



**FIELD HOCKEY ONTARIO**  
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## **MOVEMENT OF PLAYERS BETWEEN FHO CLUBS AND INDUCEMENT (POACHING) GUIDELINES**

FHO strongly encourages the cooperation of its membership to ensure all participants have a positive experience. In keeping with our vision of “Growing the sport, together,” the following relates to prospecting and movement of players between clubs and provides best practices and guidelines to follow.

These guidelines encourage coaches, players and their families to make informed choices about their selection of club. They promote commitment and respect among players, coaches and teams. The guidelines also enable FHO to promote fair competition among member teams and to uphold the values of equity, opportunity and accountability for all members.

### **Guidelines**

The FHO membership year runs from September 1 – August 31. Players are expected to remain with their club for the entire membership year. FHO recognizes that circumstances may arise during the year which would require a player to change clubs. A player who wishes to change clubs in the middle of a membership year must obtain a release from their current club. The process to change clubs is outlined below. The fee to transfer a player to a new club within a membership year is \$50. The fee is administrative and will be split between FHO and the club the player is leaving. The \$25 received by FHO will be invested in grassroots, community-based programming. Any outstanding fees owed **MUST** be paid to the club the player is leaving *before* the release is granted.

### **Process to Change Clubs**

1. A written request should be made to the coach/manager of the current club to obtain a release.
2. Once the release is given to the player in writing, the player/parent should forward a copy of the release to FHO and to the new club.
3. FHO will contact all parties: current club, new club, player/parent once the transfer is completed.
4. If a member leaves a club, voting privileges at the AGM will remain with the club the player has left until the new year begins.

Wherever possible, movement between clubs should only be considered under special circumstances to minimize disruption in training and development. Clubs should not attempt to block a player from obtaining a release if it is in the best interest of the player.

### **Guidelines for Coaches/Clubs**

The primary function of a FHO member club should be to grow the sport of field hockey in Ontario. Coaches, or their representatives, should not engage in discussions with players or their families about recruiting players to



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play for his/her team or club. These discussions include verbal communication in-person or by telephone, as well as all forms of electronic discussions such as through e-mail or other social networking sites.

Coaches and club representatives should avoid situations of real or perceived conflict of interest that might impair, or could reasonably be thought to impair professional judgement. This includes not prospecting players registered with another club to your club, Academy, University, or program run by a direct family member. Recognize the power inherent in the position of coach.

No coach participating in FHO high performance programs such as Team Ontario may recruit any player registered for another club to his/her club team or his/her University/college team.

The appropriate response to parent/guardian/player-initiated contact is to provide basic information about the club/academy, which could not be considered a solicitation of the player's participation. Any recommendation for the player to attend training, tryouts or any other team or club event by the representative would be inappropriate and considered an attempt to induce a player to leave their present club/academy.

A club/academy publicly advertising their organization, programs or services, including on their own website is not considered poaching. All players have the right and opportunity to choose which team and club they wish to join.

While players are obligated to their club for the membership year, FHO acknowledges the demand for programming outside of one's home club exists. A player may wish to pursue additional opportunities outside of their club such as indoor play, individual training, and tournament guest play. Although a release is not required for these one-off situations, the player and coach should communicate their intentions to their current club.

**Guidelines for Players**

Players are encouraged to research FHO clubs through various advertising and marketing communications to make the most informed decisions and to find the club that best fits their field hockey needs.

While players should be able to play at the club of their choice, FHO encourages respectful communication between all members to avoid the perception of poaching (inducing or attempting to induce a registered player to leave his/her team before the end of that team's current playing season.) The players first responsibility is to his/her registered team.

Players can seek a Release from a club, which is defined as a mutual written agreement between the club and player stating that transferring clubs is in the best interest of both parties. If an athlete's request for release is granted, they are responsible for paying any outstanding club fees and are subject to the club's refund and/or cancellation policies. If a player wishes to change clubs without obtaining a release, this can be done when they register for the new membership year on September 1.





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Any coach, player or parent who is seen as ignoring these guidelines may be subject to disciplinary actions by FHO.

**The Role of FHO**

With the interest of the player foremost, the following outlines the role of FHO: While obtaining a release:

1. If the existing club accepts the terms of the release, FHO will be responsible for administering the change of club on FHO records.
2. If the existing club does not accept the terms of release, FHO may be invited by either party to mediate.

At all times, it is strongly recommended that the player/ parent initiate the conversation with the existing club. The role of FHO beyond that which is already set in the guidelines will be to facilitate communication between all parties.

In the case of poaching:

1. If an existing club becomes aware of an incident of poaching or inducement, an incident record should be created and submitted to FHO outlining the incident date, time, location and details. The name of witnesses and people/ players involved should also be recorded.
2. The issue will then be investigated by the Dispute Resolution Committee who may interview players, witnesses and the poaching club along with the incident author.
3. Any coach, player or parent ignoring these guidelines may be subject to disciplinary actions by FHO which will vary based on the frequency and extent of these incidents.

