

OBA HIGH PERFORMANCE FAQ

ELIGIBILITY

Why does High Performance start at 12U?

Athletes are eligible to participate at Baseball Canada National Championships beginning at 13U and 12U is a sub-category of the 13U age group. OBA used that as the starting point for High Performance programming.

Is High Performance only for 18U and below?

Yes, the focus is on players still within their recruiting and development window, so High Performance is only considered for 18U-13U.

Are underage players allowed in High Performance?

For HP-OBA programs, athletes must still follow OBA and Baseball Canada age-category rules. Players may play up where permitted, but overage players may not play down. Regardless if the program is OBA or Independent, 11U players cannot participate in High Performance until the year they turn 12 years old.

If an OBA High Performance team joins a league with different age cutoffs, which age rules apply?

HP-OBA programs must still follow OBA rostering rules, which are January 1 to December 31 birth-year rules. That said, if the league they are playing in uses US age categories, it is permissible for HP-OBA programs to have over-agers on their teams, but those players are not permitted to attend OBA-sanctioned tournaments, Provincial Championships, National Qualifiers, or National Championships.

Are Independent High-Performance teams eligible for AAA OBA championships or national qualifiers?

No. Only OBA High Performance (HP-OBA) programs are eligible for OBA Provincial Championships and National Qualifiers.

Can an organization have both an independent HP team and an OBA HP team at the same age level?

No. Organizations are either affiliated with a local association or they are not; they cannot operate both models in that way. The definition of an HP-OBA program is that they are a part of a Local Association or Affiliated Association, the entire organization is therefore required to abide by OBA rules and regulations including Arm Care and NCCP Coach Certification, regardless of league rules that do not require them.

Why does OBA recognize Independent HP programs at all?

Independent programs need a way to register through the province in order for their players to remain eligible for pathways such as Team Ontario and Junior National Team consideration.

ROSTERS

Is High-Performance team-based or organization-based?

Both. An HP-OBA program may choose to declare some age groups as High-Performance and not others. HP-Independent programs are not permitted to participate under the age of 12U, so their entire organization is Independent.

Can a single team within a Local operate as High Performance without the whole association doing so?

Yes. Individual teams may declare HP even if other age groups within the same association do not.

Will roster sizes be limited under the HP model?

No HP-specific roster limits are being introduced at that time. OBA indicated this could be reviewed in the future, but no roster cap was other than what is currently defined in the Rep Playing Rules.

Can a player be rostered on both an HP-OBA team and an HP-Independent team?

No. A player cannot be on two High Performance programs. However, a player on an HP-Independent program may also play for an OBA team at AA or below, provided it is not another AAA or High-Performance team.

Why can a player be on one HP program and one lower-level OBA team?

This rule came from convention decisions intended to allow Local Associations to retain access to their best local players in non-HP settings while preventing players from joining multiple High-Performance programs.

What happens if a team is HP in 2027 but not in 2028?

Players who are outside the organization's boundary do not permanently gain playing rights with that team. If the team is no longer HP, those players return to their original Local Association playing-rights structure.

What if a club over-declares teams or age groups?

If a declared team never actually forms, there is no issue. The main commitment concern begins when teams start obtaining players from outside their area without releases.

How will fall ball rosters be added to the pitch count app for 2027?

The technical ability exists and a process will be developed before fall ball so rosters can be uploaded in time.

LEAGUES

Who is responsible for finding league play opportunities for a High-Performance team?

Teams are responsible for finding their own playing opportunities, including league schedules. OBA is not responsible for placing High Performance teams into a league. There are several options available in the province, including EBLO, PBLO, CPBL, and the Future Stars Canadian League. HP programs can also continue playing in their local league or loop.

How is EBLO different from High-Performance at 15U and up?

There is no separate difference in status. Teams in the EBLO may choose to play High-Performance baseball or AAA baseball, and EBLO teams are eligible to play AAA baseball and participate in the National Qualifier Tournament.

Are there plans to lower EBLO age groups?

That decision belongs to EBLO. The EBLO has the autonomy to decide whether to expand to younger age groups.

Where do 12U High-Performance teams play league games?

League play is up to each team or program to arrange. OBA is not building a dedicated 12U league. Teams may play in OBA competition and may also seek other appropriate competition opportunities if available. At 12U and 13U, HP programs should strongly consider a development first mentality and the competition should reflect that. Staying in their local leagues, especially at the lower age categories is fundamentally a solid decision.

Can 13U High-Performance teams join leagues such as CPBL, Future Stars, or EBLO?

They may pursue those opportunities if the league allows them in. OBA does not guarantee entry into outside leagues. The only league specifically identified as required to admit OBA programs is the EBLO.

Can OBA require other leagues to use the same rules?

No. Teams may choose what leagues they pursue, but OBA will not force outside leagues to change their rules.

Does declaring High Performance guarantee entry into leagues like CPBL or PBLO?

No. Declaring HP does not guarantee entry into outside leagues. Admission depends on the league itself. EBLO is the only league entirely open to OBA programs.

Can HP teams still play in their local affiliate or local league setting?

Yes. Affiliates should not prevent their own programs from participating in local league play, and HP status does not remove those opportunities.

If no dedicated league exists for younger HP teams, can they still operate?

Yes. A team can still have a valid development-focused season through exhibitions, tournaments, showcases, and other game opportunities, even without a formal league.

If no league is formed, will OBA help connect declared HP teams?

Yes. OBA can help connect High-Performance programs so they can arrange games and create quality competitive opportunities, although it cannot force leagues or teams to accept anyone.

Would a younger HP team be allowed to play up in an older EBLO division if no age-appropriate loop exists?

This question will be raised with EBLO for consideration.

RULES

If a program declares as OBA High Performance, are NCCP certification and pitch count rules required?

Yes. OBA High-Performance programs must follow all certification and arm care requirements, including applicable pitch count rules. Independent programs are not required to follow OBA NCCP or Arm Care rules, but they are expected to have their own standards in place.

Does playing in a league such as the PBLO exempt an OBA program from OBA rules?

No. League participation does not create exemptions. If a team is an OBA program, it must follow OBA rules, including certification and pitch count requirements.

If an OBA HP team plays in another league, must it still follow OBA pitch count rules?

Yes. Failure to follow pitch count requirements could affect eligibility for provincial championships and national qualifiers and could also lead to coach suspensions.

Are High Performance benchmarks mandatory right now?

No. The benchmarks are expectations rather than formal requirements at this stage. OBA noted that they may become requirements in the future as the model develops.

Do coaches for HP teams have to be non-parent coaches?

No. Parent coaches are allowed, but OBA-HP programs must, at minimum, meet certification requirements and should ensure they have appropriately qualified staff for a true High-Performance environment.

What are the minimum coaching expectations for an OBA HP team?

At minimum, coaches must meet age-appropriate NCCP AAA certification requirements. True High Performance programming should go beyond the minimum standard.

Can a team declare as HP and later reclassify to a lower level for that same year?

No. Once a team classifies as HP for the upcoming year, it is expected to remain at that level for that year. There is no additional penalty, but reclassification is not allowed until a later year.

Will declaring HP simply water down AAA?

This is a valid concern. If free releases become the main reason teams declare HP, the rules could be revisited for future seasons. We are exploring all options to ensure that HP programs are truly interested in player development, not just free-releases.

What is the overall purpose of the HP model?

The purpose of High Performance is player development, coach development, and preparing athletes for post-secondary or professional opportunities. It is not intended to be used primarily as a mechanism for free releases.

FEES AND DEADLINES

What is the declaration deadline for OBA High Performance?

The High-Performance declaration requirement is May 1 for HP-OBA programs. EBLO timelines are separate and follow EBLO's own documentation.

What happens if an OBA program declares High Performance after May 1?

A program may still become an HP program for 2027, but it would not qualify for the free release benefit and would need releases as required.

Will the declaration deadline be extended?

No.

Can associations promote their HP programs right away?

Yes. Programs may promote themselves once declared, but recruiting still must wait until the permitted recruiting period begins.

How will families know which associations have declared HP teams?

The list would be posted on the High-Performance section of the OBA website sometime in May.

Why is the 12U tryout date July 1 rather than after the season?

The goal was to balance allowing current seasons to continue while also keeping OBA programs competitive with non-OBA programs that often identify players earlier.

What is the High-Performance team fee?

OBA indicated the HP fee was the same team fee paid by OBA teams, for 2026, this fee is \$300 per team.

OPEN QUESTIONS AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS**Can PBLO players may attend the CPBL Prospect Showcase?**

OBA follow-up required.

Is there interest in a post-18U pathway?

Given changing college athletics realities, this is a worthwhile idea to bring back for further discussion.

Will teams be monitored to ensure they are truly operating as High-Performance?

Yes. Governance and oversight would continue to develop. The intent is to work in partnership with Associations rather than leave programs on their own.

Will OBA govern or review how HP teams are operating after they declare?

Yes. Governance will continue to evolve and that teams should not assume declaration means they can operate without oversight.

Is this framework final?

No. The framework is still developing. Some rules were intentionally broad, and further refinement is expected as the program evolves.

Note: This FAQ reflects the discussion in the town hall transcript and may not capture later policy updates or follow-up clarifications.