



Des Moines Youth Hockey Association

Travel Manual 2025

Philosophy

DMYHA believes that participants should be provided with the opportunity to play hockey at a variety of competitive levels. For this reason, DMYHA provides a travel division of youth hockey each season at the following levels based on participant interest:

- 8u (Mites)
- 10u (Squirts)
- 12u (Pee Wee)
- 14u (Bantam)
- NOTE: Lady Wild Tryouts are modeled similarly to the information below but held independent to Travel Team tryouts. Please contact the Girls Hockey Director for additional details.

DMYHA provides travel hockey for reasons outside of competitive levels as well. Often, travel hockey is a large commitment both for parents and players. It is our belief that providing this type of hockey also promotes the following in our participants:

- Travel hockey promotes sportsmanship, fair play, honor, character, and achievement through skill development.
- Travel hockey mentors youth players into conscientious adults and hockey ambassadors by recognizing hockey around the Midwest and at all skill levels.
- Travel hockey teaches participants about balancing and managing our time and schedules due to its commitment levels.

DMYHA Travel Expectations

Travel hockey is a commitment unlike most other youth sports, in particular, here in Iowa. These expectations come in both cost and time, but for each team to have success, all players and families on that team must make that commitment. Every player and family should understand that by taking a roster spot on the team they've been selected for, means they have committed to that team. They need to also understand that it likely means other players weren't offered that spot and would have shown commitment to that team.

Expectations of Coaches – While our coaches are typically volunteers, they still carry a set of expectations that comes with being the coaches of a travel hockey team. Being prepared for each practice and game, attendance at those practices and games, and behavior representative of the association are all part of being a coach. In addition to the block and tackling of the hockey, coaches are expected to communicate with players and families openly and routinely. As issues arise, we expect our coaches to have prompt and professional conversations addressing them with the player(s). If further discussion is needed, we expect the coach to take the concern to the player's parents.

Coaches are expected to make playing time as even as possible for the majority of the game/season. Exceptions would be during special teams play and at critical times near the end of close games. Coaches are expected to understand that the development of the overall group should come before winning. This is especially true at 10U, but coaches should work to ensure every player has the opportunity to help their team no matter the condition of the game.

Expectations of Players – At the beginning of every season, players are expected to attend tryouts. Those tryouts are the way each roster is determined, and players need to understand that making a team means that some others did not. As the season progresses, players are expected to be at practices and games regularly. It is understandable that school, sickness, injury items arise, but this should be clearly communicated with the coach(s). If players are missing routinely for other sports or activities, this must be communicated with the coach in advance. The coach does have the ability to change the players' ice time if they feel that the attendance issues warrant it. Remember, your roster spot was given to you instead of another player and should be honored and committed to. **If a player chooses to leave the team at any point in the season after committing to the roster spot, they will be expected to pay their entire portion of the team's cost or will be considered Not-in-Good-Standing by DMYHA.**

Players should recognize that their playing time should be similar to everyone else on the team. Exceptions will be during special teams and critical points of close games. Effort, behavior, and attitude will have an impact on a coach's decision for playing time as well. Players should expect that if they do not show effort, a team first behavior, or a positive attitude, that a coach will communicate that concern and playing time may be affected.

Expectation of Parents – Coaches coach, players play, parents should cheer and support from the stands. At the younger age, parents should ensure that players are on time to practices and games. That may mean being early to prepare and warm up, so please ensure that you have timing from your coaches. Parents are expected to cheer and provide only support for their player and entire team. Parents are expected to take any concerns they have to coaches in a professional manner, following any timing rules established by the coaches. They are also expected to recognize that the coach is likely a volunteer often doing their best and with the best intentions.

Parents should expect that playing time will be as even as possible depending on the game conditions listed in the above sections. Concerns about playing time can be discussed with the coach but must be professional and adhere to any timing rules presented by the coach.

Expectations of All – The reality in today's sports world is that it is harder to get officials than it has ever been. Everyone from the team, including guests in attendance, are expected to be professional and courteous of the officials, the other team, and all in attendance. This can be challenging at times and games will get heated sometimes, but we must remember that we are all there for the players and how we act in those challenging moments are what they take away.

DMYHA Administration:

The group of individuals who make up the travel hockey program within DMYHA are the following:

- Travel Director: Board voting member elected by the DMYHA members. Serves a 2-year term.
- Coaching Director/Player Development: Board voting member elected by the DMYHA members. Serves a 2-year term.
- Director of Hockey Operations: Scott Long
- DMYHA Head Skills Instructor: Tony Weil
- Coaching Selection Committee (CSC): The committee will be led by the Coaching Director and joined by the travel director, director of hockey operations, skills instructor, and Risk Manager. In the case of Lady Wild teams, the Girls Director will take the place of the travel director. This committee will interview the candidates for each age group and select the coaches for all travel teams based on the outcome of the tryouts. If a paid coach is being considered by the DMYHA board or staff, the coaching selection committee may also include the Board President in lieu of other directors or board members.
- Tryout Assessors: The evaluators for tryouts will consist of DMYHA Staff and independent assessors selected by the DMYHA Staff. A goalie specific assessor may also be selected by DMYHA if required.

General Tryout Information

The tryout process will consist of 3/4 skating sessions per age group. Upon arrival, players need to check in to receive their pre-assigned jersey (w/ number). The tryout jerseys will remain with the players throughout the tryout weekend.

The assessors for each tryout and session will consist of the tryout group listed above. Each player will be ranked amongst the tryout attendees at that age. Players will be ranked based on the following attributes, but please note that the exact skills and drills will be selected by DMYHA Staff.

- Overall skating (speed, forward skating, backward skating, crossovers, etc.)
- Shooting
- Stickhandling/Passing
- On ice awareness
- Aggressiveness
- Team Play
- Hockey IQ

Goalies will be ranked on their agility, positional play, and overall skill in addition to the attributes listed above.

Players may participate in skating and stickhandling drills, as well as scrimmages to assess all facets of their hockey ability. The scrimmage teams and lines will be assembled by DMYHA Staff to ensure similar ages and experience levels are playing against one another. DMYHA will provide individuals to assist in running the benches during the scrimmages and ensure the correct players, based on jersey number, are playing together and at the correct times.

Players are expected to attend each of their age groups' sessions. If your player is going to be absent, please let DMYHA Staff or the Travel Director know, no later than 5 days in advance of the beginning of the first tryout session. Individuals missing any tryout session will also need to fill out a missing player form through the DMYHA Staff and the Travel Director. Excused absences will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Unexcused absences for any reason will result in a player eliminating themselves as an automatic "lock" and are subject to a coach's selection. Players/Families must understand that we may not be able to place a player who does not have history with DMYHA and does not attend tryouts. This is especially true in years where cuts must occur at that age group.

Rules - Tryouts

The following rules pertain to the process of tryouts and how it will be executed.

- During the tryouts, the rinks themselves will be closed to spectators, and only the assessors and head coaching candidates may sit inside. If a pre-selected coach has been assigned, candidates for that team will not be in the rink. Spectators will be allowed to view the tryouts through the windows at the end of each rink. Tryouts can also be watched on LiveBarn if it is available through the rink.
- DMYHA provides assessors with ranking sheets that will include jersey color, and jersey numbers.
- Players trying out in the 14U, 12U, and 10U divisions can/will declare forward/defense/goalie position preference and will complete tryouts in that position.
 - This is to aid in the organization of the tryout process and create a more effective scrimmage which will create more opportunities for each player.
 - Skill sessions will be neutral for all skaters regardless of position(ie no defense or forward specific drills)
 - Final rankings will be position neutral. Forwards and Defense will then be separated and tiered based on the overall rankings
 - Automatic locks will be based on overall positional rankings.
 - Positional rankings may come into play with coaches selections where positional scarcity exists.
- USA Hockey equipment requirements will be enforced. New in 2024: The USA Hockey Congress approved legislation requiring the use of neck laceration protection for players in all age classifications, other than adults, in games and practices, as well as for on-ice officials under the age of 18, effective August 1, 2024. For clarity, the requirement includes players in the youth, girls and junior age classifications.
- NOTE: The USA Hockey rules state the neck guard requirements, and these will be enforced during games, practices, and any DMYHA on ice event.
- Coaches will typically be selected after each tryout based on the rankings of the players at each age. DMYHA may pre-select a coach at their discretion. A preselected non-parent coach may be allowed to provide a ranking for the tryout evaluations, which would impact a player's final tryout average ranking. A pre-selected parent coach will not be providing a ranking that impacts the player's final average ranking.
- Request for siblings to play together can only be made if they are in the same age division. If

requested, the siblings will be placed according to the lowest ranking. For instance, if one ranks high enough for the red team and the other for the blue, they would both be placed on the blue team. Requests should be made to the travel director prior to tryouts. This does not apply if one player is utilizing the move-up policy.

- If a player is injured or ill and unable to attend the entire tryout, they must provide a written request to the travel director prior to tryouts to be placed on a team. A doctor's note must be provided with approximate dates the player can return to play. Team placement will be based on feedback from previous year's coaches, prior year team, and how soon the player will be able to return to the ice. Please note that DMYHA Staff will place players who must miss based on the rankings they receive at the sessions they attend. This is a case-by-case basis, and players/families must understand that we may not be able to place a player who does not have history with DMYHA and does not attend tryouts. This is especially true in years where cuts must occur at that age group.
- If a player cannot attend all sessions of the tryout, players/families must understand that this will affect DMYHA's ability to place the player on a team. We highly encourage players attend at least 75% of the sessions of their respective tryout to ensure that we have an average score to use for that player. An average score is determined from the sessions the player attends, and that average is then used across the session(s) they missed. Again, players who do not attend all sessions will not be allowed to be an automatic qualifier. No guarantee can be made for which team, if any, a player will make if they do not attend the tryout in its entirety.

Team Selection and Tryout Process

DMYHA shall establish a flexible process for conducting team tryouts. The objective of the tryout process is to ensure that each player is given a fair evaluation and that all players are placed at the most appropriate level for their abilities within their age bracket. DMYHA strives to ensure consistency with its tryout process but recognizes that each year the process needs reviewed and updated as needed.

The tryout process will consist of two separate tryouts, each with 3 to 4 hours of assessment. Tryout #1 is designed to select the Red Team, considered the A team for the season. This selection occurs before(1-2 weeks) Tryout #2, where the Blue/White (if applicable) teams are selected. Players can participate in both or only the Blue/White tryout if they choose, but please note that the tryout fee overall will cost more to attend both. If a player registers for the Red tryout and is not selected after the first night or at the end of the weekend, they will be allowed to register for the Blue/White tryout. Final cost for each tryout will be announced at the opening of registration.

The primary reason for this dual tryout is to provide the greatest amount of visibility for each player. When using a dual tryout system, assessors will be able to identify the top players more easily at each session. Once the Red team is selected, the number of players the assessors are viewing will decrease in the second tryout and the overall selection process can more easily identify the top players in this new group.

***It is encouraged that players moving up from a red team(ex. 12U red to 14U) and returning red and blue players from the prior year are encouraged to tryout for the Red team tryout. The goal is to match

each player to their respective skill/ability level and maximize the competitiveness of the tryout and each selected team. That said, all players, if appropriate, may tryout at the red tryout.

The following details are a breakdown of each of the two sessions:

Tryout #1 – Red Team Tryout

The following information applies to the 10u-14u age groups. These tryouts will consist of 3, one-hour sessions. Session #1 will be attended by all players wanting to tryout for the Red Team, except returning Red Team members of that age group. At the end of session #1, assessors will rank all attending players.

Based on those rankings, a group of players, the top ranked 20-30, will be selected to attend Sessions #2 & 3. Sessions #2 & 3 attendees will consist of the returning Red Team players of that age group, along with the highest ranked players up to a total of 20-30 players. The overall number that will be selected to return after session #1 will be determined by the assessors based on how closely those skaters ranked. NOTE: Returning Red players are NOT guaranteed a spot on the Red team and will need to be ranked high enough for selection.

Example: 3 Returning players sit out on Session #1. Top 22-27 ranked Players in Session #1 are selected to join those 3 returning players to attend Sessions #2 & 3.

Sessions #2 and 3 are traditional tryout sessions with the assessors ranking each session for each attending player. At the finale of the tryouts, each players rankings per session are averaged and assembled for the selection of the team.

Skills, games, and session assessments will be determined by DMYHA Staff each year with a goal of a balanced focus on the overall skill of players, along with their game playing and teamwork abilities. A goalie only session may be included each year depending on the number of registrants.

Goalies trying out for the Red team will be handled similar to that of the skaters. Any returning Red Team goalie of that age will sit out the first session. New goalies will partake in the Session #1 and be ranked by the assessors on goalie related skills and abilities. 4 total goalies will move onto Sessions #2 & #3. These 4 will be made up of any returning Red Team Goalies and the remaining top ranked goalies from Session #1, up to 4 total. If the number of goalies is high enough, a goalie specific session may be added for the Red Team evaluation.

Tryout #2 – Blue and White Team Tryout (Red/Blue for 8u)

The following information applies to each age group, 8u through 14u. These tryouts will consist of 3-4, one-hour sessions. Each of these sessions will be set up to review and assess skills of various types for each attending player. Rankings for each player will be averaged over each of the 3-4 sessions. These rankings will be used for the selection of the teams as described below.

Goalies will be evaluated and selected based on the additional information below. Specific goalie sessions will occur during the Blue/White tryout to provide an opportunity for dedicated assessment of their skills.

Please note, based on numbers of registrants, there may be the addition of early cuts or changes to the tryout layout to ensure the best selection process for each team.

Rules – Team Selection

The following rules pertain to the process of team selection. Teams will be compiled based on the list of participants and their respective tryout ranking. The head coach will also have the ability to select players based on the rules below.

- Team size will be based on the number of kids participating in tryouts and the overall ranking of each player to ensure similar abilities/skills on each team. The number of teams each year will be determined by the DMYHA Staff and travel director. The number of players and teams will vary year to year and DMYHA reserves the right to adjust this number each season based on the tryout numbers.
- Based on the assessments, a Red Team coach (at each age group) will be assigned if not already pre-selected, and the top 25 candidates will be provided to the Red Team coach for their team selection. The number of automatic qualifying skaters is based on the number skaters on the team and is shown in the chart below.

Age	# of Skaters	# of Automatic Qualifiers (X)
10U	13	9
	14	10
	15	10
12U	13	9
	14	10
	15	10
14U	15	10

See Note Below about Automatic Qualifiers

- The breakdown of the coach's selection is as follows:
 - Skaters Ranked 1 through X (based on the chart above) are automatic qualifiers and are assigned to that team.
 - If all of the automatic qualifiers are forwards, then the # of automatic qualifiers is reduced by 2.
 - Skaters (X+1) through 13 must come from the top 20.
 - Skaters 14&15 must come from the top 25.
 - *Example: Red Team has 15 Skaters. Skaters ranked 1-10 are automatically on the team. Coach then selects players 11, 12 & 14 (Must be from top 20 tryout rankings). Coach then selects players 16 & 22 (Must be from top 25 tryout rankings).*
- DMYHA Staff has the final decision on any selection issues not specifically noted above.

- Once the red team is selected, the process will repeat itself at Tryout #2 with the Blue Team coach (at each age group).
- If a third(White) team for that age group is being assembled, the process will repeat itself similar to the Red and Blue Teams based on Tryout#2. After the Blue Team has been selected, a White Coach will be selected, and a similar process of selection based on the provided rankings will be used.
- Goalies will be placed on a team based on overall evaluation rankings. A team will assign 2 goalies to their roster unless a single goalie is approved by the Travel Director. If one goalie is selected, the head coach must recognize that this may impact the team's ability to play any given weekend. Fill in goalies for that team must be approved by the Travel Director. The Red Team coach will select their goalies(s) at Tryout#1, followed by the Blue & White Teams, if applicable, based on Tryout #2. The top available goalie will be automatically assigned to the team (auto select), and the coach must select their second goalie from the next 3 ranked goalies.

Once the team selection process is completed, the selections for each team will be emailed and have 24 hours to commit to the team and pay the designated deposit. After that point, the player will be expected to participate the rest of the season and pay the entire portion of their financial commitment to the team. Exceptions will only be made for extreme circumstances and must be approved by the DMYHA board.

8U & 10U ONLY: In order to continue the growth of the goalie position for the entire association, 8U & 10U skaters are allowed to play as a goalie during games at the discretion of the head coach. This does not require the skater to tryout at the goalie position. The intent is not to replace the goalies selected for the team and coaches are expected to use these skaters in net as fill-ins and at a reasonable level. Conversely, a goalie not being played for a specific game may also be allowed to skate out, again at a reasonable level. The goal of this policy is to allow kids to continue to grow at both positions and continue to incentivize flexibility at the goalie position

12U: If a player desires to both skate out and play goalie they are required to tryout as both. They will be assessed at both positions and may only qualify for a team based on his/her lowest position score.

14U: A player must select either goalie or skater and may not tryout as both.

Once all teams (within that tryout) have gone through the selection and commitment process, the rosters will be posted on the Des Moines Youth Hockey website and Facebook page. Assessments can be provided upon request after the selection process is complete and teams announced.

Team Operations and Processes

DMYHA intends to field 2-3 teams at each age group depending on several factors each year. The decision for 2 or 3 teams will be based on the number of kids trying out, their experience at that age level, and the coaching available at each age group. Because of this, the final decision on the number of teams will be made after tryouts have been completed.

Once a team has been established, the head coach and their assistants can determine which level of play they want to participate in. The Red Team is expected to play at an A level at minimum, The Blue Team at a B level at minimum, and so forth.

The number of games listed below correlate to the budget that has been assumed for each team at that age group. This assumption is based on typical current tournament costs and the budget for the team must be reviewed with the travel director or association treasurer.

The breakdown of team size and games for each age group is as follows:

Age Group	Number of Skaters per Team*	Max Number of Games	Min Number of games
Mites 8u	8 to 9	35	30
Squirts 10u	13 to 15	40	35
Peewee 12u	13 to 15	45	40
Bantam 14u	15	50	45

*Values may vary based on tryout participants.

The goal of DMYHA is always to have several levels across each age group. The lower skater count on each team allows for higher engagement in practice and games for each player involved. This also helps each team to more consistently find competition that aligns with that team's own skill level.

Coaches & Team Administration

The coaches will abide by the rules and procedures of the coaches' guidelines of this manual and the following rules:

- All travel coaches must meet current USA Hockey requirements including current coaching education card or certificate and modules by USA Hockey.
- In accordance with the USA Hockey rules, only the head coach and the assistants(s) or manager whose names appear on the team registration may be on the bench during games. All of those whose names appear on the team registration MUST have all necessary coaching requirements set forth by USA hockey completed.
- The head coach may select an assistant(s) from the list of acceptable coaches from the Coaches Selection Committee CSC.
- The head coach will select a manager and the other personnel they feel are needed from the parents of the players on the team. Team managers will follow guidelines established by the board representative in order to have consistency amongst teams. This includes the management of the team's finances, which must be run through the DMYHA treasurer.
- The coaches will keep practices and games in good proportion. Trips and tournaments taken by the teams should be on a selective basis. Tournament schedules need to be submitted and

approved by the DMYHA travel director. The remainder of the games beyond tournaments should be filled with surrounding teams that do not require an overnight stay.

- Coaches' trip expenses may be considered for payment by the team parents. It is recommended that the team parents pay trip expenses of non-parent Head Coaches including room and transportation.
- In the event a coaching candidate has special considerations (reimbursement of travel expenses, reimbursement for the coaching service), a closed ballot vote will take place. A 75% majority of team parents will be required to approve a coaching candidate's special considerations. Results of the vote will be reported to the DMYHA Travel Director.
- DMYHA may choose to select a non-parent coach for teams based on available coaching opportunities and the needs of the team. DMYHA reserves the right to select and assign a part time paid coach to a head coaching position as deemed necessary to provide additional opportunities, skills, and hockey education for that selected team.

Rules - Moving Up Age Division

Players at the 8u age group may try out for the 10u age group and can be assigned to any team they make at the 10u level.

*Effective 2026-2027 Season

Players at the 8u age group may try out for the 10u age group under the following considerations

- Must be second year 8u age.
- Must have one year of Travel or All Stars participation.
- They may qualify for Red only if they are a top 5 in the rankings.
- If they do not qualify for Red they may tryout for Blue/White and can be assigned to either team.

This more closely aligns with move up rules for 12u and 14u but still provides flexibility for those 8u players who desire to move up based on their development and ability.

For 10U-14U. Any player with desire to move up an age group must have played on the previous years' Red team and be nominated to the Travel director by **DMYHA Staff**. All nominations will be reviewed by the Player/Coaching director, Travel director, and DMYHA staff who are given authority to approve or deny each application. If a player is approved to tryout up, they must rank either as a top 5 skater or top goaltender and would thus make the Red Team. Players will not be allowed to move up to an older age group outside of the Red team. The player must also try out in their own age group, to ensure they are placed on the appropriate team of their birth year, in the event they do not make the older team. Please note, the move up policy is in place for players who display high-end talent and currently dominate their peers who are of the same birth year. They should also have the skills to have positive game and off ice impact in the older Red team they wish to try out for. Possession of these types of skills will be an integral part of whether the player is allowed to tryout in the older group.

Rules – Team Specific and In-Season

The following rules also apply to the travel teams and tryout process:

- All rostering rules imposed by the USA Hockey Regional oversight group will be adhered to. The rules set forth by that group are meant to help with the balance and operations of all associations, and no exceptions can be made to those rules.
- Team finances will be managed by the team manager in conjunction with the DMYHA board. All finances and payments must flow through DMYHA and their teams' respective accounts. The coach or team manager should review the team's budget at the beginning of and throughout the season to ensure the tournament costs are in line with the estimate created by the board prior to the season.
- The travel director must approve each team's game schedule at the beginning of the season.
- Players who are injured during the season and cannot continue to play the remaining portion of the season are still required to pay their share of financial obligations including ice fees, tournament registrations, and any other team expenses incurred, even during the time they are unable to play. Insurance is available at the beginning of the season to each player to help avoid this issue.
- If a player pays the deposit and commits to the team they have been invited to, they will be required to pay their entire portion of the team's fees. This rule is specifically in place to avoid the financial impact of players who remain on the team.
- If a player is selected for a travel team and subsequently turns down that selection before or during the season, that player will be eligible to participate in house league but will not be eligible to play All Stars hockey in that current hockey season. Special conditions may apply when referring to female players who may try out for travel hockey and/or girls only travel.
- No travel player can play down (Blue to White, etc.) on a team without the approval of the travel director.
- A player can participate above their current team only because of sickness, injury, or other circumstance which results in the higher team having inadequate number of players. This requires the approval of the Travel Director and the lower teams head coach.
- The lowest level team at travel may select a skater who tried out for travel but did not make a team if circumstances like sickness or injury require it. This will only be allowed if the team has inadequate numbers to participate normally in games. (Ex: Missing 2+ Players)
- House league players may not be added to travel teams if they did not participate in tryouts, except for when cases require it based on injury or extenuating circumstances as determined by the Travel Director.
- Fill-in player selection will be determined by the Travel Director and team coach. DMYHA reserves the right to select players that best fit the team's needs and culture.
- A player moving into the community from out of town during the season or a player registering after the travel teams have been selected will play in house league until the next season's tryouts. The DMYHA will hear special circumstances on this, as required.