

Sackville Minor Hockey Association Competitive Tryout Policy 2026-2027



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Mission Statement: Purpose and Philosophy of Player Evaluations

This document outlines the Sackville Minor Hockey Association (SMHA) Competitive Tryout Process. The tryout and evaluation process is aligned with Hockey Canada's [Minor Hockey Development Guide for Player Evaluation and Selection](#)¹. SMHA's Mission for this Competitive Tryout Process is twofold:

1. Provide players the opportunity to grow both as hockey players and as individuals
2. Collect data that can be used as a developmental tool

SMHA understands that Competitive Tryouts can be very stressful and frustrating for players and their families. It is SMHA's intention to make the process as transparent as possible.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Sackville Flyers commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Our policy outlines a clear commitment to:

1. Valuing and respecting diversity
2. Providing education and awareness on DEI
3. Combating racism, discrimination, and barriers to inclusion
4. Creating a safe and positive environment for conversations about DEI

Prohibit bullying, harassment, and discrimination aligning with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act.

The process for addressing allegations is thorough, ensuring:

1. Confidentiality and support for victims
2. Fair investigation and disciplinary action
3. No retaliation against complainants or witnesses

The "In the moment" directive empowers coaches and managers to:

1. Train evaluators and on-ice instructors on neurodiversity (presented at evaluator training)
2. Provide more on-ice instructors for U11 division to more effectively explain/demonstrate drills
3. Make available all evaluation drills in advance of tryouts and provide videos of drills for all divisions
4. Allow players 1 practice run at the drill before being evaluated.
5. Creation of a 'safe' space in the rink for players who are overstimulated to sit-decompress. Parents are responsible for watching their own child.
6. Stop play and address incidents immediately
7. Document incidents and notify officials

¹ Hockey Canada Minor Hockey Association Player Evaluation Guide, <https://cdn.hockeycanada.ca/hockey-canada/Hockey-Programs/MHA/downloads/mha-player-evaluation-guide-english.pdf>

8. Remove teams from games if necessary, prioritizing player safety and well-being

We hold a strong commitment to creating an inclusive and respectful environment for all players, members, and officials.

Evaluation Software

SMHA will use the Gray Jay Evaluation Software ². **The main purpose of competitive tryouts and evaluations is to place players on teams appropriate to their skill level.** The Gray Jay Evaluation Software will allow us to use the information we collect through the tryout and evaluation process. We can provide that information to coaches once teams are formed. Coaches can then use the software to do mid-season and/or end-of-season evaluations of their players. That information can then be provided to the players with feedback. Multiple Minor Hockey Associations (MHA) across Nova Scotia are now using the Gray Jay Evaluation Software. It has been a “Game Changer” for them in both expediting the process and the overall management of it.

Objectives of Player Evaluation

- To provide fair and impartial assessment of a player’s total hockey skills during skating, scrimmage, and/or exhibition game sessions
- Ensure players have a reasonable opportunity of being selected to a team appropriate to their skill level as determined during the on-ice evaluations of the current year.
- To provide uniformity and consistency in the evaluation process such that a player’s and parent's expectations are consistent from year to year as players move through the various levels of the association’s programs.
- To form teams to maintain balanced and competitive play where the athletes can develop and participate equitably and have fun playing hockey during the season.
- To provide feedback that will aid development. This will be facilitated through the Gray Jay Evaluation Software as previously discussed.

² Gray Jay, <https://grayjayleagues.com/>

Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of SMHA Support Staff for Competitive Tryouts are outlined below.

President

Will provide support and oversight to the tryout and evaluations ensuring all processes are followed as laid out here in this policy.

VP Operations

Responsible for the overall ice and resource management of the tryout and evaluation process. Will support the VP of Competitive with the implementation of the tryout process.

VP Competitive

Responsible for the planning and running of all competitive tryouts. Will have full administrative access to the Gray Jay Evaluation Software. Oversight of session 1 groupings.

Division Coordinators

Act as Liaisons between, VP Competitive, VP Operations, and Evaluators. Manages the Off-ice Helpers. Responsible for checking in players and notifying facilitators of jersey numbers and any absentees. Division coordinators must attend all sessions.

Tryout Facilitator

The Association will appoint an independent Facilitator for each age division whose role during tryouts will be:

- To oversee the tryout selection process for the specific division assigned and to ensure the integrity of the process is maintained at all times
- Coordinate the evaluators for all on-ice sessions
- Collect all player evaluation scores and rankings and develop ranking lists to guide final player selection
- Facilitate discussion and dialogue between members of the Evaluation Team to assist in ensuring that player decisions are being made in a manner consistent with the process
- Support the process by acting as an independent evaluator as and when required
- Notify the VP Competitive of all decisions and player movements
- Retain all player evaluation information and records in confidence throughout the selection process

Registrar

Responsible for ensuring all player participants are registered within Sackville Minor Hockey. Assist with administration of any applicable player transfers or those attending tryouts from outside of SMHA. Responsible for uploading registration lists to the Gray Jay Evaluation Software program prior to the beginning of tryouts.

SMHA Communication Team

Responsible for posting updated groups and ice times on SMHA's Website and sharing the link on Social Media.

On-Ice Coaches/Helpers

For the Skill/Technical sessions there shall be a lead coach and 3-4 assistant coaches. Coaches are responsible to:

- Ensure all drills finish within the allotted time.
- Drills should be kept in the same order for each session.
- Ensure players understand the drill.
- Should a player have their performance affected by items outside of their control, it is the coach's discretion to allow the player to perform the skill again.
- Coaches can encourage players to perform to the best of their ability.
- Coaches cannot share any personal insight with parents/players/other observers that may appear to bias or alter the process.

Dressing Room Monitors – These individuals can be parents of players being evaluated at the request of Division Coordinators. They will not have access to the Gray Jay Evaluation Software. As per HNS rule, a two-deep policy will be in effect for dressing room monitoring.

Evaluators

Evaluators are composed of both independent evaluators and in-house SMHA evaluators. The SMHA Evaluators can be non-parent coaches who have already been named to a particular level or parent who has not yet been selected to coach. A named, non-parent coach may evaluate the age group they will coach. A parent cannot evaluate the age group that their child plays in. SMHA will strive to be as consistent as possible with evaluators for each division. This continuity ensures players are being observed by evaluators with a solid benchmark for the overall ability of the group being observed.

In general, Evaluators should:

- Be required to attend evaluator training sessions
- Review all drills and skills to be observed so as to understand the on-ice process.
- Review the evaluation criteria prior to the process to ensure they are evaluating with the same intent.
- Stay separate from other evaluators as well as spectators during the on-ice process.
- Evaluators will evaluate from designated areas
- Confirm they have the correct group/jersey #'s to evaluate. This will be assigned through the Gray Jay Evaluation Software.
- Not share comments or opinions with parents / players or other interested observers.
- Refer questions, comments, or complaints to the Division Coordinator, tryout facilitator, and the VP of Competitive, without comment or complaint.

Tryout Committee (as per SMHA By-laws)

TRYOUT COMMITTEE:

There shall be a Tryout Committee consisting of at least ten members including the President, Vice President Competition, Vice President Development and the Division Coordinators for U11, U13, U15 and U18 and three members at large. The Tryout Committee shall set the tryout process and advise the members of such process at least three weeks before tryouts begin. The Tryout Committee shall be responsible for retaining evaluators for tryouts at each competitive level (U11 and up) and shall ensure all tryouts are conducted in a fair, objective manner. Any member of the tryout committee who has applied to coach in that year or who is a parent of a player shall recuse themselves from the tryout process for their team or player's tryout level.

Timeline

August

- Gray Jay Evaluation Software
- Coordinate Evaluators
- Coordinate On Ice Help for Tryouts
- Tryout Process Review with Exec and DC's

September

- Coach Selection Interviews, if required
- Post Tryout Process Document to Website
- Name Non-Parent Coaches confirmed and posted to Website
- Tryout Process Review with Evaluators and On Ice Help in classroom
- Tryout Jersey Assignment Handout
- Post initial groups at least 48 hours before ice sessions.
- Sep 12 - U13AAA Tryouts Begin
- No later than Sept 25 after 6pm - Finalize U13AAA Roster
- Sept 18– Under 11-15 Competitive Tryouts & Evaluations Begin
- Sept 30 – Under 11-15 Competitive Tryouts Conclude
- Sept 29 – Under 18 Competitive Tryouts & Evaluations Begin
- Under 18 Competitive Tryouts conclude – TBD

October

- Team Selection & Naming of parent coaches
- Finalize all team rosters by the following dates;
- U11 by 7pm Oct 1st
- U13 by 7pm Oct 1st
- U15 by 7pm Sept 29th
- U18 by TBD

Who Can Participate

Players who have registered with SMHA and are in good standing (see SMH By-Laws for definition) can participate in Competitive Tryouts. Players looking to try out for competitive teams at the U15 AA/A and U18 AA/A age group MUST have completed an HNS Certified Checking Clinic, prior to the start of tryouts.

- **Out of Area Transfers**
 - If a player wishes to try out from outside SMHA they must first register with their home association. If a team is not offered at their local association then they maybe considered for an Out of Area Transfer on a case-by-case basis. This must be approved by Hockey Nova Scotia's Minor Council Regional Director and SMHA Executive.
 - SMHA may accept Goaltenders if there is a shortage within a particular Division

Excused Absences: Illness, Injury, and Compassionate Reasons

The expectation is that all players participating in the SMHA Competitive Tryout process make every effort to **attend all sessions** as scheduled.

It is stressful when players are unable to participate in all or part of Competitive Tryouts due to no fault of their own. SMHA recognizes that being unable to participate impacts the mental health of absent players. Requests for Excused Absences are considered on a case-by-case basis with great consideration, and may or may not be approved.

SMHA understands that decisions made can negatively impact the perceptions and narrative of the entire Competitive Tryout process within our hockey community. As such, there are absolutely no placement decisions made before or during the Competitive Tryout process. All team placements for players with an Excused Absence are made at the end of the Competitive Tryout process, and are considered final.

- Requests for an Excused Absence for Competitive Tryouts must be sent as soon as the situation is recognized through the Excused Absence Request Form under the tryout resources tab at flyershockey.ca
- Parents/Guardians should provide **as much detail as possible** in the form
- Requests for an Excused Absence will be tracked on a spreadsheet by the VP Competitive in Google Workspace.
- The Requests will be considered and actioned by three people: the VP Competitive or a delegate, the appropriate Division Coordinator or a delegate, and one SMHA Board Member at large.
- The request will either be Rejected and designated as an Unexcused Absence, or Approved and designated as an Excused Absence.
 - **Unexcused Absences:** See *Unexcused Absences* below for full details.
 - **Excused Absences:** See *Excused Absence Player Placement* below for full details.

Illness or Injury

Any Requests for an Excused Absence related to an Illness or Injury must be accompanied by a Medical Note from a Medical Professional (i.e. Family Physician, ER Physician, Nurse Practitioner, Physiotherapist, etc.).

In all cases, the Return to Play date anticipated by Medical Professional(s) must be no later than December 1st for full on-ice participation, including games.

For player safety, any player who was granted an Excused Absence on the basis of Illness or Injury must submit a Medical Note from a Medical Professional (i.e. Family Physician, ER Physician, Nurse Practitioner, Physiotherapist, etc) to be eligible to return to SMHA-sanctioned hockey. The note should be emailed to vpcompetitive@FlyersHockey.ca, and if the player has already been assigned to a team, the team's Head Coach(es) and Manager(s) should also be included.

Compassionate Reasons

SMHA recognizes that there are certain activities or family emergencies that may occur. Absences from SMHA's Competitive Tryout process for other sports or any other extra-curricular activities may not be approved. These exceptions are rare, and may be granted for players competing at the provincial level or above, and must be submitted and approved in advance.

The following situations are examples of potential Compassionate Reasons where SMHA may consider granting an Excused Absence:

- Family tragedy
- Attendance at a provincial or national event (i.e. athletic championship, etc) that arises from the player's participation in an activity over the summer, where the activity necessitates the player to attend as part of their commitment to that activity
- Specific religious holidays

In all cases related to Compassionate Reasons, it is critical that the Parent/Guardians notify SMHA as soon as possible as noted under the **General** heading above when it is known the player will be absent.

Unexcused Absences

Any unexcused absence, such as (but not limited to) school trips, sport activities, other extra curricular activities, family gatherings, etc will result in lateral movement in the flow chart for any missed sessions.

Excused Absences: Player Placement

The VP Competitive will engage with SMHA Coaches who are familiar with the player, and consider the following points:

- Has the player been able to participate in any sessions so far?
- What information was provided by the player's Parent/Guardian?
- What team was the player on last season?
- How did the player develop throughout the last season?
- How did the player compare to their peers/teammates at the end of the last season?
- Is there a similarly-skilled player that can be agreed upon by those most familiar with the player's recent performance?
- If the player in question is new to SMHA, the VP Competitive will seek at least three (3) hockey references (prior coaches, etc) to assist in gathering information.

The VP Competitive may - at their discretion - assign one or more coaches to strike an ad hoc committee to assist with evaluating any individual request. The ad hoc committee may reach out to other coaches for feedback as they deem necessary. As stated in the points above, the VP Competitive may also employ the use of an undisclosed, like-skilled player agreed upon by the ad hoc committee, to which the absent player might be "pegged" throughout any missed sessions of the Competitive Tryout process to further assist with final placements.

If the player in question is being considered for placement on a high level team in any division, the player ought to be forecasted as being "top half" of the team in question as follows: one of the top four forwards, the top three defense, or the top goaltender. If the requested player is deemed to be comparable to many other players in the Competitive Tryout process, the player with the Excused Absence may be moved to a lower level. Other contributing factors for final placement may include the player's anticipated return-to-play timeline.

Because this is a competitive process, these decisions often lead to disappointment for the absent player if they are not placed where they felt they should be, or disappointment on the part of another player who is displaced by a player with an Excused Absence. It is extremely difficult to justify placing a player with an Excused Absence at a higher level when that player has been absent and unable to display their skills during the Competitive Tryout process.

If any of the points above lead to a debate regarding the player's placement, the player will be rostered at the lower level being considered.

A complete effort will be made to ensure fairness throughout this process.

Misconduct

If SMHA is made aware of any misleading information related to a player's Request for an Excused Absence - or any attempt to take advantage of this Excused Absence policy - the following actions will be taken immediately:

- The player will automatically be released from the Competitive Tryouts process and assigned to the Recreation Evaluation process.
- The matter will be referred to SMHA's Ombudsman for further consideration.

Harassment or threats related to this process will not be tolerated, and will be referred to SMHA's Board of Directors with disciplinary action taken immediately.

Fees: Competitive Tryout Fees and Team Budgets

Competitive Tryout Fees

Players granted an Excused Absence are still responsible for their division's full Competitive Tryout fee, regardless of that player's final placement. There are extensive considerations and time commitments dedicated to each request. It is equal and fair to include the Competitive Tryout fees for all Excused Absences because the player is being evaluated against other players who have also paid the fees.

Team Budgets

Parents/Guardians of a player placed on a SMHA Competitive or Recreation Team are responsible, in full, for their player's share of the Team Budget, regardless of when the Ill or Injured player returns to the ice. Team Budgets will not be prorated in these instances. It would be unfair for the other SMHA families to be responsible for the ill or injured player's share of the Team Budget.

Player Check-in & Jersey Assignment

Jersey handout nights will be held prior to the start of tryouts. Players will have the opportunity to find a jersey that fits and will be assigned their number for the duration of the tryouts. When Tryouts begin, volunteers will be at the main entrance of each rink, to check in players for each session. Jerseys will be available for players who were not able to attend the jersey handout time. Jersey numbers can be added to the Gray Jay Evaluation Software at that time. Otherwise, Jersey numbers will have been pre-assigned to each player. Once players receive their jersey either before or at the first session, they are to hold on to them until tryouts have completed and they can then be returned. Players must not trade try-out jerseys, as the number on the jersey is what is being used to score that individual player. If there is an issue with a jersey at any point during the try-out process, please see one of the volunteers at the main entrance and adjustments can be made and recorded with them only.

It is very important to keep the following in mind:

- This can be a slow process. Especially the first session. Please come early enough to ensure the players have enough time to register with the check-in team, get ready and be on the ice on time. Patience is required.
- Although we will strive to ensure each player has a jersey that fits properly, inevitably there will be instances where jerseys will either be too big or too small. Please keep in mind, we cannot have people coming back to check in, returning the issued jersey and grabbing a new jersey on their own. Again, your patience is required. We need to be able to make any number changes accurately in the Gray Jay Evaluation Software. If/when there is an issue with a jersey, bring it back to check in and wait to speak to one of the volunteers about it. We will make every effort to fix the sizing issue.
- Requests for a favorite or even just a different number will not be entertained.

Position Selection

New last season is the requirement for coaches to select players from the positions identified before tryouts at the U11-18 levels. What does this mean? Coaches at the aforementioned levels will no longer be able to “Flip” a player from Forward to Defence or vice versa. Players will not be able to change positions during tryouts. This selection can be changed up to Thursday, September 11, 2026 for Under 13AAA and Thursday, September 18, 2026 for Under 11, Under 13 and Under 15 and Saturday, September 27, 2026 for Under 18 at the latest, before tryouts begin to allow time to adjust groups, if necessary.

Preferred Position Selection

New this season is the requirement for players to select their top two preferred positions at the time of Registration for the upcoming season. This information is intended only for the formation of line combinations used throughout the tryout process. This information can be shared with coaches after team selections have been completed but the information will not be used in determining whether a player does or does not make a particular team within their division.

Notification Process and Player Placement

Players will be notified of their initial groupings and their standing throughout the tryout and evaluation process via postings on the SMHA website. We recommend that players and parents regularly check SMHA's website and social media sites for updates.

After each session, players will be regrouped based on scoring from the evaluators. Groups will be posted as quickly as possible so players and parents can prepare for their next session(s). Using the Gray Jay Evaluation Software will help expedite this process. We understand how stressful this is and will work to get the groups updated and posted as quickly as possible. It is important to know that a player moved into a higher group does not guarantee the player a spot on a particular team. Players will be placed on teams primarily by score. There are other factors to be considered such as, but not limited to, skill, attitude, hockey IQ, compete level. For team selection, once teams are finalized, team lists will again be posted to the SMHA website. Players will then be contacted by their head coach

Player Evaluation Criteria

Technical Skill Session(s)

- Skating - position specific
- Passing
- Shooting
- Puck Control

Compete & Scrimmage

Sessions

- Use of Hockey Skills
- Hockey Sense/IQ
- Compete Level
- Attitude

Scoring & Evaluation System

Player Scoring:

The objective is to create a system simple to use, easy to implement, and enduring scoring system that will easily identify errors and discrepancies. The scoring rubric should be clear to evaluator and usable in different situations.

Skills Sessions

During the skills-session portion of the tryout process, all players will be evaluated using a 1–7 scoring scale, with 1 representing the lowest score and 7 representing the highest score.



- All skills-session evaluations will be recorded using full-point increments only.
- The same scoring scale will be applied consistently to all players participating in the skills sessions.
- These evaluations will be used, along with the established tryout process and evaluation criteria, to assist in determining player groupings for the intersquad games.

Skills Session Scoring scale considerations:

- All sessions will be scored using a scale of 1-7 with no half point increments. The following 7-point scale descriptors have been adopted:
 1. Needs Significant Improvement – Struggles consistently; skills well below level required.
 2. Below Standard – Inconsistent; some basic skills present but below level.
 3. Developing – Shows effort and some ability; still needs improvement to compete at this level.
 4. Average – Meets the expected standard for this level; consistent and reliable.
 5. Above Average – Stronger than peers in this area; performs consistently well.

6. Very Good – High-level ability; noticeably better than most.
7. Excellent – Exceptional skill; performs at a top-tier level consistently

Intersquad Game Evaluations

Once players have been assigned to their respective intersquad game groups, the evaluation scale will change to reflect the level of competition within each game. The scoring scales will not be adjusted or normalized after the evaluations are completed. Instead, each group will have a predetermined scoring range:

Intersquad Group	Evaluation Scale
Group 1	7.0 – 10.0
Group 2	4.0 – 7.0
Group 3	1.0 – 4.0

All intersquad game evaluations will be recorded using full- and half-point increments only (e.g., 4.0, 4.5, 5.0, 5.5, etc.).

Purpose of the Tiered Scoring System

The purpose of the tiered scoring system is to provide evaluators with an appropriate range within each intersquad game to differentiate players based on their performance against the players they are competing alongside and against. This approach provides a meaningful spread of scores within each game, rather than having evaluators assign essentially the same range of marks to every player regardless of the level of competition.

At the same time, the predetermined scoring ranges establish a clear separation between the intersquad groups. The scoring ranges overlap at the boundary between groups, but a player cannot receive a score that exceeds the maximum score available within their assigned group.

For example:

A player in Group 3 can receive a score from 1.0 to 4.0.

A player in Group 2 can receive a score from 4.0 to 7.0.

A player in Group 1 can receive a score from 7.0 to 10.0.

Therefore, a player assigned to Group 3 cannot receive a score higher than 4.0, while a player in Group 2 cannot receive a score higher than 7.0. Likewise, only players participating in Group 1 can receive scores above 7.0.

All intersquad game evaluations will be scored using a 1–10 scale, with marks assigned in full- and half-point increments.

The 1–10 scale is designed to provide evaluators with greater separation between players during game situations while maintaining consistency with the principles of the 1–7 skills-session scale.

The following descriptors have been adopted:

1.0 – Needs Significant Improvement

Struggles consistently in the game environment. Has significant difficulty executing the required skills, making effective decisions, or keeping pace with the level of play.

2.0 – Well Below Standard

Demonstrates limited effectiveness in game situations. Basic abilities are present but are not consistently translated into effective play. Requires significant improvement to compete effectively at this level.

3.0 – Below Standard

Shows some ability and effort but has difficulty consistently contributing at the required level. Execution, decision-making, positioning, or pace of play remain inconsistent.

4.0 – Developing

Demonstrates developing ability within the game. Can contribute at times but does not yet consistently execute skills, decisions, or positioning at the expected level.

5.0 – Meets Standard

Consistently demonstrates the expected level of performance for the game. Makes appropriate plays, competes effectively, and demonstrates reliable execution within the game environment.

6.0 – Above Standard

Frequently demonstrates performance above the expected standard. Makes effective decisions, executes skills consistently, and contributes positively to the game.

7.0 – Very Good

Demonstrates a high level of game performance. Consistently makes effective plays, shows strong awareness and decision-making, and has a noticeable positive impact on the game.

8.0 – Excellent

Demonstrates excellent performance throughout the game. Consistently executes at a high level, makes strong decisions under pressure, and has a significant positive impact on play.

9.0 – Exceptional

Demonstrates an exceptional level of performance. Consistently influences the game through skill, decision-making, compete level, awareness, and execution. Performance is clearly among the highest demonstrated in the evaluation group.

10.0 – Outstanding

Demonstrates an outstanding level of performance throughout the evaluation. Consistently executes at an exceptional level, makes a significant impact on the game, and demonstrates the complete combination of skill, decision-making, awareness, compete level, and consistency expected of a top-tier player at this stage of evaluation.

Use of Half-Point Increments

Evaluators may use half-point increments to provide additional differentiation between players when a performance falls between two descriptors.

For example:

5.0 – Meets Standard

5.5 – Between Meets Standard and Above Standard

6.0 – Above Standard

6.5 – Between Above Standard and Very Good

7.0 – Very Good

Half-point marks should be used when the evaluator believes a player's performance falls meaningfully between the two corresponding descriptors. They should not be used simply to create additional variation in scores.

Consistency and Transparency

The tiered scoring system is intended to ensure that evaluations remain consistent, transparent, and reflective of the player's performance within the level of competition to which they have been assigned.

The scoring system is not designed to scale or artificially adjust player evaluations after the fact. The range assigned to each intersquad group is established in advance and applied consistently to every player participating in that group.

This creates a structured progression throughout the tryout process:

Skills Sessions → Initial Player Ranking → Intersquad Grouping → Tiered Intersquad Evaluation → Overall Evaluation Results

Alternative to rubrics: Quality Control for Evaluators:

- Reliability checks with evaluators during initial training and in between sessions. (ex: evaluators gather together, observe and discuss a player and scores, clarify/justify variances in scoring to recalibrate)
- The Facilitator / Div Coord / VP Comp must ensure scores meet the criteria above.
- Evaluators that repeatedly fail to meet intent of highs and lows to be replaced.
- Evaluator guidance on scoring: U15/U18 limit score for players who demonstrate an unwillingness to engage in contact to no higher than a 6/10 when evaluating tactics.

Quality Control

In order to ensure consistency in evaluator scoring, and fairness to all players within the tryout process, we have the following framework in place to address any outliers in player scoring:

- Scores with more than a 2 point variance (outlier) automatically prompts a discussion between facilitator and that evaluator at the end of the session with a potential to drop the lowest score and average the other 2
- Facilitator keeps a tally of the times a particular evaluator has an outlier (ex: player earns a 4, 4, 2 from the 3 evaluators = ✓ keep all scores; player earns 5, 4, 2 from the 3 evaluators, the 2 may get dropped ✗ and the other 2 scores are averaged)
- The Facilitator / Div Coord / VP Comp must ensure scores meet the criteria above. For example, the facilitator keeps a tally of the times a particular person has an outlier in order to determine if that evaluator should continue as an evaluator.

Tie break rules to consider in the event 2 players have the same session score.

- 2nd year over 1st year
- higher level the previous year
- player history (i.e. attitude, coachability, etc)
- committee vote

Evaluation scores are tabulated after each session to determine the ranking of the players. In the event of ties or where scores are very close, the evaluation team will use the above tiebreaking criteria to ensure that the scoring guide is being applied consistently and that the proper decisions are being made. This discussion is moderated by the independent Facilitator.

Evaluation scoring shall be based on a player's performance during the current evaluation process. Consideration of past performance shall only be permitted when the Evaluation team encounters a situation where two or more players are scored similarly and additional insight will be helpful in making

a decision or in cases where the player was unable to participate due to injury, illness or compassionate reasons and additional insight into the player's ability will assist in proper placement. In these cases, the Evaluation Team shall refer to evaluation input from the player's previous coach in comparison to other players at the same position on the player's previous team that may assist in placing the player appropriately.

Tryout Process

The following is an overview of the process aimed at assisting players and parents to understand how the various steps will unfold for U11 through U15 with the exception of U13AAA. This entire Competitive Tryout Policy is intended for competitive tryouts specifically at U11 and older age brackets.

Skill Evaluation

Tryouts for U11 competitive teams start with 2 Skills based evaluation sessions not based on position. Scores are accumulated for both skills sessions to determine where players are placed in the scrimmage games. After the first intersquad game some team placements will be made based on the cumulative scores from the skills sessions and the first game. The next two intersquad games will have cumulative scores. After the third intersquad game, remaining players will go in to a compete skate with planned scenarios and small area games to give players a chance to show their skills in game like environment. They will then proceed to a last intersquad game after which final team placements will be made. Balancing games to occur.

Tryouts for U13 competitive teams start with 2 position-based Skills Evaluation. This means the Forwards will be grouped together and the Defence will be grouped together. Scores are accumulated for both skills sessions to determine where players are placed in the scrimmage games. After the first intersquad game some team placements will be made based on the cumulative scores from the skills sessions and the first game. The scores reset for the next set of scrimmages. After the third intersquad game, remaining players will go in to a compete skate with planned scenarios and small area games to give players a chance to show their skills in game like environment. They will then proceed to a last intersquad game after which final team placements will be made. Balancing games to occur.

Tryouts for U15 competitive teams start with 1 position-based Skills Evaluation. This means the Forwards will be grouped together and the Defence will be grouped together. The scores for the 1 skill session determines which scrimmage the player is placed. The groupings will remain the same for the first two scrimmages and scores will be cumulative. After this, the scores reset for each scrimmage until the final stage when team placements are being made.

Initial Player Groups will be approximately 24 to 32 players each depending on the number of Forwards and Defence participating. All Session 1 Groupings will be balanced, ensuring a range of player skill levels within each group and to promote fairness and neutrality. Players will be evaluated upon their technical skills such as skating, puck handling, and passing.

Players will then be assigned groups for Intrasquad Game Evaluations (below) based on their combined scores from skill sessions 1 and 2 (Under 11 and Under 13)

This may result in a player who was in an earlier grouping for skill evaluation being placed in a later grouping for intra-squad games. The reason for this is that players are grouped for skill based sessions based on last name and the intra-squad games require placement by position. By keeping players with

their positional counterparts, it allows a fair evaluation across the entire position, so the top players from each position can be grouped together for the intrasquad game.

Intrasquad Game Evaluation

Players will participate in the assigned groups based on the ratings from the Skill evaluations based on position (Forward, Defense, and Goalie). Intrasquad games will include both Goaltenders and Skaters formed into teams. Players will be evaluated in the game environment. After each Intrasquad game, players are then placed into new groupings. Upon conclusion of Intrasquad Game Evaluation, teams will be finalized for each level (AAA, AA, A, or B); and players being placed into the Recreation division will be placed into teams by the VP Recreation

On-Ice Protocol

SMHA has designated specific drills for use in Skill Evaluation on-ice sessions. These plans will be created to maximize the exposure of the participants in key skill areas so as to enable the independent evaluators to better rate each. The On-Ice Coaches and Evaluation team follow the pre-planned sessions and specific timelines established for each drill.

SMHA shall also designate individuals as on-ice Drill Leaders for Skill Session and Line Combinations for Intrasquad Games for the purpose of executing the session plans and scrimmages so that players can be evaluated properly. Unless cleared of a conflict of interest and specifically selected to be part of an evaluation team pursuant to this policy, these individuals shall not participate in or influence evaluations in any manner whatsoever.

Goalie Evaluation Criteria

Session 1 Goalie Technical Skill Session (U11, U13(not AAA), U15, U18)

Depending on the level of play and the age and development of the goaltender the evaluation process should incorporate these 6 basic areas. The table below summarizes what should be evaluated for the Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced goaltender:

1. Basic Skating Skills
2. Position-Specific Movement Skills
3. Positional/Save Movement Skills
4. Rebound – Control/Recovery/Tactical
5. Transitional Play
6. Advanced Positioning

The table below summarizes what should be evaluated for the Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced goaltender:

Beginner - U 11	Intermediate - U13 /U15	Advanced -U13AAA/ U15AA /U18
1. Basic Skating 2. Lateral Movement 3. Forward/Backward Movement 4. Net Movement 5. Angle Positioning 6. Depth Positioning 7. Lower Body Save Movement 8. Upper Body Save Movement	1. Net Movement 2. Positioning & Save Movement 3. Net Play 4. Rebound Control 5. Basic Tactics 6. Intermediate Positioning 7. Basic Transition 8. Movement While Down	1. Intermediate Position Specific Movement 2. Basic Movement 3. First Save Control 4. Shot Preparation 5. Advanced Positioning while Up 6. Positioning & Movement while Down 7. Intermediate Tactics 8. Intermediate Transition

Goalie Skill Evaluations

The Association shall conduct separate sessions in which to evaluate our goalies. These sessions are intended to provide greater insight into the abilities of the goalies that may not always be possible during games. These sessions will be led by independent goalie specialists while the evaluation team rates each player. Only the scores rendered by the evaluation team shall be utilized in goalie selection and placement. Rating or opinions provided by the goaltending specialists that we utilize will only be considered in cases where goalies are tied or very close in ranking.

For Goalies trying out for under 13AAA they will be placed in the skaters skills session groupings and be evaluated using the above criteria in these skill sessions before being assigned to a team for the scrimmages.

Specific to U13AAA for the 26-27 Season:

U13AAA tryouts will consist of three different phases, with the pool of players being reduced at each stage. Outside of the tryout process, all other criteria laid out in the tryout policy will be followed.

Phase 1:

This will consist of three different groups that will take part in a one hour long skills session. The group will then be broken into 4 separate teams and compete in a round robin tournament over 2 days. Players will be evaluated on the criteria referenced in “player evaluation criteria” above. Based on this, the top eighteen (18) forwards, twelve (12) Defense and three (3) Goalies will continue on to Phase 2, with the other participants joining in the competitive tryouts process referenced above.

Phase 2:

Two new teams will be formed in this phase from the remaining players. Players will compete in two hour and a half games, over a two day span. Players are ranked again on the criteria above. Upon completion of these games, six (6) forwards, four (4) defense and one (1) goalie will be released to join the competitive tryout process above.

Phase 3:

This phase will consist of one practice and two exhibition games (TBD) . Practice will be run by a non parent coach or a non parent representative from the tryout committee. Evaluators will be there to observe all phase 3 sessions, with non parent coaches/tryout committee members providing feedback from an on ice level. Following the second exhibition game, the tryout committee will get together to review and determine the final roster.

The tryout committee reserves the right adjust numbers based on scoring and tiebreakers.

Returning Player Policy

SMHA will no longer have a returning player specific policy. All players will be treated and evaluated equally and all players must earn their positions in accordance to the SMHA tryout policies here in. All players will be treated equally and in all situations where players are competing for the final spots on a team roster SMHA reserves the right to discuss players with previous years coaches, which will include aspects such as but not limited to, coachability, attitude, compete level, team player, work ethic, attitude, prior seasons development, hockey sense, leadership.

Appeals Process

Parents or Guardians may enter an appeal if there are grounds to believe there was a procedural issue relating to their player’s placement.

An example of this might be if a player’s jersey number was recorded incorrectly in the Evaluation Software. Should an appeal be granted, a committee will be created led by the VP Competitive and VP Operations. Ideally, a Division Coordinator would be included. Findings will be binding.

Appeals based on whether one player is better than another will not be entertained. **Evaluation scores will not be disclosed under any circumstance.**

Team Structures

For the 2026-2027 Season will be determined by Total Registrations for each Division, as well as an assessment throughout the Competitive Tryout process. Ultimately, it is SMHA's responsibility to ensure our players will be challenged while having the opportunity to find success over the course of the season. Success and competitiveness should be defined as winning around as many as you lose. SMHA must follow the mandate laid out by HNS for U11, which states an association of 110 registrations will form two U11AA teams. U13 players that don't make our AAA team will be allowed to try out for another association. If we lose additional players outside SMHA then this will need to be considered. Additionally, SMHA players will be competing for roster spots on U15 Major teams. The number of players lost to U15 Major will inform what teams beyond U15AA are iced for a season.

Teams shall be selected by a committee made up of:

VP Operations, VP Competitive, Tryout Facilitator, and the independent evaluators. If VP Operations or VP Competitive have a conflict they are to be recused and replaced by an independent executive member.