

## 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. 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 Bantams, Peewees, and Squirts. 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. Goalies may enter 30 minutes prior and skaters 20 minutes before their scheduled session. 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 and are encouraged to clean them between each use. 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 Bantams and PeeWees, all skaters will have a total of five sessions, Squirts will have a total of four sessions. As always, our goal is to create equitable teams/pools for all tryout ice touches. Tryout scores coming out of phase one will be used to start getting players of like-ability competing in phase two. Scores from phase two will be used to inform phase three and so on until final team placement.

Skate 1 – Randomized, equal teams based on last season team placement

Skate 2 – Two larger groupings based on Skate 1 results

Skate 3 – Four to five groupings (based on number of players at age level)

Skate 4 – Four to five groupings (based on number of players at age level)

Skate 5 – Four to five groupings (based on number of players at age level)

Please note your skater might be asked to exit their ice touch early and join the next session. This will only happen in a scenario when the outside evaluators want to see a player compete in another grouping. A member of the tryout committee will call the parents in the event this happens.

**\*New in 2025 for the Bantam age group only** based on feedback we have received from membership. For their 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> skates, our intent is to give the players as much time as possible at their preferred position. Players with 'no preference' or 'both' will continue to get time at both positions. This change will allow for players to be evaluated more at their preferred position.

## **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 five key criteria reinforced by the evaluators and players before each skate: competitiveness, passing, skating, shooting, and overall hockey sense. Other intangibles such as character and body language are key values of the CCHA, and while tryouts can be stressful, players slamming their stick 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., 4-6) determine where each player spends the next five months. Ultimately, the four or 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 Bantam, Peewee, and Squirt tryout process follows a scrimmage format. Every time a player is on the ice, it is an opportunity to show the evaluators their hockey abilities. The scrimmages may be played in a 4-on-4 or 5-on-5 format at the discretion of the HDC.

It is the desire to have as much 5-on-5 play at all levels, but in some cases, player pools may have only 10-11 players on a bench, and thus 4-on-4 will provide reasonable rest for players between shifts. Players' shifts will be a minute long, and the puck will be picked up between shifts for a face-off at center ice, an alternating neutral zone, or an in-zone face-off dot. A bench volunteer will send the players out to play in particular positions at different points in the scrimmage that the Tryout Administrator previously created. From the first skate to the final skate, bench sheets are created to provide every player the same amount of time during a given ice touch while balancing equitable time throughout the entire tryout process between Forward and Defense.

Players who are in the defense position will have beanie caps on their helmets to help evaluators identify who is to be playing defense. This also helps evaluators know who should be playing their forward position. This was widely successful in helping provide more visual structure for the evaluators as they evaluate the hockey abilities of each player.

There could be plans to do smaller area games, e.g. ...., 3x3 if necessary. Reducing the ice into smaller area games briefly provides the evaluators additional data to help see more of a player's hockey awareness and competitiveness.

Players and Goalies will be divided into equal teams in a randomized fashion based on last year's team placement by an HDC member unfamiliar with or years removed from that age level. We strive to create similar teams consistently throughout each tryout phase, and they are reviewed daily by the Tryout Administrator. Note that this is sometimes difficult as level commissioners are informed about excused absences for fall sports or illness/injuries. After the initial scrimmage sessions, the Tryout Administrator will start to divide players into groups based on their aggregate scores. At the discretion of the Tryout Administrator, players could be asked to attend more than one tryout pool on the same day.

More opportunities to view "like skilled" players competing against each other in subsequent sessions help ensure the proper final team placement for a player's development, regardless of team designation. As the initial phases aggregate scores establish "like skilled" groups for future phases, they are weighted significantly less in their final score. Subsequent phases with "like skilled" players are weighted more in a player's final score as they compete against "like skilled" players. Some players may even be removed from later scrimmages where they have solidified themselves on a particular team placement, allowing more time to evaluate players who are harder to separate from one another.

### **Bantams:**

Unlike the Squirt and Peewee levels, checking and physical play is part of the game at the Bantam level. Clean checks and rub-outs are a natural part of the game. Any boarding, checking a player without the puck, charging, contact to the head, or unsafe or risky play will not be tolerated. The HDC and CCHA Board members present (and who have no players involved in the level of tryout being conducted) have the discretion to notify and/or remove players immediately during the session if a player engages in illegal, dangerous, or consistently dirty play.

If scheduling allows, Bantams will have planned outside scrimmages. These scrimmages are subject to change, but it is planned to have a team from another association come and provide a realistic game environment. The intent is for this to happen for the AA and A-level teams.

#### **PeeWees:**

If scheduling allows, PeeWees will have planned outside scrimmages. These scrimmages are subject to change, but it is planned to have a team from another association come and provide a realistic game environment. The intent is for this to happen for the AA and A-level teams.

#### **Squirts:**

To promote interest in the goalie position and to foster a balance between goalie and skater, the Squirt level utilizes the skater-goalie program through Squirts. This was a change implemented in the 2022-2023 season. Parents/players are encouraged to work with the commissioner to understand and complete the "Skater Goalie Intention Form" before tryouts start. The tryout coordinators will work to slot players, goalies, and skater-goalies into the proper sessions. Skater-goalies and full-time goalies may be asked to participate in some additional sessions to ensure that all sessions have enough goalies for the scrimmages. Every time your goalie is on the ice is an opportunity to show evaluators their abilities for final team placement.

### **FINAL TEAM PLACEMENT**

#### **Roster Sizes:**

CCHA Hockey Development Committee's preferred roster size is LESS than 15 skaters at the Squirt and PeeWee levels. 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., Squirt A, PeeWee AA, and A, and Bantam AA and A) levels, 15 skaters are necessary per District 6 rules. For less than 15 skaters to be placed at the AA and A levels, approval is required from District 6. Given the size of our association, this is considered rare.

Note that District 6 hockey rules require multiple teams at a level (multiple B1 teams, multiple B2 teams, etc.) to be balanced after the tryout. As a result, the tryout committee will do its best to ensure those teams are "balanced."

If a player leaves a team after team selection and before the first D6 game, it can adversely affect multiple CCHA teams at that level. The tryout committee shall determine the most equitable way to adjust the remaining players, if any, to satisfy all teams.

#### **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.

### **Additional Details**

**Player Preferred Position** – During the registration and/or at the player check-in for the first day, each player may be asked if they strongly prefer a position (forward, defense, or both). This information is utilized for two reasons. First, it provides insight for evaluators about a player's natural position. Second, towards the end of tryouts, **the last session or two**, the bench sheets **will** be adjusted to allow certain players to play more at that position.

**Mandatory Parent Meeting** – A mandatory parent meeting for Bantams, Peewees, and Squirts will occur. Please check the website ([www.cchockey.org](http://www.cchockey.org)) or exact dates and times. The purpose of the meeting is to review information about your player's level and to provide information regarding important changes that have occurred since the end of the prior season.

**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 (started for the 2022-2023 season).

**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 ([Chaska Chanhassen Hockey Association | Board Member Information & Contacts](#)).

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. In that case, 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.
- 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, 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.