

2025-2026 Waiver Policy



Peer, Numbers, and Acceleration Waiver Policy

It is the policy of River Lakes Hockey that players should play on teams as defined by Minnesota Hockey age groups and classifications. While some players may be more advanced at a particular age than others, RLH agrees with MN Hockey and USA Hockey that overall development of the player emotionally and physically is best served by having him or her progress normally through age levels and team classifications. RLH does recognize exceptions could arise beyond the normal scope of this policy.

1. **Peer Waiver:** A waiver requested to keep a skater with his/her grade in school
2. **Numbers Waiver:** Players are needed to complete a team.
 - Only the PDC can request skaters for a numbers waiver.
3. **Acceleration:** (Based on player skills and abilities) In rare instances, if a player cannot find comparable competition at his or her age level and the move would not adversely affect the numbers of either team involved.
 - The following criterion must be met in order to apply for an acceleration waiver.
 - The player must have played at the highest level of their age-appropriate group in the season prior to the acceleration request.
 - No player may accelerate more than one year beyond their age-appropriate level. For example, a first-year Peewee cannot accelerate to play Bantams.

Recommendation for team sizes is no larger than 15 skaters and no smaller than 10 skaters per team.

Waiver requests will be discussed at the September Player Development Committee meeting. All requests will be reviewed with one of the following responses: Denied, Granted, or Approved for an evaluation.

All players will begin the season playing with their age-eligible team until notified by the Player Development Committee on the status of their waiver.

If the waiver is granted by River Lakes Hockey, a formal waiver request will need to be completed and presented to the D5 Director for approval (with the exception of Peer Waivers).

If a waiver request to a higher level is granted, the family will be responsible for the balance of the registration and association requirements for the team the player has been placed on.

Peer Waiver Process:

1. Complete waiver form and turn into the Registrar prior to September 1st.

Numbers Waiver Process:

1. PDC determines a need for players to complete a team.
2. Player readiness for the next level will be assessed by the Player Development Committee in consultation with previous coaches, discussions with parents, and/or informal observations (e.g., 4 on 4 or camps).
3. In the event that more players apply and are deemed ready than are needed, an evaluation process will be followed.
 - a. If this happens before player evaluations, the applying skaters may be asked to skate at evaluations. If this happens after evaluations or evaluations are determined not to be the preferred method of assessment, the Player Development Committee will arrange an alternative evaluation period.
4. If numbers waivers are granted prior to evaluations, families will be given the option to skate at evaluations. Even if skating at evaluations, waived skaters will be placed on the lowest team. However, in cases where a player's abilities do not fit at the lowest level to such an extent that their development, the development of other players, and/or the competitive balance of play against other teams would be negatively affected, the player may be placed on a higher level team.

Acceleration Waiver Process:

1. Complete waiver form and turn into the Registrar prior to September 1st.
 - a. No acceleration waivers will be granted from Mites/8U to Squirrels/10U.
2. Player Development Committee will review the waiver at their September meeting.
 - a. Input may be sought from previous seasons' coaches or other individuals that can provide information relevant to the decision-making process
 - b. If an acceleration waiver is approved, the player will be notified that an evaluation is approved within 48 hours after the July Player Development Committee meeting.
3. If an acceleration waiver is approved for an evaluation, the player may play at either their age-appropriate level or the level they wish to accelerate to until the evaluation process is complete.
4. The player must participate in both evaluation sessions, their age-appropriate level as well as the level they wish to accelerate to.
 - a. For levels without an evaluation process, 4-on-4 or other less formal evaluation settings may be used instead.
 - b. Must pay a \$50 non-refundable evaluation fee and must be current on all association fees.

- c. The player must finish in the top 3 overall skater rankings at the level they wish to accelerate to. Goalies must finish as the top goalie in the level they wish to accelerate to.
 - i. If the player does not meet this requirement, they will return to their age-appropriate level and be placed on a team based on the evaluation process they participated in at that level.
 - ii. If the player meets this requirement, they will be placed on the highest-level team.
- d. This process will repeat if the player wants to accelerate to a higher level again in the future. A player is not forced to advance to a higher level if they have been granted an acceleration waiver in the past (e.g. a player can play 3-years at one level).