

HUDSON HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

2025-2026 TRYOUT and TEAM FORMATION POLICY

POLICY PURPOSE

This policy was written to establish a general set of rules to govern the tryout and team formation process used by the Hudson Hockey Association for assessing the skills of participants in its hockey program and for assigning players to teams.

POLICY DESCRIPTION

The tryout process developed by the Hudson Hockey Association (HHA) is designed to: A) provide a fair and unbiased approach to evaluate overall hockey ability of each youth player; B) ensure the integrity of the process is maintained; and C) involve coaches (at each coach's option) in the selection process for those non-parent coaches named to a specific team by the Player and Coach Development Committees (PCDCs) provided the non-parent coaches for their specific teams are named before team formation.

This tryout process is used to place members on a team that will enable the skater/goalie to develop their skills with other similarly developed players. The policy also strives to assign teams to levels of play that will be competitive and challenging for all team members.

PROCEDURE/CONTENT

When, based on the number of participants registered at a given age level, more than one team will exist for an age level, tryouts will be held to place skaters on an appropriate team based on their skills. Skaters/Goalies may elect not to participate in the tryout process and will be placed on the lowest level team for their age level.

Team-sizing for all teams will be determined by HHA's Team-Sizing Committee. HHA's Team-Sizing Committee is made up of the HHA President, VPHO, VPSHO, Chairs of the PCDCs, and Past Board Member. The Team-Sizing Committee shall determine roster size ranges for each team after considering the number of registered players, desired roster sizes for each age level of play, HHA's team-sizing matrix (designed to avoid having overly unbalanced numbers of skaters at each level) and the recommendation of the PCDCs.

Players/Goalies eligible to play at more than one level under HHA policies must choose the level they wish to participate in by 9/26/2025. Girls signed up to skate or play goalie for the girls' level teams as of 10/01/2025, will not be eligible to switch over to the youth tryouts. For example, a female skater going through tryouts for the Squirt level may not switch to the U10 level after tryouts commence. Also, a female skater registered to skate on the girls U10 team on or before 9/30/2025, may not sign up to participate in youth tryouts on or after 10/01/2025.

In accordance with WAHA policy, U8 girl players (who are in their last year of U8 eligibility) are now permitted to tryout with other U10 skaters at the U10 level. This adjustment is intended to help fill roster spots and facilitate the creation of multiple U10 teams, aligning with the American Development Model (ADM) for small team sizes. Players selected to move up will be chosen solely to fill roster spots, unless they meet the criteria for the existing elite move-up policy. For rostering purposes, players identified for a move-up will need to have a "move up eligible" form completed and submitted to WAHA by the WAHA deadline.

Youth players in their last year of Mite 3 eligibility will need to follow the elite player policy and have a completed "move up eligible" form submitted to WAHA by the WAHA deadline. No youth mite 3 eligible players will be allowed to participate in Tryouts with following these steps.

Tryouts will be executed using the processes set forth in this policy. Any issues not specifically addressed by this policy must be presented to the Tryout Committee and resolved by the Committee as a whole.

1. Registration Deadline

Skaters/Goalies residing in the school district as of registration must be registered to participate in tryouts by September 26th of the current season. Team-sizing ranges shall be based on the registration numbers as of this date. Skaters/Goalies moving into the school district after the cut-off date for tryouts, if allowed by the Board to register, will be evaluated by the regular tryout process if registered prior to commencement of tryouts. If Skater/Goalie is permitted to register after tryouts, Skater/Goalie will be evaluated by current VPHO, Chairs of the PCDCs, and current Coaches (head and assistant) of the level player registered to participate.

2. Tryout Fees

A \$75 fee will be charged if a player registers to try out for a team. This fee will be collected at tryout registration.

3. Tryout Notification

In advance of the tryout sessions, parents/guardians of each skater participating in tryouts will be supplied the following information via the HHA website:

- a. The tryout group they will be skating with during the tryout sessions.
- b. The dates and times of the skater's tryouts sessions.
- c. General Information including, but not limited to, player check-in, parental behavior, and procedures for notification of team placement.

A copy of the tryout policy shall be posted on the HHA website prior to the commencement of tryouts.

4. Evaluators

HHA reserves the right to hire outside evaluation firms, use current or former head coaches, hockey alumni, or individuals with extensive hockey knowledge (i.e. 4 years collegiate hockey player) to evaluate skaters and goalies for the upcoming season. The identity of the evaluation team shall be kept confidential. The same evaluators shall be present for all tryout sessions of the level they are evaluating.

The Tryout Committee shall not disseminate information about the identity of the evaluation team with anyone. This will help assure that there is no contact between association members and the evaluation team prior to or during tryouts.

Evaluators may be located on the ice, in the player boxes, or any other segregated area they would like to use for the purpose of evaluating players. No coach, parent or other person shall be allowed contact with the evaluators except the Tryout Committee members in performance of their duties.

5. Tryouts: First-Year Bantams -- Required Pre-Tryout Checking Clinic

A first-year bantam player* will not be allowed to tryout unless the player participates in one of HHA's checking clinics prior to tryouts. HHA will make two free checking/angling clinics available, specially designed to provide introductory training to prepare the player for Bantam-level play. The player is only required to attend one of the two offered clinics but may attend both if he/she decides to. The dates/times of the clinics will be sent out to the Bantam players and will also be posted on HHA's website prior to the start of the checking clinics.

*Goalies are exempt from the mandatory checking clinics.

6. Tryouts

a) Tryouts at each age level will consist of up to four ice sessions and are broken out by the following: **two sessions** are **guaranteed**; each of the **next two sessions** are by **invite only**. Not all skaters will be invited back depending on their evaluation results from the first two sessions.

b) **Players shall be identified by number only throughout the tryout process. The evaluators will not be provided with the names of the players.**

c) Tryout weekend is designed to determine players for teams at each level. Accordingly, players that register are not guaranteed more than two sessions of ice time. In other words, there may be cuts after the second session. The numbers for the players invited to the third and fourth sessions will be posted in the main lobby and/or the HHA website. At the end of the final session all teams will be selected and participants will be notified.

d) **Goalies.** Goalies will be selected after the final session of tryouts. If your son/daughter wants to be a goalie, they must participate in the goalie specific tryout, as well as the sessions they are slated to participate in throughout the tryout process. After the Goalies Skills session, the player must **declare** to the HHA Tryout Committee Front Desk if he/she will continue to try out for: 1) goalie in attempt to make team as a goalie; or 2) skater in attempt to make team as a skater.

7. Skater Evaluation Sessions

Skaters will be evaluated in scrimmage/game situation sessions that will give insight into the skater's level of ability to play the game of hockey. The tryout sessions shall consist of skill stations and scrimmaging, using any combination of 3-on-3, 4-on-4, 5-on-5, and odd-man formats, which will be used to evaluate a player in game-like situations.

The evaluators will score players after considering each player's performance by considering the player's proficiency in the following areas: **skating, puck ability, hockey sense, scoring ability, defense ability and aggressiveness**. Every attempt will be made to provide all skaters and goalies with the same amount of ice time as possible during each session.

Each evaluator shall independently score players by providing a total score from (1-10) within each category of **skating, puck ability, hockey sense, scoring ability, defense ability and aggressiveness** at the end of each session. For example, if a player received a ranking of 10 for each of the above areas, the evaluator's total score would be 60 for that skater. After tryouts are complete and the evaluators have submitted their scores, the tryout committee will consolidate all the rankings from the evaluators for each player number to determine the players' total score and then match player names to player numbers.

If two or more player's scores are tied at completion of all evaluation sessions, a **tiebreaker** will determine final on-ice tryout ranking. The tie-breaker criteria are as follows: a) a "last year" player at a particular age level will be given preference over a "first year" player; b) highest total ranking in the "skating" category; c) if a tie still exists, the Tryout Committee will resort to a coin flip to determine on-ice tryout ranking.

All scoring is accomplished using Team Genius software which is available to the final Tryout Committee. The Tryout Committee will review the final rankings in Team Genius and certify the results.

8. Coach Selections

The Player and Coach Development Committee (PCDC) invests lots of time and energy into securing the most well qualified coaches as possible to lead, train, and develop our players for individual development and team success.

For hired head coaches, the PCDC has determined these coaches to be the best leaders for player development at a specific level, and accordingly, those coaches are afforded the option of having input into their final roster, by taking into account the on-ice tryout rankings, assessing the makeup of the team, considering a certain player's "body of work" or performance over the course of a past season, and assessing individual player and team developmental goals.

Therefore, after the final rank sheet for on-ice evaluations have been certified as set forth above, the coach may at their sole discretion: a) When applicable, determine the roster size for his/her team (if the HHA Team-Sizing Committee has determined, based upon the registered number of players, that available options exist to the coach regarding team roster sizing); and thereafter, b) Agree with the evaluator's rankings as comprising the teams' final roster; or c) Exercise his/her coach pick options.

If the coach selects option "c", the coach may determine up to 25% of the final team roster (at minimum, the top 75% of players as determined by the on-ice player evaluations are secure and will make the team and are not subject to adjustments).

The following schedule will determine the maximum quantity of coach picks and the pool size from which these picks will be selected:

# of Skaters	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Coach Picks	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	5
Pool Size	4	4	6	6	6	6	8	8	8	8	10

The selection pool will be determined by final rank during the evaluation sessions. For example, for an "A" team with a total of 13 skaters, the coach will be allowed to select up to 3 skaters from the 6 skaters ranked at numbers 11 through 16 after the evaluation process. In this example with a roster of 13 skaters, as set forth above, the players ranked 1-10 by the evaluators have secured a spot on the team. Also, in this example, a player ranked at number 17 or above may not be considered by the coach.

At the coaches' discretion, they can forfeit one of their skater selections and instead select a goalie if the overall tryout scores of the top two goalies are within 10 percent.

Participants in the coach selection process will not communicate ranking, skater's names, or any other selection information to anyone not involved in the process.

9. Goalie Selection

All goalie candidates will participate in a skills evaluation session that will take place during or close to the tryout period. During this session, goalies will be evaluated by goalie evaluator(s). Each goalie will be rated on several drills. Other persons may be used during this process as shooters, so consistency, puck speed, and accuracy can be controlled. These individuals (shooters) will have no input into the scores of the goalies. The skills evaluation session shall be averaged into the total tryout score for each goalie.

In addition, the goalie candidates shall be evaluated during the remaining four sessions/scrimmages. Every effort will be made to equalize the number of minutes a goalie is on the ice, but this may be affected by the number of goalies trying out in each age grouping. Each goalie shall receive a score versus his/her peers for each of the four sessions/scrimmages. Each on-ice session/scrimmage score will be averaged into each of the goalies overall score throughout the tryout process. Goalies shall be rotated to provide exposure to different skater groups throughout the tryout process and to be evaluated against as many of the other goalies at their age grouping as possible.

If possible, goalies will be evenly assigned among teams at the same age level. If an unequal number of goalies exist to be distributed amongst the teams at any given age level; the Tryout Committee shall determine the number of goalies on each team after receiving a recommendation from the PCDCs regarding number of goalies per team and input from the tryout evaluators regarding the abilities of the goalies at the age level being evaluated. The number of goalies placed on each team shall adhere to the rule that the goalie differential between teams shall not exceed one, e.g., one team can't have three goalies and one goalie on another team.

10. Injury Policy/Missed Sessions

If a skater is unable to participate in tryouts due to an injury, a doctor's excuse will be required to be released from tryouts. If an injury occurs prior to or during tryouts for which there is a valid doctor's excuse, the Tryout Committee will determine team placement at the conclusion of tryouts after consulting with the previous year's coach and the PCDC which may include current age-level coaches and coaching coordinator(s). If a skater is injured/illness during tryouts, their current tryout score will be considered during the player placement process.

If someone is unable to attend a tryout session for a non-medical reason, the placement of that skater will be determined by the Tryout Committee considering recommendations by the previous year's coach and the PCDC which may include current age-level coaches and coaching coordinator(s).

A player placed on a team pursuant to this provision (11) will not displace a tryout player ranking in the top 75% of that team's initial roster based on evaluations but may displace a player ranking in the bottom 25% of that team's initial roster based on evaluations. E.g., in the example set forth in 8 above, with a roster of 13 skaters, it is possible that a player placed

pursuant to this provision may displace a player that initially ranked between positions 11-16 after the on-ice evaluation process but shall not displace a player ranked 1-10.

The parent or legal guardian of any player who is part of the player pool to be considered pursuant to this section is prohibited from participating in the selection process.

11. Player Placement

All player placements will be announced at the completion of the tryout process. Each skater should check the Hudson Hockey Association website to see the final team placement results. This will be done within 96 hours following the final session of evaluation. Once certified by the Tryout Committee, the decisions of the evaluators are final.

Communication between any evaluator with a parent or player is prohibited.

The Tryout Committee does not have any input into player scores and simply certifies the results based on each evaluator's scores. All scores are verified by more than one committee member to ensure accuracy. Any questions should be made directly to the Tryout Committee Chair.

12. Team Formation: Multiple Teams at Same Level

If there are enough participants for more than one team at the same level (e.g., multiple "C" teams), the team players will be divided equally by the Tryout Committee and/or coaches either at the conclusion of the "A" and "B" tryouts or after an additional skating session which is held involving the "C" players unless otherwise voted on by the HHA Board.

The head coaches shall either rank all players (or agree to have another designated person rank all players) and each coach's rankings shall be averaged to determine the final ranking of each player for team formation purposes. The players shall then be grouped by sets of 4 skaters and the coaches shall alternate making the first two picks in each round. The coaches shall flip a coin or agree upon another method to determine the first overall pick. The coach with the first overall pick can either select the goalie of his choice or decide to take the 1st two picks in the first round. If the coach selects the goalie first, he will then have the first two picks of the second round. The head coach is automatically awarded his son/daughter, plus the players of his assistant coaches, plus the players of his manager (if assistant coaches and managers are pre-assigned to a head coach before the teams are selected).

Example Draft with two "C" teams, one Red Team and one Blue Team:

Example Player Rankings

Round 1	1	2 Blue coach kid	3	4
Round 2	5	6	7	8

	Red manager kid			
Round 3	9	10	11	12

Example procedure/scenarios:

1) Red Coach wins coin flip. Red Coach picks players ranked #1 & #3 (can't pick player #2 as that is the Blue coach's kid). Blue coach gets goalie of his choice, gets players #2 (his kid) & #4, and selects players #6 & #7 (can't select player #5 as that is the Red Manager's kid). Red coach gets players #5 & #8 in the second round. Red coach picks players #9 & #11 in third round (bypasses player #10 to take player #11). The process continues until all players are selected.

2) Blue Coach wins the coin flip. Blue coach selects player #1 (rather than pick top goalie) and gets player #2 (his kid). The Red coach selects the goalie of his choice, gets players 3, 4, and 5, and selects player 6. Blue coach gets players #7 & #8 and selects players #9 & #10. Red coach gets players #11 & #12. The process continues until all players are selected.

After the teams have been initially selected using the process set forth above, the coaches, if they mutually agree, may "trade players" to try and accommodate player friendships, carpools, etc. After any agreed upon "trading" takes place, the rosters shall be finalized and published on the HHA website. If necessary, the VPSHO, the PCDC Chair, and that age-level's coaching coordinator shall assist in resolving any questions/scenarios that arise between the head coaches during the team formation process, or in making any necessary adjustments, including formulating the process when three teams are involved, when one of the goalies is the son/daughter of a coach/manager, etc.

13. Player/Parent Conduct

The mandates for acceptable player/parent conduct are more fully set forth in HHA's Parent Handbook, HHA's Policies, and the tryout letter sent to each family. The rules of conduct include:

- A. Good sportsmanship will be required throughout the tryout process. This includes on the ice, on the bench and in the locker rooms.
- B. Parents are to have no contact with the evaluators, the on-ice tryout evaluators, or the bench-tryout volunteers.
- C. Adults will be allowed to view tryouts while in process in specifically designated areas if they do not cheer for or holler at their player, other players, or other individuals present at the rink. There shall be no verbal or other contact between players and their family members during the sessions.
- D. No recording of any type is allowed during tryouts.

Any player or adult who does not abide by HHA's rules of conduct may, at the sole discretion of the Tryout Committee, will be required to leave the building and/or the player may be banned from this year's tryouts in addition to other discipline available under HHA's policies/rules of conduct. Violations of the rules of conduct may result in skater disqualification/expulsion from the tryout process and forfeiture of tryout fee.

14. Policy Modification

As stated above, this policy was written to establish a general set of rules to govern the tryout and team formation process. However, in the event of unforeseen situations or as otherwise necessary to accomplish the goals of properly evaluating and assessing the skills of participants and placing players on a team that will enable the skater to develop their skills with other similarly-skilled players in the Hudson Hockey Association, the Tryout Committee will make decisions accordingly, as needed, to make necessary changes/modifications to these general rules (examples include but are not limited to providing more or less ice time to certain players to allow the evaluators more opportunities to see certain players compete directly against each other).

The Hudson Hockey Association reserves the right to modify or make changes to the Tryout Process through the Tryout Committee during the current season tryout process. The Tryout Committee is given the right and responsibility to ensure tryouts are conducted in a professional manner and may come across situations that need immediate attention and solutions may fall outside of the Tryout Policy, this section provides the immunity of the Tryout Committee to make adjustments and modifications to ensure the best possible outcome for HHA, the team, and the player for the best possible outcome throughout tryouts.

Hudson Hockey Association looks to promote hockey and development of players within the "Membership" district and understands that Hudson Hockey Association, from time to time, will accept players on a waiver from other associations' districts to fill teams out. This section states and clarifies that the Hudson Hockey Association will place players living within the Membership District ahead of players that are on waiver from outside the Hudson Hockey Association Membership District. Hudson Hockey Association will place all players on teams according to their level of play, but will take priority on players from the membership district over players from outside associations.

15. Concluding Message

The HHA Tryout Committee works very hard to administer the very best tryout process with the time and resources at their disposal. Please encourage your players to do their best to demonstrate their development in all six of the evaluation areas and have the best possible attitude throughout the process.

“This is a great, fun game. So please allow situations like this to be a life lesson for your player. We all get cut, we all get fired. We are all told at some point in our lives that our services are no longer needed. Sports are a microcosm of life—life will go on if your player did not make the team. Let your player enjoy the game and play at a level that will allow him or her to flourish and want to play again next season.” Angelo Ricci, Ricci Hockey Consulting

Any questions regarding HHA’s Tryout/Team Formation Policy should be directed to:
HHA Tryout Committee Chair - tryoutcommittee@hudsonhockey.com