



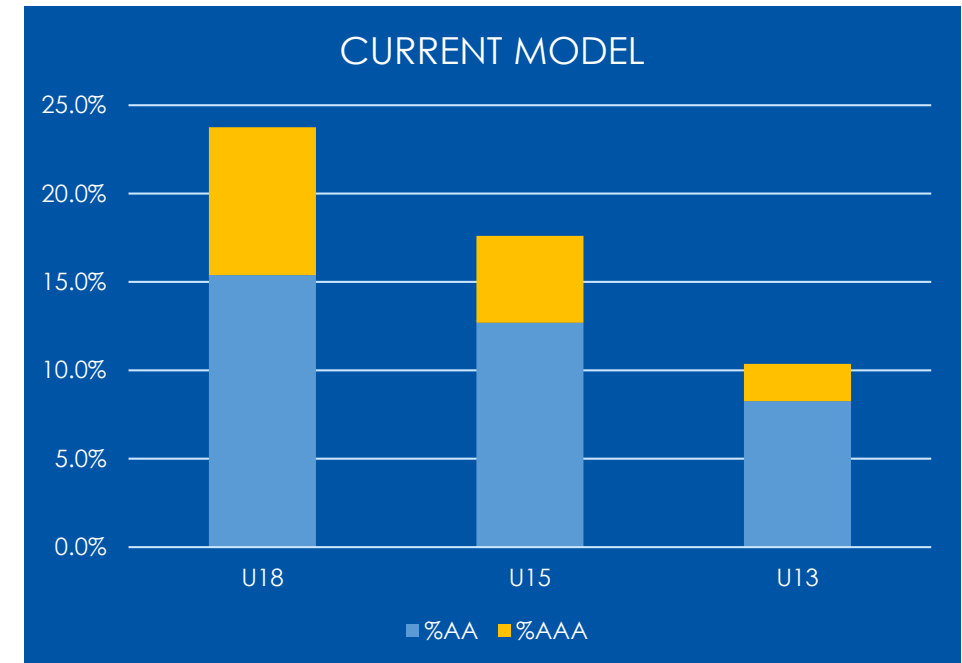
U13 ELITE STRUCTURE

2025-26 SEASON

BACKGROUND



- There has been an increased demand for a higher level of hockey at the U13 level in Alberta.
- Some Members perceive that the current offering in Alberta is not competitive enough and are considering programs outside the Hockey Alberta sanctioned programs.
- 53 teams at the top level of U13 is not perceived as competitive enough, leading families to seek unsanctioned alternatives.
- While the U15 Elite Model is seen as competitive (players are returning for this level of play), the U13 model is not.
- U13 AAA is being piloted in Northern Alberta throughout the 2024-25 season, which has provided some insights.
- Only 10% of U13 players can currently access 'AA & AAA' hockey, compared to 17% at U15 age category.



A NEW U13 ELITE MODEL



GOALS:

1. **Expand** the U13 AAA Pilot to an Official Division & Category of Competition across Alberta.
2. **Create** a 2-Tier U13 Elite Model with both AAA & AA developed in consideration of one another.
3. **Strengthen** the level of **competition** in U13 Elite Hockey to maintain & attract top U13 talent to the Hockey Alberta program.
4. Increase the number of Elite Hockey Opportunities for U13 Elite Players to establish a **progression pyramid** into U15 & beyond.
 - *Widen the base by strengthening the top level (now U13 AAA) and creating a 2nd tier feeder system (U13 AA) that offers an elite experience*

A NEW U13 ELITE MODEL



PRINCIPLES:

1. Host two U13 AAA teams for each U18 AAA Draw Zone in the province, to strengthen development pyramid (32 U13 AAA to 16 U18 AAA).
2. Each U13 AAA teams is to have a minimum of 1 AA team feeding the AAA team, and preferably 2 AA teams feeding the AAA team.
3. Allow Draw Zone Leadership Team to determine the U13 AA host Minor Hockey Clubs for each zone, to respect ice and registration discrepancies within the zones and communities that host them.
 - Target 6 – 9% of U13 Players in a Draw Zone playing at AAA level
 - Target 15 – 18% of U13 Players in a Draw zone playing at the top 2 levels of U13 Hockey (AAA & AA)

History of U13 Elite Teams in Alberta



	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Proposed
North AA	29	28	27	19	18
North AAA	0	0	0	11	16
South AA	30	24	24	24	21
South AAA	0	0	0	0	16
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Total U13 AA	59	52	51	43	39
Total U13 AAA	0	0	0	11	32

Proposed Model - reduces # of teams at 'top level', strengthening competition
- creates a 2nd tier feeder system to widen development pyramid

CALGARY

		13 AAA Program			
	CBHA	CBHA	CRAA	CRAA	
	CNHA	CNHA	NWCAA	NWCAA	
		13 AA Program			
Wolverines	Bow Valley	Knights	Southwest	Glenlake	Trails West
Raiders	McKnight	NW Warriors	Springbank	Bow River	

Summary

- Each U18 AAA draw zone in the province is required to host 2 U13 AAA teams
- Each U13 AAA team must have 1 or 2 U13 AA teams feeding it
- Therefore, the Calgary Region will host 8 AAA teams and 11 AA teams in 2025-26
- 8 - U13 AAA Teams – 2 Per Elite Association (evenly selected)
- 11 - U13 AA Teams – These will be hosted by the Calgary Community Clubs and operate as AA programs (1 per club).

A NEW U13 ELITE MODEL



U13AAA FOR CALGARY:

1. Each Elite Association in Calgary operates 2 – U13 AAA teams
 - a) Aligns with the model in the full province (2 U13 AAA for every 1 U18 AAA)
 - b) Supports the development pyramid for U15 & U18, players entering Elite Clubs at the U13 AAA will likely remain within elite program
 - i. Within our current model, history shows 1 team of U13 AA players per year moves back to community hockey
 - c) Game lengths will move to 2 hours slots – 1 flood every 2 periods
 - d) To create enough ice we will do this at U15 AA as well
 - i. Same game format that existed prior to 2018
 - e) League structure & # of Games is still TBD
 - i. Expect AAA to operate as a 'Southern Alberta Division – 16 teams'

U13 AAA & AA Model in Calgary



U13 AA Rosters

Association	21/22		22/23		23/24		24/25		4 Yr Ave.	
	1st Year Players	2nd Year Players	1st Year Players	2nd Year Players	1st Year Players	2nd Year Players	1st Year Players	2nd Year Players	1st Year Players	2nd Year Players
CBHA	10	41	9	42	14	37	10	41	10.8	40.3
CRAA	14	38	6	45	4	47	7	44	7.8	43.5
CNHA	9	42	9	42	10	41	15	36	10.8	40.3
NWCAA	13	39	10	41	7	44	11	40	10.3	41.0
							(1 underage)			
Total U13 AA	46	160	34	170	35	169	43	161	39.5	165.0
% of Players	22.3%	77.7%	16.7%	83.3%	17.2%	82.8%	21.1%	78.9%	19.3%	80.7%
Ave per team	3.8	13.3	2.8	14.2	2.9	14.1	3.6	13.4	3.3	13.8

U15 AA Rosters

Association	21/22		22/23		23/24		24/25		4 Yr Ave.	
	1st Year Players	2nd Year Players	1st Year Players	2nd Year Players	1st Year Players	2nd Year Players	1st Year Players	2nd Year Players	1st Year Players	2nd Year Players
CBHA	26	31	23	34	26	31	21	36	24.0	33.0
CRAA	22	35	23	34	20	37	23	37	22.0	35.8
CNHA	22	35	25	32	23	34	19	41	22.3	35.5
NWCAA	22	35	20	37	21	36	31	27	23.5	33.8
Total U15 AA	92	136	91	137	90	138	94	141	91.8	138.0
% of Players	40.4%	59.6%	39.9%	60.1%	39.5%	60.5%	40.0%	60.0%	39.9%	60.1%
Ave per team	7.7	11.3	7.6	11.4	7.5	11.5	7.8	11.8	7.6	11.5

A NEW U13 ELITE MODEL



U13 AA FOR CALGARY:

1. AA Program will operate inside the community programs
 - a) The Calgary zone will have 11 teams, similar to U11 AA program (1per Assoc.)
 - b) Aligns with the Hockey Alberta principles of 1-2 U13AA teams feeding each U13 AAA team in the Calgary region
 - c) Minimum requirements for this stream will be agreed upon
 - a) 90 minute game slots, no floods (same as AA is currently operated in Calgary)
 - d) Players are not 'required' to play AA, and can opt out of this division
 - e) Coaching:
 - a) Parent Coaches are permitted
 - b) Coaching Certification Requirements are TBD
 - f) Teams will play in the AEHL League (Calgary Division – 11 team division)

U13 AA Model in Calgary



WHY ALLOCATE TO COMMUNITY STREAM:

- Approximately 35% of U13AA players, (1 team of players) return to play with community clubs in their 1st year of U15
 - Proposal eliminates back and forth between community & elite programs
- Community programming offers strong development and changes in recent years has removed top teams from our community programs
- Aligns with our U11AA remaining in community programming
- Provides opportunity for 'Qualified Parent Coaches' at U13 AA, which is against policy in most elite clubs, but occurs frequently in the remainder of the province
- Previous to 21/22 the U13 AA program was operated by community clubs

OVERVIEW of PROPOSED MODEL

CBHA			CNHA		
CBHA		CBHA	CNHA		CNHA
CAL	CAL	CAL	CAL	CAL	CAL
CRAA			NWCAA		
CRAA		CRAA	NWCAA		NWCAA
CAL	CAL	CAL	CAL	CAL	CAL
AIRDRIE			OKOTOKS		
AIRDRIE		COCHRANE	OKOTOKS		STRATHMORE
AIRDRIE	COCHRANE	DRUMHELLER	OKOTOKS	FOOTHILLS	STRATHMORE
LETHBRIDGE			RED DEER		
LETHBRIDGE		MED HAT	RED DEER		SYLVAN LAKE
LETHBRIDGE	TABER	MED HAT	RED DEER	LACOMBE	OLDS
GRANDE PRAIRE			LLOYDMINSTER		
GRANDE PRAIRIE		WHITECOURT	LLOYDMINSTER		BONNYVILLE
GR. PR.	PR	WHITECOURT	LLOYD	WAINWRIGHT	BONNYVILLE
ST ALBERT			FORT SASKATCHEWAN		
ST ALBERT		SPRUCE GROVE	FORT SASK		FORT MCMURRAY
ST ALBERT	ST ALBERT	SPR. GRO	FTSK	STURG	FTMC
SHERWOOD PARK			LEDUC		
SHERWOOD PARK		STRATHCONA	LEDUC		CAMROSE
SPK	SPK	SCONA	LEDUC	BEAUMONT	CAMROSE
EDMONTON			EDMONTON		
CAC		KC	MLAC		SSAC
EDM	EDM	EDM	EDM	EDM	EDM

32 AAA Teams
 - 16 North/ 16 South
 39 AA Teams
 - 18 North/ 21 South

Maintains most host centers with AA or AAA team

Model accounts for some geographical/travel concerns

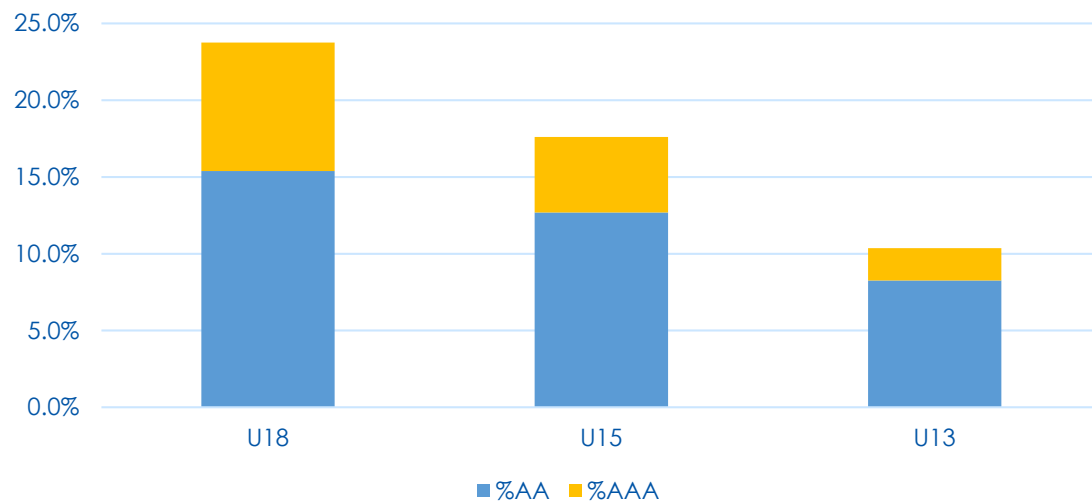
Larger draw zones start with more AA teams

U18 AAA DRAW ZONE
U13 AAA TEAM
U13 AA TEAM
FUTURE U13 AA TEAM

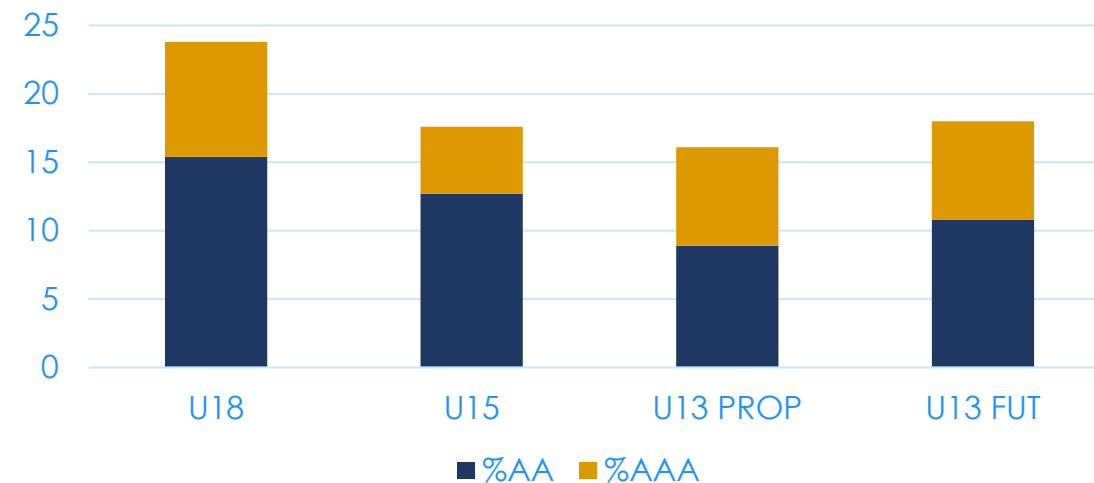
MODEL PROJECTIONS



CURRENT MODEL



NEW MODEL



- Once U13 AA is fully built out in a 2AAA : 3AA ratio, U13 will contain a higher percentage of players in Elite than U15, un-inverting the progression pyramid.

A NEW U13 ELITE MODEL



NEXT STEPS – ACTION PLAN :

1. Confirm League Operational Standards
 - a) # of games
 - b) Minimum # of players on roster (AAA & AA)
 - c) Length of games (minimum ice slot required)
 - d) Determine divisional or interlock play
 - e) Strategy for Showcases/Tournaments/Provincials
 - f) League start and end dates (tryout dates)
 - g) League Costs
2. Host AAA & AA Programs build their program structure for 2025-26
3. Host Clubs share program plans and structure with membership