



WESTERN CHALLENGE CUP POLICY AND PROCEDURES ***Updated January 2024***

1. INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

This policy and procedure manual are intended to assist VBHA Board members and VBHA members to understand, apply, and evolve its goals and objectives for the Western Challenge Cup (WCC) and any higher competitive level tournaments that VBHA may participate in.

2. WESTERN CHALLENGE CUP

Each year VBHA participates in the WCC. In 1999 the minor ball hockey associations of British Columbia and Alberta founded WCC. At that time, there was no National or Western Championships for minor ball hockey competitors so it was decided this tournament would serve as a venue to challenge highly skilled minor ball hockey players with a chance to compete against other teams throughout BC and Alberta at a higher competitive level.

Since the start of the WCC tournament, it has been hosted by cities throughout Western Canada and the lower mainland of BC. This tournament has grown over the years with a participation expectancy of a minimum of 32 teams each year and includes teams from BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. This tournament occurs over a four- or five-day period, usually during the middle of July.

The WCC is a representative tournament where the coaches have full discretion to play the players in any given circumstance that will give them the best opportunity to win. The process attempts to select a team with players that will each contribute to the good of the team, but that does not necessarily mean there will be fair floor time for all players. However, the coaches are aware this is a huge commitment from families and will be as fair as possible without compromising the team's chance of success.

The age divisions eligible to play in the WCC are as follows.

- U11 Division
- U13 Division
- U15 Division
- U17 Division
- U19 Division

3. EVALUATION COMMITTEE

This committee is Chaired by the VBHA WCC Coordinator and the other committee members are formed from non-VBHA board members/ board members. The committee will be appointed by the VBHA board members and will be made up of a minimum of five members (1 chair, and at least 4 other committee members) and appointments will be a term of three (3) years. The Chair of the Committee (WCC Coordinator) will report to the President and Vice President and/or VBHA board.

4. EVALUATION COMMITTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each returning player will have an evaluation from the previous season(s) and any new player will have an evaluation from New Player Evaluations. This information is gathered by the Vice President and/or Head of Coaches and used as a starting point for WCC evaluations.

The Evaluation Committee will:

- Have experience with evaluating ball hockey.
- Work with the scheduler to ensure floor time is available for all necessary evaluations and tryouts.
- Attend and evaluate all necessary players.
- Turn completed evaluation sheets into the President and/or Vice President after each session is completed. If the President and/or Vice President cannot attend, the completed sheets will be turned in to their designate.
- The WCC Committee will compile the evaluation scores and determine the 12 best players in each age group.
 - o 6 or 7 forwards, 4 or 5 Defense, and 1 or 2 goalie(s)

Anyone on the Evaluation Committee cannot evaluate their own child and will not have any say on their child being the first 12 players selected to the WCC Team.

5. PLAYER EVALUATIONS

Players (or Goalies) are NOT permitted to wear any shorts or jerseys from previous Westerns, Team BC or Team Canada to ANY of the tryouts.

There are five categories of evaluation for **Runners**, each out of 10. They are as follows:

1. **Speed**: (speed with and without the ball)
2. **Shooting**: (wrist, snap, slap, quick release, accuracy, one-time shots)
3. **Dexterity**: (passing, stickhandling, agility, balance)
4. **Tenacity**: (work ethic, back checking, forechecking, battles/engagement)
5. **Hockey IQ**: (positioning in all three zones with and without the ball, line changes, pass when needed, carry when needed, shot when needed, etc.)

There are three categories of evaluation for **Goalies**, each out of 10. They are as follows:

1. **Hockey IQ**: (ability to communicate and direct teammates, hockey IQ)
2. **Positioning**: (technical ability, positional play)

3. Reaction: (movement and reaction skills)

Players and goalies are evaluated on their ability against defined criteria (below); not necessarily against the other players on the floor. Players are ranked with a 1 through 10 where:

- 10 - the player is perfect at the skill (very few, if any, 10's should be given out)
- 9 - the player is approaching being highly accomplished at skill
- 7-8 - the player is beginning to perform the skill at a higher level
- 4-6 - the player is capable of doing the skill but has only begun to learn it
- 2-3 - the player understands the skill but still struggles to do it
- 1 - the player is learning the skill for the first time

6. *TEAMS AND ROSTER REQUIREMENTS*

The VBHA Board will carefully choose the initial 12 players, including one goalie, drawing from the assessments and recommendations provided by the Evaluation Committee. Additionally, the appointed Head Coach for each age group in the WCC will play a pivotal role in determining the final 5 players. It is important to note that the WCC Head Coach's selections will undergo thorough approval from both the Evaluation Committee and the VBHA Board to ensure a comprehensive and fair decision-making process,

The Evaluation Committee, in consultation with Board members, holds the ultimate authority to determine whether VBHA submits a team for any age division. This decision is based on specific criteria established to assess the team's competitiveness, the adequacy of player numbers, and other relevant factors. The collaborative input from the Evaluation Committee and Board members ensures a comprehensive and well-informed decision-making process for the VBHA teams.

Competitive Assessment:

- If the Evaluation Committee and Board members deem that the team won't be competitive enough, they have the final say on whether VBHA submits a team for any age division.

Adequate Number of Players

- If the Evaluation Committee and Board members ascertain that there are enough players who are both competitive and numerous, they have the final say on whether VBHA submits two teams for any age division.

Possibility of Two WCC Teams

- In the event of two teams, the top-rated players required to fill one team will be strategically grouped together. This approach ensures that the first team comprises the most skilled individuals. Meanwhile, the formation of a second team is designed to offer valuable experience to players who may not have reached the top level yet. This strategic placement aims to foster the overall development of players within the VBHA program.

7. AFFILIATED PLAYERS (AP)

Affiliated players (AP) are individuals who are not initially chosen for the WCC team. In the event that the WCC Head Coach wishes to include any affiliated players, they are required to seek permission from the Evaluation Committee, President, and/or Vice President. This protocol ensures that the addition of affiliated players aligns with the overall team strategy and is in accordance with the evaluation and approval processes established by the VBHA.

Affiliated players (AP) are not anticipated to participate in the tournament by default. However, the WCC Head Coach retains the authority to make decisions regarding the inclusion of affiliated players based on the team's specific needs. In situations where an Affiliate Player is deemed necessary for the team's requirements, the Head Coach is empowered to initiate their participation. This approach allows flexibility for the coaching staff to make strategic decisions that best serve the team's objectives during the tournament.

WCC COACHING SELECTION PROCESS:

The selection process for WCC coaches follows a comprehensive and transparent procedure:

1) Coach Selection Timeline:

- WCC coaches will be selected after the commencement and before the conclusion of the tryouts, once the initial 12 players are chosen for the WCC Teams by the VBHA Board.
- An announcement will be made prior to the first tryout, inviting coaching applications through the VBHA.com website.

2) Application Timeline:

- Online coaching applications will be submitted through the VBHA.com website.
- All applicants will receive evaluation sheets at each tryout, listing attending players by jersey number, allowing coaches to make their own assessments for team selection.

(Note**)** If only one coach applies for a specific age group, committee and board approval may be obtained prior to tryouts.

3) Review and Voting:

- President and/or Vice President will review coaching applications and make recommendations to the VBHA Board.

VBHA Board members will vote on the WCC Head Coach for each age group.

4) Assistant Coach Selection:

- Assistant coaches will be chosen by the Head Coach and must be approved by the WCC committee AND VBHA Board

5) Bench Staff and Final Approval:

- The WCC Head Coach may have the maximum allowable bench staff as per WCC rules.
- Upon final roster announcements, the WCC coach can select and announce their assistants, subject to final approval from the Evaluation Committee AND VBHA Board.

6) No Parental Requirement:

- WCC Head Coach, Assistant Coaches, and Team Managers are not required to have a child on the team.

7) Mandatory Meeting:

- A mandatory meeting for all tournament coaches will be conducted before any WCC events, facilitated by the Evaluation Committee
- The meeting aims to provide coaches with a clear understanding of expectations and the upcoming steps in the WCC.

This structured approach ensures a fair and organized selection process for WCC coaches, fostering transparency and accountability within the VBHA.

8. COACH RULES OF CONDUCT

Coaching volunteers, as role models, embody VBHA's values. We encourage competitive spirit within the rules, fostering a positive environment for players, with all staff serving as ambassadors for both VBHA and their teams. Upholding these principles ensures a positive and sportsmanlike environment for the players and reflects the values of VBHA.

- Always maintain emotional and physical self-control when in the presence of your players.
- Don't be the cause for any player to stop playing ball hockey.
- Control your player's tempers and actions on the floor or at any Team events. As Coach, you are accountable for your players and bench staff's actions in the arena and any Team events.

You will seek assistance from the Evaluation Committee, President and/or Vice President if the player or bench staff are not following their code and attempts have been made by yourself to control it.

The objective of VBHA's participation in the WCC is to showcase the best of VBHA and bring home a medal. If a WCC coach does not participate as per the guidelines set out in the rules of conduct, they may not be eligible to participate as a bench staff at any future WCC events.

9. TRYOUT FEE AND PROCESS

- Players will register to attend tryouts on the VBHA.com website.
- Tryouts will be held as early in the season as possible. Depending on the age group, the first tryout will be strictly drill's and any subsequent tryouts will be full scrimmages.
- VBHA will do their best not to schedule tryouts when league games are being played.
VBHA league games take priority over WCC tryouts and WCC exhibition games.

- Any individual within the WCC age divisions eligible to play for WCC is welcome to attend the WCC open tryouts by paying a \$30.00 fee. With three scheduled tryouts, participants will be assessed based on predefined evaluation categories and criteria. It is important to note participants are only guaranteed 1 scheduled tryout as this is a competitive process requiring cuts/eliminations. Attendance at the first tryout is mandatory, and for those unable to attend, approval may be requested via email to president@vbha.com. Final authorization will be granted by the President and/or Vice President in consultation with the evaluation committee. It's important to note that decisions on attendance exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis, with the ultimate approval resting with the President and/or Vice President.
 - Any player registered for the current BC Ball Hockey season who has participated in a minimum of **5 regular-season** games by the end of the season ***is eligible*** to join the WCC. (This includes the Regular Season and Playoffs)
- It is essential to note that a comprehensive player evaluation is challenging if a participant misses any tryouts. If a player attends the initial tryout but is unable to participate in subsequent sessions due to reasons such as family vacations or work commitments, the Evaluation Committee will consider the assessments from the first tryout and any previous evaluations.
- Under specific circumstances, if the Evaluation Committee and VBHA Board are informed in advance, the player's previous evaluation scores may be taken into account if they cannot attend tryouts. However, it is imperative for each player to register their intent to play on the WCC Team.
- ***After the initial session, all subsequent tryouts will be by invitation only***.

After the initial selection of the top 12 players/goalies by the committee, a meeting will be convened with the Head Coach to finalize the remaining 5 (or more) players, with the last 5 players requiring approval from the Committee. Any affiliated players (AP) must be identified and approved at this stage. Once the teams are completed, the WCC coordinator will submit them to the board for final approval. If any player(s) are rejected by the board, the WCC Committee will promptly replace them with another candidate. Once the rosters are finalized, the Board will provide the Head Coach with contact information for all players, allowing up to 48 hours for the coach to establish contact with the team. After this period, the Board will post the rosters on the website, ensuring that the information is available no later than one week after the final tryout.

10. WCC NAME, TEAM FEES AND DEPOSITS

- All VBHA WCC teams will be known as Valley Venom. VBHA will submit the entrance fee for each final roster division determined by the Evaluation Committee. Each WCC team will be responsible for their own exhibition game referees, team bonding, team apparel, and team wind-ups.
- If there are more than one team participating in a division, they will be known as Valley Venom A and B. The top-rated players will be Valley Venom A.

The VBHA WCC Coordinator and/or Head of Coaches, in collaboration with the Head Coach and Team Manager, will decide on the standard team apparel for each team. This includes home and away jerseys, shorts, and a t-shirt, which players will retain after the tournament. A team apparel

fitting will be scheduled as soon as practical of the final roster announcement. To cover the costs of jerseys, exhibition game referees, team bonding activities, additional team apparel, and the team wind-up, there will be a WCC team fee of approximately \$250 per player.

Please note that VBHA does not pay travel expenses, i.e.) transportation costs or hotels.

11. TEAM MANAGER ROLE

A team manager will be picked by the head coach of each WCC team. The team manager is a central figure in creating the flow of communication. The team manager will:

- prepare a budget for their head coach to review and approve.
- distribute and collect all paperwork required for the team to hand in at the tournament.
- Collect team fees and jersey deposits.
- arrange and hand out team apparel.
- reconcile all funds and provide VBHA with the necessary funds for the team apparel.
- arrange volunteers and referees for exhibition games.
- submit final team rosters.
- Fill out game sheets.
- Keep a spreadsheet with each players expenses. Refund when necessary.
- Be present at apparel fitting