

June 20, 2017

North West Zone Hockey Association Tryout and Evaluation Process 2017/2018 Season

This document describes the North West Zone Hockey Association's tryout and evaluation process with the intent of providing players and player parents with a full understanding of how we determine which tier, and therefore, team, a player will be placed on for the season. We are providing this information to ensure we are transparent, consistent and open with our players and their parents. Our ultimate goal is to place each player in the tier that best suits their skill level, attitude, and commitment level.

Objectives

The objectives of our tryout and evaluation process are:

1. To provide a fair and impartial assessment of a player's total hockey skills during the scrimmage sessions.
2. To ensure that players have the full opportunity of being selected to a team appropriate to their skill levels as determined during the on-ice evaluations of the current year.
3. To provide coaches with the opportunity and flexibility to build a team based on their own coaching philosophy and knowledge of player skills and attitude as demonstrated during evaluations.
4. To provide uniformity and consistency in the evaluation process such that player and parent expectations are consistent from year to year as players move through the various levels of the association's programs.
5. To form teams to maintain balanced and competitive play where the athletes can develop and participate equitably and have fun playing hockey during the season.
6. To provide feedback in order to develop players.

Evaluation Process Description

The following provides a basic description of how NWZHA Evaluations/Tryouts are performed.

1. Players are placed into initial skate or scrimmage groups, where each group is identified by either a 'group number' or 'group colour' and each group has enough players to comprise 2 scrimmage teams. The exact number will vary year to year, but usually 10 to 16 defencemen, 16 to 24 forwards and 4 to 6 goalies are assigned to each initial group. Players are placed into groups based primarily on the category and tier they played the previous year. This is done to try to start with scrimmage groups that are comprised of somewhat similarly skilled players.

It is important to note that the placement of players into the initial skate/scrimmage groups does not determine where a player will ultimately be placed. The initial grouping is done somewhat arbitrarily and the evaluation process will move players from group to group based on how they compare to the other players in the group. Our process ensures that if players are initially placed in a group that is above or below their skill level, that player will be moved to a more appropriate group for the following skate. Players who have registered as NON BODY-CHECKING will not move into the top group as that is made up of the A/B body checking teams.

2. During drills and practices, NWZ evaluators (at minimum, all NWZ coaches and members of the NWZ Hockey Committee. If deemed necessary by the NWZ Hockey Committee, other knowledgeable individuals with proven player evaluation skills and experience may be added to the team of evaluators).

Typically, Bantam and Midget evaluators will provide scores with a range of 1 to 10, where 10 is 'best'. The scores are based on evaluator's assessment of the player in a number of skills categories (see evaluation criteria section later in this document) in comparison to other players within the current skate group. To be clear - the evaluator scores are based on just how each player compares to the other players within the same skate group. A score of (for example) 8 in Group 1 is not equitable to a score of 8 in Group 2, 3 or 4, etc. Evaluators will observe players through every drill/every shift for the scrimmage or skills skate - a player's last shift in a scrimmage is every bit as important, but not more important than their first or any other shift that day. Evaluators will provide multiple scores throughout the scrimmage or drills for each player (i.e., a potentially different score may be given on one shift than on another), and ultimately decide on a final score by the end of the session.

3. Evaluator worksheets will be used to record the ongoing and final scores by player. Each evaluator will be responsible for scoring a certain number of players. The evaluator worksheets will provide jersey colour and number - **no player names will be available to evaluators.**

4. Scrimmages

- i. Players will be divided into scrimmage teams based on previous season placement for the first scrimmage and based on performance in scrimmages after the first round of scrimmages are complete.
- ii. Body checking will only be permitted in the top scrimmage groups for Bantam and Midget. Players who do not want to play body checking hockey should ensure the Bantam or Midget Director is informed of this so they will not be placed in the top group. Only Bantam A and B, and Midget A and B teams will play with full body checking in the season.
- iii. Each player will play in four 60 minute scrimmage games.
- iv. Three (3) volunteers will be on each player bench for scrimmages. These volunteers will control the lines (determine who is on the ice each shift) and the gates. On-bench volunteers are **strictly** prohibited from actively coaching individuals or the teams during the scrimmages.
- v. Line change intervals will be tightly controlled by a 90 second buzzer.
- vi. Goalies will change every 10 minutes and will switch teams.

5. Evaluations

Players will be evaluated on the following:

- i. Skating: Speed, Agility, Quickness
 - ii. Defensive Play: Positioning when opposing team has puck possession, angling, stick use, gap control.
 - iii. Offensive Play: Shooting, passing (making/receiving), puck control, positioning when opposing team has possession.
 - iv. Hockey Sense/IQ: Decision-making, play selection, ability to anticipate, creativity, ability to 'see the ice'.
 - v. Attitude: Work ethic, reaction to own mistakes and other player mistakes, coachability, aggressiveness, sportsmanship, determination, hustle.
6. Upon the end of the session (one hour scrimmage or skill session), evaluators will provide their evaluation scores to an administrator who will record the scores and return the sheet to the evaluator.

7. Once scores have been recorded, the coaches and other evaluators will meet and decide for each player if they should remain in the current group, move up (if a higher level group exists) or move down (if a lower level group exists). This is determined by reviewing the players' scores and by general open discussion between all evaluators. If all agree that player should move up, down or remain in the current group, the next player is discussed. If there is disagreement, evaluators/coaches will present their reasoning for their recommendation (on a 'round table' basis) and a vote will be held - simple majority will rule.
8. The evaluation administrator will record the decisions and once all players in that group have been reviewed, the administrator will read 'player name, jersey colour and number, up' or '...down' or '...stay' - this is read out loud as a quality assurance step to ensure what was decided was recorded correctly.
9. While the final (for that group/session) decisions are being read, the administrator will also identify any discrepancies between the up/down/stay decisions and the player's evaluation score. If a player scored very high but the group decided that player should stay or drop, the administrator will verbally identify the anomaly and the scoring and decision will be reviewed; final determination will be based on consensus.
10. After all the groups have skated/scrimmaged, and steps 2 to 7 have been completed for each group, the groups for the next season are determined (players move up, down or stay in current group).
11. Steps above are repeated each skate/scrimmage.
12. After the last skate/scrimmage - usually a day or two following the last scrimmage - the category draft is held.
13. The draft is attended by all coaches.
14. Teams are picked in descending sequence from Provincial A to tier 6. If only one team is targeted for a tier, the coach for that team picks his entire team before the next team is drafted. In the case where two or more teams will be in the same tier, the associated coaches will flip a coin to determine who picks first, second, third, (etc.). The coaches of the teams in the same tier will then draft their teams, using an orderly pick process that 'snakes'. For example, if three teams will be in one tier then Coach 1 picks 1st, Coach 2 picks 2nd, Coach 3 picks 3 **AND** 4, Coach 2 picks 5th and Coach 1 picks 6th and 7th, Coach 2 picks 8th, Coach 3 picks 9th and 10th, etc. Once the teams in the same tier have been completely picked, the team in the next lowest tier will be chosen.

15. Throughout the draft, if any player is chosen or not chosen in what appears to be an anomaly based on that player's evaluation scores and general consensus, the coach who selected a player who is potentially out of place (should be in a lower tier) or 'passed over' a player who potentially should be in that tier will be asked by the Draft Chairperson to explain their decision. The coach must provide a valid hockey reason for his potentially incorrect decision. If the coach cannot provide a rational hockey reason then the Draft Chairperson and/or other coaches may demand that the decision be corrected. It is important to note this step is only considered when it is quite obvious that a player is being chosen whose skill level is demonstrably lower than the other players on that team and lower than other players available (not yet drafted) or that a player whose skill level is obviously higher than player(s) being picked on the current team is not being chosen by the coach. This step is intended as a safeguard to ensure coaches are drafting based on skill, attitude and overall playing ability as opposed to other reasons that are not appropriate to the evaluation process. Coaches are well within their rights to choose a certain player whose scores may be slightly lower than another player who is available due to the player's style or the role the coach is trying to fill; however, this should only occur when the players in question are quite close in skill levels as determined by evaluation scores and post-skate evaluator discussions.

Rules

1. The selection process will be the same for all players at each level (Peewee, Bantam and Midget) and the evaluations will be documented. This ensures consistency in the evaluation process, and provides consistency in player and parent/guardian expectations from year to year as players move through the various levels of NWS's program.
- 1a. **Since NWZHA has only one tier of Peewee hockey teams (Peewee AA), there are some processes for Peewee AA Tryouts that differ from Bantam and Midget, however these differences are minor and do not impact the player selection/evaluation criteria.**
2. Evaluations are documented and remain confidential. Individual evaluation scores and rankings are not released, as our purpose is to form teams, not to rank players.

Under no circumstances will evaluation results be released to parents/guardians or players.

The evaluation sheets and the ranking criteria will be only made available to the Evaluation Committee and the President of the NWZ.

The Evaluation Committee at each level will be comprised of ALL COACHES and directors currently active within the NWZ.

3. A member of the Evaluation Committee will remove himself from any discussions or decisions that are required to be made regarding his or her own child.
4. Any new player that registers with our Association will have the opportunity to try out for the highest level in their division as long as the evaluation is prior to the cut-off date as determined by the Association.
5. We encourage all NWZ Bantam and Midget players who feel they have the appropriate skill level to try out for Canadian Athletic Club (CAC) Bantam, Minor Midget and Midget AA and AAA teams. Any player who chooses to try out for CAC or other AA/AAA clubs and is ultimately released will have the opportunity to be evaluated and placed on the appropriately tiered NWZ team regardless of whether NWZ Evaluation Scrimmages have been completed.
6. The Executive Board of Director will deal with any injury or illness which prevents a player from completing the evaluations on a case by case basis.
7. Although it is impossible to completely eliminate subjectivity, or previous coach/player experiences, the selection process will reflect on-ice performance during the evaluation process.

Again, as an Association, our goal in team formation is to have players of similar ability playing together to maintain balanced teams where the athletes can participate equitably and have fun playing hockey during the season.

8. This is a 100% coach pick draft process. The coaches will draft their teams and will not be pressured or persuaded to draft certain players in any way. Tampering of this process may result in a player(s) being released from the NWZ.

Under no circumstances will evaluation results be released.

9. **Players will be assigned a pinney or a tryout jersey upon their arrival at the rink. The evaluators will only know the players' pinney/jersey numbers - not their names. Players must wear the tryout jerseys provided and should refrain from wearing CAC, NWZ, WWHA or HAC socks.
10. Evaluations for Bantam and Midget will comprise 4 or more one-hour skates (drill/technical sessions or scrimmages). Each player will have 4 or more ice times for evaluation purposes.
11. Players trying out for the NWZ Pee wee AA teams are not guaranteed more than one tryout session (technical skate or scrimmage).

FAQS

How many evaluation sessions will there be?

Bantam - each player who registers before the first evaluation will get 4 skates.

Midget - each player who registers before the first evaluation will get 4 skates.

Peewee - players are only guaranteed 1 skate, however, it is rare for this to occur. Peewee players will each have 3 or 4 skates unless a player is demonstrably and significantly less skilled than the average Peewee tryout player, in which case for both player safety and evaluation integrity the player will be released 'early' to their home association (Whitemud West Hockey Association or Hawks Athletic Club).

What is being evaluated?

Players are being evaluated on Skill in various areas, effort, attitude and teamwork.

Who will do the evaluations?

The Evaluation Committee at each level will be comprised of ALL COACHES and directors currently active within the NWZ.

What should my son/daughter wear to the evaluations?

Full equipment is always mandatory. This includes:

- ◆ Protective cup
- ◆ Shin pads
- ◆ Hockey pants
- ◆ Shoulder pads
- ◆ Elbow pads
- ◆ Skates
- ◆ Hockey gloves
- ◆ Hockey stick
- ◆ CSA approved helmet and full shield
- ◆ Neck guard

How are the players notified of their standing within the process?

Players will be informed by the OFF-ice administrators who are responsible for tracking evaluations, contacting parents and players and scheduling sessions. Players will not be informed at the rink but by the off-ice administrator via phone. Depending on the age of the player, it is recommended that the administrator speak to the parent/player directly and do not leave a message with a sibling, babysitter, etc. Scrimmage groups, schedules and ultimately the final team rosters will be posted on the NWZ website.

What happens after the evaluation sessions?

Upon the completion of evaluations, players will be contacted by the coach of their team. The coach will outline:

- ◆ Practice Schedule
- ◆ Game Schedule
- ◆ Introduction of other coaches
- ◆ Setting of first meeting with parents and players

How soon after evaluations does the season start?

NWZ endorses Long Term Athlete Development and encourages players to seek a balance between school, hockey, family, friends, and other sports. Therefore, if ice availability permits, we try to schedule evaluations and tryouts so they are completed within a short duration and are completed ideally one to two weeks prior to the season start.

Appeals

Coach draft decisions are final. If a player/parent feels that there were extenuating circumstances that affected the player's ability to perform during tryouts, they may request a review via a letter or e-mail to be delivered to the NWZ Disputes Chairperson, or, if unavailable, the NWZ President or Vice-President.

The appeal letter must describe the circumstances that affected the player's performance, how that affected the player's performance, and must provide any related documentation.

The appeal will be reviewed by the NWZ Hockey Committee and Disputes Chair. The Committee will review the evidence and make a decision recommendation that will be presented to the NWZ President for approval.

Once approved, the decision will be provided to the player.

Appeals over player placement, based on player/parent questioning player placement, will not be entertained. If a player/parent has justified concerns that the stated evaluation process was not followed, an appeal may be submitted in writing to the NWZ Disputes person or NWZ President.