

## Changes to Priority Booking

On March 19, the Cold Lake Minor Hockey Board of Directors became aware of a social media post the City of Cold Lake made on Facebook in regards to them updating their priority booking policy of fields and arena's to "prioritize events that bring significant economic activity to the community". In these draft changes, they introduced a definition of "Sport Tournament" and proposed that events fitting this description, be placed in second priority.

In a Staff Report given to council, there were many incorrect statements made in general, and also against Cold Lake Minor Hockey. According to the staff report:

- Page 1, Background Paragraph 2 they stated the PHL was allowed to host 4 showcases, 2 of which were dual ice sheets and 2 of which were single ice sheets. Based on the schedules sent out weekly to users, the PHL used 1 ice sheet for 1 of their showcases and 2 ice sheets for the other 3 showcases.

- Page 2, Paragraph 3 they stated that CLMH advised that the PHL should be limited to booking the North Arena only and that this comes from the impression that CLMH receives priority over the Energy Centre. At no point in time did the CLMH Executive or Board of directors state the PHL should only be permitted to book at the North Arena. We simply mentioned that in previous seasons, when the PHL would host a showcase in Cold Lake, they were permitted 1 full ice sheet at the Energy Centre and the full ice sheet at the North arena, thus bringing the showcase traffic into the facility and City, but also making it capable for CLMH to still host games during those showcase weekends, and could this not still continue? When we were told no, they will get to utilize the Energy Centre, we asked if that means that our games that are a priority for our season scheduling would bump practices out of the North since we were bumped out of the EC, we were told no, there were regular user groups there. This was later changed to a yes, any games would have booking priority over practices at the North arena during showcase weekends so we can meet our scheduling requirements, however this wasn't exactly the case. When trying to book games at the north, there were times we were told what could and could not work and we were left scheduling around users practicing at the North.

- Page 2, Paragraph 4 the PHL approached the facility stating they would like to host a significant tournament or showcase every month, "in other words expand from 2 to 6 per season" which is already false and contradicts them stating on Page 1 that they were already permitted to host 4.

In the online video from the March 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, Councillor Vining asks the question "Does Minor Hockey view the North arena as an inferior facility". Kevin Nagoya, CAO, then responds that he "can confirm based on his meetings there were allegations being made as such, however after a meeting with Cold Lake Minor Hockey to explain where the facility is inferior, no examples were able to be given". There was never at any point, a meeting held with the city, Facility or Mr. Nagoya in regards to this statement or us as an Association having to give examples of why we felt this way.

- In September of 2024, Mr. Nagoya emailed CLMH's president, the gist of the email was that CLMH has mentioned that the North Arena is not suitable for us and the program we provide. This caught not only the President, but our scheduler and volunteers off guard as no one had ever voiced this.

- Years ago, after the construction of the new boards in the North Arena, during a face-to-face scheduling sit down between the previous facility scheduler and minor hockey's scheduler, when discussing game bookings, we were informed that the new boards weren't exactly to standard height requirements so to avoid scheduling any U18 games there due to contact hockey and the chance of injury to players because of the boards.
- This was the only information sent to the facility scheduler when asked about a scheduling conflict and moving a U18AA game from the EC to CLN, which we then stated this was what we were informed previously and why that could be an issue. Our President at that time then spoke with Mr. Nagoya, and neither one of them were able to find out where this "concern" came from.
- Cold Lake Minor Hockey fought to "Save the North" in 2018, and again in 2020 and we were successful in both of those campaigns and permitted to book there from Monday – Friday each season. We as an association and our members love the North arena, and how much work has been put into it to date. Kids enjoy playing there as it is the last arena in Cold Lake that still has the "Old Barn" feel to it while looking amazing

Mr. Vining also stated during this video that the Lakeland Panthers have hosted tournaments here in the EC and CLMH has never complained. That is because that program approached Minor Hockey and asked if they could schedule a tournament here and the two groups worked together to come to a conclusion that worked for the Panthers and did not affect CLMH's scheduling.

At the March 25<sup>th</sup> council meeting, CLMH went with questions and concerns to try have the city take more time looking into this change prior to voting on it. Some of the responses from council were upsetting to hear.

- U7 only skates on Saturday and Sunday mornings for their practices and games. They will be the first group impacted as anytime a showcase is scheduled, they will be pushed out of their time slots. They were moved to the North arena when possible this past 24-25 season, however when we stated that we had older teams playing games out of Glendon due to scheduling issues because of showcases, the Mayor asked why they were sent there, in which CLMH responded with asking if we should cancel U7 in order to host that game in Cold Lake, and the Mayor's response was "Yes".
- U9 will then be the next group affected as their games are held on weekends and they will be unable to access ice due to league teams needing priority. Between U7 & U9 that is 169 players alone impacted.
- CLMH does not cap our registration numbers. We accept anyone regardless of their financial capabilities or skill set. Everyone has a place here, and we have continued to grow as an association because of this. However, with more weekend ice being removed from CLMH's season schedule, we will have to look at either capping our allowable registrants in order to minimize team sizes, or look at booking ice in outside communities which forces our local resident players to play "Home" games that they have to travel 30+ minutes for.
- We held 5 tournaments in the 2024-25 season. We may have to look at holding less in the future to ensure we can book all of our teams their games required for regular season play.
- The city states that there is JJ Parr to utilize as well so this change shouldn't cause major issues. Currently JJ Parr only ices 1 surface in their facility and CLMH only has access to 8 hours, working around their own military priority users. When having scheduling issues this season, we reached

out to JJ Parr to see if they had extra ice outside of our allotted booking times that we could use to which we were informed there was nothing available. So the city is making assumptions they can gain us more access to JJ Parr when “tournaments” are in town but not looking into this prior to making their decision.

- They state city residents and taxpayers want a pool, but that the city has continued to put money into the North and Energy Centre facilities to make them what they are today, which we (CLMH) do not take for granted. However, this new decision displaces the many tax payers who are members of CLMH and will be affected when it comes to scheduling next season, for majority non tax payers.

On a weekend of games, CLMH brings 18-20 different teams into the community who shop, eat at restaurants, fill up at gas stations. The same as a dual showcase that brings in 13 teams. The one and only difference they bring to the community from us is they are filling hotels. That is the overall difference that the city is basing their decision on, hotels.

We received Letter’s from surrounding communities to confirm how they are supported by their facilities and towns when it comes to non-profit youth group booking priority status over for-profit group bookings, which the council was not interested in. It’s unfortunate we are not supported in the same way.

At the March 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, city council voted unanimously to implement this change to the priority booking policy.

In the 2024-25 season CLMH had 440 total players, 330+ of which are City of Cold Lake tax payers. We are and have been the largest majority user group in Cold Lake for 10+ years and hope to offer our members the best experience we can while trying to navigate this troubling decision.

The largest misconception everyone has is that Cold Lake has 5 arenas, however this is not the case. There are 4 operational, and CLMH has access to 2 on Saturdays and Sundays with limited use of a 3<sup>rd</sup> as explained above.