

## **SMHA Underage Player Policy**

- The Sudbury Minor Hockey Association (SMHA) strongly recommends that all players participate in the age group for which they are by birth designated under OHF and NOHA rules and regulations. However, the Association recognizes the right of the underage player to play at an older age level, under special circumstances.

This policy applies to U12 to U16 tryouts. This policy does not apply to U18 tryouts. U16 aged players will have the right to tryout for the U18 team.

### **Eligibility**

- A parent/guardian who wishes for their child to play up a category shall request in writing to the SMHA Executive, and the convenors for that age group, to have their child participate in tryouts for an older age group.
- For 2022, requests must be received by August 31st.
- Commencing in 2023, requests must be received by February 15th prior to Spring tryouts and July 15th prior to Fall tryouts.
- Any request received after this date will not be considered for the upcoming season.
- This request is to be forwarded to the following e-mail: [smha@sudburyminorhockey.ca](mailto:smha@sudburyminorhockey.ca)

### **Criteria**

If an underaged player is to play at an older age group, they shall have to be ranked in the top three (3) forwards, top two (2) defence or top goalie on the team they would like to move up to.

### **Process**

- The Association will notify the Coach of the team in the higher age category of any underage player(s) requesting a tryout for the team and will include information in regard to conflict of interest rules for underage player tryouts (see section on Conflict of Interest).
- The player has to tryout at the highest level of their own age group and also the highest level of the older age group.
- The President and the Rep Convenor (\*) will select a committee of three (3) independent evaluators per position (Forward, Defence, Goalie).
- A minimum of two (2) board members will be selected to attend the tryouts to ensure there is no interference during the evaluations.
- The underage player will be evaluated during the second and third tryout dates for the older age group.
- The underaged player(s) will be evaluated based on skill and ability for the age that they are requesting to play by the evaluators.
- An evaluation form, adapted from Hockey Canada's player evaluation forms, will be used by the evaluators to evaluate and rank the skills and abilities of all of the players trying out for the same position (Forward, Defence, or Goalie) as the underage player. Evaluators will assess and rank players independently from one another.
- Upon completion of the evaluation, the evaluators will present their individual results to the Board. In the event that two (2) evaluators deem the underage player to have met the criteria to play at the older age group, the Rep Convenor(\*) will contact the coach to determine if the coach is interested in adding the underage player to their roster.
- Notice of the decision will be provided within one (1) day of the final evaluation.
- The decision of the evaluators is final with no opportunity to appeal.

*\* in the case of a declared conflict of interest by the President and/or Rep Convenor, another Board member with no declared conflict of interest will be appointed to oversee the process.*

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### **Evaluation Committee**

Players shall be evaluated and ranked in a fair and objective manner by impartial evaluators.

An impartial evaluator is defined as an individual (non-parent and not related to a player in the tryout process) who has adequate hockey knowledge, experience, and expertise. This includes but is not limited to:

- The evaluators must attest to having no conflict of interest in relation to the age group of the underage player as well as the age group that they are evaluating.
- Evaluators must be development 1 certified.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

- Any Board member with a direct or indirect interest in the outcome of the tryout or who has a child(ren) who plays at the age group being requested must declare a conflict of interest.
- Ensure that no parent(s) associated with the underage player age group or the age group being evaluated are participating in the tryout process.
- Non-parent Assistant Coaches and all tryout staff (sign-in staff, on-ice staff) must not have a conflict of interest with any player participating in the tryout.
- If at any time during the process the parent(s) of the underage players participating in the tryout attempts to influence the coaches or evaluators, the process will be terminated.
- Coaches or evaluators shall immediately report to the age group convenor any attempts from an outside party to influence team selection.
- The convenor shall forward the information to the SMHA Executive.
- The SMHA Executive shall discuss the matter with the Board and determine if an investigation is required.
- If it is deemed necessary that an investigation be conducted, the SMHA Executive shall assign an investigator to determine what occurred.
- The investigator shall complete a report and submit it to the SMHA Executive for review.
- The investigator shall indicate based on the balance of probabilities whether the allegation occurred.
- Based on the findings, the Board will recommend sanctions if required.

### **Duration**

- Underage players requesting to play in an older age group must apply every year.