MASON CITY YOUTH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION
Play-Up Policy

The following provisions apply to participation in the travel hockey programming with Mason City Youth Hockey Association ("MCYHA"), which includes the Mason City Mohawk Youth and High School programs.

This policy shall be enforced at all age levels 8u through 14u.
The High School program has its own evaluation criteria, but eligibility to play-up to High School Hockey is established by this policy.

The presence of this policy does not imply that the Board of Directors believes it is better for skilled players to play-up into an older age group. On the contrary, the Board of Directors firmly believes that each age level offers a unique set of skills and competencies that are adequately challenging for any skater in that level. Furthermore, the Board of Directors has full confidence that the coaches assigned to each level are adequately trained and possess the knowledge to sufficiently challenge each skater in that level, regardless of skill.

1. **Who is eligible to try out for an older age group**
    a. Any skater in the final season of their current age group may elect to try out for an older age group
    b. A player seeking to try out up to High School from 14u must be in 9th grade AND in their final year of 14u
1. **What are the criteria Evaluated**
    a. Top-Six Ranking
        i. The player must rank within the top six (6) players of the age group they are seeking to join, based on evaluations conducted during tryouts
    b. Team Size and Age Group Structure
        i. The impact of the play-up on the team size and structure will be considered for both the age group the player is desiring to join and the age group the player would otherwise play in
    c. The Top-Six Ranking may be waived if:
        i. The player tries out at the higher age group
        ii. The Coaching Director and evaluators determine the player demonstrated competent skill at that level during tryouts
        iii. Moving the player would help the target age group reach a viable roster
        iv. Moving the player would not change the viability of their age-appropriate team's roster size
            1. This exception is discretionary and does not entitle a player who tries out at the higher level to a play-up approval
    d. Goaltender Availability
        i. Where the play-up request involves a goaltender, the number of goaltenders available at both the current and target age group is a discretionary

consideration under this factor, weighed alongside overall roster size. A goaltender may also be dual-rostered – remaining primarily on their age -appropriate team while filling in on the higher-level team – to address temporary needs such as injury or sickness.

2. **Who approves/denies the play-up?**
    a. The Coaching Director will make the final recommendation based on the results of the try out (see tryout policy) to the Board of Directors, who will approve or deny the play-up request based on eligibility criteria
    b. In the event that there is no Coaching Director, those involved in the evaluation of tryouts will make the recommendation to the Board of Directors
3. **What other factors are considered**
    a. Player Development
        i. The long-term development of the player must be the primary focus. A player should not be moved to an older age group if it is deemed they are not physically, mentally, or emotionally prepared for the increased competition
    b. Player Welfare
        i. Any play-up decision will prioritize the player's overall well-being. This includes avoiding situations where the player might face undue physical or emotional stress by competing at a higher level than they can handle
4. **What can a skater/family requesting a play-up expect**
    a. Initial Request
        i. A player's parent may submit a request to the Board of Directors for their child to try out for the next age group's travel teams
            1. The Board of Directors will approve or deny this request based on skater eligibility
    b. Tryout & Results
        i. The skater must attend two (2) of the three (3) tryout sessions for their age group AND the desired age group
        ii. The tryout, evaluation, and selection will be conducted in accordance with the Tryout Policy
        iii. Play-up results are reported to the Board of Directors in the form of recommended team rosters
            1. The Coaching Director should make notation as to the results of the play-up request
    c. Board of Directors Approval
        i. The Board of Directors will approve the rosters and play results based on the Coaching Director's guidance
            1. The Board of Directors will not alter the Coaching Director's guidance for any reason other than a change in skater eligibility since the play request was submitted
    d. Decision Communication

        i. The final decision will be communicated to the player and family within twenty-four (24) hours by individual email from the Board President and the Coaching Director, jointly
    e. Appeals Process
        i. If the player's family disagrees with the decision, they may appeal the decision in writing to the Board of Directors. The appeal will be reviewed with guidance from the Coaching Director and a final decision made within seven (7) days of the appeal submission
5. **Records Retention**
    a. As per the Tryout Policy, all evaluation forms, scores and related tryout records will be retained by the Board of Directors for the duration of the season
6. **How is this policy maintained**
    a. Respecting the policy
        i. While the policy allows for play-up when the criteria are met, the primary focus remains on what is best for the player's development and well-being, as well as the balance of the team
    b. Review of Policy
        v. This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant to player development, team needs and organizational goals

POLICY ADOPTED BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON: September 28, 2026