



PLAYER EVALUATION PROCESS & CRITERIA

The Orono Youth Hockey Association is committed to supporting our athletes throughout the team placement process. This document is intended as a guide to help you understand what to expect before, during, and after evaluations.

Our goal is to ensure a fair and impartial approach that results in players being placed at the level best suited to support their skill development and love of the game.

The OYHA Booster Board and Coaches Board wish all players the very best in the upcoming hockey season.

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PLAYER EVALUATION PROCESS & CRITERIA

BEFORE EVALUATIONS

All player evaluations are closed to parents and the public. To support the integrity of the evaluation process and our players, only evaluators and on ice personnel are permitted in the arena. (Exception: Parents of Squirt/U10 players may assist with tying skates before leaving the arena.)

SPARTAN TRAINING CAMP

Pre-season clinics are optional sessions for all skaters and goalies to prepare for tryouts. Participation and performance in the pre-season clinics are not used in evaluations in any way. Please monitor the OYHA website for information on pre-season clinics.

EVALUATION DATES

Evaluations will generally begin in mid to late September and be completed by early-October. Dates/times for evaluations are posted to the OYHA website. It is your responsibility to monitor the website and understand which session you must attend.

EQUIPMENT

Please make sure all of your equipment is in good condition and is the Orono color scheme. All non-Orono stickers must be removed prior to taking the ice for the first evaluation session. No AAA team, all-star team, or choice league stickers are allowed. Non Orono stickers and AAA team stickers may be removed at the discretion of volunteers in the arena.

ABSENCE

Absence from player evaluations is discouraged as it not only affects the missing player, but also the association and the quality of the evaluation process.



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BEFORE EVALUATIONS

ABSENCE CONTINUED

What if I can't participate in evaluations?

The following are considered excused absences for missing an evaluation session: Injury, illness, religious conflict, or specific written approval from the Orono Youth Hockey Coaches Board (OYHA CB) at cbchair@oronohockey.org.

What if I have an excused absence and am unable to participate?

It is critical to notify the OYHA CB of an excused absence as soon as possible in advance.

What if I cannot attend due to another reason?

If missing an evaluation session for a non-excused reason, contact the OYHA CB immediately providing details. In fairness to all players trying out, the reason will be considered and either approved or denied by the OYHA CB.

What team will I be placed on if I completely miss evaluations due to an excused absence?

OYHA CB members, with feedback from applicable coaches, will determine the team placement.

What happens if I miss an evaluation session due to an excused absence?

OYHA CB members, with feedback from applicable coaches and available session scores will be used to determine the next session or team placement.

What happens if I miss an evaluation for an unexcused absence?

If the OYHA CB was not notified or the absence was not approved, the evaluation score can be negatively impacted. Feedback from applicable coaches and available session scores may still be considered.

Can I opt out of player evaluations and still play hockey for OYHA?

Players have the option to opt out of evaluations completely and be automatically placed on the lowest level team for their age group. Players also have the option to opt out of the top-level player evaluations and be placed in the post-split B/C pool session. Players who opt out of the top-level evaluations may still make a second or third tier team.



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DURING EVALUATIONS

Evaluators will look for complete hockey players, with strengths balanced across skating skills, hockey skills (puck handling, passing, shooting, body position), and positive contributions to team play. Where do players add value? ...offensively, defensively, physically, energetically, mentally, emotionally, intelligently, or through leadership and attentiveness.

WHAT TO WEAR

Please wear a generic Orono colored jersey and socks with no team names, last names, or other identifiers on them. No AAA team, all-star team, or choice league stickers or identifiers of any kind are allowed. Players may be asked to change their jersey or turn it inside out.

WHAT TO EXPECT

PRE-SPLIT (DAY 1)

Players will be assigned to alphabetical groups based on last name. Each group is designed to have a like number of players so group assignments must be followed to avoid overcrowding.

POST SPLIT (DAYS 2-4)

A/B POOL

B/C POOL

FINAL

A TEAM

B TEAM(S)

C TEAM(S)

POOL ASSIGNMENTS

Placement in the A/B pool does not guarantee a spot on one of the top two teams. In some cases, the number of skaters in the A/B pool may exceed the number of available roster spots. Pooling will be adjusted appropriately based on the number of teams at each level.

Depending on the number of players and/or their evaluation scores, some players may be held out of certain scrimmages. This approach is intended to give evaluators a clearer view of players who are still being closely considered for placement.

New pool assignments will be emailed to families after each of the first three days. Note: new in 2025-26, the initial A/B pool split will occur after day one of evaluations. It is essential that players attend their assigned pool sessions, as missing them may negatively affect their team placement.

In the event that a player moves pools within tryouts, their score from the final day will be the score that is used. Pools are stacked on top of each other for final rankings (i.e. all 20 A pool kids in order, followed by all 20 B pool kids in order).



PLAYER EVALUATION PROCESS & CRITERIA

DURING EVALUATIONS

SKATERS

HOW WILL I BE EVALUATED?

During each evaluation session, a panel of independent evaluators will score the players based on their specific player pool. Evaluators are chosen for their hockey knowledge, trained in the process to fairly evaluate players, and do not have a player participating at this level, regardless of their participation on either the Booster Board or Coaches Board. Evaluators are asked to be present, attentive, and engaged at each session they evaluate.

The independent evaluators use Team Genius, a third-party player evaluation software, to evaluate and rank players each session.

All Coaches Board members are assigned to age groups where they have no conflicts of interest. Additionally, parent coaches are not involved as they are not selected as coaches until after the teams have been formed. Non-conflicted coaches board members serve as the level leads for Squirt, Peewee, and Bantam. Coaches Board members are responsible to secure additional non-conflicted evaluators at their level. These could be non-parent coaches, coaches from the high school hockey programs, or individuals from outside the association. Our goal is to have between four and six evaluators for every session. The evaluators are shared with the Booster Board prior to tryouts.

Evaluations will be performed primarily by small area games and scrimmage format (3v3, 4v4 and/or 5v5). Evaluators may also utilize drills that focus on specific skills and/or competing as necessary. During tryouts, evaluators are looking for a combination of skating, puck skills, hockey IQ, and listening skills.

Evaluators look for complete hockey players with strengths balanced across: skills, hockey sense, and positive contribution to team play.

At the Peewee and Bantam levels, skaters may be asked to play specific positions during the scrimmage based on the positions they elected at the time of registration. In those instances, evaluators will be asked to consider position specific attributes when they provide their evaluation score.



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DURING EVALUATIONS

GOALIES

HOW WILL I BE EVALUATED?

Goaltenders are assessed by independent, goalie-specific evaluators. The process consists of five sessions in total: one goalie-only skills session and four evaluation scrimmage sessions with skaters.

GOALIE SKILLS SESSION

The goalie skills session focuses on core movements such as slides, pivots, T-pushes, and recoveries, providing a standardized measure of technical ability before the first pool split. This session consists of 4-5 drills and ensures that every goalie is assessed on the same fundamental criteria. For that reason, the goalie skills session score carries forward through the evaluation process and represents 50% of a goalie's score after each of the four evaluation sessions.

EVALUATION SCRIMMAGE SESSIONS

Scrimmage sessions allow for the evaluation of a goalie's performance in live game scenarios. Evaluators look at positioning, rebound control, angles, lateral movement, stick and glove work, and overall decision-making. When goalie numbers are limited, rotations or supplemental goalies may be used to ensure every pool has live goaltenders, maintaining fairness for both goalies and skaters. OYHA advises part-time goalies to participate as skaters for these sessions.

OYHA will not pull up or push down a goalie from their respective skill level in order to meet a team need.

Please check the [Goalie program page](#) on the OYHA website for dates and times of Spartan Training Camp and evaluation sessions.

NEGATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS

The safety of our players is the top priority of OYHA. Any negative play can impact an evaluation score. This includes flagrant penalties, use of foul language on/off the ice, or play intended to injure.



PLAYER EVALUATION PROCESS & CRITERIA

AFTER EVALUATIONS

As parents, the words we choose and the feelings we reflect have lasting impressions on our kids. In the end, all kids will have the opportunity to participate in this great game, and parents will have the opportunity to cheer for their favorite hockey player. Once teams are formed and the schedule is set, the focus quickly shifts to having a fun and successful season.

FINAL DETERMINATION

Team Genius will be used to rank players throughout the entire process. For final placements, evaluators will use Team Genius scoring coupled with player versus player comparisons to form the team rosters.

Evaluators and non-parent coaches have the discretion to move a player up or down if the player is within 2 players of the split and within 10% of the margin (defined as 10% of the difference between the highest and lowest score of the higher team).

If the evaluators or non-parent coach elects to utilize this discretion, they will present the reasons to the OYHA Booster Board and Coaches Board for approval. Additionally, in the same scenario, prior year coach feedback can be considered if feedback on both players was provided at the end of the prior season. This primarily relates to attitude, competitiveness, work ethic in practice, and attendance.

In the event that a first year and second year player's scores are a statistical tie, the tiebreaker will go to the second-year player at the particular level. This applies to both the A/B – B/C pool split and the final team rankings. Other than the scenario outlined immediately above, previous year team placement has no bearing on team placement.

At the Peewee and Bantam levels, positions become more important to the roster construction. In order to provide a balanced roster of forwards and defensemen, evaluators may use the declared position at registration when making final roster placements. This helps maintain team structure and supports player development within their chosen roles.

NOTIFICATION

After team selections are complete, please check the OYHA website for team assignments. Teams will be announced no later than 48 hours prior to the first ice session for that age group. You will also be contacted by coaches providing information about the schedule and first practice.



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AFTER EVALUATIONS

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

OYHA is committed to continuously improving the evaluation process. In order to do so, questions/comments must go through a member of the OYHA Coaches Board. Do not bring questions/comments to coaches or evaluators. OYHA understands that there will be disappointments. However, team selections are final.

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DISCLAIMER: The intent of this document is to support the evaluation process. If anything herein conflicts with the official policies and/or practices of OYHA, those shall remain in effect.