



## NIAGARA FALLS MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION ICE TIME POLICY

The Niagara Falls Minor Hockey Association (the “NFMHA”) values a balance between competitiveness and equal ice time for its players.

At the representative level, U10 and higher, the NFMHA expects its teams to be more performance-based and results-oriented. Coaches will have more latitude in making ice time decisions. Among other things, they may decide to:

- (a) shorten the bench, from time to time, during close, consequential games, although no player should be benched for an entire period or more, based on skill or ability;
- (b) make use of “special teams” during power plays, penalty kills, empty net and overtime situations;
- (c) structure the rotation of forward lines or defence pairings so that all players get a regular shift, but the frequency is not the same among them;
- (d) bench a player for disciplinary reasons, although, again, no player should be benched for an entire period or more, based on disciplinary reasons, and the coach must give the player an explanation; and
- (e) structure the rotation of goaltenders so that one plays and/or starts up to two-thirds (2/3) of the time, averaged over the season.

At all other levels, the NFMHA expects its teams to be more development-oriented and fun-based. Coaches must strive to provide, more or less, equal ice time to all players, averaged over the game, except:

- (a) during the last three (3) minutes of a close, consequential game;
- (b) during the first three (3) minutes or the last three (3) minutes of an overtime period, but not both;
- (c) for disciplinary reasons, although, again, no player should be benched for an entire period or more, based on disciplinary reasons, and the coach must give the player an explanation; and

- (d) ice time lost by the player due to factors beyond the coaches' control, such as absences, illnesses, injuries, penalties, suspensions, vacations, etc.

Having said that, it is impossible for players to receive the exact same amount of ice time in every game. Tracking ice time will be frowned upon by the NFMHA.

Coaches, at these levels, must also structure the rotation of goaltenders such that they play and start, more or less, equally, averaged over the season.