGIONAL  | LOCAL  |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|--|
|                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Junior A</li> <li>U18 Major (Nationals)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Junior B</li> <li>Junior C</li> <li>U15 Major (Atlantica)</li> <li>U16 AAA (Atlantica)</li> <li>U18 Major (Atlantica)</li> <li>U13 AAA Minor (Atlantica)</li> <li>HC Accredited Sport Schools</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U18 AA, A, B Minor</li> <li>U15 AA, A, B Minor</li> <li>U13 AA, A, B Minor</li> <li>U11 AA, A, B Minor</li> <li>U13 AAA Minor (Provincials)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor Junior</li> <li>U18 C Minor</li> <li>U15 C Minor</li> <li>U13 C Minor</li> <li>U11 C Minor</li> <li>Para Hockey</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U9 Minor</li> <li>U7 Minor</li> <li>Local programs</li> </ul> |
| August 15       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summer tryouts are permitted to start</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summer tryouts are permitted to start (excluding U13 AAA)</li> </ul>   |   |   |  |
| August 30       |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U13 AAA conditioning skates start</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conditioning skates start</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conditioning skates start</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conditioning skates start</li> </ul>                          |
| September 13    |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U13 AAA Minor tryouts start</li> </ul>   |   |   |  |
| September 20    |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Junior B, Junior C League play begins</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tryouts begin</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tryouts begin</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groupings/assessments start</li> </ul>                        |
| September 27-28 |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U15 Major Early Bird Tournament (Tryouts finish)</li> </ul>  |   |   |  |
|                 |   |   |   |   |  |
| October 11      |   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competitive League play begins</li> </ul>  |   |  |
| October 18      |   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rec League play begins</li> </ul>  |   |  |
| October 25      |   |   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>League play starts</li> </ul>  |  |
| November 20-23  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U13 AAA Provincial Tournament</li> </ul>   |   |   |  |
| December 1      |   |   |   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>League play starts (U9 only)</li> </ul>                       |
| February 1      |   |   |   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U9 Full-Ice Games begin</li> </ul>                            |
| March 8         |   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competitive Minor League winners - Day of Champion</li> </ul>  |   |  |
| March 15        |   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competitive Minor League winners - Provincial</li> </ul>   |   |  |
| March 19-22     |   |   |   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEDMHA (U9 Jamboree)</li> </ul>                               |
| March 26-29     |   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEDMHA (Minor Division)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEDMHA (Minor Division)</li> </ul>   |  |
| March 28-29     |   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conference Championships</li> </ul>  |   |  |
| March 29        |   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rec League winners declared</li> </ul>   |   |  |
| April 2-5       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U18 Major Atlantica (Male)</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U13 AAA Provincials (Minor)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U18 AA Provincials (Minor)</li> <li>U15 AA Provincials (Minor)</li> </ul>  |   |  |
|                 |   |   |   |   |  |
| April 11-12     |   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Day of Champions (Minor)</li> </ul>  |   |  |
| April 15-May 30 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U18 Major Spring ID Camps</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U15 Major Spring ID Camps</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MHA Spring Development Camps</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MHA Spring Development Camps</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MHA Spring Development Camps</li> </ul>                       |
| April 16-19     |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U13/U15 Male Atlantica</li> </ul>  |   |   |  |
| April 20-26     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TELUS Cup U18 Male</li> </ul>                      |   |   |   |  |