

Capital Region AA Phase One - 2026-2027

As part of the ongoing effort to strengthen the AA program in the Capital Region, all associations have collaborated to develop a revised framework for AA programming.

This initiative represents an important step toward participation in a province-wide AA league and the planned implementation of policies and procedures that support a move toward a more centralized AA model.

A centralized approach will help streamline services, provide consistent high-quality programming, and ensure equitable access for all eligible athletes across the greater Edmonton region. Ultimately, the goals of this initiative are to enhance **consistency**, improve **competitive balance**, and increase **accessibility** for athletes and families.

Key objectives for the initiative include:

- Support athlete development at all levels (AA, A, B, C)
- Establish a clear and structured pathway that ensures athletes are placed at the appropriate tier for their skill level (AA, A, B, C), supporting meaningful development, confidence, and long term success.
- **Reduce competitive imbalances** with the south region and provide opportunity for meaningful competition for **all athletes at all levels** (AA, A, B, C).
- Ensure athletes from all associations have equal opportunity to participate in AA evaluations on a **fair and consistent** basis.
- Provide athletes with the opportunity to participate in an AA evaluation stream where they are assessed by evaluators representing all associations.
- Ensure that evaluation processes are **consistent, transparent, and equitable** across all associations.
- Align AA evaluation timelines across the Capital Region so that evaluations for other tiers can proceed efficiently and without disruption.
- Work toward greater competitive balance among Capital Region AA teams.
- Manage costs and travel time for AA participants and their families.

Currently, the framework is divided into two (2) phases.

Phase One (2026-2027) will be a combination of a regional approach and a fully centrally provided pooled approach, similar to Calgary AA.

For Phase One (2026–2027), associations in the Capital Region will cooperate to form **three (3) AA teams at each age group**. The framework provides that three main host associations will be named and each organization will endeavor to host, subject to the availability of AA level athletes.

Phase One of the Capital Region framework hopes to provide athletes and families the opportunity to participate in the region most closely connected to their historic home association. Regional alignment will also consider registration volumes to ensure comparable athlete pools sizes within each region. For athletes that are evaluated as potential AA candidates, Phase One will allow athletes to play in their home region, as well as the opportunity to move to another region *if conditions merit*.

For Phase One, the number and level of AA teams each association hosts may be adjusted after evaluations based on the geographical location of the successful athletes. If there is a large number of AA participants from one geographic region, that association may host more than one team at that level. Regardless, the number of Capital Region teams per level will remain capped at three (3) in total. This allowance would be made to assist in ice availability, logistics and efficient travel for the successful athletes.

For Phase One, "Athlete Residency" will be determined and geographic host boundaries will be established based on comparable pool sizes. To be accepted into the process, athletes will be required to respect these boundaries when participating in the AA "Centralized Evaluations Process."

Q&A

Why the changes?

These changes reflect several years of dialogue and collaboration among community leaders within the Capital region.

They are also informed by extensive consultation conducted by Ringette Alberta and Sport for Life through the *Every Kid Can Play* project, which included community surveys and engagement with board members and community stakeholders in 2025 and 2026.

Building on the strong foundation of high-quality programming already present in the Capital Region, these changes are intended to:

- Increase consistency in programming across teams and better align with other regions in the province.
- Strengthen competitive balance among Edmonton-area teams and across the province at all levels (AA, A, B, C).
- Expand accessibility for athletes, particularly those in associations or organizations that do not currently offer AA programming.
- Enable a broader network of dedicated volunteers to share leadership, program responsibilities, and workload.

What are the next steps for this project beyond Phase One (2026-2027)?

Phase 2 of the framework is for all associations in the Capital Region to establish a **single AA program provider**, similar to the model currently used in Calgary.

With one unified AA provider and a consistent set of policies, procedures, and development pathways, the system will become more streamlined and collaborative. Rather than multiple organizations operating separate programs, a unified structure will support stronger alignment and shared standards.

This approach will provide athletes and coaches with greater consistency across the province, expanded development opportunities, and a supportive environment focused on continuous improvement and collective success.

How do the changes for the 2026-2027 season fit into the creation of a single AA program provider?

Phase One represents an important step toward transitioning to the ideal Phase 2 future model. The changes being introduced will begin to establish the structures and processes needed to support a unified AA program in the Capital Region.

As this work progresses, there will be ongoing opportunities for organizations, athletes, and families to learn more about the changes, ask questions, and share feedback. This collaborative process will help ensure a smooth transition while supporting the continued growth and success of AA ringette.

Together, we are building a stronger and more connected future for ringette in the Capital Region—one that prioritizes collaboration, opportunity, and excellence for every athlete.