



West Niagara Minor Hockey Association (WNMH)

Local League Policy: Mercy and Sportsmanship

Effective Date: October 2025

Applies To: All Local League players, coaches, team staff, and parents/guardians

Approved By: WNMH Local League Committee

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote fairness, respect, and enjoyment in all West Niagara Local League (WNMH-LL) games and practices. The “Mercy and Sportsmanship Policy” ensures that all players, regardless of skill level, have a positive and equitable experience while reinforcing the values of respect, integrity, and community that define WNMH.

2. Guiding Principles

- **Respect:** All players, coaches, officials, and spectators will be treated with dignity and respect.
- **Fair Play:** Teams and coaches will act in a manner that encourages balanced competition and discourages running up scores or humiliating opponents.
- **Development Over Dominance:** The focus of WNMH Local League hockey is skill development, teamwork, and fun—not winning by large margins.

3. Mercy Guidelines

To maintain fairness and sportsmanship, the following guidelines apply to all WNMH-LL games:

- **Maximum Goal Differential:** Teams are expected to keep games within a 10-goal differential.
 - If a team exceeds a 10-goal differential and continues to score unnecessarily, the coaching staff may face disciplinary action or suspension.
 - Coaches are responsible for managing the play and ensuring their team competes respectfully once a large lead is established.
- **Coaching Expectations During Lopsided Games:**
 - Adjust player positions and line combinations to promote balanced play.
 - Focus on team play, passing, and defensive skills rather than additional scoring.
 - Avoid goal celebrations or behavior that could be perceived as disrespectful.



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- Demonstrate integrity and leadership by maintaining respect for the opposing team and goaltender.

- Exceptions: Situations such as an absent goalie, short bench, or player injury that naturally affect scoring balance will be reviewed with discretion by the Local League Director.

4. Sportsmanship Expectations

All participants—players, coaches, parents, and spectators—are expected to demonstrate the highest level of sportsmanship:

- **Players:** Show respect for teammates, opponents, and officials at all times. No taunting, mocking, or showboating.
- **Coaches:** Model composure, respect, and fairness. Reinforce that how you win or lose matters as much as the result.
- **Parents & Spectators:** Cheer positively for all players. Negative comments, criticism of officials, or unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated.
- **Officials:** May issue warnings, penalties, or suspensions for conduct that violates sportsmanship standards.

5. Enforcement

- Any unsportsmanlike conduct by players, coaches, or spectators may result in discipline in accordance with WNMH's Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy.
- Coaches who fail to manage goal differentials appropriately or who engage in unsportsmanlike behavior will be subject to suspension.
- The Local League Director and Centre Convenors reserve the right to review all incidents and apply sanctions or suspensions as required.

Approved by: WNMH Local League Director