

PROPOSAL TO CHANGE AGE RESTRICTION ON GIRL'S TEAM	
BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION	RECOMMENDED CHANGE
<p><b>Markets</b> - we are what we consider to be a non-traditional girls' hockey market compared to more of a traditional market such as Minnesota/Wisconsin. We find this to be relevant because we are attempting to establish a girls program and need more flexibility than a traditional market. In the traditional markets they have both higher Quantity of players and Quality of players to choose from. There are also more options in a traditional market for a beginning player. The traditional markets offer girls to participate in their school team during the regular season then form "all-star" Pre and Post teams from their state/affiliate to send to Districts and Nationals. The flexibility of this rule change will allow us to continue to compete with those teams.</p> <p><b>Crossover age</b> –Some girls begin playing hockey in our boys' program. Often times at age 13 they consider crossing-over to the girl's program. Mostly due to the fact that checking begins at the 14U age for boys. So, for the girl that has played at a high level (squirt/peewee travel) that want to investigate their choices, their choices include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Play boys bantam - not as safe for a girl as playing girls</li> <li>2) Play for the local girl's program</li> <li>3) Move to another association/affiliate</li> </ol> <p>We have lost players in the past to places/programs like St Louis Lady Blues, Wisconsin and Minnesota Girls High School.</p> <p>The program we have built offers that "cross-over" girl a chance to stay in MWAHA and still develop at the highest Level. The rule as written prevents that girl from playing on an appropriate developmental team.</p> <p><b>Beginners</b> – Each year we have new girls entering our program straight out of IP. While blending them into a team works at the younger ages, it causes challenges for the older ages. We have always provided a place for all girls to play, and this is still one of the most important ideals to us. While some girls in our program have played for 10 years and have highly developed skills, these beginners need to have a developmentally appropriate level of play. The players are very self-aware and putting a beginner on a team with veteran players leads to a lack of confidence, frustration and often the beginner gives up. The current rule would limit our flexibility to design the program in a way that addresses all of the players' ages and developmental level. Ex. A situation we had this year, a 13-year-old girl that played boys peewee A at age 12 crossed-over to play girls. With the current rule in place she would have been on a team with girls right out of</p>	<p><i>Associations are allowed to develop their own "Playing Up" rules although all Youth teams must have a majority of their players from their respective age groups. Exceptions would be associations that do not have a majority of players from the respective age group and girls' teams. Girls teams are allowed an open mix of players from two consecutive age groups,</i></p> <p><i>12U and 10U, 14U and 12U, 16U and 14U, 19U and 16U, a 10U roster must have the majority of players from 10U.</i></p> <p>For the benefit of both veteran and beginner girls, we are asking for a modification to include 14U age girls on the 19U and 16U and would read (modifications are highlighted):</p> <p>Associations are allowed to develop their own "Playing Up" rules although all Youth teams must have a majority of their players from their respective age groups. Exceptions would be associations that do not have a majority of players from the respective age group and girls' teams. Girls' teams are allowed an open mix of players from <b>two</b> consecutive age groups,</p> <p>12U and 10U, 14U and 12U, 16U and 14U, 19U and 16U, <b>and 14U</b> a 10U roster must have the majority of players from 10U.</p>

IP. In that situation the family would look at other options outside MWAHA.

**ACHA** Some players have aspirations of playing in college. We have had girls graduate from our program and continue on in college at the club level. The ACHA National Tournament for Club Division I will include 8 teams. We have 4 players that grew up in our program that will be participating the that National Tournament. Combining beginners with veterans does not allow us to have a team that will be able to participate in the schedule that we have competed in which include several college showcase tournaments. Many of the players interested in competing at the college level have paid their dues in Omaha and wish that opportunity.

**National Bound Teams** Tier II girl's hockey national tournament teams have become more of a regional "all-star" team. Representing MWAHA has been important to us. The flexibility of this proposal will allow us to continue to compete at this level. USA Hockey rules allow for girls ages 13 and up to participate on 19U. This is quite common. In Minnesota when a girl ages out of 12U they are allow to try out for their high school team. The average age in North Dakota for a 19U girls' team is 15.1. This can only happen by including girls younger than 15. At districts this year 19U team competed against 13-year-old girls on other 19U teams. We ask that the MWAHA rule not be more restrictive than the USA Hockey rules.

**Misleading Names** Girls 19U leads people to believe this will be all 17 - 19 aged girls. Most non-traditional markets will follow USA rule of 13+. We don't have a local girls high school league to play in so we follow age based. However, it is essentially our girls high school program. We think of it more like:

G19U = High School Varsity

G16U = Girls JV

G19U-B = Reserve

**Girls Hockey vs Boys Hockey** For the highly developed girl she could choose Boys High School Hockey. Each year there have been girls playing in our boy's high school club program. A Freshman girl 14 years old can play full contact hockey against an 18-year-old boy. We feel the girls program offers a safer alternative to that. IF they can "play up" in the boys, they can certainly play up in girls.

Girls 19U vs boys' high school

1) A girl is done with puberty earlier

<p>2) No checking  3) Locker room concerns  4) Targeting  5) boys that retaliate to “stick up” for their female teammate</p> <p>We have heard that there are concerns about 13-year-old girls in a locker room with 17-year-old girls</p> <p>1) Boys high school has players 14 - 18 in the same locker room.</p> <p>2) if we don’t give the girls the right developmental experience, they are entitled to consider boys high school. Then you could have a 14-year-old girl in a boy’s locker room for chalk talk, meeting... with 18-year-old boys</p> <p>3) Traditional markets have 13-year-old girls in locker rooms with 18-year-old girls. In Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota and Wisconsin, when a girl is done with 12u she can try out for her high school team. Whether she plays Varsity or JV she is potentially in a room with seniors.</p> <p>In our market we simply don’t have the numbers to build our program without this flexibility. We feel the flexibility of this modification will allow us to place the right player on the team most suitable for that players development and safety. We often have a few new players age 14 – 16 that have not skated before. By combining them with a 13 – 16-year-old girls we are creating a situation where all parties are mismatched. By using a tryout method and identifying the players that are at the same developmental program we feel we are creating a situation where a player has an opportunity to develop at the right level. We also find this helps to retain players. Many players quit the sport when they feel they do not fit in. This is true in girl’s hockey.</p>	
<p><b>EXECUTIVE BOARD RECOMMENDATION: Approve</b></p> <p><i>Executive Board Rational: As we continue to support the growth of girl’s hockey we need to recognize policies developed for our program as a whole may have an unnecessary negative affect on Girl’s Hockey and growth. We would reserve the right to relook at this adjustment at a time that numbers support more stringent age requirements.</i></p>	