

IRISH YOUTH
HOCKEY LEAGUE



Tryout Policy 2026-27

Rovers

Fostering fair tryouts that emphasize
development and growth



irishyouthhockey.com



Mission Statement

The Irish Youth Hockey League strives to provide an equal opportunity for all children to play organized hockey. Through hockey, children can develop character, sportsmanship, a sense of teamwork, respect for authority and commitment. Our primary goal is to allow all players to reach their full potential and have fun learning to love the game of hockey.

Our North Star

Our priorities and our culture are built around individual skill development at all levels of our organization. We don't like to measure success by the amount of banners on the wall or trophies in our case. Instead, we take pride in helping players push themselves to be the best version of themselves every single day, on and off the ice. We strive to meet players where they are in their development journey. Some players excel early in their journey while others may have jumps in skill later on.



We work to prepare players for the next chapter of their hockey journey, whatever that may be. The sport of hockey can be an incredible vessel for creating not just elite athletes, but elite humans. The game has a way of providing real, translatable lessons that will prepare players for life far beyond the ice. With a culture that prioritizes a love for the game, individual skill development, teamwork, life skills and daily growth, the by-product will be success.

In keeping with these principals, we encourage parents and players to enter tryouts with the understanding that tryouts are a development opportunity, regardless of the outcome. They can help players gauge where they are in their development journey in relation to the other players in their cohort, but they are not determinative of future success. All players will be supported in their development no matter which team they play for in a given season.



Tryouts

General Procedures

Players will check-in and receive a numbered tryout jersey.



Players First

Tryouts will be “blind.” The only people allowed in the rink during tryouts are the evaluators, on ice coaches and other authorized staff. Parents must wait outside of the rink. This allows the tryout to be free from outside influence. It helps reduce stress for players and keeps the atmosphere focused and quiet. It also frees parents from the temptation of comparison.



On-Ice Coaches

Tryouts will be run by authorized, unbiased coaches. Coaches who have a child trying out for a particular team will not be on-ice for their child’s tryout.



Reduced
Stress



Focused
Quiet



Unbiased
Coaches



Evaluation Criteria

A panel of experienced, unbiased evaluators will be assembled and announced prior to the tryout day. Evaluators who have a child trying out for a particular team will not evaluate for their child's tryout.

Evaluators use a consistent evaluation rubric for each player and are given only a list of jersey numbers/colors (players are not name-identified).

Skaters

- Skating ability including edgework, stride, balance and speed graded both forwards and backwards
- Coachability and Attitude
- Effort and Compete Level
- Hockey I.Q. and Decision Making
- Teamplay and Consistency
- Depending on the level, other skill attributes such as stick handling, shooting and passing yield more consideration



Goalies

- Skating and Edgework
- Position Mobility and Recovery
- Puck Tracking and Reaction Time
- Stickwork
- Hockey I.Q. and Decision Making
- Coachability and Attitude
- Effort and Compete Level





Evaluation Criteria

Hybrid Goalies

All of the above metrics skaters and goalies are measured.

Goalie-only specialization is discouraged by USA Hockey before age 11

10U players and below who are interested in playing goalie should try out as both a skater and a goalie. The player will be graded based on their skating and goalie ability, with their cumulative evaluation being the criteria for making a team.

At 11U and older, a hybrid goalie may be declared by the player and they will be selected for the team as a hybrid goalie if they could make the team for both positions. They cannot be selected to be a hybrid goalie and displace a skater or another goalie who was evaluated as at a higher level than them. If a hybrid goalie does excel in one position or the other and was evaluated to make the cut in one of the two, they may be offered that specialized position in lieu of the hybrid position.

If a hybrid goalie accepts a roster spot, they should expect to split time between both positions evenly throughout the season at practices and games. They may even split games with their goalie partner to avoid a full time goalie from sitting for an entire game. In that event, they have the option to change mid-game and play the remainder of the game as a skater.





Team Selection

Evaluators will use the rubric for each player to make team selection decisions. Evaluators will have the majority of the input when it comes to team selection. If a team has a pre-selected, non-parent coach, that coach will also have input in the selection process.

Especially in situations where a player is considered to be "on the bubble" or is in a tie with another player from a skill level standpoint, evaluators and coaches reserve the right to gather information from former coaches of these players.

Any evaluators, staff members, or coaches with a child trying out for a particular team will not be allowed to be in the room or involved in any capacity when it comes to the selection of their child's age group team.



Coach Selection

Parents who have expressed interest in coaching their child's team will only be offered a spot on the coaching staff by the IYHL coaching committee after their child has been evaluated and placed on a team roster.



Considerations for Additional Teams or Team Composition

The expected number of Rovers teams for each season is one team per birth year for full time (starting with 9U) and one team per mixed age group (10U, 12U, 14U) for part time (with the exception of 8U part time Jr. Rovers which will be expected to have multiple teams). Adjustments may be made based on the number of players trying out at a given birth year or age group and any extenuating circumstances.

Such adjustments could include creating additional teams, making mixed birth year teams etc. These decisions will be made by a committee composed of unbiased board members and evaluators. The committee deciding on the composition of teams for any particular age group will not include any board member or evaluator with a child trying out for the relevant age group.

Criteria for the creation of additional teams will include, but not be limited to:

- Are there goalies available?
- Are there viable coaching options?
- Do we have the ice availability and other resources needed to support it?
- Is the roster balanced from a skill standpoint? Is the bottom of the roster a standard deviation lower than the top, potentially creating an environment for poor player and parent culture and cohesiveness?
- How does the conception of an additional travel team affect the League as a whole?





Move Up Request

We are firm believers in age appropriate development. Therefore, move ups are considered with the player's and the League's best interest in mind on a case-by-case basis. You can find our move up policy at irishyouthhockey.com

Supplemental Tryouts

Extenuating circumstances including, but not limited to, school conflicts, relocation or injury may prevent interested players from attending the preset tryout dates. A player's family may make a request that the player still be able to tryout despite being unable to attend the preset tryout dates. The Board will evaluate these conflict requests on a case-by-case basis. A particular age group may be offered a supplemental one-skate tryout as soon as reasonably possible after the main tryout. Supplemental tryouts will be on an invite-only basis to those players competing for the final roster spot(s) (as well as inviting those already offered a roster position on the relevant team for team ice time). The invites may include players that were unable to tryout as well as others that were "on the bubble" for a given team.

Feedback and 24 Hour Rule

We know that it can be difficult to process the results of a tryout. IYHL wants to support every player and continue to help them develop at the right level. The evaluators are happy to provide reasonable feedback to players upon request. However, we ask that parents and players abide by the "24 hour rule." Please wait 24 hours from the time of the tryout decision to reach out with questions or to ask for feedback. Take time to process the information and talk to your player about it before reacting. Remember that sometimes hard news in the moment can end up being a positive in the longer term as players develop best when they play at the right level. And please be respectful of evaluators, coaches, and board members who all donate their time and energy to IYHL.



FAQs

Common Misconceptions



My player doesn't know full ice hockey yet, they don't understand offsides, icing etc. Does that matter?

Nope!

We know they don't understand that when moving to full ice for the first time. It is not a metric used in their evaluation. They learn fast.



If we didn't participate in programming like Spring Hockey or Road to Rovers, will that hurt my players chances of making a team?

Nope!

Just like tryouts, those other programs are simply development opportunities. They are optional, supplemental programs that have zero implications on the tryout process or player selection.



I have questions or concerns ahead of tryouts but I fear it will impact my child's chances of making a team if I raise them.

Please reach out!

We understand there are conversations that may be uncomfortable to have. We take pride in transparency and communication and want you to rest assured that your child's performance and evaluation at tryouts is what determines their destiny, not their parents.



I am sure my child is going to get cut, why should they try out?

Please show up!

Every tryout is a new opportunity for a player to develop and demonstrate their abilities. You never "know" if a player will get cut. It is also impossible for the committees to determine how many players are interested in travel hockey and how many teams are feasible at a given age group if all potentially interested players don't sign up and show up to the tryouts.