

Siouxland Youth Hockey Association (SYHA)

Tryout and Team Placement Policy, Squirts – Bantams



Purpose

The primary goal of the tryout and team placement process is to fairly and objectively evaluate all registered players and place them on the team that best matches their current skill level, hockey sense, effort, and developmental needs. This creates balanced, competitive teams while promoting skill development, good sportsmanship, teamwork, and a positive experience for every player.

Team placements are based primarily on performance observed during tryouts. Previous season placement, friendships, or parental requests do not influence decisions. The process prioritizes accuracy, consistency, and impartiality to give every player an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities.

Tryout Schedule and Format

- Tryouts will be held during the first week of August each year.
- Day 1: Structured skill evaluation including 15 minutes of skating skills, 25 minutes of Small Area Games (SAG), and 20 minutes of 5v5 full-ice play.
- Day 2: Live game format consisting of a 3-minute warmup followed by three 12-minute stop-time periods.

When player numbers warrant it, evaluators may excuse a small number of players from returning for Day 2 (typically the strongest performers from the top end and, when applicable, the weakest from the bottom end, based on Day 1 performance). This practice, which may be used even when there are approximately two teams' worth of players, allows evaluators to focus more closely on the middle and borderline players. It provides a clearer and more deliberate look at those whose placement is uncertain, helping ensure the most accurate decisions are made regarding who belongs on the top teams.

Goalie Evaluation

A separate goalie evaluation session will be held if needed during the same week of tryouts. Goalies may receive additional evaluation time during regular tryout sessions if needed.

SYHA Tryout and Team Placement Policy, Squirts - Bantams



Evaluators and Selection Process

Evaluators will be selected by the DOHO and approved by the BOD. These evaluators are selected for their hockey expertise, impartiality, and commitment to fair evaluation. They will be the sole individuals responsible for ranking players and recommending team rosters. No other coaches, parents, or board members will participate in on-ice evaluations or initial team selections. No coach, parent, or other person shall be allowed contact with the evaluators.

The Board of Directors (BOD) retains ultimate approval authority over all rosters but will intervene only in cases of clear procedural errors or egregious issues. The Board's role is to uphold fairness and policy compliance, not to override evaluator judgments based on individual preferences.

Closed Tryouts

All tryout sessions are closed to players' families, spectators, and non-essential personnel. Only participating players and authorized evaluators/coaches are permitted inside the facility. Live Barn streaming will be locked during all tryout sessions to maintain a focused and professional evaluation environment. An access code for reviewing any recorded film will be provided to the three evaluators. The BOD may also be granted access if needed for injury-related or similar situations needing review.

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluators will assess players across key areas using a consistent, standardized scoring system:

- Skating ability and edge work
- Puck control, passing, and shooting
- Hockey sense and decision-making (especially in game-like situations)
- Team play, effort, competitiveness, and coachability
- Overall contribution and sportsmanship

Day 1 focuses on individual and small-group skills, with Small Area Games (SAG), providing a highly competitive environment to evaluate level and effort. Day 2 emphasizes game application, compete level, and teamwork through live scrimmages. Multiple evaluators ensure balanced perspectives, and scores are documented for consistency.

SYHA Tryout and Team Placement Policy, Squirts - Bantams



Attendance and Eligibility

All players must be fully registered for the upcoming season and for tryouts, with registration for tryouts closing two weeks prior to the start of tryouts. This allows the DOHO time to assemble balanced tryout groups so that sessions are competitive and every player has a fair opportunity to showcase their skills.

Players are strongly encouraged to attend both scheduled days unless told otherwise. Consistent attendance allows for the most accurate evaluation. Players planning to miss any tryout sessions (for example, due to vacation or other known conflicts) must notify the DOHO at least two weeks prior to the start of tryouts. Players who experience unexpected absences, such as illness or injury, should notify the DOHO as soon as possible.

Players who do not attend any tryout sessions run a significant risk of being placed on a team that does not accurately reflect their abilities, since placement decisions rely heavily on on-ice performance.

Team Selection and Timeline

The evaluators will convene the day after the final tryout session to review observations, discuss rankings, finalize recommended rosters, and potentially review tryout film if needed. Recommended rosters will be presented to the BOD following the completion of the rosters. The BOD will review and approve or request minor adjustments for policy compliance. Final team rosters will be posted and communicated to families no later than Saturday at 6:00 PM.

Confidentiality

Individual player scores, rankings, and evaluator discussions are strictly confidential. Only final team placements will be made public. This protects the integrity of the process and focuses attention on player development rather than comparisons.

Communication

Families will receive notification of their child's team placement via email and/or the organization's website/app by the posted deadline. No individual feedback on scores or rankings will be provided, as the process relies on collective evaluator judgment. Players and parents may request a meeting with the DOHO to discuss general developmental feedback after the season begins. All placement decisions are final.

SYHA Tryout and Team Placement Policy, Squirts - Bantams



Additional Guidelines

The DOHO will determine the number of teams per division and roster sizes based on the total number of registered players and available ice time. The preference is to maintain smaller rosters — typically 10, 11, or 12 skaters per team plus 1-2 goalies, so that every player receives more ice time and puck touches, supporting better individual development. Roster sizes and the number of teams will be adjusted as needed to accommodate actual registration numbers (for example, 26 skaters and 3 goalies would typically result in two teams rather than three). Every effort will be made to keep rosters as close in size as possible while doing what is best for player growth and the association as a whole.

This Tryout and Team Placement Policy reflects our organization's commitment to running a **professional**, equitable, and developmentally focused program. By standardizing the schedule, limiting evaluators to a small impartial group, maintaining closed sessions, and implementing efficient evaluation practices when player numbers warrant, we aim to reduce bias, build trust, and ensure every player has the best opportunity to succeed.

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the DOHO or BOD President.

Effective June 2026