

Innovating Youth Tournament Schedules to Minimize School Absenteeism: An Exploratory Study

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PROBLEM

Canadian youth sport participants often participate on competitive travel “rep” teams. The typical tournament model begins with round-robin play on Friday and Saturday and championship games on Sunday. This traditional model leads to unnecessary missed school days for players. We collected data to demonstrate how fewer school days are missed by switching to a Saturday-Monday competition schedule.

METHOD

104 Youth Hockey Tournaments

Tyke (7 years old) to
Midget (16 years old)

Competition levels
AE through **AAA**

4,639 team entries

RESULTS

Average roster size:
17 players

46%
of teams
advanced to **Sunday**

54%
of teams
did not advance
to **Sunday**

17 players x 2,510 teams = **42,670 AVOIDABLE school days missed**

Number of Players from Teams Playing on Friday and Not Playing on Sunday

Division	Alliance	GTHL	NOHA	OMHA	Grand Total
Tyke	68			340	408
Novice	459			2,805	3,366
Minor Atom	1,224	697	119	1,989	4,029
Atom	1,360	918	170	3,604	6,052
Minor Peewee	935	1,105	51	2,397	4,488
Peewee	731	901	221	4,148	6,001
Minor Bantam	1,139	969	85	2,091	4,284
Bantam	1,156	1,275	221	3,162	5,814
Minor Midget	884	1,156	34	1,785	3,859
Midget	578	1,054	238	2,499	4,369
Grand Total	8,534	8,075	1,241	24,840	42,670

WHY IT MATTERS

Adjusting the playing schedule of Canadian youth hockey tournaments to a Saturday-Monday format instead of the traditional Friday-Sunday offering would have saved 42,670 school days from being missed unnecessarily. Youth sports event and facility operators should consider altering program delivery to reduce unnecessary missed school days for athletes competing in competitive travel sports.