



MEMORANDUM

Date: June 19, 2025

To: Alberta Elite Hockey League AAA Clubs
Aaron Rawlake – Elite Hockey Commissioner
Richard Doerksen – WHL
Ryan Bartoshyk – AJHL

From: Kendall Newell, Senior Manager – Competition

RE: Western Canadian Development Model – Phase 2

Announced in July 2024, the Western Canadian Development Model (WCDM) pilot project is a joint initiative between Hockey Canada's four Western Members, their respective Junior A hockey leagues and the Western Hockey League (WHL) that prioritizes athlete development on and off the ice through four key pillars:

- Player Advancement
- Roster Composition
- Standard of Play and Rules
- Alignment and Messaging

The initial season of the pilot project introduced eight changes to junior hockey in Western Canada, including increased flexibility in the development pathway for 15- and 16-year olds, the choice to wear half-face protection for players 18 years of age or older and streamlined Playing Rules between Junior A leagues and the WHL.

Beginning in the 2025-2026 season, the WCMD will expand its scope and implement these five additional changes as part of the pilot:

- **Western Junior A teams will be permitted to register up to five US Resident players** at one time on their active roster, a decrease from the previous six
- **16- and 17-year-old US Resident players** who have been drafted, listed or signed by a WHL team **will be eligible to be rostered by any Western Junior A team**
- **Each Western Junior A team will be eligible to roster one 16- or 17-year-old player whose parent(s) reside(s) outside of their province or region**, if the player has been drafted, listed or signed by a WHL team
 - A maximum of twenty-three (23) players / one (1) per WHL Team will be permitted to register with WCDM Members under these scenarios.
- **Out-of-province players who participate in the Canadian Sport School Hockey League (CSSHL) will be eligible to affiliate with Western Junior A teams** in their school's respective province or region
- **Jr. A Teams participating in the WCDM may roster a maximum of eight (8) players from Provinces outside of Western Canada.**

Data from the WCDM pilot project will continue to be reviewed on an ongoing basis, with the expectation that additional changes will be introduced in future seasons.

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact Hockey Alberta.