

2025 – 2026 CCHA Tryout Overview (Boys Program)

Goal

The goal of tryouts is to place all players with like-skilled players because we believe that is the ideal environment for development and success on the ice. Of course, this is a relative exercise, and players develop at different trajectories. Hence the need for an annual tryout. Remember, this is about the kids, not the parents or guardians.

Overview

Below is an overview of how tryouts will be administered for Upper Level Boys. The CCHA reserves the right to make changes as it deems appropriate before or during tryouts. Due to numbers, the same process will be followed, but the same number of skates and cuts may not be the same across levels. Players should arrive at tryouts 45 minutes before the start of their first session and 30 minutes before all subsequent sessions. Check-in will be conducted outside of VRC near the exterior concession stand window in the main parking lot area. The Level Commissioner will instruct players when to enter rink to get begin to change into hockey gear. Players will be assigned a pinny at the first session and are responsible for it for the remainder of the tryout sessions. Players take their pinny home between sessions. Players are responsible for bringing their Pinny back to the rink for each tryout session. Players will NOT be allowed on the ice without their assigned Pinny. After each level's tryouts, all pinnies will be collected, cleaned, and sanitized. You will track your player's future sessions by their pinny number.

Tryout Session Viewing is CLOSED to spectators.

For all upper-level boys programs, every skater will participate in a total of five sessions. As always, our goal is to create equitable teams and pools for every tryout ice time. Each session will include multiple ice times, and players will be assigned to a specific group for each session.

Session 1 will be a grading session where each skater is evaluated on their execution of five specific stations. Scores from Session 1 will be used only to help place players of similar ability into scrimmage groups beginning with Session 2. These Session 1 scores will not be included in the overall evaluation score for Sessions 2–5.

During Sessions 2–5, players may be moved to a different group based on their evaluation scores. In other words, the group a player starts in for Session 2 does not necessarily mean they will remain in that same group throughout the entire tryout process. After all five

sessions are complete, the combined evaluation scores will be used for final team placement.

Session 1: Grading session. Groups will be completely random.

Sessions 2–5: 5-on-5 full-ice scrimmages. Groups for Session 2 will be created based on Session 1 results. Groups for the remaining sessions will be determined based on the evaluations from the previous session.

Tryout Evaluations

Scoring:

Evaluators will be issued a new evaluation sheet for each session. Players will be graded using a scale from 1 to 10 during the tryout sessions.

A+ =10, A =9, A- =8, B+ =7, B =6, B- =5, C+=4, C =3, C- =2, D=1.

Skater Expectations:

Each player is expected to do their best. Players will be evaluated on the following criteria reinforced by the evaluators and players before each skate: competitiveness, passing, skating, shooting, position play and overall hockey sense. Other intangibles such as character, work ethic and body language are key values of the CCHA, and while tryouts can be stressful, players slamming their stick, purposely trying to injure another player or yelling at a teammate is not only inappropriate, it will result in a lower score.

Goalie Expectations:

Goaltender skills will be evaluated in one session at Stauber's Goalcrease in Edina. Goalies will demonstrate proficiency in 6-8 multidisciplinary skills at each station. Each station will challenge each goalie regarding their

positioning, balance, movement, save technique, rebound control, and recovery. Three professional goalie coaches will be running each station, but they will not be evaluating the goalies themselves. Instead, the CCHA will use its independent evaluators to record the goalies' tryout performance.

Stopping the puck is the best, but not the only way to showcase a goalie's abilities. It is not just about stopping the puck but also includes save technique, movement, positioning, rebound control, and competitiveness. Accordingly, these skills will be considered in the upcoming tryouts to determine proper goalie team placement.

Soft Scores:

The CCHA believes that prior-year information on a player is valuable to a player's placement for the upcoming season. Tryouts are unique in that a few skates (e.g., 2-3) determine where each player spends the next five months. Ultimately, the four to five evaluators (potentially non-parent coaches) determine each player's score and placement. 'Soft scores' are used when players have statistically equivalent scores, referred to as the "bubble." To help determine which bubble players should be placed on the higher team, the tryout committee will consider the previous year's feedback provided at the end of last season. This is an effort to help reward kids who differentiate themselves from other bubble players based on attitude, effort, attendance, being a good teammate, and hockey sense. This data is under the VP of Hockey's purview and only used once the evaluators determine the bubble to place the last few players properly.

During the tryout, evaluators are looking for the best all-around skilled players, which may mean someone other than the player who scores the most goals, races the puck from one end to the other during their sessions, lets in the fewest goals, etc. Evaluations will be made on the holistic play of the player, inclusive of both offensive and defensive skills, as outlined above. Final player placements will be based on the tryout process.

Tryout Format & Process

The tryout process will follow a scrimmage format. Every time a player is on the ice, they have an opportunity to demonstrate their hockey abilities to the evaluators. Scrimmages will be played in a 5-on-5 format at the discretion of the HDC.

At the Bantam and Pee wee levels, each player had the opportunity to designate whether they would like to be evaluated as a forward or defenseman. Players will be evaluated primarily at their designated position; however, they may occasionally be asked to play the opposite position during the tryout process due to the number of players participating. Playing a position other than the one selected will not negatively impact a player's evaluation.

The goal is for scrimmages at all levels to simulate a real hockey game. Shifts will be one minute long, and the puck will be picked up between shifts for a face-off at center ice, an alternating neutral-zone dot, or an in-zone face-off dot. A bench volunteer will send players onto the ice in specific positions according to bench sheets previously created by the Tryout Administrator.

From the first skate to the final skate, bench sheets are designed to provide every player with equal ice time during each session while balancing equitable opportunities at both forward and defense throughout the full tryout process.

Players assigned to defense will wear beanie caps on their helmets to help evaluators identify who is playing defense. This also helps evaluators clearly identify which players are skating in forward positions. This process has been very successful in providing better visual structure for evaluators as they assess each player's hockey abilities.

Players and goalies will be divided into balanced teams in a randomized manner based on last year's team placement. These groupings will be created by HDC members overseeing that particular tryout who do not have a child at that level. We strive to create balanced teams throughout each tryout phase, and groupings are reviewed daily by the Tryout Administrator. Please note that this can sometimes be difficult due to excused absences related to fall sports, illness, or injury.

After the initial scrimmage sessions, the Tryout Administrator will begin dividing players into groups based on their aggregate scores. At the discretion of the Tryout Administrator, players may be asked to attend more than one tryout pool on the same day.

Providing more opportunities to evaluate like-skilled players competing against one another in later sessions helps ensure proper final team placement for each player's development, regardless of team designation. Session 1 grading scores are used only to establish like-skilled groups for Session 2 and will not be included in the final aggregate score. Scores from Sessions 2–5, where players compete against similarly skilled players, will carry more weight in the final evaluation.

In some cases, players may be removed from later scrimmages once they have clearly solidified a particular team placement. This allows evaluators to spend more time assessing players who are harder to separate from one another.

FINAL TEAM PLACEMENT

Roster Sizes:

CCHA Hockey Development Committee's preferred roster size is 15 skaters at the Bantam and Pee wee levels, with squirt level being 14 skater or less per team. However, this can fluctuate based on the number of players that try out, the number of goalies, and the number of skater-goalies. In those situations, the evaluators and HDC will determine the appropriate team to carry the extra skaters. At the top (e.g. Bantam AA, Pee wee AA, Squirt A) levels, District 6 approval for size of teams happens prior to tryouts beginning.

Non-Parent Coach

Team Picks in conjunction with the evaluators, HDC, and Board members administering a level's tryout, Non Parent coaches may select the final players (1-3 typically) from the bubble once all the top players have been locked into place.

Tryout Opt-Out

Players who know they want to play "C" level hockey and/or do not enjoy the tryout process can elect not to participate in tryouts. They will be placed on a "C" level team and \$50 will be credited to their account. You must contact your level commissioner at least one week before your player's tryout session if you want to exercise this option.

Tryout Schedule

The tryout schedule is created using forecasted registration numbers. Sessions may be combined, shortened, or extended based on the number of players registered at a given level. Accordingly, checking the tryout schedule often (e.g., daily during tryouts) is important.

Tryout Uniform and Equipment Restrictions

At check-in, each player will be issued a numbered tryout pinny that must be worn with the front and back numbers exposed. Beneath the Pinny, all players must wear a solid color jersey in the CCHA colors (black, Vegas gold, yellow gold, purple or white). No team or player names should be visible on the jersey. Either CCHA issued socks from a prior season or socks in a solid CCHA color (see above) must be worn. All non-CCHA stickers should be removed from helmets, and any names taped on the helmet. Neck guards must be worn for all tryout sessions. All equipment (helmets and gloves) must be black in color.

Participation Importance

Players are highly encouraged to attend every session to maintain control of their performance and accurately influence their scores. Any unexcused/unexplained absence from the player's session will result in the HDC controlling the player's placement, and a lower placement may result than if the player had participated fully.

Emergency Absence Policy, Medical, and Fall Sports Conflicts – If an emergency situation will result in a player being late for or missing a tryout session, the player's parent should contact the Level Commissioner as soon as you suspect this will occur, presumably before it does. Your Level Commissioner should be your primary contact for all communications. All commissioners' contact information can be found on the website.

Any player unable to participate in the tryouts for medical reasons, such as an injury or illness, must provide the Level Commissioner with a written explanation from a doctor confirming the player's medical inability to participate. Unless the Level Commissioner receives and acknowledges a medical excuse, players must attend all scheduled tryout sessions or be assigned a score of zero for all such sessions.

In the event a player misses a scheduled tryout session for reasons other than a medical or emergency situation, the player receives a zero for that session, and team placement will be at the HDC's and the VP of Hockey's discretion. A player must complete the entire session they start and may not leave early for any reason other than a medical issue or emergency event.

The CCHA believes in multisport athletes. Reserving ice and planning tryouts months before tryout season make it difficult to accommodate fall sports schedules. As a result, if a fall sports conflict is imminent, please notify the level commissioner ASAP. The tryout administration will follow the player's scores throughout the other sessions to help determine appropriate scoring for the player's missed session due to a fall sports conflict. A fall sport conflict is defined as a district game. A practice, scrimmage, or other team event is not considered required attendance and will not be excused as a valid fall sport conflict.

In the unique situation where a CCHA player is participating in the Minnesota Hockey sponsored, High-Performance Tier 1 Hockey League and other Elite fall teams, it is expected that the player will still do their best to participate in the CCHA tryouts. High-Performance Tier 1 promotes their players to prioritize association tryouts over their program. However, if there is a conflict with a CCHA tryout session, the HDC and VP – Hockey Operations will assign a reasonable placement score for that individual for the missed session.

The HDC and the CCHA Board will deal with any situations and circumstances not addressed by this policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Tryout Committee: To administer the tryouts, a combination of Board members, HDC members, and volunteers will be used to conduct the sessions. Generally speaking, the tryouts by level will be conducted by a combination of persons identified below. A general description of their typical responsibilities during tryouts follows the list.

- Hockey Development Committee
- Board Representative (President, Vice President – Hockey Operations, Treasurer)
- Evaluators
- Level Commissioner
- Tryout Level Coordinator
- Tryout Administrator

- Pinny Runner
- Bench Volunteer
- Tryout Administrative Assistant
- Clock Volunteer

Hockey Development Committee

Per the CCHA bylaws, the HDC is tasked to administer and execute the tryout process. Any HDC member with a player at the tryout level cannot participate until after tryouts are final and all players have been placed. A member of the Executive Committee of the Board will observe and review the results to ensure all processes are appropriately followed.

Board Representative

A representative from the Board of Directors Executive Committee (e.g., President, Vice President, or Treasurer) will observe and oversee the tryout process to ensure that the process is administered fairly. Any Board member with a player at the tryout level cannot participate until after the final tryouts, and all players have been placed.

Pinny Runner

Works closely with the Tryout Administrator on Pinny assignments and quickly distributes and picks up session check-in, evaluation, and bench sheet/ forms. They double-check all session scores by Pinny and score with a verbal read-back of each score. Assists with other duties as needed, keeps things moving forward, distributes pucks, and ensures first aid kits are present.

Clock Volunteer

Verify the scrimmage format with the Tryout Level Coordinator and run the clock accordingly.

Evaluators

Evaluator's credentials are reviewed, and Evaluators are proactively chosen by the Hockey Development Committee per the CCHA bylaws. Potential Evaluators will be questioned and must disclose if they have instructed or coached any members in the player's session or skill sessions. Evaluators must be impartial as their scores dictate player placement. As with coach selection parameters cited above, hockey-knowledgeable people will be sought

out to participate as evaluators. Their role is to perform the task of evaluation during their respective session.

- The evaluator's player should be removed from the level they evaluate by one year.
- Evaluators will be furnished with identical forms for scoring. All players will be given a pinny number for the entire tryout process, represented on the evaluation form. All evaluators will be hockey-knowledgeable and have no connections to players at the evaluated level.
- Evaluators are required to attend all sessions for the purpose of scoring consistency. Substitute evaluators may be used on a limited basis.
- Evaluator questions should be addressed to the Tryout Level Coordinator or HDC Level Representative.
- Evaluators must stay engaged throughout the process. Evaluators may not use their smartphones during their evaluation sessions.
- HDC and Board members can be called upon to be evaluators if they do not have an age-eligible player at that level.

Level Commissioners

The role of the level commissioners during tryouts is to act as a communication link to parents and players throughout the process. All parent questions/concerns regarding player placement should be directed to the respective level commissioner in writing.

The Level Commissioner will:

- Attend all level evaluation sessions.
- Be responsible for organizing and presenting information at the mandatory parent meeting.
- Verify that players are wearing the correct pinny number, neck guard, and socks when they start their session.

Tryout Level Coordinator

The Tryout Level Coordinator's overall role is to assist the HDC rep and work with the evaluators at the respective level to ensure a consistent and fair tryout process. It is

expected that this person is hockey knowledgeable, doesn't have a player participating at the specific level, and will fill in for tryout evaluator/volunteer in case of an emergency.

This person may be responsible for:

- Contacting, scheduling, and training evaluators for their respective level.
 - Attending all assigned level tryout sessions for skaters and goalies.
 - Working with the HDC representative at the assigned level.
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- Working with the level commissioner to ensure players understand what's expected of them throughout the tryout process.
 - Ensure tryout evaluators and volunteers sign in and are appropriately credited for their time.

Tryout Administrator

The Tryout Administrator's overall role is administrative support throughout the Tryout process. There will be a Tryout Administrator at every tryout session.

Primary tasks are:

- Create initial groupings and secret numbers by player.
- Create Bench sheets for the session.
- Data entry of all evaluator scores for every session into the tryout database, which includes an independent second person (typically the Pinny Runner) for verbal readback of scores by pinny number as a cross-check to ensure data accuracy.
- Encouraged to ask and point out to the Tryout Coordinator questions on evaluator scores that don't appear consistent.
- During the tryout process, solicit a software-experienced, independent second person to audit/verify composite formulas for accuracy.
- Run reports to provide a ranking for player placements.
- Run final placement and identify natural breaks for review of final team rostering.

- Track volunteer hours with HDC rep.
- Responsible for obtaining scrimmage session refs.

Tryout Administrative Assistant

Duties include:

- Check-in player and hand out the correct pinny number.
- Inform the Level Commissioner who has not checked in so that calls can be made and Bench Sheets verified and updated.
- Distribute and pick up bench sheets, check-in sheets, and eval forms for the hard copy file.
- Assist the entire team as needed.

Bench Volunteers/Locker Room Monitor

The Tryout Level Coordinator will create bench sheets. The role of the bench volunteers is to ensure the bench sheets are implemented for fair position play and rotation of ice touches.

- Monitor the Locker Room/Dressing area before and after the tryout session(s).
- Rotate offensive players each shift.
- Rotate defensive players each shift.
- Watch and ask questions of the player after hard hits or impacts and call for medical evaluation if there is a question regarding whether a player is healthy enough to continue.

Please reach out to your level commissioner if you have questions.

Why this process?

With the goal of placing players with like-skilled players where they can succeed and develop, we have determined that a largely objective process is fair. The process is reviewed annually and adjusted as deemed appropriate by the BHDC and Board of Directors. We collaborate with other local associations of similar size. There are many

different ways to place players. We believe this process ensures that placement is fair and meets the goal.

Feedback

While this process has been heavily scrutinized, we always look for improvement. If you have any feedback, please share it with your level commissioner. Note, however, that changes to this process cannot be implemented during tryouts. Document ideas and share them once tryouts are completed. The summer months can be used to review, revise, and change the process.