

Northern Tier Stars Hockey



2026/27 Season

**Tryout Policy, Procedures &
Team Selection Process**

WELCOME

Welcome to the Northern Tier Stars 2026/27 tryouts. This guide is intended to summarize the procedures used to determine what level each skater will play at this season.

This process is designed to place each skater at the level of play that will best promote the development of their hockey skills. Please read all this information carefully and review it with your child so they know what to expect when they arrive at the rink.

Tryouts are a stressful time for the kids, parents and the volunteers who coordinate it. To make the process as efficient as possible, there are a few things that parents and skaters can do to ensure tryouts run smoothly.

Make sure you know what time to be at the rink and are on time. It is very important that players are at the rink dressed and ready to skate 30 minutes prior to their scheduled tryout time. This will allow time to make any necessary last-minute changes if the session before yours ends early we may have the opportunity to begin the next session early/ you will not be able to enter the building until 60 minutes prior to your scheduled ice time. Parents, this is your responsibility.

Problems will arise. Some you will see coming, some you won't, and it is very important everyone cooperates with the tryout staff and be patient throughout the entire process

TRYOUT COMMITTEE

The NTS Tryout Committee will consist of the President, Tryout Director, Girls Director, and Hockey/Coaching Director from St Francis Youth Hockey Association, Cambridge Isanti Hockey Association, and North Branch Area Hockey Association. Goalie Directors are allowed in the office while discussing goaltending. Only the NTS Tryout Committee is allowed in the office while player scoring procedures are taking place. At the time of pool and final team selection, the Head Coach may also be present.

PRE-SKATE & TRY OUT TIMES

All pre-skate and try-out times can be found by navigating to www.northerntierstars.org. Please reference this page for all dates and times. Please monitor this page as dates and times can change.

Below are rules for both parents and players:

Players

- All players will receive tryout pinnies when they check in.
- Players may not wear any Elite, AAA, or any other jerseys, socks or helmets not approved by the Northern Tier Stars Co-Op Committee.
- Any name plates/stickers on jerseys or helmets must be removed or taped over before going on the ice.

- Please wear Northern Edge, Northern Tier Stars, Cambridge/Isanti, St. Francis or North Branch socks only.
- This rule will be enforced for each skater, at each session, at all levels.
- Show up for tryouts in shape. Do not let the pre-skate be the first time you have skated this season. There are many area rinks that have open hockey as well as open skating.
- Inspect your hockey equipment and repair anything that needs to be in game condition.
- All USA Hockey equipment i.e mouthguards, helmets, neck guards, are required for tryouts.
- Give 100% each time you are on the ice and support your teammates.
- Try not to be nervous, relax, remain calm and focus on what you are doing.
- Pay close attention and follow directions.
- BELIEVE IN YOURSELF!

PARENTS/SPECTATORS

- Parents/Spectators will not be allowed inside the arena during tryouts. One parent will be allowed inside to help tie skates before their child's tryout begins. Parents are expected to leave immediately after tying skates and will not be allowed to re-enter the building. Exceptions to re-enter after they skate would be to tie a sibling's skate, volunteering, or on the tryout committee.
- Be realistic of your child's ability. Do not put any extra pressure on your child. They know why they are at tryouts and what is at stake.
- Relax, stay calm, and enjoy the tryouts. If you are calm and having fun, then chances are good that your child will too.
- Any issues or concerns you may have should be discussed in an adult and orderly fashion with a Northern Tier Stars Co-Op Committee member or a member of any association Board.
- Your help is essential to the success of tryouts. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Any person(s) disrupting the tryout process will be asked to leave the rink and not be allowed to return until the tryouts are complete. This includes all Coaches and Board Members at tryouts as well.

GOALTENDER TRYOUT PROCESS

Goaltenders at all levels will participate in a skill session with a 3rd party evaluator group. The evaluators will give each goalie a score of 1-10 points for each drill demonstrated.

Skills to be demonstrated are:

- Movement/Positioning
- Technical/E iciency
- Rebound Control/Recovery
- Complete Level/Intensity
- Stopping the Puck

Goaltenders will also participate in each scrimmage at their respective level. MEGA will evaluate

2 of the 3 scrimmages and the tryout judges will evaluate the other scrimmage.

Goalies will also receive scores of 1-10 points for each shift they play in the scrimmages. In addition to the drill session skills, scoring during the scrimmages will be based on the following:

- Body Positioning (Depth/Square)
- Rebound Control
- Consistency
- Hockey IQ (Anticipation)
- Compete Level

The number of goalies at each level will determine how many shifts each goalie will skate. Goalies will rotate every 3 shifts from net to net to the penalty box. Each individual goalie shift will span a time of 5 minutes. Scores from the drill session and the scrimmage sessions will be accumulated to create a final score.

GOALTENDER TEAM SELECTION PROCESS

If there are only as many goalies at a particular level as there will be teams, no matter the point spread between goalies, the highest scoring goalie will play for the top-level team, the second highest scoring goalie will play for the second level team and the 3rd level goalie for the 3rd level team, etc.

All skaters who try out for a goaltender position and are placed on a team as a goaltender are expected to play the goaltender throughout the season.

At the 10U level, recognizing the developmental nature of the program, goaltenders may be permitted to play as a skater when needed, at the discretion of the coaching staff. At the 12U and 15U levels, players rostered as goaltenders will play exclusively in the goaltender position for the entire season. However, in special circumstances and based on team needs, a rostered goaltender may be permitted to skate out as a player at the discretion of the coaching staff that aligns with leveling policies.

The Northern Tier Stars Co-Op Committee reserves the right to place goalies on teams as needed as long as it represents the order of placement at tryouts.

Until we are certain of how many goalies and teams we will have at a given level, this procedure will most certainly change or may be altered to ensure that each goalie has a fair and equal opportunity, and that each team will have a goaltender.

SKATER TRYOUT PROCESS

EVALUATORS:

The tryout judges are unbiased evaluators that have a strong hockey background and understanding of the game. There will be a minimum of 4 tryout judges to evaluate on the following criteria:

- Skating skills, forward and backward
- Puck skills, stickhandling and shooting

- Team play
- Rink awareness
- Effort

SCRIMMAGE FORMAT (All Levels):

Each level will be randomly divided into groups. Each group will then be randomly divided into lines of skaters by the tryout software. The tryout format will include three sessions of full ice scrimmages (4-on-4 or 5-on-5 depending on numbers). For all levels, overall scoring will be 33.3% for first two scrimmages and 33.4% for the third scrimmage.

The determination of the scrimmage format will be dictated by the size of the groups. The tryout software will randomize each shift to allow all skaters to skate with everyone on their bench and against everyone on the opposite bench. Each shift will be 1 minute and will follow with a minimum of a 1-minute break. Each skater will skate approximately 9 shifts for each scrimmage session. Skaters will be scored for each shift they skate. Scores will be based on the following criteria:

- Team Play & Effort
- Skating Ability
- Rink Awareness
- Shooting & Passing Skills
- Board & Corner Play
- Offensive & Defensive Play

Note to all skaters during scrimmage sessions: Any flagrant penalties will result in the judge's deducting points from the offending skaters score. If the penalty is deemed to be with intent to injure another skater, the offending player will be ejected from the remainder of that session and receive no score for that particular session. The Northern Tier Stars Co-Op Committee will meet to determine if further action should be taken.

Ghost skaters will be necessary to complete lines during the scrimmage sessions. Ghost skaters will not receive scores for the shifts they skate. Ghost skaters will be selected randomly and given ample recovery time before their next shift. Ghost skaters are unaware of performing this unevaluated shift to ensure fairness to all skaters.

SCORES:

At the conclusion of the third session, the scores for each skater will be totaled and listed in order from the highest score to the lowest score at each level. These scores will help determine the Pool selection process detailed in the team selection section, which will be held during session 4. In the event there are two or more players tied at the cutoff, all of the tied players would be invited to pool play.

Individual tryout scores are confidential. Scores will not be posted at the rink, nor will they be given or shown to anyone other than the Northern Tier Stars Tryout Committee during the tryouts. This policy protects players from unnecessary comparison, allows evaluators to provide honest and objective feedback, and helps maintain the integrity of the selection process.

Multiple reviews and verification steps are conducted throughout tryouts to ensure evaluations are fair, consistent, and free from undue influence. These measures help provide confidence that team selections are based on a thorough, balanced, and objective assessment of each player's performance.

TEAM SELECTION PROCESS:

At the conclusion of session 3 of the tryout process, the scores for each skater at each level will be totaled and listed from the highest score to the lowest score for team placement. This list will only be available to the NTS Tryout Committee and appropriate Head Coach. The scores will be reviewed as detailed below for the session 4 "pool". The top 70% of players for each team are determined by evaluation scores. The additional roster spots for the team will be selected by the designated Head Coach/NTS Tryout Committee, which will occur on or after day 4 of the try-outs. The remaining 30% of the roster must be selected from the next grouping of players that is equal to the number of remaining roster spots multiplied by two.

Example Scenario:

- 15 player team roster
- Top 11 ranking players are locked by 70% rule
- Remaining 30% of roster equals 4
- Doubled equals 8
- Head Coach/NTS Tryout Committee have a grouping of the next 6 ranked players based on evaluation scores to select the final 4 roster spots. The tryout committee and selected Head Coach can add additional players to the potential roster pool if there is a tie or very close score at the 30% cutoff. The Head Coach/NTS Tryout Committee will express reasoning for each selection.

****U15 pools or teams will not be finalized until after highschool tryouts have completed.****

If a board member or tryout committee member is the parent or guardian of a skater that is in the 30% selection window or if the parent or guardian of a skater is not in the 30% but has been requested by the coach as a coach's selection, the parent/guardian will not participate in the discussion regarding the coach's selections for this team.

The Northern Tier Stars Co-op Committee must review and approve all final roster selections. Upon approval, the final rosters will be posted as soon as they are available.

If there are any circumstances, suits or unforeseen situations during the tryout process that are not covered in this guide, it will require Northern Tier Stars Co-Op Committee action to resolve the issue. Northern Tier Stars Co-Op Committee reserves the right to change or alter any part of the tryout process or procedures to ensure a fair and equal opportunity for all skaters.

ATTENDANCE & INJURY POLICY

ATTENDANCE/TARDY POLICY:

All skaters & goaltenders are expected to attend and be on time for all tryout sessions at their respective level. Any skater who will be absent or tardy must notify the NTS Tryout Committee. Skaters who are late or absent without prior approval from the NTS Tryout Committee will receive no score for the time they miss. Skaters who have the approval to be late or absent will have their scores

averaged out to provide a score for any time missed.

Excused absences will be granted only in situations that are uncontrollable, emergency in nature, or considered life changing. An absence due to participation in a Varsity-level high school game will also be considered an excused absence. Absences for a Junior Varsity game, or Varsity or Junior Varsity practice, will not be considered excused. If a skater chooses not to participate in the tryout process, the skater will be placed on the lowest level team at their appropriate age group.

INJURY/ILLNESS POLICY

Skaters who are not able to tryout due to illness or injury must notify the Northern Tier Stars Co-Op Committee prior to scheduled evaluations. A note from a doctor may be requested to release your child to participate in the tryouts.

The Northern Tier Stars Tryout Committee will hold an open spot for 10 days after the final tryout date for any skater who cannot participate in the tryouts due to injury or illness, and have met the requirements of this policy. If after the 10-day extension, and the player has still not returned to the ice, there can be an appeal if needed to the Girls Director who will take the appeal to the Co-Op Committee for review.

Upon the skater's recovery and release from the skater's doctor, the skater will have up to 3 hours of pre-skate and 3 hours of evaluation ice time with the head coach at the last level. The head coaches of all teams will evaluate the skater during these time frames and determine the appropriate level/team for the skater based upon his/her skill. All team selection decisions must be approved by the Northern Tier Stars Co-op Committee.

If a skater chooses not to participate in the tryout process, the skater will be placed on the lowest level team at their appropriate age group.

TRYOUT POLICY UPDATES

If there are any circumstances or unforeseen situations during the tryout process that are not covered in this guide, it will require the NTS Tryout Committee to resolve the issue. The NTS Tryout Committee reserves the right to change or alter any part of the tryout process or procedures to ensure a fair and equal opportunity for all skaters.