

Hockey Alberta

Body Checking Review Committee



Final Recommendations

Presented to the Hockey Alberta Board of Directors
April 26th, 2003

Final Draft April 26th, 2003

Hockey Alberta Body Checking Review Committee Final Recommendations

Executive Summary

Our Committee has taken a journey and on behalf of the Body Checking Review Committee I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Hockey Alberta Board of Directors for showing leadership and courage to allow this committee to complete it's work and present these recommendations today.

Today we will be presenting our final recommendations. Our work represents over 9 months of careful review, collaboration, consultation, survey and research of all the relevant issues facing our organization in determining the approach Alberta should take in ensuring the proper environment for our young Hockey Players.

Each Recommendation we will be presenting today will reflect Hockey Alberta's Vision, Mission and Core Values as an Organization. We will provide you the rationale, the summary of supporting research and information, information on Survey feedback and other relevant implications and considerations that the committee looked at in determining these recommendations.

Background

In May of 2002 at the Canadian Hockey Association Annual meeting in Toronto a motion was passed to allow Branches of the CHA to introduce body Checking below the Pee Wee age level if they chose, starting in the 2002-2003 hockey season. Following that decision the Hockey Alberta Board of Directors decided to delay any change in the introduction of Body Checking in Alberta until a complete review could be under taken of all the issues involved in the introduction of Body Checking below the Pee Wee level.

A Special "***Body Checking Review Committee***" was struck to review this issue completely looking at all angles and aspects of Body Checking in Minor Hockey with the intent of presenting some recommendations back to the Hockey Alberta Board of Directors by no later than **April 30th 2003**.

Committee Mandate

" To review at what age and or categories Body Checking should be introduced in Alberta"

The Objectives set for the Committee by the Board of Directors were the following:

1. Review the CHA motion relating to Body Checking from the 2002 CHA AGM
2. Review all relevant issues and research available relating to the introduction of Body Checking in Hockey
3. Seek input from Hockey Alberta Councils, Zone Teams and Members on this issue
4. Complete the review process by April 30th 2003
5. File a summary Report and make recommendations to the Hockey Alberta Board of Directors

Body Checking Review Committee Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Area of Responsibility</u>
1. George Kallay – Chair	Lead the Process
2. Dr. Steve Norris	Injuries and Research, and Athlete Development
3. Ray Boudreau	Parents and Safety Issues
4. Terry Ledingham	Board and Member Liaison
5. Janis Entem	Minor Hockey Association Issues
6. Jim McNamara	Referee Liaison
7. Bjorn Kinding	Skill Development and International Perspective
8. Rick Polutnik	Coaching and Leadership Development
9. Scott Robinson	Hockey Alberta Staff Representative

Recommendations

A detailed copy of the recommendations is attached to the executive Summary for you review. The Committee's work lead to the initial formation of 8 recommendations. These recommendations were then shared with the Membership of Hockey Alberta through two workshops held in Edmonton on March 29th and in Calgary on March 30th. From this feedback as well as feedback received through an Online Survey following the workshops the recommendations have been adjusted and there now stands 9 recommendations being put forth from this committee.

The Initial recommendations have been adjusted to reflect the concerns and issues raised by the membership who contributed to this process. Many of the recommendations have received resounding support. Others required the committee to carefully review again and identify ways to satisfy concerns of the members while not compromising the integrity of the work completed by the committee.

We believe that the recommendations presented to the Board are sound and thoroughly reviewed.

The Recommendations can be summarized in the following way:

- A Phase in approach to implementing the 4 Steps to Body Checking is needed to ensure proper education and training of players, coaches, referee's and parents.
- Rule Modifications are necessary to ensure a safe and developmental environment for the players
- The Education of Coaches, Referee's and Parents must improve and be aligned better and specialized Training must be mandatory for all coaches
- Hockey Alberta must work with Leagues and Minor Hockey Associations to create non Body Checking options for Players at all levels
- More Research is needed to understand better what issues like Body Checking have on the skill acquisition and Player dropout in Hockey
- Hockey Alberta needs to work with Leagues to identify what reward and discipline systems are in place now and how we can improve those to ensure a safe, developmentally focused environment for the players, coaches, referee's and parents
- That these recommendations need time for piloting and further development to ensure compliance and coordination.

Conclusion

With the presentation of this report the work of the Body Checking Review Committee is now complete. We would like to thank the Hockey Alberta Board of Directors for their Guidance and leadership in this process.

I would especially like to thank the members of this committee for their dedication and commitment to this project. Their insight, expertise and guidance cannot be understated in this project and I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked with such a group.

Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted

George Kallay
Chair, Body Checking Review Committee

Hockey Alberta Body Checking Review Committee

Definitions

Body Checking: Body Checking is the result of a defensive player (player without the puck) pushing, striking or hitting an offensive player (player with the puck) moving in an opposite direction. The action of the defensive player is deliberate and forceful in an opposite direction to which the offensive player is moving.

Body Contact: Body Contact is a result of movement of the offensive player (player with the puck) in a restricted space created by the angling, positioning and skating of a defensive player (player without the puck) moving in the same direction.

Canadian Hockey Association 4 Step Checking Model:

Step #1 – Positioning and Angling

- The first step in teaching Checking is to learn how to control skating and establish position to approach the opponent from an angle minimizing time and space for the opponent.

Step #2 – Stick Checks

- The second step is to effectively use the stick, poke checking and sweep checking, lifting and locking the opponent's stick.

Step #3 – Body Contact

- The third step is to use the body to block the opponent's way or take away the skating lanes of another player. The correct stance and effective use of leg strength are important parts of these techniques.

Step #4 – Body Checking

- The fourth and final step is the actual body checking. This step includes teaching techniques to check and receive a body check as well as safety and rules.

Hockey Alberta Body Checking Review Committee

Presentation of Recommendations

Recommendation #1

A) *That the introduction of Body Checking in Alberta follow a three phase process as outlined below:*

1. **Phase 1** - Atom Age Group (9-10)
 - Introduction of steps 1 to 3 of the *CHA Checking Progression Model*
 - No introduction to Body Checking in Tryouts, Games, Competitions or Practice sessions
2. **Phase 2** - Pee Wee Group (11-12)
 - Reinforce the steps 1 to 3 of *CHA Checking Progression Model*
 - Introduce step 4 in the *CHA Checking Progression Model* in practice sessions only in the months of September to December.
 - Body Checking in Games and Competitions only allowed after **December 24th**.
3. **Phase 3** - Bantam Group (13-14)
 - Review Steps 1-4 in *CHA Body Checking Progression Model* through the season in practices sessions
 - Body Checking allowed in Tryouts, Games and Competitions starting at the beginning of the season.

Reflected Hockey Alberta Core Values

- **Fun & Fairplay based on Respect** - To promote positive self - esteem in all our people
- **Safe Environments** - By providing training and education for the well being of all
- **Innovation** - Creating an environment where learning and flexibility are the tools we use to wisely handle our changing circumstances
- **Perspective** - Maintaining a healthy balance between life and the Game

Rationale for Recommendation

- Focus of the Body Checking Review Committee with this recommendation is to balance needs of the young athlete in terms of development and safety with the challenges facing the Minor Hockey System and the desires to have both competitive and recreational options for players.
- This innovative approach to introduction of Body Checking ensures that all players and coaches have the adequate time to learn the important skills and techniques needed while balancing the developmental variances of all levels of athletes
- Modified rules ensure safety and a progression approach to learning Body Checking in a competitive yet safe environment.

Summary of Supporting Research and Information

- Many research studies, position statements and Medical reviews available and reviewed by this committee support that the introduction of Body Checking is linked to a dramatic increase in injuries in Hockey no matter what level it is introduced.

Final Draft April 26th, 2003

- Position statements American Academy of Pediatrics and the Canadian Academy of Sport Medicine do not support the introduction of full Body Checking in Hockey until about 14 - 15 years of age.
- The insufficient Practice to Game ratios in Canada create a significant challenge to support the proper introduction of Body Checking and education of coaches and players.
- Studies indicate that the largest number of injuries in body checking in Hockey occurs when there is collisions and severe contact the with the boards
- Research in skill acquisition in sport supports the fact that players will have difficulty learning basic skills if pressure (like that created by Body checking) is introduced before those basic skills are fully formed.
- All of the countries surveyed (USA, Czech Republic, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Switzerland) none of them implement full Body Checking below the peewee age level.
- Some Countries surveyed such as Finland uses modified rules to maximize development and safety of the players especially in youth hockey.

Members Survey Feedback

- 72% of those surveyed felt that Body Checking introduction was a significant issue
- 85% of those surveyed felt that the Body Checking issue was primarily one of Safety and or Skill Development
- 89% felt that the decision to implement Body checking issue should be supported with relevant Research information.
- 69% felt Body Checking should be introduced at the atom level or below. 31% indicated that Body Checking should be introduced at or above the peewee level.
- 70% of expert coaches surveyed felt that Body Checking should be introduced above at the peewee age level or above.

Other Considerations & Implications

- Working with Minor Hockey Associations and Leagues is a major consideration in implementing the above recommendation
- December 24th was selected as a start date for Body checking in peewee to ensure that proper training time and education processes can be completed by all coaches and players and that introduction of Body Checking falls in a natural break in the season for League play and tournament play.
- Pilot projects around this recommendation should be considered to ensure effective implementation and communication issues are dealt with in terms of all partners.

Recommendation #2

That the following rule modifications be implemented consistent with the CHA Checking Progression Model to reinforce proper checking techniques and attitudes by players in the game.

1. CHA Rule – 28(f)

Current Rule

(f) Any player incurring a total of three or more stick infraction penalties during the same game shall be ejected from the game. For the application of this rule, stick infraction penalties are considered to be: high sticking, cross-checking, slashing, spearing and butt-ending.

Rule Modification (All Minor Hockey age divisions)

(f) Any player incurring a total of three or more minor penalties shall be ejected from the game.

2. CHA Rule – 50

Current Rule

(a) No change

(b) No change

Rule Modifications (PeeWee age levels only)

NEW (c) In the divisions of PeeWee a minor penalty shall be assessed any Player who body checks an opponent without two hands on the stick.

NEW (d) In the divisions of PeeWee a minor penalty shall be assessed any Player who body checks an opponent while carrying his stick above the waist of his opponent.

NEW (e) In the division of PeeWee a minor penalty shall be assessed any Player who body checks an opponent below the goal line.

Reflected Hockey Alberta Core Values

- **Fun & Fairplay based on Respect** - To promote positive self - esteem in all our people
- **Safe Environments** - By providing training and education for the well being of all
- **Innovation** - Creating and environment where learning and flexibility are the tools we use to wisely handle our changing circumstances
- **Perspective** - Maintaining a healthy balance between life and the Game

Rationale for Recommendation

- Modified rules ensure safety and a progression approach to learning Body Checking in a competitive yet safe environment.
- Aligning the rules of the game with the teaching methods of the CHA Body Checking Progression Model to ensure that the learning is reinforced in how the game should be played out on the ice.

Summary of Supporting Research and Information

- Some Countries surveyed such as Finland uses modified rules to maximize development and safety of the players especially in youth hockey.

Members Survey Feedback

- 72% of those surveyed felt that Body Checking introduction was a significant issue
- 85% of those surveyed felt that the Body Checking issue was primarily one of Safety and or Skill Development
- 49% of Referee's believe introducing Body Checking below the Pee Wee level will make the game more competitive.
- 47% of coaches felt that Modified rules were necessary to ensure the safety of players in relation to Body Checking.

Other Considerations & Implications

- Working with Minor Hockey Associations and Leagues is a major consideration in implementing the above recommendation
- Pilot projects around this recommendation should be considered to ensure that the rule changes being proposed are effective in reinforcing the proper checking techniques and attitudes towards safety and development by the players, coaches and referee's in the game

Recommendation #3

Implement a mandatory Hockey Alberta Checking Program for all Head Coaches in the age divisions of Atom, PeeWee and Bantam consistent with the 3 Phase implementation process outlined in Recommendation #1.

Reflected Hockey Alberta Core Values

- **Fun & Fairplay based on Respect** - To promote positive self - esteem in all our people
- **Safe Environments** - By providing training and education for the well being of all
- **Innovation** - Creating an environment where learning and flexibility are the tools we use to wisely handle our changing circumstances
- **Teamwork** - As a life long skill
- **Perspective** - Maintaining a healthy balance between life and the Game

Rationale for Recommendation

- Through all the research and surveys reviewed the need and support for more education of coaches is one of the most clear messages that has been identified. That being said the challenges facing Hockey Alberta and it's Minor Hockey Associations in properly Training coaches in our Volunteer system cannot be overstated.
- The 3 Phase approach of Recommendation # 1 aligns with this recommendation to train coaches in a systematic way. The 3 Phase approach ensures that learning is progressive and connected between each age level for both the coaches and the players.
- The CHA Four Step Checking Model is the basis for the training along with an emphasis on ethics, safety and rule understanding for coaches.

Summary of Supporting Research & Information

- Skill acquisition research supports a developmental approach to learning for the players, which in turn impacts on the training needs of the coaches
- Research done in Quebec also identifies the need for more training for coaches in this area
- The CHA Coaching Committee position Paper in 1991 clearly laid out the need for more education and consistency in terms of how the area of Body Checking should be taught for young players

Members Survey Feedback

- 90% of Minor Hockey Associations felt that there should be special Body Checking education in Alberta.
- 80% of Coaches, Minor Hockey Associations and Parents felt that there should be Mandatory Body Checking Clinics
- 65% of Minor Hockey Associations said that coaches in their associations do not have the necessary skills to teach body Checking effectively
- 74% of Minor Hockey associations said that they would be willing to invest \$50 or more per coach per year in Body Checking education programs.

Other Considerations & Implications

- The current Hockey Alberta Checking Education program would have to be modified to fit the 3 Phase approach.
- More instructors would have to be trained and recruited to implement this recommendation effectively.
- Provincial standardization to the Body Checking education tools and programs would be essential.
- Adjustments may have to be looked at in the current regulations around coaching education that would allow for the proposed approach and ensure that first year coaches were not over whelmed with education requirements
- Hockey Alberta would also have to work with Hockey Alberta Zone Clinic Coordinators and Leagues to create "Windows" in the existing schedules to ensure that all coaches could attend Checking Education workshops in the fall of each year.
- The Training Program for coaches also needs to reflect the rule interpretation of officials and the challenges that they face in calling these rules in competitive play

(Proposed) Hockey Alberta Checking Program Outline

Atom/Peewee/ Bantam Coaches	
Coaches Training	<i>Phases 1-3 Atom Pee Wee Bantam Head Coaches Theory, On-ice and Off-ice</i> 1. <i>Growth & Development</i> 2. <i>Respect and Ethics</i> 3. <i>Checking Skills CHA Checking Progression Model (Positioning/Angling, Stick Checks, Body Contact, Body Checking)</i> 4. <i>Drills and consideration for each Age Group (incl. Special restrictions for the peewee age group)</i> 5. <i>Rules and their Purpose</i> 6. <i>Signing a "PlaySmart Agreement/Commitment"</i>
Resources	<i>Manual 1&2 PowerPoint Coach Video/DVD</i>
Format Time	<i>Classroom, On Ice, Off Ice 8 Hours</i>

Recommendation #4

Work with the Hockey Alberta Referee's Council to ensure that the current Referee Training Program aligns to the 3 Phase Implementation process in Recommendation #1.

Reflected Hockey Alberta Core Values

- **Fun & Fairplay based on Respect** - To promote positive self - esteem in all our people
- **Safe Environments** - By providing training and education for the well being of all
- **Innovation** - Creating and environment where learning and flexibility are the tools we use to wisely handle our changing circumstances
- **Consistency** - in our decisions and applications of policies and regulations
- **Teamwork** - As a life long skill
- **Perspective** - Maintaining a healthy balance between life and the Game

Rationale for Recommendation

- Referees play a significant role in the safety and protection of young players in the game especially when it comes to Body Checking.
- The Committee felt strongly that there needs to be a stronger connection between coach education and referee education in terms of Body Checking rules and teaching techniques.
- Enhanced education tools for officials also need to be upgraded to ensure that Officials have the best information and education possible.

Summary of Supporting Research & Information

- The Referee's Council has supported the rule modifications identified in Recommendation #1 as a means to ensure safety and development of the players as well as development of the officials themselves
- Modified rules are used in other countries as a means to ensure development and safety of the players as well as train the officials

Members Survey Feedback

- 55% of officials felt that Parents and coaches would be harder on them as officials if Body Checking was implemented below the Pee Wee level
- 49% of Officials indicated that the game would become more competitive if Body Checking was introduced below the Peewee level
- 44% of Officials said that special training would be required if Body Checking was introduced at a lower level

Other Considerations & Implications

- The Hockey Alberta Referee's Council will need to be consulted further on the needs of officials in terms of proper Training regarding Body Checking

Recommendation #5

Develop and implement a Parent Awareness Program around growth and development and Body Checking issues for young athletes.

Reflected Hockey Alberta Core Values

- **Fun & Fairplay based on Respect** - To promote positive self - esteem in all our people
- **Safe Environments** - By providing training and education for the well being of all
- **Innovation** - Creating an environment where learning and flexibility are the tools we use to wisely handle our changing circumstances
- **Teamwork** - As a life long skill
- **Perspective** - Maintaining a healthy balance between life and the Game

Rationale for Recommendation

- Parents play a major role in the culture, expectations and support for the Minor Hockey System in Alberta. The Committee believes that education is needed for parents to ensure that the right messages are understood and promoted to the kids in the game.
- It appears that there is a lack of understanding of proper Growth and Developmental factors for young athletes in our game. Parents in particular need to have some access to information supporting a positive environment for the development of their child through sport.

Summary of Supporting Research and Information

- Research indicates that Parental influence on behavior of Athletes cannot be ignored.
- Parents can also influence attitudes of athletes that may not support the principles or positive aspects of our game that a coach may be trying to teach.
- Parent education is clearly a need based on some studies that speak to the effects of Parents in amateur sport.

Members Survey Feedback

- 55% of officials felt that Parents and coaches would be harder on them as officials if Body Checking was implemented below the Pee Wee level
- Many of the Surveys submitted identified that Parent education is an important consideration in the positive support for Body checking in Hockey at any level.

Other Considerations & Implications

- Parent Education though likely supported in these findings is certainly not easy nor is it uniformly effective. The Body Checking review Committee did feel that there is incomplete tools for educating Parents and therefore is suggesting better tools be created.
- Minor Hockey Associations are the critical link to ensuring the education of Parents in the Game. Further discussion is required with MHA's to determine strategies to educate the parents in the game about the proper growth and development needs of the athletes.

Recommendation #6

That Hockey Alberta work in conjunction with Leagues and Minor Hockey Associations to implement a non body checking option for PeeWee to Midget aged players through out Alberta.

Reflected Hockey Alberta Core Values

- **Safe Environments** - By providing training and education for the well being of all
- **Innovation** - Creating an environment where learning and flexibility are the tools we use to wisely handle our changing circumstances
- **Consistency** - in the decisions and applications of policies and regulations
- **Teamwork** - As a lifelong skill
- **Perspective** - Maintaining a healthy balance between life and the Game

Rationale for Recommendation

- The committee recognized through much feedback that there is a need for more choice in our system for players and parents in terms of what level of competitiveness they want to participate in throughout the Minor Hockey System
- The concern for player drop out in our sport seems to be linked to the implementation of Body Checking in Hockey though it is not clear how significant an issue it is.
- Athletes need an opportunity to participate in the game that supports the developmental stage they are at regardless of whether they are an early maturing or late maturing athlete.

Summary of Supporting Research and Information

- Research supports the need for variable options for players to develop at different age levels.
- There is significant variance in size, weight and strength of players between ages of 8 and 15 years of age.
- The "relative age effect" in our game encourages pre selection of players based on size and or early maturing factors therefore leaving later developing players at a disadvantage
- Though limited information is available on the reasons for Player Drop out at any age level, studies in Quebec and Manitoba indicate that introduction of Body Checking is one significant reason for player drop out.

Members Survey Feedback

- 64% of Players and 72% of Parents believe that there should be teams in each community that without Body Checking.
- 36% of Parents and 40% Players believe that a significant amount (More than 25%) of Kids Drop out of Hockey due to the introduction of Body checking.
- 78% of Minor Hockey Associations felt that it is important that all communities are on the same page with Non Body Checking and Body Checking leagues.

Other Considerations & Implications

- The Body Checking Review Committee recognizes that there is a difficulty in providing options for players to have non-body Checking leagues especially in communities where there may be only one or more teams in an age division. Support from Leagues in the Province will be needed to ensure success of this recommendation
- Hockey Alberta would work with Non Body Checking Teams and Leagues in determining if events like provincial championships would be an important consideration in the future.

Recommendation #7

Hockey Alberta recommends that through the CHA Research Committee research be under taken in Alberta covering the following topic areas:

- Body Checking as it affects skill acquisition in young players
- Understand the reason players and officials dropout of Hockey Prior to Midget age group and assess their attitudes towards competition and participation in the game.

Reflected Hockey Alberta Core Values

- **Safe Environments** - By providing training and education for the well being of all
- **Innovation** - Creating and environment where learning and flexibility are the tools we use to wisely handle our changing circumstances
- **Perspective** - Maintaining a healthy balance between life and the Game

Rationale for Recommendation

- After review of all the information available relating to the Body Checking issue, the Committee felt strongly that more research is needed in Hockey to support player, coach and official development and participation.
- Hockey Alberta should take a proactive role with the CHA in initiating and supporting research in Alberta.
- The Committee felt that a research study focused specifically on these issues would assist the Hockey System in assessing the needs of the athletes and officials in many areas.

Summary of Supporting Research and Information

- From all of the research reviewed there seems to be a significant gap in specific research available on Skill development in Hockey and the parameters around the environmental and systemic factors that improve skill development
- There has not been a comprehensive research study done on why players and officials drop out of hockey.

Members Survey Feedback

- Overall 89% of all respondents of the surveys felt that decisions related to Body Checking should be supported by relevant research in the areas of safety, skill development, competitiveness, player dropout and refereeing.
- After Many consultations with Hockey Alberta Volunteers, Leagues and Committee's it was identified consistently that research should play an important role any decision about the implementation of Body Checking.

Other Considerations and Implications

- Hockey Alberta should continue to be proactive through the CHA Research Committee to establish these specific research studies to maximize resources and benefits to all of Canadian Hockey

Recommendation #8

That Hockey Alberta work in conjunction with Leagues and Officials in Alberta to identify what reward and discipline systems are in place and identify ways to ensure those systems encourage proper attitudes and tactics used by coaches and athletes in the game.

Reflected Hockey Alberta Core Values

- **Fun & Fairplay based on Respect** - To promote positive self - esteem in all our people
- **Safe Environments** - By providing training and education for the well being of all
- **Innovation** - Creating an environment where learning and flexibility are the tools we use to wisely handle our changing circumstances
- **Consistency** - in our decisions and applications of policies and regulations
- **Teamwork** - As a life long skill
- **Perspective** - Maintaining a healthy balance between life and the Game

Rationale for Recommendation

- The Body Checking Review Committee felt strongly that we need to find ways to support positive behavior and tactics by coaches, players and parents in a way that we reward those activities.
- Over time there is a need to be more proactive in dealing with negative behavior in our game as well as finding ways to support positive behavior in a systematic way.

Summary of Supporting Research & Information

- Research relating to aggression and violence indicates that the cause is largely the social culture created within the game and in society itself.
- Violence and aggressive behavior may be the learning outcome that players take beyond the game when appropriate rewards are absent from the competitive environment
- Coaches tend to make decisions on player selection based on "Survival Characteristics" in other words the environment they are working in. This may pre-select players based on physical and early maturing attributes versus all round skills and attitudes of players.

Members Survey Feedback

- Meetings with Leagues and Officials groups did support a need to work together to find ways to make the game safer and more enjoyable for all players

Other Considerations & Implications

- The committee has found out that many leagues do a good job of dealing with discipline and that some even reward positive behavior of their teams with awards etc...
- Hockey Alberta through its Game and Conduct Management Committee needs to investigate ways that Minor Hockey Associations and Leagues can ensure a safe, fun and developmental environment for all Players, Teams and Coaches in our game

Recommendation #9

That the Hockey Alberta Body Checking Review Committee's 8 Core recommendations be supported in principle and appropriate Pilot Projects where required, be undertaken to confirm, adjust and or incorporate these recommendations starting in September of the 2004 - 2005 season.

Reflected Hockey Alberta Core Values

- **Fun & Fairplay based on Respect** - To promote positive self - esteem in all our people
- **Safe Environments** - By providing training and education for the well being of all
- **Innovation** - Creating and environment where learning and flexibility are the tools we use to wisely handle our changing circumstances
- **Consistency** - in our decisions and applications of policies and regulations
- **Teamwork** - As a life long skill
- **Perspective** - Maintaining a healthy balance between life and the Game

Rationale for Recommendation

- The process and importance of preparing and educating the General Membership on these proposed recommendations cannot be understated. It is for this reason that an appropriate preparation period is put in place that ensures successful implementation.
- The Canadian Hockey Association is currently completing a full review of the Body Checking issue in Canada and there may be some initiatives that impact on this Committee's recommendations and therefore time is allowed to ensure continuity between Hockey Alberta's recommendations and those of the CHA.

Summary of Supporting research and Information

- The implementation of the Age Change in 2002 preceded a 1-year preparation process that has proven to be very valuable in terms of education of the system and preparation of people.

Members Survey Feedback

- Previous experience and membership feedback supports implementation of these recommendations where sufficient time is given for communication and adjustment to take place for all Minor Hockey Associations, coaches, players and parents.

Other Considerations and Implications

- The implementation date allows for some Pilot projects to be run in the upcoming year to work out any specifics in terms of training, education and rule modifications that are proposed
- Further discussion with Leagues, Referee's and Minor Hockey Associations will be needed to ensure successful implementation of these recommendations.