

# Approach to ODWHA Scheduling Meeting

The New ODWHA Scheduling meeting is a meeting of all teams to schedule home and away games between each team for the regular season. Each team comes to the meeting with assigned ice from their organization. Teams negotiate game times during this meeting in a round table format, and report back to their Ice Chairs with the results for fine tuning.

**\*\*Only 2 representatives from each team are allowed to attend.**

Scheduling meeting. Those 2 words invoke fear into most managers new or experienced. But they don't need to. The scheduling meeting is all about preparation.

The only common factor for the whole day is controlled chaos. It starts right off when you arrive and wait in a very crowded hallway for your time slot, to last minute wrinkles thrown at you like a change in loop or finding out your loop now has more teams in it. The good news is that if you are prepared none of these items are difficult to navigate.

## *Scheduling Day*

### *Manager/Statistician*

A document will be provided to train the team statistician/manager on league operations, policy and procedures.

The great news is that the ODWHA and the OWHA have standardized and use the same system to run the league and the provincials; ITSportsNet. The document will help you use the ODWHA's website and the ITSportsNet system to load your home games, print game labels, record your game results, and learn about the process to manage penalties/suspensions.

Note that you need to record all your exhibition, tournament, league and provincial games in the system. As the home team you will need to input the game and then score it. As the visiting team you will need to approve the results entered by the home team.

The document speaks for itself. But feel free to bring questions. It will become easier once you get going using the system.

## ***Scheduling Meeting***

### ***Preparation:***

This is where the motto of “be prepared” is extremely important. Without adequate preparation the scheduling day will be very challenging. I have tried both date lists and a calendar style layout and I prefer the calendar style layout by a landslide. The reason for a calendar style layout is that I can at a glance see

- What’s happening the days prior and post a potential game day and avoid long runs of being on the ice every day for 5+ days
- I can see weekends clearly and avoid scheduling 3 game weekends (they are tough and will leave gapping holes in your season where you are off the ice for extended periods).
- I can see who I am playing so I can spread out over the season difficult games or multiple games against 1 team (especially important if you have 3 or more games against 1 team).
- Blackout dates.

And consequently make better scheduling decisions in the MOMENT.

So my advice is to create a physical calendar layout with everything marked on it. I mean everything that affects potential scheduling.

- Practices
- Tournaments
- Blackout dates
- Dates coaching staff not available
- Team events
- Game Ice

I like to use my TeamSnap calendar (or whatever team calendaring system your team uses). I input all my known information into the system, print out the monthly calendars and then use highlighters to mark other information on the calendar highlighting key info. Colour code it. Mark your game ice so it jumps off the page at you (you can find them at a glance). I like to X off days that cannot be used.

Review with your coach prior to the meeting. **KNOW YOUR CALENDAR** well. Take the 60 minutes to do this activity as it is the best preparation for the meeting you can have.

### ***Day of:***

- The meeting starts exactly on time so DON'T be late!!!!
- Only 2 individuals per team in the room. More than two is NOT helpful and in fact would be more confusing. Don't worry your fantastic ice scheduler is there or reachable by phone for backup and support. Once in the room locate your table
- Be well caffeinated and relaxed. This is actually easier than it looks if you have followed all of the preparation techniques.

- Use a pencil with a good eraser for the negotiation phase since you WILL need to change times even though you agreed to them.
- Make sure you get contact info for the schedulers at the table. You will need them after.
- While at the table introduce yourself to the other teams and try to sit next to the teams who are the furthest away from you. You want to schedule with them first and basically once they say GO you will turn to the team next to you and start negotiating game times. If you have another team from your organization or an organization close to you like Nepean or Kanata leave them until last since odds are you can do a weeknight game if needed.
- Be strong and don't let another manager bully you into a less than optimal date. It will all work out in the end.
- Once you arrive at your table you will be given a sheet telling you how many home and away games you need to schedule per team. The season has 20 games. Double headers are encouraged
- Your ice scheduler is there or available and can provide you with other ice times as a last resort but before you go to her/him for ice you need to make sure you do 2 things
  - See if you can change times with another team if the team you are having trouble with can make one of your existing but committed times.
  - Ask the team you are having trouble scheduling with for a couple of days that work for them and ask the scheduler for those dates. If not you will simply cause more confusion for yourself and for the ice scheduler.
- DO NOT leave before everyone is done since you may be asked to make changes if 2 teams at the end cannot find times that work. This is one massive negotiation.
- Use 1 set of scheduling papers. I have seen people use a calendar for dates then write the dates on a separate piece of paper not in any sort of order. This is a recipe for disaster, or at least a potential tough scheduling day resulting in a less than optimum scheduling day output. Not to mention slowing down the whole scheduling process.
- Before you leave the meeting you will need to list your home and away games on a form you are given. 1 copy goes to the ODWHA, and 1 for you. Make sure you hand it in and keep your copy. This is the perfect summary for system input later!

***Next 3 days:***

- After the day you need to give your ice scheduler your dates so they can look at the whole schedule and if required make some slight time / ice adjustments before you input your home games into [ITSportsNet](#).
- If you do have a change you will need to notify the other team (not the ODWHA) and get agreement (note this is why you need to get contact info at the meeting).
- You need to monitor your email closely and record any changes you are asked to make as all associations go through this slight adjustment period. You can make as many changes as you need to **BEFORE** the schedule is finalized in ITSportsNet. After that time, you are allowed 3 changes before your team is **FINED \$100 PER CHANGE**.
- Then you can **enter your home games only into ITSportsNet.**
- Games must be entered within 3 days of the Scheduling meeting
- Once you enter your games your scheduling duties are over until the end of the regular season (unless you have a team website to update but I will leave this to you to manage).
- You are now experienced and ready for the next scheduling part of the season – Playdown & Playoff games .