

## Policy on SMHC Players and other Teenagers Participating as Assistant Coaches

### Background

SMHC encourages players in Bantam and Midget age groups – including those who are registered as High School hockey players – to develop their skills and abilities as coaches by helping with younger age groups. This provides an opportunity for them to test their potential interests in coaching. SMHC recognizes that this provides a valuable development and leadership opportunity. At the same time, SMHC encourages its coaches to provide opportunities for these players as a means to address their own needs for coaching assistance, while offering constructive guidance and mentoring for these players.

### Policy

It shall be the policy of SMHC that registered SMHC players in the Bantam and Midget age groups shall be permitted to serve as assistant coaches, under the following conditions and circumstances:

- Players may only assist teams whose players are two full years younger than themselves (for example, a first year Bantam age player may not assist with Peewee; a first year Midget age player may not assist with Bantam);
- Players may not assist with the Mites program due to the special developmental nature of that program and the presence of a relatively large number of parent helpers;
- Players must wear a helmet with cage, neck guard and hockey gloves while on the ice and a hockey helmet with cage while serving on the bench during games, as per Hockey New Brunswick regulations;
- More than one player may serve as a player assistant coach with any one team; however, only one player may be on the ice during practices and on the bench during games, at any given time (coaches may rotate their player assistant coaches as required or as opportunities present themselves);
- There must be a willingness of a head coach to agree to provide opportunities for players to serve as assistants;
- Head coaches are responsible for the actions of and tasks assigned to, player assistant coaches;
- Head coaches must provide meaningful opportunities and tasks to player assistant coaches; these players must be actively assisting with drills (providing coaching, directing players, setting up or moving equipment, retrieving pucks, providing structured shooting on goalies, etc); if player assistant coaches are found to be not providing assistance and instead are found to be disruptive (shooting pucks aimlessly, distracting the coaches and players by shooting pucks during instructions, not providing active coaching, etc) they will be asked to end their participation;
- The presence of a player assistant coach does not relieve the head coach and/or assistant coaches from their responsibilities; player assistant coaches shall not run or direct practices (other than specific drills as assigned by the head coach), and they should not be left alone to supervise dressing rooms.

SMHC registered players and High School players who are 16 years of age and over will be encouraged to attend and complete appropriate coaching and speak out clinics.

#### Process for Players to Make Application to be a Player Assistant Coach

Any player may make a request to SMHC Executive to be approved as a player assistant coach. The request expressing the desire to be a player assistant coach may be made in any one of the following ways:

- A written request by email;
- A written request submitted on paper (to the SMHC mailing address or by deposit in the SMHC mail box on the equipment room door).

A verbal or written request from a coach may also be received, naming a specific player that he or she wishes to have as a player assistant coach. However, the player in question will still need to provide a written request to the SMHC Executive.

Requests can be made at any time of the year to SMHC Executive members; however, requests should be made prior to November 30 each year.

Regardless of the manner in which the request is made, the request should include a statement of which age group or groups the player is interested in assisting, a statement of what the player hopes to achieve or learn or develop, and a statement about what they have to offer / why they think they can help or do a good job. In addition, the request may identify a specific coach or team the player is interested in teaching.

The SMHC Executive shall endeavour to respond to the request as soon as possible and render a decision as soon as possible, upon receipt of the request. The Vice-President shall notify the parent of the player by phone or email or in person, as deemed appropriate. The SMHC Executive shall then make it known to appropriate head coaches that the player has been approved and encourage head coaches to invite the player to serve as a player assistant coach with their team.

#### Selection Criteria

The SMHC Executive shall make the decision to approve or deny the application by a player to be an assistant coach. The Executive shall use the following criteria to make its decision:

- The overall general character and demeanor of the player making the request;
- The previous experience of the player in terms of his or her interactions with teammates in recent years;
- The demonstrated willingness to learn and to be helpful.

In addition the Executive shall seek any and all input from any member of SMHC or others to make its decision.

#### Removal of Assistant Coach Privileges

The SMHC Executive reserves the right to assess the experience of any or all player assistant coaches and to terminate the participation of players in question should problems or issues be discovered. SMHC Executive members will work with players, parents, and coaches to clarify any issues or problems and work to arrive at a mutually satisfactory outcome. Player safety is of primary importance and the SMHC Executive shall take whatever measures are necessary to ensure the safety of its players, including the termination of assistant coach privileges in cases where risky / dangerous behaviours have been observed. SMHC will also respond to concerns of parents and guardians in this regard.

In addition, it is important to note that players who receive a suspension of one or more games for an incident resulting from their own games, are also suspended from their responsibilities as a player assistant coach during the time of the suspension, as per Hockey New Brunswick regulations. This means that player assistant coaches cannot be on the ice for any practices and cannot be on the bench for any games, during the period of their playing suspension.