

Waukesha County Youth Hockey Association

2025-2026 Team Tryout and Placement Policies and Procedures

POLICY PURPOSE

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

POLICY DESCRIPTION

The tryout process used by the Waukesha County Youth Hockey Association is designed to: A) provide a fair and unbiased approach to evaluate overall hockey ability of each youth player and B) ensure that the integrity of the process is maintained. This tryout process is used to place members on a team that will enable the skater to develop their skills with other similarly talented players. The policy also strives to assign teams to levels of play that will be competitive, as well as challenging, for all team members. The parameters of this policy were assembled to provide a process to place players on teams with these goals in mind.

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 in order to place skaters on an appropriate team based on their skills. Skaters may elect not to participate in the tryout process and will thus be placed on the lowest level team for that age level. The team-size roster range for all teams will be determined by VP On-Ice, VP Off-Ice, President, WCYHA Hockey Director, Coaches' Committee Rep. This group shall determine roster-size ranges for each team after considering the number of registered players, desired roster sizes for each age level of play, and the overall talent pool at each playing level. Tryouts will be executed using the processes set forth in this policy.

Any issues not specifically addressed by this policy will be determined by the WCYHA VP On-Ice, unless otherwise addressed in WCYHA Policies and Procedures. All questions should be addressed to the VP On-Ice.

Team placements and tryouts will take place over the course of 3 weeks of evaluation. All skaters will participate in the first two weeks of in-house evaluations. Skaters will be invited to attend the A/B tryouts based on numbers needed at each age level. The process and procedure for the two phases are outlined in the document.

Pre Season Skates

All skaters are encouraged to participate in the pre-season CC Rep skates. There will be 6 skates throughout the summer run by our coaches and CC Reps. These skates are registered through the county and carry a very nominal fee per session to participate. The organization will again be partnering with IHA to run a Fall Speed Camp in August and September. This camp will be led by the organization Hockey Director(s), high school coaches from the area, experienced hockey players and WCYHA coaches.

WCYHA Coaches Skater Evaluation

All skaters will be invited at no additional charge to attend the coaches evaluation skates. These skates will take place the week of September 14th and 21st. Most skaters will get 6 (1) hour on ice sessions. The skater is not required to attend all 6 sessions to be selected to the A/B tryout, but must attend at least 2 sessions over the 2 weeks to be invited. An exception to this will occur if only two teams, at a given level, will be fielded then all players (skaters and goalies) will be invited to the A/B (Girls-Gold/Bronze) tryout, regardless of their attendance. In these sessions the skaters will be evaluated by 4-6 coaches from their respective level in the WCYHA. These coaches will be familiar with the playing styles of the players and skill expectations of the level. The coaches will use the criteria below as guidance when making their selections. They will also discuss any extenuating circumstances and past performances by the individual skaters. At the end of the 6 sessions the "selection committee" along with WCYHA's Hockey Director(s) will compile the list of skaters who will be invited to attend the A/B tryout to be held the following weekend 10/3-5. The number of skaters invited will be based on the number of spots available on A and B rosters plus and additional 2/3 roster. For example, if we will have 1 A team and 1 B team and both rosters will be 15 skaters and 1 goalie – we would invite 40 skaters and 3 goalies to attend the A/B tryouts.

These skaters will be selected based on their overall ability to play at the A/B Division 1 level in the state of Wisconsin, in comparison to the skaters at their level in WCYHA. These teams will also compete with AA/A teams Regionally so we will be looking for their overall compete and ability to execute in Tactical and Game situations.

If you are invited to attend the A/B tryout but would prefer not to play for an A or B team you may decline your invitation and attend C placement (or lowest Girlsteam). All players that do not continue on will be placed following the C placement protocols outlined below. C placements will take place in and around the A/B tryout and will be communicated to the parents, with the schedule also being posted to the website.

1. Registration Deadline

Skaters residing in the WCYHA district as of registration must be registered with WCYHA to participate in tryouts. They must also complete the A/B tryout registration in SportsEngine, which

will be open the day after the final coaches evaluation skate and remain open for 3 days. Skaters will not be allowed to drop in and register at time of tryouts. All fees must be paid at time of registration and each participating skater must be current with all other financial obligations to WCYHA. Skaters moving into the district after tryouts, if allowed to register by the Board, will initially be placed on a "C" team for evaluation by the age-level coaches and Coaching Coordinators. That skater or another skater may then be moved up to the next highest team in that age level based upon team sizing and Board approval. All new skaters registering and trying out for a U10/Squirt, U12/PeeWee, or U14/Bantam team will need to have successfully completed at least 1 year of a Learn to Skate or Learn to Play Hockey program before being able to participate in tryouts.

2. Tryout Fee

All fees will be reviewed year to year based on registration. For 2025, players will be assessed a fee of \$35 to tryout for the A/ B or Gold/Bronze teams. The ice time and administrative costs of running the A/B and Gold/Bronze tryout is not included in registration fees.

3. Tryout Notification

In advance of the tryout sessions, the parents/guardians of each skater in the tryout process will be sent the following information to the email address provided to WCYHA in the tryout registration:

- a. The tryout group they will be skating with during the tryout sessions (if applicable).
- b. The dates and times of the skater's tryout sessions.
- c. General information including, but not limited to, procedure for posting of final team placement, player check-in, parental behavior and notification of team placement.

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

4. Player/Parent Requests to "Not Play" at a Higher Competitive Level or For a Specific Coach

- a. Players/parents may submit one request to "Not play" at a certain "higher" competitive level or for a specific coach.
- b. Request must be in writing to the Level Director, CC Rep and VP On-Ice and submitted before the start of the "player placement/selection process". Honored requests will allow competitive team players to shift down one competitive level. Under no circumstance will they be allowed to shift up one competitive level.

5. Player Requirements for Tryouts

- a. Skaters must wear full hockey gear for all skill sessions & scrimmages.
- b. Players should check-in at least 30 minutes prior to assigned tryout session.
- c. All registrants at the U10/Squirt, U12/PeeWee, and U14/Bantam levels will be provided tryout jerseys at check-in. Jerseys must be returned immediately after completion of the tryout process.

6. Tryout Committee

The Tryout Committee will be chaired by the VP On-Ice and consist of the WCYHA VP On-Ice, WCYHA President, CC Reps, and WCYHA Hockey Director(s). The Tryout Committee will be responsible for the selection of the tryout evaluators, assist in the player placement process and organization of tryout evaluation process.

7. A/B and Gold/Bronze Tryout Evaluators

A combination of inside and outside evaluators will be used to assess all skaters at each level involved in the tryout process. WCYHA has secured independent evaluators to serve as the primary evaluation team. A minimum of 3 independent evaluators will be in attendance for each tryout. These evaluators will be chosen by the VP On-Ice and Hockey Director(s) and approved by the Tryout Committee. Two internal evaluators will be recommended by the VP On-Ice and Hockey Director(s) and approved by the Tryout Committee. The Internal Tryout Evaluators will consist of qualified members from inside the WCYHA, with knowledge of the level they are to evaluate. The internal evaluators will not have a skater at the same level they are evaluating. The same evaluators shall be present for all tryout sessions in which they will be participating. No more than 8 evaluators will be utilized at any time. The VP On-Ice is not allowed to be an evaluator, unless they are named as a coach for their child's respective team. The VP On-Ice, as chair of the Committee, will oversee evaluators and the process to ensure compliance with the process. Evaluators will be selected on their past experience and ability to assess a hockey player without bias regarding the identity of the player. The identity of the evaluation team shall be kept confidential. No one shall disseminate information about the identity of the evaluation team with anyone outside of the Tryout Committee. This will help ensure that there is no contact between Association members and the evaluation team prior to or during tryouts. If any evaluator is related to any participant, they will not submit a score or evaluation for that skater and they will not be part of any discussion about that skater throughout the process. Evaluators may be located on the ice, in the player boxes, or any other segregated area that they would like to use for the purpose of evaluating players. They may not discuss tryouts, provide coaching or give insight into the evaluation with any player. No coach, parent or other person shall be allowed contact with the evaluators except the individuals who may have to carry out duties related to tryouts.

8. Tryout Facilitation

The Hockey Director(s) and Level CC Rep will create the drills and format of the tryout and present them to the tryout committee for approval. CC Reps, Level Directors, President, VP Off-Ice and approved WCYHA coaches will be required to assist in the on- and off-ice activities, at the direction of the VP On-Ice, during tryouts. These activities may include, but are not limited to, the registration process, handing out of tryout jerseys, clock operation, and running of on-ice drills.

9. Tryouts: U14/Bantams - Required Pre-Tryout Checking Clinic

WCYHA will make available, prior to tryouts, a free checking/angling clinic, specially designed to provide introductory training to prepare the player for Bantam-level play. It is mandatory for each Bantam player to participate in the WCYHA checking clinic. The date/time of the clinic will be sent out to the Bantam players and will also be posted on WCYHA's website prior to start of the checking clinic. Please contact the VP On-Ice in the case of a conflict.

Note: Goalies are exempt from the mandatory checking clinic.

10. A/B and Gold/Bronze Tryouts

a) Tryouts at each youth age level will consist of three sessions. If any age group yields two teams at any level, their tryout will consist of two sessions. The tryouts will be conducted over one weekend 10/3-5.

b) During tryouts, the players shall be identified throughout the process by number only. The evaluators will not be provided with the names of the players.

c) Goalies will be selected after the final session of tryouts. Goalies must participate in all tryout sessions for their respective age level, unless they are told by the Tryout Committee that they are no longer required to attend.

11. Skater Evaluation Sessions

Evaluation Sessions will be used to determine "A" and "B" or "Gold" and "Bronze" team(s) placement. Skaters will be evaluated in small area games and scrimmage/game situation sessions that will give insight into the skater's level of ability to play the game of hockey.

The evaluators will rank players after considering each player's performance by taking into account the player's skills (skating, puck ability, playmaking, scoring, shooting) and hockey performance (demonstrated hockey IQ/hockey sense, aggressiveness, backchecking, forechecking, playing team defense, playing their position, making their teammates better, etc.). Each session, every attempt will be made to provide each skater and each goalie with the same amount of ice time as possible.

Each evaluator shall independently rank the players by providing, at the end of each session, a total ranking score based on the overall level of skill achieved (A(5), A/B(4), B(3), B/C(2), C(0)) keeping in mind the following criteria: skating, puck ability, hockey sense, and aggressiveness. The scores of all evaluators will be captured at the end of each session. At the end of the final day the scores will be totaled and averaged. Those averages will create a player ranking list. A player that places in the top 85% of rankings will be guaranteed a spot on the highest team at that level. The remaining players will be placed by the Tryout Committee. Those players must be from a pool of players grouped by their tryout evaluation placement. That pool will be consistent with twice the number of players needed to complete the roster. For example, in a 13-skater roster the top 11 skaters by evaluation will be placed on the highest team; the remaining 2 spots will be chosen from a pool of the next 4 players in the evaluation process. Following an in-depth discussion with all evaluators and the Tryout Committee the final roster spots will be placed by CC Rep, Level Director, and Hockey Director(s). This will allow for proper discussion around a “bad” tryout and for properly placing skaters in the best situation for their long-term development. Scores will not be shared with any coaches or parents and will be kept confidential amongst the Tryout Committee. Any parent questions should be directed to the VP On-Ice or Hockey Director(s).

This system ensures for a proper check and balance for all involved parties, creating a fair and partial system for each player.

12. Goalie Evaluation Sessions

Each goalie will be individually evaluated and ranked based upon each player’s performance of the tryout skills/drills formulated by the evaluation group and the player 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 at each respective age group. All final on-ice tryout rankings will be tallied by the evaluation group, checked for accuracy and the final on-ice rank sheet will be signed and certified by the evaluation group chair and one administrative representative of the Tryout Committee. If possible, goalies will be evenly assigned among teams at the same age level. If an unequal number of goalies exist among the teams at their respective age level, the evaluation group shall determine the number of goalies on each team after evaluations. 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 at a given age level cannot have three goalies on the roster while another team at the same level has one rostered goalie).

13. Missed A/B Tryout Sessions

If a player is unable to participate in every day of the A/B or Gold/Bronze tryouts, the player will be placed on the lowest level team at their age level. The only exceptions to this are injury, catastrophic life events or in the event that the skater has successfully made a hockey team such

as Team Wisconsin, which is the highest level of Tier II play, and they have a competition that directly interferes with that skater's tryout time (Fall team play including 10U Junior Admirals and WEHL is excluded from this exception). In those rare circumstances the player's parent/guardian must send notification of such an event to the Hockey Director(s), VP On-Ice, President and VP Off-Ice for review. If unable to attend any tryout days and upon approval by the WCYHA Board of Directors the skater will be placed according to the recommendations of the Tryout Committee and the players coach from the previous season, based on the skaters previous performance in the organization. For players on a team such as Team Wisconsin, the Committee may also contact the head coach of that team for input on player placement.

14. Player Placement

All player placements will be announced at the completion of each tryout process. All skaters that are selected for an A/B or Gold/Bronze team will be contacted by their coach within 48 hours of tryouts. All C teams will be contacted by their coach within 48 hours of the final skate, informing them of their team and coach (see Section 16 for more information on C team placement sessions). Within 72 hours, the rosters of all teams will be posted on the WCYHA website. Once validated by the Tryout Committee, the decisions that are posted are final.

Any questions should be directed to the VP On-Ice and Hockey Director(s).

Communication between any evaluator or Tryout Committee member with a parent or player is prohibited. All rankings are verified by more than one committee member after input to ensure accuracy.

15. 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 placed based on tryout evaluation. This will take place either at the conclusion of the "A" and "B" tryouts or, in the case of "C" team placement, after additional placement skating sessions.

Teams will be tiered based on the evaluator rankings from tryouts for all "A" and "B" teams. Equalizing of teams may occur if recommended by evaluators and approved by the Tryout Committee.

All "C" level skaters will be evaluated by the C level coaches and the appropriate level CC Rep during tryout week. The teams will be formed at the end of the week. These teams will be formed to foster the best competitive and learning environment. Tiering or equalizing of these teams will be determined by the VP On-Ice, Hockey Director(s), CC Rep and Level Director. Team placement will be posted within 48 hours of the final skating session of the week.

16. 8U/Mite Program

The WCYHA Board of Directors approved the adoption of USA Hockey's American Development Model (ADM) for the 8 & Under Program. At these levels, ADM has a cross-ice focus. The "tryout" process will be very informal and involve on-ice coaches categorizing the overall level into thirds, identified by "Red", "White", and "Blue" teams. This "evaluation" process will be developed by the Grow the Game Coordinator in coordination with the VP On-Ice and Hockey Director(s). The primary focus in the 8 & Under Program is introducing the fundamentals and skill development while making it fun and developing a passion for the game. The 8 & Under Program at WCYHA will continue to follow the ADM Model. Please visit the USA Hockey link for more information on the ADM at www.admkids.com/.

There is no prerequisite to enroll in the Learn to Skate program prior to enrolling in the 8U Program. The 8 & Under Program will set the foundation for the players' hockey development and prepare them to progress through the older age divisions (U10/Squirt, U12/PeeWee, U14/Bantam, and High School).

17. Player/Parent Conduct

The mandates for acceptable player/parent conduct are more fully set forth in WCYHA's parent handbook, WCYHA'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 volunteers, or the bench-tryout volunteers.
- C. Viewing of tryouts will not be allowed by anyone other than evaluators or other tryout volunteers. 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.
- E. Any player or adult who does not abide by WCYHA's rules of conduct may, at the sole discretion of the tryout volunteers, 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 WCYHA's policies/rules of conduct.

18. Policy Modifications

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 talented players in the WCYHA program, 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; pandemic or stay at home orders shortening season or tryout time; etc.).

19. Closing Statement

Please keep in mind that these young skaters are placing plenty of pressure on themselves going into tryouts. Remember that they are out here to play a game, a great game that should be enjoyed. Enjoying the game, having fun with teammates, and learning sport and life lessons can be achieved on an “A” team or a “C” team. Encourage your skater to relax, have fun and give 100% effort; there is no need to pile on additional pressure. “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 WCYHA’s tryout/team formation policy should be directed to:

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