

Central Zone: AEHL U13AAA & U13AA

As previously announced, Sylvan Lake Minor Hockey Association (SLMHA) and Red Deer Minor Hockey Commission (Red Deer MHC) have been identified as the two hosts in the central zone for the expanded U13AAA program in Alberta next season.

SLMHA and Red Deer have been committed from the beginning to ensure that the programming offered is linear, providing equal development for athletes and opportunity for elite players entering to play the next level at U15.

Recruitment Areas / Draw Zones

Hockey Alberta has recently aligned the U13AAA program expansions to each U18AAA recruitment area, with both SLMHA and Red Deer MHC identified as the two host teams. The U18AAA draw zone for the Red Deer/central zone includes the following MHA's:

U18AAA – Red Deer (Central Zone)		
Bashaw	Clive	Red Deer
Big Valley	Delburne	Rocky Mountain House
Blackfalds	Endmoor	Spruce View
Blindman Valley	Innisfail	Stettler
Bowden	Lacombe	Sundre
Caroline	Olds	Sylvan Lake

To ensure the two teams within this Red Deer U18AAA recruitment area can maintain competitive memberships in comparisons to the entirety of the province, our central Alberta Minor Hockey Associations (MHA's) have mutually agreed to adopt the boundaries as identified below.

U13AAA

While the U18AAA recruitment area will continue to serve as the outer boundaries for the newly designated U13AAA teams, a more detailed separation of player draws has been introduced to ensure that our central teams can remain competitive with other programs across the province. To strengthen the competitiveness of teams in the central Alberta region, Sylvan Lake and Red Deer, in close consultation with the surrounding central Alberta MHAs, have mutually agreed to align the U13AAA boundaries with those of the current U16AA draw zone for the 2025-2026 season. Adoption of these boundaries is designed to create a more balanced and competitive environment for all players within the region.

To ensure you are registering your player with the correct U13AAA host association, please refer to the table below, which outlines the corresponding draw area to register your player for. This alignment is an important step in maintaining the competitiveness of central Alberta teams, while also ensuring fairness and balance in player recruitment across the province.

U13AAA Host Associations – Central Zone	
Red Deer	Sylvan Lake
Alix Bashaw Big Valley Clive Delburne Endmoor Red Deer Stettler	Blindman Valley Blackfalds Bowden Caroline Innisfail Lacombe Olds Rocky Mountain House Spruce View Sylvan Lake Sundre

U13AA

In the central zone, U13AA host associations will continue unchanged with Lacombe Minor Hockey Association (Central Alberta Selects), Olds Minor Hockey Association, Red Deer MHC and SLMHA (West Central Tigers).

To ensure our central teams can maintain competitive memberships in comparisons to the entirety of the province, our central Alberta MHA's have mutually agreed to continue following the U15AA recruitment areas for the 2025-2026 season for U13AA.

Spring ID Skates/Tryouts

Red Deer and Sylvan Lake will **not** be hosting U13AAA spring ID or tryout skates for the 2025-2026 season. The host associations feel that this will give equal opportunity for every eligible player to try out for the upcoming season's U13AAA teams.

Removing the spring ID or tryout skates for the 2025-2026 season will also ensure that Red Deer and Sylvan Lake can perform due diligence in hiring qualified head coaches for the upcoming season and construct a linear structure for the two U13AAA teams in our zone.

Registration

AAA

Players residing in the U18AAA Red Deer recruitment area wishing to register for a tryout in the upcoming 2025-2026 season for U13AAA are to register with SLMHA or Red Deer MHC, in accordance with the recruitment area of their MHA boundary outlined previously.

- Red Deer MHC: <https://www.reddeerminorchockey.com/>
- Sylvan Lake MHA: <https://www.sylvanlakeminorchockey.ca/registration/>

AA

Players wishing to register for a tryout for the upcoming 2025-2026 season for U13AA are to register in accordance with the recruitment area of their MHA's current U15AA boundary (previously existed for the U13AA division).

SLMHA and Red Deer MHC are committed to maintaining the current U15AA boundaries that have previously existed for their U13AA teams for the upcoming 2025-2026 season and will redirect outside athletes registering to tryout to the appropriate recruitment area. This may include Red Deer MHC, SLMHA (West Central Tigers), Lacombe MHA (Central Alberta Selects) or Olds MHA.

- Lacombe MHA: <https://www.lacombeminorhockey.com/>
- Olds MHA: <https://www.oldsminorhockey.com/>
- Red Deer MHC: <https://www.reddeeminorhockey.com/>
- Sylvan Lake MHA: <https://www.sylvanlakeminorhockey.ca/registration/>

FAQ

Does the player have to stay within the central zone? There are no borders identified in the U13 Elite program

While Hockey Alberta had identified that they will not set borders within each U18AAA zone, many recruitment areas, including the Red Deer/central zone have mutually agreed to set their own boundaries to ensure competitive play and opportunity. Each player is required to stay within the U18AAA recruitment area of their MHA (i.e. a player in the Red Deer U18AAA central zone is not permitted to go play for a team that would be in Airdrie's U18AAA recruitment area without appropriate releases).

The U13AAA program only requires a player to stay within their regional zone (central zone); the host teams within that zone can define their own boundaries/recruitment areas.

Hockey Alberta announced earlier this season that Draw Zones are being taken away and players can register wherever. How is it that there are restrictions to where a player can register?

The Hockey Alberta announcement earlier this season was a little confusing in that it primarily affected first time players in an MHA. If a player is new to playing minor hockey in Alberta, he/she has the option to sign up to another MHA in another community AS LONG AS THEY ARE ACCEPTED BY THAT MHA.

For Elite Hockey (AAA and AA), the [Elite Player Movement application](#) process is to be utilized if a player wants to move away from the designated MHA host prior to the July 1 deadline.

If a player is registered for AAA tryouts, do they automatically end up on the tryout list for AA or minor hockey if they do not make the final roster for the higher tiered team?

A player is **NOT** assumed to be trying out at any lower level than the one they are registered to tryout for; and the host MHA may change depending on the level(s) of team that they are trying out for. It is highly recommended to register your player for each tryout level individually with the appropriate MHA. Tryout fees and registration can always be refunded if a player makes a higher-level team; however, a player may not be able to be added to a tryout of MHA last minute. Host Alberta Elite Hockey League (AEHL) MHA's track where a player is at in the tryout process for MHAs to know where their players are at regarding team selections.

A player is signed up for both AAA and AA tryouts. What happens to other tryout/paid registration fees if the player makes AAA?

If a player makes the higher-level team outside of SLMHA before attending any of the tryout skates, we will do a credit against the tryout fee(s) and any paid registration. If a player makes a higher-level team within SLMHA, a credit will be issued for the lower-level tryout fees. For instance, if a player tries out for U13AAA and makes the team, they no longer need to attend the AA tryouts, and your AA tryout fees will be applied as a credit towards your registration fees in the fall or refunded if already paid in full.

If a resident SLMHA player is trying out for AAA and/or AA and is released from those teams to return to play tiered hockey; once the association's team rosters are all finalized, a refund of the difference in registration fees will be administered.

A player was released from the tryout roster at AAA, now what?

If a player is released from AAA, they will go to the AA tryout with the MHA that they are registered to try out for. If there is a host association still looking to fill a position on a current U13AAA team, a player can follow the AEHL process and request a [Second Tryout](#) appropriately.

A player was released from the tryout roster at AA, what are alternate options?

If a player is released from AA, they will return to their registered MHA for tiered hockey. If there is a host association still looking to fill a position on a current AA team, a player can follow the AEHL process and request a [Second Tryout](#) appropriately.

A player was not rostered to any AAA or AA team and no longer wishes to play minor hockey. What is the process?

Contact your MHA. Each MHA has their own policy on refunds, withdrawals, etc.

Where can we find more information?

Resources can be found at [Hockey Alberta](#), the [Alberta Elite Hockey League](#), contacting representatives from your host elite MHA's or directly with your Minor Hockey Association.