



SOUTH SHORE MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION TRYOUT AND EVALUATION POLICY

Updated September 2026

1 SCOPE

The following process is to be followed and adhered to for all competitive (AA/A/B) teams to be registered by the South Shore Minor Hockey Association (SSMHA) at the U11, U13, and U15 division levels. Evaluations for the U18 division level are described under its own process within the confines of this policy.

2 GOVERNANCE

The SSMHA Tryout Committee bears primary responsibility for implementation and adherence to the guidelines outlined in this policy, ensuring an impartial and structured environment for all participants. Any inquiries concerning the application or execution of this policy shall be brought immediately to the attention of the SSMHA Tryout Committee Chair. If further guidance is required, the matter will be submitted to the SSMHA Board of Directors.

3 GENERAL INFORMATION

3.1 ELIGIBILITY

All U11, U13, U15 and U18 players and goaltenders will be eligible to tryout for the AA, A, B, or C teams. If a player or goaltender chooses not to participate in the tryout process, they are not required to register or pay the SSMHA tryout fee. A player or goaltender who elects not to

participate in the tryout process but is registered with SSMHA will automatically be placed on the C level team of their respective age division for final rostering.

3.2 REGISTRATION AND TRYOUT FEES

All players and goaltenders with intentions of being evaluated for placement on any SSMHA competitive teams will be required to register for their division level tryouts and make payment for the fee attached prior to the beginning of the tryout sessions. All outstanding fees from previous years must be paid in full for players or goaltenders to be eligible for tryout sessions. Access to tryout registration can be found on the SSMHA website under the heading "Registration".

3.3 OUT OF ASSOCIATION PLAYERS AND GOALTENDERS

Out of association players and goaltenders will be eligible to try out for SSMHA registered teams granted they have registered with their home association and obtain a release from their home association, register and submit payment for SSMHA's tryout process. All out of association players and goaltenders must adhere to Hockey Nova Scotia (HNS) regulations.

3.4 EVALUATORS

- 3.41 Each evaluation session (both skills and games) shall target a minimum panel of three to four qualified evaluators. A minimum of two (2) evaluators per game are assigned exclusively to evaluate goaltenders.
- 3.42 Evaluators must be fully independent, possessing no direct affiliation (e.g., parent, relative, or current coach) with players or goaltenders in the age group or division being evaluated. Subject to availability and resources, SSMHA will prioritize engaging independent, third-party evaluators to conduct or oversee all evaluation sessions.

3.5 PLAYER AND GOALTENDER EXPECTATIONS

- 3.51 Each player and goaltender being evaluated will be assigned a pinny/jersey when entering the rink and will wear that same pinny/jersey for all sessions *if possible*.

- 3.52 A master list with each player's and goaltender's name and corresponding pinny/jersey number will be used to ensure accurate recordings of scores at each evaluation session.
- 3.53 Designated members of the SSMHA Tryout Committee will be responsible for ensuring each player/goaltender is wearing the correct number **immediately before** the players and goaltenders enter the ice. This is to be done as a safeguard to ensure that players and goaltenders have not exchanged, swapped, mixed up or altered their pinny/jersey prior to entering the ice surface for evaluation. This measure will be undertaken at each evaluation session and for each division level consistently to verify accurate recording of results and minimize any potential errors.
- 3.54 To preserve evaluation integrity, no identifiable team, tournament, or personalized apparel (jerseys, socks, helmet stickers) may be worn during any evaluation session. Parents and guardians must ensure players and goaltenders attend all sessions in a plain, solid-colour jersey featuring no name bars or team branding.

3.6 GROUPINGS

For each division, registered players and goaltenders will be split into two balanced groups based on age and alphabetical order.

For each division:

- 1st-Year Players: Split alphabetically into two equal halves
- 2nd-Year Players: Split alphabetically into two equal halves.

Each tryout group will then be formed by combining one half of the 1st-year players and goaltenders with one half of the 2nd-year players and goaltenders, ensuring an equal distribution of player and goaltender age and group size.

4 TEAM OFFERINGS

Team offerings and competitive levels vary each season based on player and goaltender registration numbers, evaluation results, and league ice availability. The levels detailed below represent potential team offerings; final offerings will be confirmed after registration and evaluation are complete.

AA/A

Players and goaltenders selected for a competitive roster are expected to commit to the following team requirements:

- **League Play:** Compete in the Central Minor Hockey League (CMHL), requiring weekend and occasional weekday travel across the Halifax Regional Municipality and Western Nova Scotia.
- **Tournaments:** Attend 3 to 5 tournaments across the Maritimes.
- **Ice Time:** Participate in weekly home games, team practices, and potential extra ice sessions, which may be hosted at regional arenas such as Chester or Liverpool.
- **Off-Ice Training:** Attend potential off-ice development, including dryland training, video sessions, and board talks.
- **Financial and Fundraising Commitment:** Fulfill team financial obligations for additional ice time and operational costs through parent contributions, team fundraising, or both.

B

Players and goaltenders selected for a competitive roster are expected to commit to the following team requirements:

- **League Play:** Compete in the Annapolis Valley Minor Hockey League (AVMHL), requiring weekend and occasional weekday travel across the Annapolis Valley and Western Nova Scotia.
- **Tournaments:** Attend 3 to 5 tournaments across the Maritimes.
- **Ice Time:** Participate in weekly home games, team practices, and potential extra ice sessions, which may be hosted at regional arenas such as Chester or Liverpool.
- **Off-Ice Training:** Attend potential off-ice development, including dryland training, video sessions, and board talks.
- **Financial and Fundraising Commitment:** Fulfill team financial obligations for additional ice time and operational costs through parent contributions, team fundraising, or both.

C

Players and goaltenders selected for a competitive roster are expected to commit to the following team requirements:

- **League Play:** Compete in the Annapolis Valley Minor Hockey League (AVMHL), requiring travel across the Valley and Western Nova Scotia on most weekends and occasional weekdays.
- **Tournaments:** Attend 3 to 5 tournaments across the Maritimes.
- **Financial and Fundraising Commitment:** Fulfill minor team financial obligations (such as extra ice time or tournament fees) through limited parent contributions, team fundraising, or both.

5 EVALUATION PROCESS: PLAYERS (U11-U15)

For U11-U15 division levels, SSMHA uses a two-phase system for player evaluations:

1. **Skills Phase:** Multi-session evaluations focusing on individual skill development.
2. **Game Phase:** Multi-session evaluations focusing on game play and positional awareness.

A player's overall **Total Score** is calculated using progressive session weighting based on division level, as detailed in **Table 1.1**.

A player's **Total Score** is calculated by combining their weighted scores from **Skills Session 1**, **Skills Session 2**, and their final evaluated game (**Game 2, 3, or 4**). This Total Score determines a player's relative ranking within their division.

Game 1 scores are **not** used for a player's Total Score. Game 1 scores are only used for the purposes of determining a player's progression to Game 2, 3, or 4.

Table 1.1 - Weight of Players Total Score Per Evaluation Session

	Skills Session 1	Skills Session 2	Game 1*	Game 2, 3, or 4**	Total Score
U11	33.3%	33.3%	Progression Only	33.3%	100%
U13	25.0%	25.0%	Progression Only	50.0%	100%
U15	25.0%	25.0%	Progression Only	50.0%	100%

****Game 1 Scores:** Used strictly to determine advancement paths (advancing to Game 2 vs. Game 3/4) and are omitted from final Total Score calculations.*

5.1 PHASE ONE: PLAYER SKILL SESSIONS

5.11 The initial evaluation phase consists of two (2) skill-based sessions. **All players must attend both sessions.**

5.12 **SCORING**

Evaluators evaluate players using standard SSMHA scoring forms. Each player will receive a score from **1 to 5** in categories such as:

- **Skating:** Forward/backward skating, edgework, agility, stopping, turns, transitions, and pivots.
- **Puck Skills:** Puck handling, puck control, passing, and shooting.
- **Game-Like Skills:** Body control, body positioning, spatial awareness, and on-ice communication.
- **Compete Level:** Readiness, alertness, effort, and discipline.

A player's session score is the summed average of these category ratings. Upon completion, evaluators sign and date their evaluation sheets and submit them directly to the Division Coordinator.

5.13 **SESSION SCORE CALCULATION**

A player's combined skill score is calculated by adding their individual session scores together:

$$\text{TOTAL SKILL SCORE} = \text{SKILL SESSION 1 SCORE} + \text{SKILL SESSION 2 SCORE}$$

5.14 **RANKING AND ADVANCING TO GAME PHASE**

Following the completion of both skill sessions, skaters are ranked from the highest score to lowest score within their division.

The top eight (8) ranked skaters automatically advance directly to **Game 2** of the Game Phase. This group must consist of:

- Top five (5) highest-ranked Forwards
- Top three (3) highest-ranked Defence

5.2 PHASE TWO: GAME SESSIONS

5.21 Game sessions run during a 90-minute ice booking, consisting of three (3) 26-minute straight-time periods.

During all game phases, a timed buzzer will be employed to ensure the equal distribution of ice time for any given session.

5.22 **SCORING**

Evaluators evaluate players using standard SSMHA scoring forms. Each player will receive a score from **1 to 5** in categories such as:

- **Skating**
- **Game Sense / Hockey IQ**
- **Puck Control**
- **Game Awareness and Positioning**
- **Compete Level**

Upon completion, evaluators sign and date their evaluation sheets and submit them directly to the Division Coordinator.

5.23 **POSITIONAL EXPECTATIONS AND BENCH MANAGEMENT**

To ensure a fair evaluation, players will play their primary declared position (Forward or Defence) for as many shifts as reasonably possible. It is the responsibility of the bench staff/personnel to ensure this principle is met and to give every player a fair evaluation at their declared position.

Bench staff will ensure players receive shift rotations within their primary designation (Forward or Defence). Specific roles (e.g., Left Wing vs. Right Wing) are not guaranteed, and bench staff will rotate players across these sub-positions to maintain balanced ice time.

If roster numbers require a Defence to play Forward (or vice versa), bench staff will rotate players equally so everyone receives maximum evaluation time at their declared position. When game conditions dictate (such as during penalties), bench personnel may temporarily assign players outside their registered position category (Forward or Defence). Such occurrences must be distributed equitably among players to safeguard evaluation integrity and ensure each candidate receives maximum ice time in their declared position.

Game sessions exist strictly to collect individual performance data. Game wins and losses have no impact on player evaluations. Maintaining primary position rotations ensures evaluators get the largest possible sample size to place every player where they can best develop, compete, and succeed.

5.24 **TEAM BALANCING METHODOLOGY**

To ensure equal competition and accurate evaluation, all game rosters (Team 1 vs. Team 2) are balanced using a two-step process:

1. **Balance by Position:** Forwards and Defence are divided as evenly as possible between both teams (e.g., if 9 Defence play, Team 1 receives 4 and Team 2 receives 5).
2. **Balance by Rank:** Teams will roster equally ranked players at both positions. Within each positional group, players are assigned using an alternating pattern based on their skill rankings:

- a. **Team 1:** Receives Forwards ranked 1, 3, 5, 7, 9...
- b. **Team 2:** Receives Forwards ranked 2, 4, 6, 8, 10...
- c. **Team 1:** Receives Defence ranked 1, 3, 5, 7, 9...
- d. **Team 2:** Receives Defence ranked 2, 4, 6, 8, 10...

Roster Adjustment Rule: If a division has fewer than the required number of registered players at a specific position (e.g., only 4 Defence), the remaining roster spots default to the next highest-ranked skaters available, regardless of position.

The goal of this process is to create two teams that are as evenly matched as possible while maintaining the principle that players are to be evaluated at their designated position (Forward or Defence) as much as reasonably possible during any game sessions.

5.25 **GAME 1**

Game 1 consists of the 20 highest-ranked skaters who have not automatically advanced to Game 2. Selection prioritized by position is as follows:

- **Top 11 Forwards**
- **Top 6 Defence**
- **Top 3 Remaining Skaters** (highest-ranked remaining players, regardless of position)

ADVANCEMENT TO GAME 2

Upon completion of Game 1, player scores are recalculated using the combined weighted scores of **Skills Session 1 + Skills Session 2 + Game 1**.

$$\text{PLAYER SCORE} = \text{SKILL SESSION 1 SCORE} + \text{SKILL SESSION 2 SCORE} + \text{GAME 1 SCORE}$$

The top 12 skaters from Game 1 advance to Game 2 based on the following breakdown:

- **Top 6 Forwards**
- **Top 4 Defence**
- **Top 2 Remaining Skaters** (highest-ranked remaining players, regardless of position)

Note: Game 1 scores are used exclusively to determine advancement to Game 2 and are not factored into Total Score calculations.

5.26 **GAME 2**

Game 2 consists of 20 skaters compiled from two qualifying paths:

- **Direct Skills Advance (8 Skaters):** Top 5 Forwards and Top 3 Defence from Phase 1.
- **Game 1 Advance (12 Skaters):** Top 6 Forwards, Top 4 Defence, and Top 2 remaining highest-ranked skaters from Game 1, independent of position.

FINAL SCORE CALCULATION AND MASTER LIST

Following Game 2 each player's overall evaluation score (**Total Score**) is calculated by combining their weighted scores from **Skills Session 1 + Skills Session 2 + Game 2**:

$$\text{TOTAL SCORE} = \text{SKILL SESSION 1 SCORE} + \text{SKILL SESSION 2 SCORE} + \text{GAME 2 SCORE}$$

The Tryout Committee creates a Master List ranking the 20 Game 2 participants by Total Score, including player names, scores, final rankings, and primary positions.

TEAM ROSTER DECISIONS AND PLAYER PLACEMENT

The final AA team roster is selected directly from the Master List.

Non-Selected Participants ("Parked" Status): Players who participate in Game 2 but are not selected for the AA team will not participate in further evaluation games. These players are automatically placed ("parked") onto the next level team (e.g., A team) roster.

HNS Compliance Exception: The only exception to auto-placement is if a player must be released back to their home association to comply with Hockey Nova Scotia (HNS) regulations (e.g., if the player's home association offers a team at that same competitive level).

5.27 **GAME 3**

Game 3 participants include:

- All skaters who did not qualify for Game 1 or Game 2.
- The eight (8) skaters from Game 1 who did not advance to Game 2.

FINAL SCORE CALCULATION AND MASTER LIST

Following Game 3, each participant's final evaluation score (**Total Score**) is calculated by combining their weighted scores from **Skills Session 1 + Skills Session 2 + Game 3**:

$$\text{TOTAL SCORE} = \text{SKILL SESSION 1 SCORE} + \text{SKILL SESSION 2 SCORE} + \text{GAME 3 SCORE}$$

A **Game 3 Master List** is compiled, ranking all Game 3 participants by Total Score, including player names, scores, final rankings, and primary positions.

SUBSEQUENT TEAM ROSTER SELECTIONS

A Team Roster: Formed by combining all "parked" players from Game 2 who were not selected for the AA team, plus the highest-ranked skaters from the Game 3 Master List needed to complete positional requirements.

B Team Roster: Formed from the next highest-ranked skaters on the Game 3 Master List not selected for the A team, taking positional needs into account.

C Team Roster(s): Composed of all remaining skaters not assigned to a competitive team (AA, A, or B), as well as any players who chose not to participate in the SSMHA tryout process.

5.28 **GAME 4**

A fourth game session may be scheduled under one of two specific scenarios:

- Scenario 1: Large registration volume
- Scenario 2: Multi-team level balancing

SCENARIO 1: LARGE REGISTRATION VOLUME

If the remaining player pool for Game 3 exceeds 32 skaters or is determined by the Tryout Committee to be too large for accurate evaluation, the group will be split into two parallel games (Game 3 and Game 4).

- **Format:** Skaters are divided equally across four balanced teams (Teams 1 through 4) following the position and ranking balancing principles outlined in Game 3.
 - **Game 3:** Team 1 vs. Team 2
 - **Game 4:** Team 3 vs. Team 4
- **Evaluation Parity:** Games 3 and 4 carry equal evaluation weight.

SCENARIO 2: MULTI-TEAM LEVEL BALANCING

If SSMHA offers multiple teams at the same competitive or recreational tier (e.g., two B teams or two C teams), Game 4 may be utilized as a balancing session.

Following Game 4, the Tryout Committee is responsible for creating two evenly matched team rosters within that specific tier before league play begins.

FINAL SCORE CALCULATION AND MASTER LIST

Following Game 3 and 4, each participant's final evaluation score (**Total Score**) is calculated by combining their weighted scores from **Skills Session 1 + Skills Session 2 + Game 3 or 4 into a combined single Game 3/4 Master List:**

TOTAL SCORE = SKILL SESSION 1 SCORE + SKILL SESSION 2 SCORE + GAME 3 OR 4 SCORE
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Final A, B, and C team rosters are generated from this combined Master List following the same selection protocol as standard Game 3 procedures.

5.3 ROSTER SELECTION AND ROSTER SIZE

5.31 SSMHA aims to establish optimal roster sizes across all divisions to support player development. Roster sizes vary each season based on overall division registration numbers at the time of final team selection

5.32 Unless otherwise declared by SSMHA, teams are finalized according to the following schedule:

- AA Team: Finalized immediately following Game 2.
- A and B Teams: Finalized immediately following Game 3 (or Game 4, if applicable).
- C Teams: Finalized following the completion of Game 3 or 4, as outlined in the previous section.

5.33 COACH'S DISCRETIONARY PICK

The Head Coach for each team is to be determined by the Coaching Selection Committee. For AA, A, and B, the Head Coach will be given the option of selecting Coach's Discretionary Picks based on specific guidelines. Coach's Discretionary Picks may occur once the Head Coach has accepted the position.

Once SSMHA sets the total roster size, the Head Coach may fill the remaining spots by selecting the appropriate number of skaters required to fill any remaining roster spots. These selections may be made based on the coach's experience, team

requirements, and team direction/identity. Coach selections may include any positional combination based on team needs.

To protect evaluation integrity, the Head Coach receives only an unranked, alphabetical list of names and positions for eligible candidates. No scores or exact rankings are disclosed.

If the Head Coach declines to make discretionary picks, remaining roster spots automatically fill based on strict Master List rank, regardless of position.

If a Head Coach named under the SSMHA Coach Selection Policy has two or more players (e.g., immediate family members) within the eligible selection range defined by the SSMHA Tryout Policy, a conflict of interest is created. In this scenario, the Head Coach's right to make discretionary picks for those positions is immediately revoked. Consequently, any remaining open roster spots will automatically be filled based on strict ranking order from the Master List, regardless of position.

5.34

AA TEAMS

Scoring Data: Weighted score from Skills Sessions 1 and 2 + Game 2 (per Table 1.1).

Roster Limits: 13-15 Skaters

Automatic Roster Locks (Top 12): The top 7 Forwards and top 5 Defence on the Game 2 Master List automatically earn roster spots.

Coach's Discretionary Picks: Players eligible for Coach's Discretionary Pick must rank inside the top 18 on the Master List following the completion of game 2. No other players ranking outside the top 18 can be considered for this purpose.

To protect evaluation integrity, the Head Coach receives only an unranked, alphabetical list of names and positions for the remaining six (6) highest ranking eligible candidates. No scores or exact rankings are disclosed.

Default Assignment: If the Head Coach declines to make discretionary picks, remaining roster spots automatically fill based on strict Master List rank, regardless of position.

Special Circumstances: Where the ideal Top 12 compositions of 7 Forwards and 5 Defence cannot be achieved due to an insufficient number of registered players declaring either position (Forward or Defence), the Top 12 will be established using as many players possible from the ideal 7 Forwards and 5 Defence composition. Any remaining positions within the Top 12 will be filled by the next highest-ranking players, regardless of declared position, as determined by the Master Rankings List.

5.35

A TEAMS

Scoring Data: Weighted score from Skills Sessions 1 and 2 + Game 3/4 (per Table 1.1).

Roster Limits: 13-16 Skaters

Automatic Roster Locks (Top 12): All "parked" players from Game 2 are placed first. The top remaining Forwards and Defence on the Game 3/4 Master List complete the top 12 automatic locks so that the top 12 is composed of 7 Forwards and 5 Defence.

Coach's Discretionary Picks: The Head Coach selects remaining roster spots from the next top 6 highest-ranked eligible players, regardless of position, on the Master List.

Default Assignment: If discretionary picks are declined, remaining spots default strictly to the next highest-ranked players on the Master List.

Special Circumstances: Where the ideal Top 12 compositions of 7 Forwards and 5 Defence cannot be achieved due to an insufficient number of registered players declaring either position (Forward or Defence), the Top 12 will be established using as many players possible from the ideal 7 Forwards and 5 Defence composition. Any remaining positions within the Top 12 will be filled by the next highest-ranking players, regardless of declared position, as determined by the Master Rankings List.

5.36

B TEAMS

Scoring Data: Weighted score from Skills Sessions 1 and 2 + Game 3/4 (per Table 1.1).

Roster Limits: 12-16 Skaters

Automatic Roster Locks (Top 12): The top remaining 7 Forwards and 5 Defence on the Game 3/4 Master List automatically lock onto the roster.

Coach's Discretionary Picks: The Head Coach selects remaining roster spots from the next top 6 highest-ranked eligible players, regardless of position, on the Master List.

Default Assignment: If discretionary picks are declined, remaining spots default strictly to the next highest-ranked players on the Master List.

Special Circumstances: Where the ideal Top 12 compositions of 7 Forwards and 5 Defence cannot be achieved due to an insufficient number of registered players declaring either position (Forward or Defence), the Top 12 will be established using as many players possible from the ideal 7 Forwards and 5 Defence composition. Any remaining positions within the Top 12 will be filled by the next highest-ranking players, regardless of declared position, as determined by the Master Rankings List.

5.37

C TEAMS

Roster Composition: Composed of all remaining players not assigned to a competitive roster (AA, A, or B), along with players who opted out of the competitive tryout process.

Multi-Team Balancing: If division numbers require multiple C teams, the Tryout Committee balances rosters evenly following Game 4 (if necessary).

Core Objective: Across all divisions and levels, SSMHA strives to maintain balanced, competitively appropriate roster sizes to maximize individual player development and ice time.

6 EVALUATION PROCESS: GOALTENDERS (U11-U15)

For U11-U15 division levels, SSMHA uses a two-phase system for goaltender evaluations:

1. **Skills Phase:** Multi-session evaluations focusing on individual skill development.
2. **Game Phase:** Multi-session evaluations focusing on game play and positional awareness.

A goaltender's overall **Total Score** is calculated using progressive session weighting based on division level, as detailed in **Table 2.1**. A goaltender's **Total Score** is calculated by combining their weighted scores from **Skills Session 1**, **Skills Session 2**, and their final evaluated game (**Game 2, 3, or 4**).

This Total Score determines a goaltender's relative ranking within their division. Game 1 scores are **not** used for a goaltender's Total Score. Game 1 scores are only used for the purposes of determining a goaltender's progression to Game 2, 3, or 4.

Table 2.1 - Weight of Goaltenders Total Score Per Evaluation Session

	Skills Session 1	Skills Session 2	Game 1*	Game 2, 3 or 4**	Total Score
U11	33.3%	33.3%	Progression Only	33.3%	100%
U13	25.0%	25.0%	Progression Only	50.0%	100%

U15	25.0%	25.0%	Progression Only	50.0%	100%
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***Game 1 Scores:** Used strictly to determine advancement paths (advancing to Game 2 vs. Game 3/4) and are omitted from final Total Score calculations.

****Games 3 and 4:** Game 4 is utilized based on registration numbers. Final calculations include either Game 3 or Game 4, not both.

6.1 PHASE ONE: GOALTENDER SKILL SESSIONS

6.11 The initial evaluation phase consists of two (2) skill-based sessions. **All goaltenders must attend both sessions.**

- **Skills Session 1:** Goaltender-only session focusing on specialized mechanics.
- **Skills Session 2:** Integrated session where goaltenders are evaluated while participating alongside skaters during Skater Skills Session 2.

6.12 SCORING

Evaluators evaluate goaltenders using standard SSMHA scoring forms. Each goaltender will receive a score from **1 to 5** in categories such as:

- **Stance and Technique:** Knee bend, hand position, stick position, and butterfly posture.
- **Mobility and Skating:** Sliding, up and down movement, recovery, T-pushes, shuffling, C-cuts, backwards skating, and eye tracking.
- **Positioning:** Squareness to shooter, angle play, net awareness, RVH, and depth control.
- **Rebound Control:** Tracking, control, puck cover, absorption, and redirection.
- **Compete Level:** Alertness, attentiveness, battle level, second effort, and communication.

A goaltender's session score is the summed average of these category ratings. Upon completion, evaluators sign and date their evaluation sheets and submit them directly to the Division Coordinator.

6.13 SESSION SCORE CALCULATION

A goaltender's combined skill score is calculated by adding their individual session scores together:

TOTAL SKILL SCORE = SKILL SESSION 1 SCORE + SKILL SESSION 2 SCORE
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6.14 **RANKING AND ADVANCING TO GAME PHASE**

Following the completion of both skill sessions, goaltenders are ranked from the highest score to lowest score within their division.

Advancement to the Game Phase proceeds as follows:

- **1st Ranked Goaltender:** Advances directly to **Game 2**.
- **2nd through 5th Ranked Goaltenders:** Advance to **Game 1**.
- **6th through 8th Ranked Goaltenders:** Advance to **Game 3** (and Game 4, if required).

Capacity and Cut-off Rule: SSMHA can accommodate a maximum of **eight (8) goaltenders** in the Game Phase per division. If more than eight goaltenders register, those ranked 9th and lower after the Skills Phase will not advance to evaluation games and will be assigned directly to C level team rosters.

6.2 PHASE TWO: GOALTENDER GAME SESSIONS

6.21 Game sessions run during 90-minute ice bookings, consisting of three (3) 26-minute straight-time periods.

6.22 Game sessions exist strictly to collect individual performance data. Game wins and losses have no impact on goaltender evaluations. SSMHA's priority is to place every goaltender at a skill level where they can develop, stay competitive, and succeed.

6.23 **SCORING**

Evaluators evaluate goaltenders using standard SSMHA scoring forms. Each goaltender will receive a score from **1 to 5** in categories such as:

- **Mobility and Net Movement:** Sliding mechanics, butterfly technique, recovery speed, and cross-crease movement.
- **Positioning:** Squareness to shooters, angle management, net awareness, RVH execution, hand position, stick position, and depth control.
- **Rebound Control:** Puck tracking, absorption, puck cover, and intentional redirection away from danger areas.

- **Compete Level:** Overall effort, attentiveness, second-effort battling, and second-chance saves.
- **Game Performance:** On-ice communication, puck handling behind the net, and general play-reading ability.

Upon completion, evaluators sign and date their evaluation sheets and submit them directly to the Division Coordinator.

6.24 **EQUAL PLAYING TIME AND ROTATION FORMATS**

All goaltenders in a game session receive equal playing time and will face shots from both competing teams.

Depending on roster numbers per game, bench staff will execute one of the following rotation schedules:

- **2 Goaltenders in Game:** Each plays 3 periods (78 minutes total); switching ends at the 13-minute mark of Period 2 to face both teams equally.
- **3 Goaltenders in Game:** Each plays 2 full periods (52 minutes total) using a 3-period rotation:
 - **Period 1:** Goalie 1 vs Team 1 | Goalie 2 vs Team 2
 - **Period 2:** Goalie 1 vs Team 2 | Goalie 3 vs Team 1
 - **Period 3:** Goalie 2 vs Team 1 | Goalie 3 vs Team 2
- **4 Goaltenders in Game:** Each plays 1.5 periods total (39 minutes) in 13-minute increments against alternating teams across all three periods.
 - **Period 1:**
 - *First 13 min:* Goalie 1 vs. Team 1 | Goalie 2 vs. Team 2
 - *Second 13 min:* Goalie 3 vs. Team 1 | Goalie 4 vs. Team 2
 - **Period 2:**
 - *First 13 min:* Goalie 1 vs. Team 2 | Goalie 2 vs. Team 1
 - *Second 13 min:* Goalie 3 vs. Team 2 | Goalie 4 vs. Team 1
 - **Period 3:**
 - *First 13 min:* Goalie 1 vs. Team 1 | Goalie 2 vs. Team 2
 - *Second 13 min:* Goalie 3 vs. Team 1 | Goalie 4 vs. Team 2

Bench staff will make every effort to adhere to the rotation schedule. However, minor timing variations may occur due to the natural flow of gameplay.

6.25 **GAME 1**

Game 1 includes the four (4) goaltenders ranked **2nd through 5th** following the Skills Phase. Goaltenders ranked 6th or lower proceed directly to Game 3 (or Game 4, if required).

ADVANCEMENT TO GAME 2

Upon completion of Game 1, goaltender scores are recalculated using the combined weighted scores of **Skills Session 1 + Skills Session 2 + Game 1** (per Table 2.1).

$$\text{GOALTENDER SCORE} = \text{SKILL SESSION 1 SCORE} + \text{SKILL SESSION 2 SCORE} + \text{GAME 1 SCORE}$$

Advancement to the next games in the Game Phase proceeds as follows:

- **Advancement to Game 2:** Following Game 1, the top three (3) goaltenders from this session advance to Game 2.
- **Reassignment to Game 3:** The remaining goaltender from Game 1 reassigns to Game 3 (or Game 4).

Note: Game 1 scores are used exclusively to determine advancement to Game 2 and are not factored into Total Score calculations.

6.26

GAME 2

Game 2 features the top four (4) goaltenders in the division:

1. The **1st ranked goaltender** from the direct Skills Phase route.
2. The **top three (3) goaltenders** advancing from Game 1.

FINAL SCORE CALCULATION AND MASTER LIST

Following Game 2 each goaltender's overall evaluation score (**Total Score**) is calculated by combining their weighted scores from **Skills Session 1 + Skills Session 2 + Game 2** (per Table 2.1):

$$\text{TOTAL SCORE} = \text{SKILL SESSION 1 SCORE} + \text{SKILL SESSION 2 SCORE} + \text{GAME 2 SCORE}$$

TEAM ROSTER DECISIONS

The AA team goaltender roster is selected directly from these final Game 2 rankings.

6.27

GAME 3

Game 3 includes up to four (4) goaltenders:

- Goaltenders ranked **6th through 8th** from the Skills Phase.
- The **single goaltender** from Game 1 who did not advance to Game 2.

FINAL SCORE CALCULATION AND MASTER LIST

Following Game 3 each goaltender's overall evaluation score (**Total Score**) is calculated by combining their weighted scores from **Skills Session 1 + Skills Session 2 + Game 3** (per Table 2.1):

TOTAL SCORE = SKILL SESSION 1 SCORE + SKILL SESSION 2 SCORE + GAME 3 SCORE

A **Goaltender Master List** (including names, weighted scores, and final rankings) is generated following Game 3 to determine placements for A, B, and C team rosters.

6.3 GOALTENDER ROSTER SIZES AND SELECTION

- 6.31 For all divisions, goaltender roster sizes for each team level are established exclusively by the SSMHA Tryout Committee. Roster sizes must be finalized before any Head Coaching offers are issued or any head coach discretionary picks are made.

DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND ROSTER TARGETS

SSMHA strives to provide appropriate roster sizes at each level to balance competitive integrity, goalie development, and meaningful playing time.

- **Standard Roster Size:** Target roster size is one (1) to two (2) goaltenders per team.
- **Skill-Based Placement:** Every reasonable effort will be made to roster goaltenders to the appropriate tier based on demonstrated ability.

6.32 SCENARIO 1: EXCESS GOALTENDERS

When registered goaltenders exceed available roster spots (assuming a maximum of 2 goaltenders per team), SSMHA will explore all reasonable options to secure playing opportunities, including:

- Collaborating with neighboring associations to identify open goaltender spots and development opportunities.

- Working with parents and Hockey Nova Scotia (HNS) regulations to evaluate playing up a division level where appropriate.
- If no other viable alternatives exist, fielding teams with three (3) goaltenders as a last resort.

SCENARIO 2: SHORTAGE OF GOALTENDERS

When total registered goaltenders are fewer than maximum available roster spots across a division, the SSMHA Tryout Committee will set team roster sizes impartially by consulting the Goaltender Development Coordinator and Lead Goalie Evaluators. Roster caps established during this consultation will be final and govern all subsequent placements.

6.33 Unless otherwise declared by SSMHA, teams are finalized according to the following schedule:

- AA Team: Finalized immediately following Game 2.
- A and B Teams: Finalized immediately following Game 3 (or Game 4, if applicable).
- C Teams: Finalized following the completion of Game 3 or 4, as outlined in the previous section

6.34 If a Head Coach named under the SSMHA Coach Selection Policy has two or more players (e.g., immediate family members) within the eligible selection range defined by the SSMHA Tryout Policy, a conflict of interest is created. In this scenario, the Head Coach's right to make discretionary picks for those positions is immediately revoked. Consequently, any remaining open goaltender roster spots will automatically be filled by the remaining highest ranked goaltender from the Master List.

6.33 AA TEAMS

Scoring Data: Weighted score from Skills Sessions 1 and 2 + Game 2 (per Table 2.1).

Roster Limits: 1-2 Goaltenders

First Goaltender (Automatic Lock): The 1st ranked goaltender following Game 2 automatically locks onto the AA roster.

Second Goaltender (Coach's Discretionary Pick): The Head Coach selects the second goaltender from candidates ranked 2nd and 3rd following Game 2. The 4th ranked goaltender after Game 2 is ineligible for selection on the AA roster. The Head Coach receives an unranked list of eligible candidate names only. No scores or rankings are provided.

Default Assignment: If the Head Coach declines the discretionary pick, the 2nd ranked goaltender automatically receives the second roster spot.

Reassignment and "Parked" Status: The unselected goaltender from the 2nd or 3rd spot is "parked" and automatically earns the first goaltender spot on the A team.

The 4th ranked goaltender does not play further evaluation games and remains eligible for selection on the A team.

6.34

A TEAMS

Scoring Data: Weighted score from Skills Sessions 1 and 2 + Game 3/4 (per Table 2.1).

Roster Limits: 1-2 Goaltenders

First Goaltender (Automatic Lock): The highest ranked goaltender following Game 2 that did not get rostered onto the AA team automatically locks onto the first A roster spot.

Second Goaltender (Coach's Discretionary Pick): The Head Coach selects the second goaltender from two candidates: the 4th ranked goaltender and the 5th ranked goaltender (the highest-ranking ranked goaltender following Game 3/4). The Head Coach receives an unranked list of eligible candidate names only. No scores or rankings are provided.

Default Assignment: If the Head Coach declines the discretionary pick, the 4th ranked goaltender automatically receives the second roster spot.

Reassignment and "Parked" Status: The unselected goaltender from the 4th or 5th spot is "parked" and automatically earns the first goaltender spot on the B team (if a B team is being hosted).

6.35

B TEAMS

Scoring Data: Weighted score from Skills Sessions 1 and 2 + Game 3/4 (per Table 2.1).

Roster Limits: 1-2 Goaltenders

First Goaltender (Automatic Lock): The highest-ranked remaining goaltender not rostered to the A team (4th or 5th overall) is "parked" and automatically locks into the first B team roster spot.

Second Goaltender (Coach's Discretionary Pick): The Head Coach selects the second goaltender from candidates ranked 6th and 7th following Game 3/4. The Head Coach receives an unranked list of candidate names only.

Default Assignment: If the Head Coach declines the discretionary pick, the next highest-ranked goaltender automatically receives the second roster spot.

6.36

C TEAMS

Roster Assignment: Composed of all remaining goaltenders not placed on AA, A, or B rosters, alongside goaltenders who opted out of the competitive tryout process.

Multi-Team Balancing: If division numbers require multiple C teams, the Tryout Committee balances and assigns goaltenders evenly following Game 3/4.

Core Objective: Across all divisions and competitive levels, SSMHA strives to maintain balances, developmentally appropriate roster sizes to maximize playing time for every goaltender.

7 EVALUATION PROCESS: PLAYERS AND GOALTENDERS U18

All U18 evaluations consist exclusively of the Game Phase. Unlike other divisions, no skills evaluation phase is conducted for the U18 level.

During all game phases, a timed buzzer will be employed to ensure the equal distribution of ice time for any given session.

EVALUATION PATHWAYS

The Game Phase operates under one of two pathways, determined annually by SSMHA registration numbers and the total number of teams fielded:

- **Pathway 1 (Two-Team Model):** Triggered by low registration (35 or fewer players).
 - Results in two (2) teams: one Competitive team (AA, A, or B) and one Recreational team (C).
- **Pathway 2 (Three+ Team Model):** Triggered by higher registration (greater than 35 players).
 - Results in three (3) or more teams: two (2) or more Competitive teams (AA, A, or B) and one Recreational team (C)

7.1 PATHWAY ONE: TWO TEAM EVALUATION

Pathway 1 evaluations consist of two (2) game sessions: a Progression Game (Game 1) and a Final Roster Selection Game (Game 2).

7.11 GAME 1: PROGRESSION

All registered players and goaltenders participate in Game 1. The SSMHA Tryout Committee assigns players based on declared positions to balance Team 1 and Team 2 evenly with Forwards, Defence, and Goaltenders.

Note: If registration numbers exceed single-game capacity, a second progression game will be added to ensure all players participate.

7.12 **GAME 2: FINAL ROSTER SELECTION**

Advancement to Game 2 is based on Game 1 rankings. Game 2 features the top 20 overall skaters and top 3 goaltenders, structured as follows whenever possible:

- Top 10 Forwards
- Top 6 Defence
- Top 3 Goaltenders
- Top 4 remaining skaters (regardless of position)

7.13 **PATHWAY 1 SCORING AND WEIGHTING**

Each player's Final Score is based 100% on their Game 2 evaluation score. Game 1 scores serve strictly to determine advancement to Game 2 and are omitted from the final total score calculation.

Table 3.1 - Weight of Players and Goaltenders Total Score Per Evaluation Session

	Game 1*	Game 2	Total Score
U18	Progression Only	100%	100%

**Game 1 Scores: Used strictly to determine advancement paths (advancing to Game 2) and are omitted from final Total Score calculation*

7.2 PATHWAY TWO: THREE + TEAM EVALUATION

Pathway 2 evaluations consist of three (3) game sessions. All players and goaltenders are guaranteed a minimum of two (2) scored games.

- **Game 1:** Team 1 vs. Team 2
- **Game 2:** Team 1 vs. Team 3
- **Game 3:** Team 2 vs. Team 3

7.21 **TEAM FORMATION AND BALANCING FOR TRYOUTS**

The SSMHA Tryout Committee subdivides all into three balanced evaluation rosters using a two-step criteria:

1. **Position:** Equal (or near-equal) distribution of Forwards, Defence, and Goaltenders across all teams.

2. **Age:** Equal (or near-equal) distribution of 1st-year, 2nd-year, and 3rd-year U18 players across all teams.

7.21 **PATHWAY 2 SCORING AND WEIGHTING**

A player's Final Score is calculated by totaling their two (2) played game sessions (50% per game).

Table 3.2 - Weight of Players and Goaltenders Total Score Per Evaluation Session

	Game 1*	Game 2*	Game 3*	Total Score
U18	50%	50%	50%	100%

**Note: Each player participates in exactly two (2) game sessions, generating two combined scores for their final score calculation*

7.3 ROSTER SELECTION AND SIZE

7.31 Teams are finalized sequentially from highest level to lowest level:

1. **Highest-Level Team:** Finalized immediately following Game 2 (Pathway 1) or Game 3 (Pathway 2).
2. **Subsequent Competitive Teams:** Finalized in descending order (e.g., AA, then A, then B).
3. **Recreational Teams (C):** Finalized following the completion of all competitive rosters.

7.32 **COACH'S DISCRETIONARY PICK**

The Head Coach for each team is to be determined by the Coaching Selection Committee. For AA, A, and B, the Head Coach will be given the option of selecting Coach's Discretionary Picks based on specific guidelines. Coach's Discretionary Picks may occur once the Head Coach has accepted the position.

To protect evaluation integrity, the Head Coach receives only an unranked, alphabetical list of names and positions for eligible candidates. No scores or exact rankings are disclosed.

If the Head Coach declines to make discretionary picks, remaining roster spots automatically fill based on strict Master List rank, regardless of position.

If a Head Coach named under the SSMHA Coach Selection Policy has two or more players (e.g., immediate family members) within the eligible selection range defined

by the SSMHA Tryout Policy, a conflict of interest is created. In this scenario, the Head Coach's right to make discretionary picks for those positions is immediately revoked. Consequently, any remaining open roster spots will automatically be filled based on strict ranking order from the Master List, regardless of position.

7.33 **AA, A, OR B TEAMS (HIGHEST LEVEL)**

Roster Limits: 12–16 Skaters | 1–2 Goaltenders

Automatic Locks (Top 12): The top 7 Forwards and top 5 Defence on the Master List automatically lock onto the roster.

Coach's Discretionary Picks: Remaining roster spots must be selected from players ranked inside the **top 18 overall** on the Master List.

7.34 **A OR B TEAMS (NEXT HIGHEST LEVEL)**

Roster Limits: 12–16 Skaters | 1–2 Goaltenders

Automatic Locks (Top 12): The top remaining 7 Forwards and top 5 Defence on the Master List automatically lock onto the roster.

Coach's Discretionary Picks: Remaining roster spots must be selected from the **next 6 highest-ranked players** remaining on the Master List, regardless of position.

7.4 COMPETITIVE GOALTENDER

7.41 **AA, A, OR B TEAMS (HIGHEST LEVEL)**

1st Goaltender (Automatic Lock): Ranked 1st overall on the Master List.

2nd Goaltender (Coach's Pick): Selected by the Head Coach from an unranked list containing the 2nd and 3rd ranked goaltenders.

Default Assignment: If the Head Coach declines the discretionary pick, the next highest-ranked goaltender automatically receives the second roster spot.

7.42 **A OR B TEAMS (NEXT HIGHEST LEVEL)**

1st Goaltender (Automatic Lock): The unselected goaltender from the top group (2nd or 3rd ranked overall).

2nd Goaltender (Coach's Pick): Selected by the Head Coach from an unranked list containing the 4th and 5th ranked goaltenders.

Default Assignment: If the Head Coach declines the discretionary pick, the next highest-ranked goaltender automatically receives the second roster spot.

7.43 C TEAMS

Roster Composition: Consists of all remaining players not assigned to a competitive roster, alongside players who opted out of competitive tryouts.

Multi-Team Balancing: If numbers require multiple C teams, the Tryout Committee distributes players evenly to ensure balanced team strength across all rosters. This will be followed by a balancing game to verify the accuracy of the balancing. Any adjustments deemed necessary will be made by the Tryout Committee as required.
Core Objective: SSMHA strives to maintain balanced, competitively appropriate roster sizes across all divisions to maximize player development and ice time.

7.44 GOALTENDER SHORTAGE AND AVAILABILITY PROTOCOL

In the event of a goaltender shortage, the SSMHA Tryout Committee adjusts maximum goaltender allocations per team. If the number of available goaltenders equals the total number of registered SSMHA teams in the division, goaltenders are assigned strictly by Master List rank (1st rank to highest-level team, 2nd rank to next-level team, etc.) to guarantee every team has at least one goaltender.

8 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESTRICTIONS

8.1 PROJECTED ICE TIME REQUIREMENTS

The table below outlines the estimated ice hour allocations required to complete tryout evaluations across each division:

Division	Skills Sessions (2 per group)	Game Sessions	Total Ice Hours Required
U11	4 hours	4.5 or 6* hours	8.5 to 10 hours
U13	4 hours	4.5 or 6* hours	8.5 to 10 hours
U15	2–4 hours (based on registration)	4.5 hours	6.5 to 8.5 hours
U18	Not applicable	3 or 4.5 hours	3 hours to 4.5 hours

Total Estimated Division Ice Requirement: 26.5 hours minimum to 33 hours maximum.

** **4th Game Session Trigger:** Game 4 ice is only allocated if player registration numbers require forming four or more teams within a division, or if an additional balancing game is required between two teams at the same competitive tier.*

8.2 SCORES AND RANKINGS RELEASE

Individual Player Scores:

8.21

- **Request Timeline:** Parents may request a copy of their player's scores **48 hours after** the official public release of final division team rosters. Requests made prior to the 48-hour window will not be processed.
- **Submission Process:** Parents must submit an official **SSMHA Score Release Form** (available on the SSMHA website) to the appropriate Division Coordinator.
- **Provided Information:** Upon approval, parents will receive their player's individual scores for both Skills Sessions and their final evaluated Game Session.
- **Privacy:** Parents are strictly limited to receiving scores for their own child. Scores for other players will not be disclosed under any circumstances.

SSMHA views individual session scores as constructive feedback. Scores highlight specific technical strengths and identify areas for ongoing player development.

8.22

Player Rankings Policy:

- **Strict Non-Disclosure:** Player rankings will **never** be released to players, parents, or families for any reason, across any division or position.
- **Rationale:** Relative rankings do not provide actionable feedback regarding a player's skill set or development needs and are strictly reserved for internal team formation.

8.3 PLAYER TIE RULE

In the event of a tie between two or more players following the completion of each phase for purposes of progression or following the completion of all phases for purposes of roster formation(s), the following applies:

8.31

PROGRESSION

A tie during the progression phase is defined as two (2) or more players who have earned the exact same scoring after either the skill phase or Game 1 phase.

After taking into account the players declared position and roster compositions stated prior, if such a tie remains then all tied players with the same score and same declared positions will progress to the next phase. The remaining players continuing

onto the next phase will be adjusted accordingly to accommodate ties and maintain the player composition stated prior.

8.32 **FINAL ROSTER FORMATIONS (TOP 12)**

A tie during the final roster formation is defined as two (2) or more players who have earned the exact same scoring after the completion of the tryout process (skills phase and game phase).

If a tie occurs at the threshold of the top 7 Forwards or top 5 Defence, all players involved in the tie will automatically be added to the Top 12 roster. When this happens, the number of available Coach's Discretionary Picks will be reduced by the number of extra tied players selected.

This rule applies consistently to all team levels (AA, A, and B) in all divisions from U11 to U18.

8.4 GOALTENDER TIE RULE

8.41 In the event two goaltenders of similar age (ex. both 2nd year goaltenders) have identical scores at any stage, for the purposes of progression and roster formation, the goaltender that played the highest level the previous season wins the tie. This tie break is made on the premise that the goaltender has greater experience at that level at the current time.

8.42 In the event goaltenders of differing ages (ex. 1st year goaltender and 2nd year goaltender) have identical scores at any stage, for the purposes of progression and roster formation; the younger goaltender wins the tie. This tie break is made on the premise that the younger goaltender has a higher ceiling and/or potential at the current time.

9 ABSENTEEISM AND INJURY

9.1 GENERAL ATTENDANCE EXPECTATION

All registered players and goaltenders are expected to attend all scheduled Skills Sessions and Game Sessions for their designated division. Missing any evaluation session impacts a player's cumulative score and overall division ranking.

9.2 EXCUSED ABSENCES

An absence will only be considered **Excused** under the following circumstances, provided proper advance notification is given to the Tryout Committee:

- **Medical Illness or Injury:** Supported by a written note from a licensed medical professional (physician, nurse practitioner, or physiotherapist).
- **Family Emergency or Bereavement:** Notification provided to the Division Coordinator prior to the session.
- **HNS/Hockey Canada Sanctioned Event:** Conflict with an official regional or provincial high-performance program event.

Notification Requirement: Except in emergency situations, players or goaltenders must inform the Division Coordinator at least **24 hours prior** to the affected session.

9.3 UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

If a player or goaltender misses an evaluation session without prior notification or a valid medical/emergency excuse:

- **Session Score:** The player or goaltender receives a score of **zero (0)** for the missed session.
- **Advancement:** Unexcused absences in early phase sessions (Skills Phase or Game 1) default the player or goaltender to the non-advancing path (e.g., direct assignment to Game 3/4 or C level evaluation).

9.4 SCORING PROTOCOL FOR EXCUSED ABSENCES

When an absence is approved as **Excused**, the Tryout Committee will apply one of the following evaluation adjustments depending on the phase missed:

9.41 SCENARIO A: MISSED SKILL SESSION

- **One Skills Session Missed:** The player's or goaltender's score for the single attended Skills Session will be duplicated or scaled to represent their full Skills Phase baseline.
- **Both Skills Sessions Missed:** The player or goaltender cannot receive a Skills Phase score. If medical clearance is provided prior to the Game Phase, the player will be placed into **Game 1** or **Game 3** at the discretion of the Tryout Committee based on historical evaluation data (if available).

9.42 **SCENARIO B: MISSED GAME SESSION**

- If a player or goaltender misses Game 1 or Game 2 due to an excused medical absence, their advancement or placement onto the Master List will be reviewed by the Tryout Committee using their available Skills Phase scores and prior season playing level.
- Excused players or goaltenders cannot displace an automatically locked player (Top 12 skaters / goaltender) who completed the full evaluation process.

After taking into account the players declared position and roster compositions stated prior, if a tie remains then all tied players with the same score and same declared position will be included within the Top 12. As a result, the number of Coach's Discretionary Picks may be reduced accordingly.