



ELITE FEMALE HOCKEY PATHWAY

ALBERTA BUILT

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The **Elite Female Pathway Guide** outlines the exclusive opportunities that are available to Alberta's elite female hockey players registered with a Hockey Alberta member organization. These opportunities include the competition, coaching and development they experience on the ice, along with the supports and services available off the ice. Member organizations include Minor Hockey Associations, Accredited Schools and the Alberta Junior Female Hockey League.

PHOTO CREDITS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Elite Female Hockey Pathway	1
Exclusive Benefits // Programs.....	3
Exclusive Benefits // Services and Supports.....	8
Alberta Female Hockey League	12
Accredited Schools.....	15
AJFHL, ACAC, U SPORTS.....	16

ABOUT THE HOCKEY ALBERTA



ELITE FEMALE HOCKEY PATHWAY

Hockey Alberta's Elite Female pathway provides competition, development and movement opportunities to meet the needs of female players and teams in Alberta.

The foundation of the Elite Female Hockey pathway is *"Made, Played and Developed in Alberta"*. The pathway establishes and promotes a provincial system of development that directs players from grassroots to U13 AA Hockey, onto U15 AA and then to U18 AA & U18 AAA or Accredited Schools, concluding with the Alberta Junior Female Hockey League.

A key part of the Elite Female Hockey pathway is ensuring that the appropriate number of teams, in the right locations, operate within each division of play in the Alberta Female Hockey League (AFHL) to provide elite level opportunities for the top players within their geographic area.

Affiliation is an integral part of the Elite Female Hockey pathway to accommodate the developmental needs of the athlete and team by providing all players within a geographic area the opportunity to be identified and registered as an affiliate.

Hockey Alberta's system is constantly evolving. Regular reviews examine the number of players registered at each level, where they are located, and how the system can best support and facilitate their skill development. The AFHL expanded in 2023-24 to include a U13 AA division, and additional teams at the U15 and U18 levels.



Leagues and Categories

Exclusive Benefits

U18



AA HOCKEY



ACCREDITED
SCHOOLS

Prep Division



Team Alberta



National
Aboriginal Hockey
Championships



Arctic Games

U15

AA HOCKEY



Alberta
Challenge



U16 Summer
Development
Camp



Arctic Games



National
Aboriginal
Hockey
Championships

U13

AA HOCKEY



Alberta Winter Games

Every player registered in a Hockey Alberta organization or program has exclusive access to:

- Hockey Canada Trained / Certified Coaches
- Hockey Canada Trained / Certified Officials
- Hockey Canada Insurance coverage
- Provincial, National, and International-sanctioned Tournaments



EXCLUSIVE BENEFITS OF THE HOCKEY ALBERTA SYSTEM

Participants in the Hockey Alberta system enjoy exclusive benefits as part of their membership - ranging from eligibility to participate in certain programming, to trained and certified coaches and insurance coverage.

If you aspire to higher levels of competition, learning and developing under the guidance of the best-trained coaches, and playing against the best players in Alberta, the Hockey Alberta system is where you need to be.



EXCLUSIVE ACCESS TO PROGRAMS

TEAM ALBERTA

Hockey Alberta participants are eligible to try out for Team Alberta programs.

Hockey Alberta's Team Alberta programming identifies and develops the top female players to represent Alberta at national competitions, and to compete for berths on national teams representing Canada at international competitions.

In addition, Team Alberta programming features high performance development opportunities for coaches, medical professionals, therapists, administrators, equipment managers and referees/ officials who are interested in representing Alberta at national and international events.

Hockey Alberta participants are eligible for these unique opportunities, allowing them to learn and grow through a short term, and competitive atmosphere. The mental and physical skills and character traits necessary to be successful at a competition at this level helps to prepare all participants for national and international competitions.

Events coordinated through the Team Alberta program can occur annually, every two (2) years, or every four (4) years, depending on the event. The list of events, camps, and/or tournaments includes:

- Canada Winter Games
- U18 Female Team Alberta selection camps
- U16 Female Summer Development Camp
- Alberta Winter Games
- Arctic Winter Games
- National Aboriginal Hockey Championships
- Alberta Challenge



ALBERTA CHALLENGE

The beginning of the Team Alberta Female program where U15 players from across Alberta compete for 120 positions (six teams) at the event.

- 2 regional tryout camps, 160 players per region, 3 teams selected per region
- Access to top coaches and directors of operations
- Position-specific development throughout competition
- First exposure to short-term competition to prepare for future provincial and national opportunities
- Top coaches in the province, mentored by previous leaders
- Development opportunity for top players, administrators, coaches, and officials



U16 SUMMER DEVELOPMENT CAMP

The second stage of the development and identification process that feeds Team Alberta U18. Participants are selected based on their performance at the Alberta Challenge. The camp includes on- and off-ice training and classroom sessions.

- Approximately the Top 40 athletes based on their performance at the Alberta Challenge (2 teams selected)
- Access to top skill and goaltender coaches; position specific development at camp
- Top coaches in the province, mentored by previous leaders



U18 FEMALE TEAM ALBERTA

The final stage of identification and evaluation towards Team Alberta and an entry point for athletes to be evaluated and selected for U18 Team Canada.

- Invitation-only program, based on previous Team Alberta participation and evaluations with player's sanctioned club team throughout the season
- Process begins with Summer Camp in July. High intensity program with off-ice and on-ice training, games, and personal development sessions
- Following camp, shortlist is selected with players who will compete at Fall Camp. Players also scouted with their club team prior to final roster decisions for the 20 players selected to comprise Team Alberta
- Those players represent Alberta at the U18 Nationals or Canada Winter Games
- Players can continue to represent Team Canada at U18, Development and Senior National team levels



ALBERTA WINTER GAMES

The Alberta Winter Games is a multi-sport event for developing athletes, aged 11-16 years old. The Winter Games occur in even-numbered years. Participants are selected to represent the eight zones in Alberta in 20 sports including hockey.

Hockey Alberta coordinates the ice hockey portion of the Alberta Winter Games, as a core segment of its Development Program. The Alberta Winter Games provide U13 AA female club teams an opportunity to discover the great qualities of competitive hockey through competing in a short-term competition within a multi-sport games.



ARCTIC WINTER GAMES

The Arctic Winter Games are the world's largest northern multi-sport and cultural event, taking place every two years. The Arctic Winter Games celebrate athletic completion, culture, friendship and cooperation between northern contingents. Athletic competition features sports that enjoy worldwide popularity alongside traditional Arctic sports and Dene games.

Hockey Alberta operates a Junior Female hockey team which is comprised of 17 players and two coaches. Teams participate in a round-robin tournament to determine seeding for medal-round pairings. One gold ulu is awarded in each division. Teams that regularly participate in ice hockey include Alaska, Yukon, Alberta North, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Eligible communities for the Arctic Winter Games are located north of the 55th Parallel. Coaches and players must live or have permanent residency in one of these communities. Players eligible for the Junior Female team are U15/ U18 aged females.



NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS (NAHC)

The annual event serves as a focal point for grassroots and regional Indigenous hockey development. The NAHC is open to U15 and U18 aged Indigenous female youth and attracts participation from First Nation, Inuit and Metis across the 13 provinces and territories. The NAHC helps foster cultural unity and pride to celebrate the athletic abilities of Indigenous players from across the country.

Hockey Alberta, in partnership with the Indigenous Sport Council of Alberta, oversees the selection process for the players and coaches representing the province at the championships. This includes recruiting and selecting the Indigenous coaching staff, registration and selection camps for players, team training, and designing the uniforms.

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ABERTA NORTH

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4

EXCLUSIVE ACCESS TO SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

HOCKEY CANADA INSURANCE:

One of the benefits of registering with Hockey Alberta is access to an exceptional insurance program - with low premiums - through Hockey Canada.

Medical/ dental coverage is a self-administered secondary insurance program that assists members who may not have private secondary coverage for services such as dental and physiotherapy or have exhausted their limits within their private coverage.

Policy coverage areas also include:

- commercial general liability
- sexual misconduct liability
- directors and officers' liability
- accidental death and dismemberment coverage

Premiums remain low due to the total membership of players in Hockey Canada, and the ongoing focus on safety, risk and conduct management by Hockey Canada, Hockey Alberta, and member organizations.

**CHECK OUT
EXCLUSIVE BENEFITS!**

[hockeyalberta.ca/members/
insurance/national-insurance/](https://hockeyalberta.ca/members/insurance/national-insurance/)



NATIONAL COACH CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (NCCP):

Standardized, inclusive, and safe sport education to coaches and coach developers across 65 sports.

The Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) manages and delivers NCCP training through its partner network of 65 National Sport Organizations and Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations. The NCCP equips hockey coaches of all levels with the skills and knowledge of the game to work effectively with their developing athletes.

All head coaches leading teams at the Female AA level must be at minimum Development 1 (D1) certified. For a coach to become certified they must attend a two-day in-person clinic, complete a written evaluation, and receive a field evaluation of a team practice. For a coach to maintain their Development 1 certification status they must complete 20 Professional Development points within 5 years of being certified. Development 1 certification focuses on:

- Team building
- Skill development
- Drill design
- Developing drill progressions
- Practice planning
- Developing athletic abilities
- Individual skills and tactics
- Making ethical decisions



National Coach Certification Program / Hockey Canada Coach and Instructional Streams

NCCP
HOCKEY CANADA





All head coaches leading Hockey Alberta Female AAA teams must be High Performance 1 (HP1) certified.

For a coach to become HP1 certified they must attend the required national online modules and a five-day in-person clinic, complete a written assignment, receive a field evaluation of a practice and a game, and complete the online evaluations for Make Ethical Decisions, Leading Drug Free Sport and Managing Conflict. For a coach to maintain their High Performance 1 Certification status they must complete 30 Professional Development Points within five (5) years of being certified.

HP1 certification focuses on:

- Leadership in coaching
- Teaching and evaluating
- Physical preparation
- Mental preparation
- Power-play and penalty-kill
- Advanced skill analysis
- Game and bench management
- Creating a high-performance culture
- Player evaluation and selection
- Performance planning
- Defensive and offensive team play
- Effective use of technology

HOCKEY CANADA OFFICIATING PROGRAM (HCOP):

The Officiating Pathway is the foundation for training, development, and advancement for all officials across Hockey Alberta.

Certification at all levels, except Level I, is a two-part process involving clinical and practical assessment. The official must attend all sessions and obtain the minimum mark on the examination. Once certified, it is essential that an official continue to update and be completely familiar with new rule interpretations and officiating techniques. To maintain one's present level of certification, an individual must attend a full Hockey Canada officiating program clinic and write a national examination every year with appropriate passing mark.

MORE ON THE STRIPES

[officials.hockeyalberta.ca/
register/officials-pathway/](https://officials.hockeyalberta.ca/register/officials-pathway/)

Hockey Canada Officiating Pathway





ALBERTA FEMALE HOCKEY LEAGUE (AFHL)

The Alberta Female Hockey League (AFHL) is Hockey Alberta's provincial AAA and AA league representing the highest categories of female minor hockey in Alberta with four (4) divisions (U18 AAA, U18 AA, U15AA, U13AA). Each division is structured to allow the top percentage of players in each age category to compete and develop with similarly-skilled teammates and opponents.

Exclusive opportunities include:

- Provincial travel transportation partner Traxx Coachlines
- Games livestreamed on FloHockey and analyzed by Hudl for review and statistic measuring by coaches and players (U15, U18 divisions only).
- Access to major tournaments (Calgary Firestarter, Mandy Schwartz Memorial Tournament, Western Sport School Challenge and many others).
- U18 AAA head coaches are HP1 certified and U13/ U15/ U18 AA Coaches are Development 1 certified.
- Games are officiated by trained Hockey Alberta officials.
- Associations must abide by league operating standards, and regular assessment programs to ensure teams are growing and improving for the benefit of their players.



U18 AAA

U18 AAA is the highest level of minor hockey in Alberta and the pinnacle of the AFHL.

- Eight (8) teams
- No boundaries - players can select best team and program for their development needs
- Top players from three birth years
- 28-game regular season
- Ability for teams to black out weekends for tournaments
- Showcase designed to provide athletes exposure to post-secondary scouts
- Affiliation to AJFHL available
- AFHL champion challenges British Columbia champions for berth at Esso Cup



U18 AA

Allows development opportunity for Elite players to remain in the AFHL system and better their skills as they develop up to AAA.

- 12 teams
- 30-game regular season (approximate)
- League showcase weekend
- Ability for teams to black out weekends for tournaments
- All teams qualify for playoffs; five-team provincial championship
- Affiliation available to U18 AAA and AJFHL

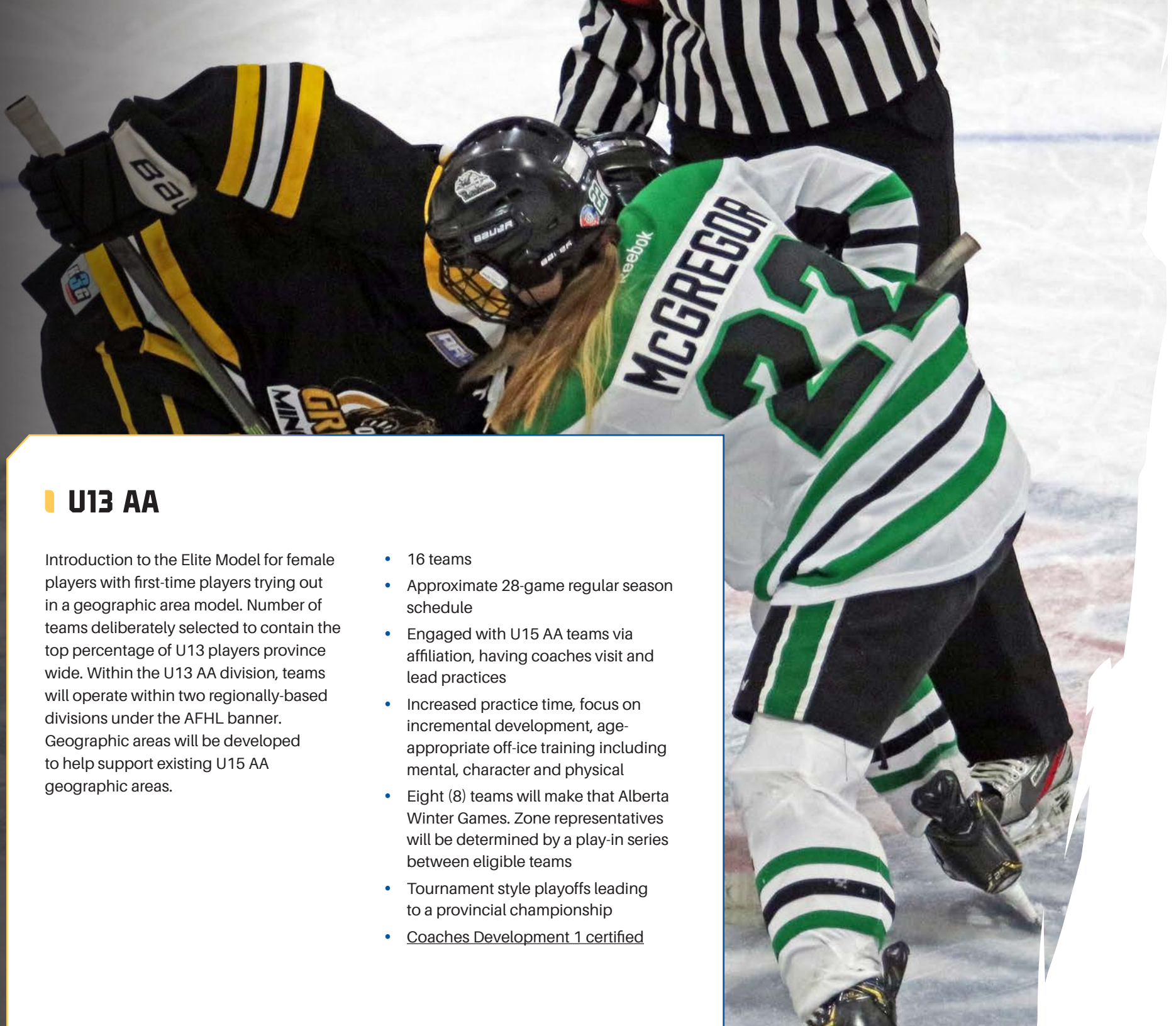


U15 AA

A two-year age group that provides athletes with increased competition as they prepare for U18 hockey. It is the key development and feeder system to U18 AA and U18 AAA.

- 14 teams
- 31-game regular season
- League showcase weekend
- Opportunity for black out weekends to attend tournaments
- All teams qualify for playoffs; five-team provincial championship
- Enhanced exposure to scouts for U18 AA/ AAA, post-secondary and elite development opportunities





U13 AA

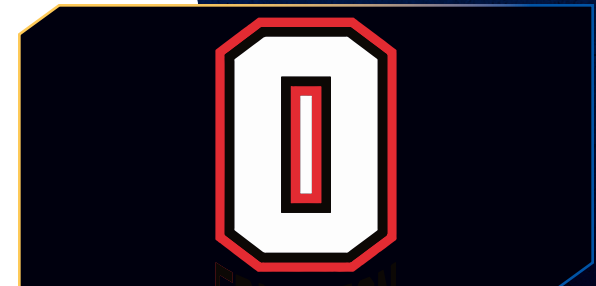
Introduction to the Elite Model for female players with first-time players trying out in a geographic area model. Number of teams deliberately selected to contain the top percentage of U13 players province wide. Within the U13 AA division, teams will operate within two regionally-based divisions under the AFHL banner. Geographic areas will be developed to help support existing U15 AA geographic areas.

- 16 teams
- Approximate 28-game regular season schedule
- Engaged with U15 AA teams via affiliation, having coaches visit and lead practices
- Increased practice time, focus on incremental development, age-appropriate off-ice training including mental, character and physical
- Eight (8) teams will make that Alberta Winter Games. Zone representatives will be determined by a play-in series between eligible teams
- Tournament style playoffs leading to a provincial championship
- Coaches Development 1 certified

HOCKEY CANADA ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

A model of hockey that synthesizes education and hockey development into one program. Players participate in daytime hockey programming and compete in league versus other Accredited Schools in the CSSHL.

- Four (4) Alberta programs (Edge School in Calgary, Northern Alberta Xtreme in Devon, Okanagan Hockey Academy in Edmonton and South Alberta Hockey Academy in Medicine Hat)
- Participate in tournaments and games across western Canada
- Full time coaches and hockey operations staff
- Governed by national policy, held to the highest standard via an extensive assessment program



ALBERTA JUNIOR FEMALE HOCKEY LEAGUE (AJFHL)

Hockey Alberta's Elite Female players have a Junior Female Hockey League available to continue playing beyond Minor Hockey.

Founded in 2009, the Alberta Junior Female Hockey League (AJFHL) is one of the few Junior Female Leagues available to athletes across the country. Hosted in nine (9) different communities across the province, it provides female athletes the opportunity to continue playing past minor hockey. Many Junior Female players are students pursuing their high school or post secondary education, or young professionals working full time jobs but still pursuing their lifelong passion for the game.

AJFHL Members include:

- [Calgary Titans](#)
- [Central Alberta Amazons](#)
- [Cochrane Chaos](#)
- [Edmonton Wolves](#)
- [Foothills Storm](#)
- [Fort Saskatchewan Fury](#)
- [Lethbridge Eagles](#)
- [Sherwood Park Steele](#)



ACAC

The Alberta Colleges Athletics Conference is the premier college athletic conference in Canada. The ACAC began in 1964 as the Western Inter-College Conference (WICC). Member schools hosting women's hockey are Lakeland College, Medicine Hat College, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, Olds College, Red Deer Polytechnic, and Southern Alberta Institute of Technology.

U SPORTS

U SPORTS is the national brand for university sports in Canada. Every year, over 20,000 student-athletes and 900 coaches from 56 universities vie for 21 national championships in 12 different sports. Alberta Member schools hosting women's hockey are Grant MacEwan, University of Alberta, University of Calgary, and Mount Royal University.

For more information, check out Hockey Alberta's [Post-Secondary Resource Guide](#)

ABOUT HOCKEY ALBERTA

Hockey Alberta was founded in 1907, and is the province's governing body for amateur hockey, from minor to senior, including the Alberta Junior Hockey League, Alberta Junior Female Hockey League and the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference. Hockey Alberta has approximately 450 member organizations representing more than 95,000 participants.

Hockey Alberta is a customer-driven, responsive organization committed to designing and implementing, enforcing, and evaluating new ways to organize and develop players,

coaches, officials and administrators to create positive experiences for everyone involved in the game.

Hockey Alberta's head office is in Red Deer, with most services and programs based out of this office, including operations, development, communications, and the Hockey Alberta Foundation. Hockey Alberta also has regional managers who provide coaching and player development support to minor hockey associations.

ABOUT HOCKEY CANADA

Hockey Canada is the national governing body for hockey in the country. The organization works in conjunction with the 13 provincial members, the Canadian Hockey League and USports in growing the game at all levels. Hockey Canada oversees the management of programs in Canada from entry-level to high performance teams and competitions, including world championships and the Olympic Winter Games. Hockey Canada is also Canada's voice within the International Ice Hockey Federation.

ALBERTA BUILT.

HOCKEY ALBERTA // ALBERTA AMATEUR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

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