



CMHA Competitive Tryout, Evaluation and Team Formation Policy

Date of Policy Approval: September 28, 2025

1.0 Overall Purpose of the Tryout and Player Evaluation Policy

The overall objective of this policy is:

- To set out the expectations for competitive hockey teams within CMHA
- To establish a process and approach for the organization of tryouts and player evaluations that is accountable, transparent and done with appropriate Board oversight
- To set forth the roles and responsibilities of CMHA Board members in relation to the oversight and coordination of tryouts and player evaluation processes.
- To select evaluators who are objective, unbiased, free of conflict of interest, and have a thorough understanding of CMHA's objectives with the tryout process;
- To inform players and parents of the expectations upon which players will be evaluated;
- To provide fair, consistent and impartial assessment of a player
- To create an environment where each player has a reasonable opportunity to be selected for the level appropriate to their skill, physical maturity and ability where they may continue to grow and develop as a player;
- To establish an evaluation and selection process that provides consistent and comprehensive evaluation based upon the demonstrated skills and ability of each player;
- To inform players and parents of the expectations upon which players will be evaluated;
- To provide for the ongoing review and improvement of the player evaluation and team selection process, ensuring that the process continues to meet the demands placed upon the Association.

2.0 How CMHA Determines Team Levels

Competitive hockey is offered by Chester Minor Hockey Association (CMHA) from the U11 level up. As a small association Chester usually ices a single team at each age level; occasionally it may have enough registered players to form two teams at a single age level. A hockey team is defined as a maximum of 18 skaters and two goalies in any given age level.

The level of competitive play within CMHA teams is dictated first by a declaration based process and then through a series of exhibition games organized by the league throughout October to determine relegation and placement. Declarations are generally made early in the hockey season by CMHA's Board after registration has closed. Initial decisions are typically based on the number of registrations the association has received at a particular age level and the likely composition of players who have registered to form the team in a given year.

The association also reviews data and information from past seasons and in particular looks at past player history and previous team success in league play during the years prior to make its best estimate on what type of team to declare. This may range from AA to C. Each year in September, the President of CMHA, on the advice of its Development Advisor, past year coaches and direction from the Board will identify and notify the Western Regional Director of their intent to form teams and will declare their targeted level of play from AA - C.

As part of the declaration process and in recognition of the limited pool of players within the Western region, the President of CMHA will make all efforts to reach out prior to submitting any declarations or intents to coordinate and review other MHA's plans for their upcoming seasons. All efforts will be made to collaborate with other local MHAs to ensure that all players within the Western region have an opportunity to be considered for teams and play hockey at the competitive level that best meets their abilities and talent.

3.0 Player Expectations for CMHA Competitive Hockey Teams

Players who sign up for a competitive hockey team with CMHA should be aware of the time, travel and financial commitments that come with this level of play. This includes but is not limited to the following:

- **Practices:** Players should be prepared to attend 1-2 practices per week; each team will decide what is appropriate for them.
- **Games:** Players and families should be prepared to play an average of two (2) games per week (one home and one away game, typically scheduled on the weekends both Saturday and Sunday).
- **Travel commitment:** Regular season team play typically includes travel to some of the following communities (depending where opposing teams are iced): Lunenburg, Bridgewater, Liverpool, Shelburne, Barrington Passage, Yarmouth, Church Point, Clare, Digby, Middleton, Greenwood, Kentville, Windsor, Newport or any rink within these general geographic boundaries.
- **Tournaments:** Up to 5 tournaments a season (typically between 2-3 tournaments generally within the Maritimes) and any costs associated with hotels, gas, and meals where required.
- **Player cash contributions/players sponsorships:** Parent-player cash contribution/sponsorships to support costs like tournament registrations, a second weekly practice ice time, extra exhibition games, team building activities or any other items decided by the team. These payments and contributions are intended to generate some cash flow for a team, to help carry the group through

the first half of their season. This budget will be set by the team manager and head coach, in consultation with parents during the first parent meeting.

- **Fundraising:** Parents and players must contribute to team fundraising efforts. Fundraising beyond the player-parent contribution is to offset extra team costs such as tournament registration fees, non-parent coach fees, extra or specialized development expertise that may be brought in, and extra ice-time for practices through the year. If the team fundraises more than is needed to cover its expenses, parent-player cash contributions can be returned. See CMHA's fundraising policy for more detail.

For players who fall within CMHA's catchment area but who are not interested in playing competitive hockey at the U11 - U18 levels, additional options to play recreational hockey exist in the Western Region with our sister organizations. These options are all within a 30-60 min drive through South Shore Minor Hockey and/or Queens Minor Hockey depending on the player's individual needs.

4.0 Decision to Host Tryouts/Player Evaluations

CMHA's President will determine whether tryouts or player evaluations will be required and held by the Association on the advice and recommendations of the CMHA Board. This decision each year will be influenced by the number of players registered on or around September 1st and any player expressed requests for tryout releases from other Associations.

5.0 Tryout Coordination and Organization

If the Association determines tryouts and/or player evaluations will be required, CMHA's Development Coordinator will take on overall responsibility of coordinating, overseeing and executing the tryout process. Depending on the age of play, the level coordinators/level directors elected for the year, will also assist in organizing tryouts.

5.1 Determining and Setting Tryout Dates - Cascading Approach

CMHA will adhere to a cascading approach to setting its approximate tryout dates dependent on the level of play it is declaring in an age category. The purpose of this approach is to allow Association players to compete for a spot on AAA, AA, A, or B teams if CMHA is not hosting that level. For example:

- If CMHA intends to host a AA level team, AA tryouts shall not begin until AAA tryouts have concluded within the Western Region and the player roster has been selected. Any players who reside within the Association's catchment who are trying out for AAA team, and are subsequently released from that team, shall have the ability to return to CMHA and participate in AA tryouts.
- If CMHA is not hosting a AA team but does intend to declare an A level team, A level tryouts shall not begin until all AA tryouts within the Western region have concluded, and player rosters have been finalized;

- If CMHA is not hosting a AAA, AA, or A team but will declare a B team, B level tryouts shall not begin until all A level tryouts have concluded in the Western region and player rosters have been finalized.

This cascading approach shall be implemented for all levels to ensure that Association players are able to fully participate in the competitive selection process within the Western Region and are best placed at a level of competitive play that best matches their skill and ability, should they so choose to try out. CMHA will however not unduly delay any of its tryouts if Chester Association players have requested a second AAA or AA tryout outside of the Western Region with the approval of Hockey Nova Scotia. Players pursuing other competitive options outside of the region are free to make those decisions and apply for a tryout release but CMHA will not delay its process in these circumstances. Players and families should familiarize themselves with HNS's regulations regarding concurrent tryouts when considering their options.

5.2 Scheduling Ice Times

Once the tryout time frame is selected, the Development Coordinator will work closely with the Vice President to schedule ice times to conduct tryouts and evaluations in early October working within the availability of ice times provided to CMHA as part of its regular bookings at the Eleanor Pew Memorial Arena.

If additional ice times must be scheduled at rinks other than our home rink, the development coordinator will work with the VP to ensure suitable bookings are made at rinks as close as geographically possible to the Association's home ice. All efforts to prevent the need for excessive travel for tryouts will be made.

6.0 Evaluators

The role of the evaluators during the tryout process will be to:

- Review and understand the evaluation factors/criteria that they are being asked to evaluate in a given session
- Ensure that each assigned player receives a full evaluation and a representative score based on said evaluation
- Respect the confidentiality of the process and do not discuss any evaluations outside of the actual process and those involved
- Refrain from sharing comments/ opinions with anyone outside of the tryout process.
- Direct any questions, comments or concerns to the Development Coordinator.

6.1 Evaluator Panels

Level coordinators will work with the development coordinator to assist in assembling and presenting evaluator panels for Board approval. An evaluator panel must adhere to the following criteria:

- Tryout evaluation panels must consist of at least three people, qualified to assess player skills, team play, and other factors.

- Tryout evaluators can not evaluate for a level where they have an immediate family member (child, grandchild, or dependent), who is trying out (this includes parent coaches).
- Tryout evaluators can not have coached any player trying out in the past three years.
- Parent coaches may be utilized by the tryout committee to help run skill testing drills and help with the flow of tryouts, but will not be permitted to score or have input into the scoring process.
- Any parent coaches helping on ice, who are found to be unduly attempting to influence the outcome or score assigned to any of the players trying out will be removed from the process by the Board on the advice of the Development Coordinator and may have their coaching privileges revoked.
- CMHA's Development Coordinator may participate as one of the evaluators, provided they have not coached any of the players who are intending to try out for a given level, within the past three seasons.

7.0 Notification of Tryouts

- If tryouts will be held for any level of play, a notification will be put on the CMHA website no later than 2 weeks prior to the first tryout session to provide sufficient notice to parents and players who want to register to tryout.
- Every person who is registered for a competitive team will receive an email at the address provided during registration, inviting their player(s) to tryout.
- All players who register for tryouts will receive email communication at the e-mail address used to register them, containing dates, times and locations of their tryouts. This information will also be shared on CMHA's website and social media page(s).
- If a player has not registered for their tryout, and have not paid their tryout fee (if applicable) or made payment arrangements with the Treasurer, they will not be permitted to take to the ice. Given the short window of time to host tryouts, select a team, and register players before the season begins, there can be no exceptions to this rule.

8.0 Registration and Fee Payment for Tryouts

- Try out fees for within and out of association players will be set annually by the CMHA's Board, at a cost commensurate to recover any additional expenses required to host tryouts (e.g. extra ice and evaluator stipends).

- Tryout costs will be communicated to players and parents at the time of registration.
- Payment must be made by e-transfer/cheque prior to the start of the first session or the player will not be permitted to take the ice.
- No refund of tryout fees will be provided after the tryout sessions and process has begun.

9.0 Out of Association Players Trying out for a CMHA Team

9.1 Release for Tryouts

- Tryouts shall be open to players from other associations; however, they must seek and receive a tryout approval in writing from their home association to register and attend a CMHA tryout process.
- No players from outside of the association will be permitted to try out without confirmation of this release on file in writing with CMHA's President.

9.2 Selection of Out of Association Players

To be named to a CMHA roster, Out of Association players trying out for a CMHA team, must be determined and ranked at the conclusion of the second intra-squad game, as one of the:

- top 6 forwards
- top 4 defense or
- top 2 goalies

All out of association players who are not ranked in one of these spots, will be released back to their home association unless there is a need due to low registration, to include out of association players who rank lower in the process to ensure a team has a sufficient number of competitive players.

10.0 Player Attire for Tryouts

- Socks: Players must wear CMHA socks or solid colour socks. No specialty team socks are permitted.
- Shells: Players are not permitted to wear any specialty team hockey pant shells.
- Jerseys: Tryout jerseys will be provided to players participating in CMHA tryouts. Players are to wear the tryout jersey CMHA evaluators provide. Please indicate your jersey size at the time you register your player to ensure they have gear that fits.

- The number assigned to each player will remain with the player for the duration of the tryout. Players are not permitted to trade jerseys in any instance.
- No player will be allowed on the ice without full, properly functioning, equipment, including neck guards.
- A jersey deposit may be requested in addition to the tryout fees and will be refunded upon the return of tryout jerseys.

11.0 Player Selection by Position

- For the purposes of scoring and ranking players, CMHA requires that all players competing for a position on competitive teams identify the position for which they are trying out.
- Players and parents cannot request a position change once tryouts have begun.

12.0 Voluntary Withdrawal From Participation in Tryouts

- If a player begins the tryout process and does not wish to continue in the process, the player and/or their parents will notify the Development Coordinator in writing, who will inform CMHA's Board.

13.0 Tryout Absenteeism and Injury

- All players registered for tryouts are expected to attend all evaluation sessions for their Program;
- Any player that fails to attend a tryout session without a valid circumstance will receive a score of 0 for the session(s) missed. A "no show" must be documented;
- The Parent/Player is to notify CMHA's Development Coordinator in writing at the first possible opportunity and within 24 hours if the player is going to miss a session;

Valid Circumstances accepted by

CMHA include the following:

- Illness (if more than one session is missed a physician's note may be required prior to the last ice session in their program);
- Injury (if more than one session is missed a physician's note or evidence of injury may required prior to the last ice session in their program);

Other valid reasons such as the

following:

- Family tragedy (e.g. death of an immediate family member);
- Religious holidays (including major non-Christian holidays)
- Attendance at a regional or national event, sport or otherwise, that arises from a player's participation and it necessitates their attendance;

- For any other compassionate reasons at the discretion of CMHA's Board (with prior notification and written approval).
- A player who has attended some but not all of their tryout sessions for their program due to illness, injury, or for other reasons, will be scored based on the sessions they attended and those scores will be pro-rated for the sessions that they missed.
- Additional information may be requested by the evaluation team such as, past performance, previous season's team and/or feedback from the head coach candidate(s) and estimated time of return, in the case of ill or injured players;
- A player who is excused from all tryout sessions in their program due to illness or injury, will be ranked based on the following criteria:
 - Level of play the previous season
 - Past performance
 - Feedback from previous coaches
 - Estimated time of the players return to play
- If a player is excused from all evaluations due to compassionate or other reasons, the player will be ranked based on the following criteria:
 - Level of play the previous season;
 - Past performance;
 - Feedback from previous coaches;

14.0 Tryout and Evaluation Process

If local association registration numbers do not warrant a tryout process at a given age level, no call for open tryouts will be conducted. Instead, players will be evaluated on their ability to play at the level the team is declaring. Coaches will look at the relative level of player skill, the player's physical and social maturity, safety factors and best placement for the player's development. If a player is deemed to be significantly more developed than their peers, coaching staff will meet with the player and their family to suggest a possible evaluation which could see the player moved to a higher age level or encouragement to tryout for a more competitive team in the region. If coaches feel the player's development, skill and safety would be better served in a less competitive environment, coaches will meet with the player and parents to present more appropriate options to ensure the player's continued development and safety.

Players participating in CMHA's tryout and player evaluation process will be evaluated on their individual skills and game play performance. The tryout format may consist of the following components:

- One (1) skill sessions to assess individual skills
- One (1) skill session to assess tactical skills
- One (1) Inter-squad scrimmage game (U9-U13 levels) and/or one (1) Exhibition game (U15 & U18 levels only)

14.1 Skill Evaluation:

- Skating: acceleration, speed, agility, balance, stride, crossovers and pivoting
- Passing: forehand and backhand passing and receiving
- Puck Handling: head up/awareness, quick hands, puck protection and control
- Shooting: velocity, accuracy, quick release, shooting in stride
- Intangibles (goalies and skaters): work ethic, consistency, attentiveness.

14.2 Game Execution:

- Skating: as above
- Puck Skills: passing, puck handling and shooting
- Offensive Play: creativity, determination, driving the net, vision, play making, confidence and speed with the puck, positioning with and without the puck, two-way play (forechecking and backchecking), break out, scoring ability and battling
- Defensive Play: angling, gap control, vision, checking, positional play, puck movement, net play, point play
- Intangibles: work ethic, compete level, discipline, stamina, team play, attitude and communication skills

14.3 Goalie Evaluation:

- Goalies participating in CMHA tryouts will have one goalie skill evaluation session and if tactical skill sessions are required as part of the process, will also participate on ice during player tactical skills sessions.
- The goalie skill session will evaluate the goalie's stance, mobility, positioning, save technique, and rebound control.
- Goalies will also participate in the inter-squad games. During game play, in addition to the skills above, game performance, anticipation, tracking, cardio, and determination will be evaluated.

15.0 Scoring and Weighting of Sessions

- Evaluators will use a points based rating system developed by Hockey Canada to assess performance, with scores ranging from 0-5 points.
- Scores awarded during all sessions will be carried through the entire tryout process.

Age Division	Number of Sessions	Session 1 - Technical Skills	Session 2 - Tactical Skills	Inter-squad Game 1	Inter-squad Game 2	Exhibition Game
U11	3	35%	25%	20%	N/A	n/a
U13	4	25%	25%	25%	25%	n/a

U15	5	25%	20%	25%	25%	
U18	5	20%	20%	30%	30%	

16.0 Evaluation Phases and Tryout Format

16.1 Skills Phase

There are two sessions in the Skills Phase. Players trying out for competitive teams will be grouped to create approximate evenly skilled groups for the first two skills sessions. The purpose of the grouping is to facilitate a fair ranking process by reducing risk of excessively strong or weak groups.

- Technical Skills – Drills designed to test the player's individual skills – skating, puck handling, shooting and passing abilities.
- Tactical Skills – Drills designed to test the player's tactical skills in game-like situations such as battle drills, one-on-ones, two-on-ones, etc.

16.2 Intra-Squad Game Phase

This phase will include two intra-squad games as follows:

- Game 1 – Intra-squad – The combined evaluation scores from Session 1 and 2 will be used to rank the players and tier them into teams for the first intra-squad game.
- Game 2 – Intra-squad – Scores from Game 1 and the skills scores will be combined (based on the weighting table) to re-group the players for Intra-Game 2 and ensure equal skill ranking across both groups.

16.3 Final Exhibition Game Phase

- The final phase of the tryouts involves evaluating the players' overall skills and abilities as demonstrated in an exhibition game against an opponent from another association OR a third intra-squad game/equalizer if there is no ability to schedule an exhibition game, as required.
- The exhibition games may have larger teams than necessary to facilitate the evaluation process.
- The normal number of players on the teams during this phase are as follows: up to 12 forwards, 8 defence and 3 goalies.
- Prior to the final exhibition game, 6 forwards, 4 defence and 1 goalie will have their team selection locked in on the basis of their scores and ranking through the first four sessions.

- The head coach reserves the right to sit some or all of the locked-in players during an exhibition game to better assess the remaining players.
- Players (other than the locked players) attending the exhibition game are not guaranteed to make that team.
- The Development coordinator may approve head coach requests to add players to the exhibition games as required, to ensure sufficient number of players to conduct the game.
- After this game, the evaluators will consult with Coaches, and make the final selections to complete the roster.

17.0 Head Coach Input to Team Formation

- Team roster positions as follows will be determined by evaluator's scores from the tryout process:
 - Forward positions 1-6
 - Defence positions 1-4
 - Goaltender position 1
- A named Head Coach candidate for a given team may provide input to assist evaluators during their deliberations on the following roster positions.
 - Forward positions 7-12,
 - Defence positions 5-6,
 - Goaltender position 2;
- Additional information provided to the evaluators can include coaches' knowledge of the players work ethic, compete level, discipline, stamina, team play, attitude, coachability, and communication skills.
- If a head coach has a child, grandchild or immediate household dependent participating in the tryout process, they may not provide additional input into the evaluation process if their child, grandchild or immediate dependent is one of the players being considered for one of the remaining team positions and is not part of the group who was previously locked in.
- In this instance the final roster decisions will rest with the evaluators conducting the tryout and the evaluation committee will make its deliberations without the head coach's input. In the event that evaluators are not familiar with the players who remain, evaluators may reach out to past coaches for any players still in contention for a spot on the roster, should they require more information on the player's work ethic, compete level, discipline, stamina, team play, attitude, coachability and communication skills.

18.0 Confidentiality and Submission of Final Evaluation Scores

- Evaluators will not have parent interaction during the evaluation sessions.
- Evaluation sheets and scores will be tallied up and signed. After tallied and signed off, all scores are locked and cannot be adjusted or changed. Score sheets will be turned into the Development Coordinator.
- Evaluators shall not discuss their scores with anyone and will respect the confidentiality of the process at all times.

19.0 Announcing Final Roster Selections

- An email to communicate the final roster will be sent to all registered players who tried out using Blind Carbon Copy (bcc). The e-mail address used to register the player for tryouts in Spordle will be the method of communication.
- Phone calls or in-person conversations will not be made by CMHA directly to players to inform them of the outcome, therefore players and their families are asked to please check their email.
- One week following official email communication of the final roster, CMHA will post roster announcements on its website and social media page(s).
- All roster decisions once posted publicly on the website are final as communicated.

20.0 Post-Tryout and Evaluation Feedback and Complaints SProcess

- The steps below have been introduced to ensure players receive the feedback they need and to deal with any player selection complaints in an efficient and professional manner.
- Post-Tryout and Evaluation Feedback: The tryout process is designed to be fair, transparent and takes into account a variety of factors as outlined above. Players are welcomed and encouraged to seek constructive feedback from coaches to help improve their game. If a Player, Parent or Supporter wishes to receive feedback on their tryout results, the procedure for communicating with the association and team volunteers is as follows:
 1. Wait 24 hours after the release of the final roster. No requests for feedback will be considered within the 24 hour cooling off period.
 2. Contact the Team's Head Coach in writing to express the desire to receive feedback on the player's tryout results.

- Complaints Process: If after receiving feedback from the team's head coach you feel the team's selection was not made accordance to the tryout rules or process outlined above; the selection committee or coach were biased in their assessment; or if the decision was grossly unfair or unreasonable and you would like to make a formal complaint please follow this process:
 1. Contact CMHA's Development Coordinator at development@chesterravens.com
 2. Concerns and complaints must be submitted in writing by email and must include:
 - the Players name
 - the team they were trying out for
 - your contact information
 - Details on your concerns related to the criteria above
 3. Complaints must be submitted within 48 hours of receiving feedback from the team's head coach.
 4. The development coordinator will review the merits of the complaint, and if warranted, will bring it to CMHA's Board of Directors for review and consideration.
 5. All decisions of the Development Coordinator and CMHA's Board of Directors are final.
- Any escalation that involves inappropriate behaviour before, during, or after the evaluation process may warrant disciplinary action.