



Siouxland Youth Hockey Association (SYHA)

Player Move-Up Policy, Tykes – Metros

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear, fair, and flexible process that allows exceptional players to compete at one division level higher, only when it is in the best interest of the player's long-term development. SYHA follows USA Hockey and affiliate association age classifications as the default placement for every player, being the strong recommendation to develop players within their proper age group.

Move-Up Pathway 1: Clear Exceptional Talent

Exceptional talent is subjective but refers to a player who would be a major contributor on the highest team at the next division level. The player must have been one of the highest contributing members at their level (e.g. top-2 forwards, top-1 defenseman, or starting goalie of gold team) the previous season OR receive a written endorsement from the previous season's head coach stating the player has mastered the USA Hockey skill progressions for their current level and are ready for the next level.

Procedures

- A written request from parents must be emailed to the Director of Hockey Operations (DOHO) and the President of SYHA no later than June 15th.
- The player must fully register for the season and evaluations at their birth-year level. Failure to do so forfeits the move-up request. If tryouts for both divisions fall on the same day, the DOHO can make the decision for the player to attend one or both of the evaluations.
- The DOHO, in consultation with the older division head coach, will assess whether the player projects to be a dominant contributor (e.g. top-5 forward, top-2 defensemen, or primary goaltender) on the highest team at the older level.
- If the DOHO and coaches recommend the move-up, a recommendation to the BOD will be submitted that includes the following (unless all previously provided in written request for consideration):
 - how the player's skill level exceeds a majority or all of the skaters at the current level and will contribute to the gaining division.
 - demonstration of emotional maturity on and off the ice.
 - leadership examples during game play.

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Move-Up Pathway 2: Program Need

The DOHO, in consultation with the coaching staff and independent evaluators, may recommend moving a player up one level to fill critical roster shortages to maintain a competitive balance.

Procedures

- The player must attend evaluations to be considered and may be asked to attend the higher division's evaluations.
- The DOHO, after evaluations and in consultation with the coaching staff and independent evaluators, will ask for parental and player consent before making the recommendation to the Board of Directors (BOD).
- The DOHO will make move-up recommendations to the BOD prior to submitting teams for approval. Recommendations will include rationale behind the moves.
- **Special Provision for 6U (Tykes):**
Move-up to 8U (Mites) will be considered if the head coach and the DOHO agree it's in the best interest of the player and the association. The decision rests with the DOHO.

Additional Guidelines Applicable to Both Pathways

- Moving up is the exception, not the rule, and decisions will always prioritize what is best for both the player and the organization.
- No player may move-up more than one age level.
- No player will be moved up if it creates an unsafe physical mismatch or if the player is not projected to receive meaningful ice time at the higher level.
- Parental and player consent is required.
- All approved move-up players are responsible for registration fees, travel cost, and other associated expenses at the higher level they join.
- Evaluations are on an annual basis and do not affect placement in future years.
- Once teams are declared and the season begins, no additional move-up requests will be considered except in extreme circumstances (e.g., significant roster depletion due to injury or move-outs), and any such late move still requires BOD approval.
- Anything not addressed in policy will be determined with the DOHO and the player's head coach, with final approval from the BOD.
- All decisions under this policy are final. There is no appeals process.



Special Provision for 14U (Bantams) - Transition to High School

In alignment with USA Hockey youth development pathways and to ensure proper physical maturation and skill development prior to higher speed and more physical competition, Bantam age players are strongly encouraged to complete two full seasons at the Bantam level before being eligible to transition to high school hockey. Exceptions allowing a second-year, freshman eligible, Bantam to move directly to high school hockey may be granted under one of the following scenarios and procedures only.

- The DOHO and high school coaches jointly recommend the immediate transition to high school based on the player's exceptional talent (Follow Pathway 1).

OR

- A written request for consideration is emailed to the DOHO no later than June 15th.
- The high school roster includes no more than 36 players.
- The player attends both Bantam and high school evaluations.
- The DOHO and coaches review the request, evaluate the player, and provide unanimous agreement that the player will be competitive and is ready to transition to the high school program and that the move is in the best interest of the player's long-term development and the association.
- Player and parental consent are acquired.
- The DOHO compiles the recommendation information and presents it to the BOD.
- The final approval rests solely with the BOD with no options for appeal.
- If approved and consent granted from parents and player, the player will register and participate with the high school program (subject to high school eligibility rules).