



Huntsville Girls Hockey Association Competitive Hockey Policy

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Table of Contents

1. Purpose
2. General Governance
3. Definitions
4. Tryout Policy
 - 4.1 Basis for Establishing Teams
 - 4.2 Team Categorization
 - 4.3 Tryout Sequence
 - 4.4 Goalie Assignment Objectives
 - 4.5 Tryout Fees & Eligibility
5. Team Selection Policy
 - 5.1 Player Evaluation
 - 5.2 Complaints Resolution Process
6. Local Catchment Area
7. Out-of-Town Players
8. Playing Up a Division
9. Coaching & Staff Requirements
10. Association Fees (effective 2026/2027 season)
11. Team Fees (effective 2026/2027 season)
12. Uniform Policy (effective 2026/2027 season)
13. Sample Budget
14. Fundraising & Sponsorship
15. Travel Expectations
16. League Play
17. Tournaments
18. Important Dates & Deadlines
19. Code of Conduct
20. Questions and Submissions
21. Acknowledgement

1.0 Purpose

- To provide a consistent and transparent framework for the operation of competitive hockey teams, including criteria for establishing teams, eligibility, tryouts, coaching requirements, fees, budgeting, and conduct expectations.
- This policy shall replace and supersede any previous Competitive Hockey Policy of the Huntsville Girls Hockey Association.

2.0 General Governance

- All teams must follow the rules, bylaws and policies of Hockey Canada, Ontario Hockey Federation, Ontario Women's Hockey Association and Huntsville Girls Hockey Association.
- Competitive teams are also subject to the bylaws, policies and rules of the Ontario Women's Hockey League (OWHA).
- Competitive teams report to the Competitive Director, if the position is vacant the board of directors shall provide teams with an alternate contact within the board.

3.0 Definitions

- **Pick up player** = a player who is registered to a lower-level team (e.g., house league or lower-tier competitive) but is approved to temporarily play with a higher-level competitive team as needed. They may be called up to cover absences due to injury, illness, or other circumstances, ensuring teams can field full rosters.
- **Anticipated growth** = previous year + 5% (Example: 40 + 5% = 42 expected registrants)
- **Tournament:** generally, cost effective and regional with an approximate cost of \$1000 per family
- **Special tournament** = high cost, travel intensive events like the Lake Placid Tournament, with a cost of \$2000 plus, per family

4.0 Tryout Policy

4.1 Basis for Establishing Teams

- The board will use the chart below to determine if there are enough players to support competitive teams by evaluating last year's registrants plus anticipated growth (see definition), and the coach's recommendation.

Total players	#HL teams	# Competitive teams
Up to 25	1 -2	0
26-36	1-2	1
37-54	1-2	1-2
55-68	2	2
69+	2+	3+

- HGHA is committed to ensuring there is at least one house league team in a division before considering the addition of competitive teams.
- The Association may form multiple competitive tiers within a division (e.g., B, BB, A or AA)
- The formation of additional teams is not guaranteed, and depends on:
 - The previous years registration across all divisions
 - The number of players that register and actually tryout for competitive
 - Coach availability
 - League structure and OWHA approval
 - Ice availability (e.g., there may be insufficient ice to support two A level teams here due to their longer game requirement
 - Goalie numbers across the division
- It is the coach's responsibility to assess if there is sufficient talent and competitiveness among the players to justify forming a team at the intended level.
- All teams will be advertised in advance of tryouts via social media and our website at the B level unless the coach notifies the Competitive Director otherwise via email
- Teams shall ideally consist of 15 players, including 1-2 goalies, with exceptions considered.
- The board may place rostering limitations as required based on the needs of the organization
- If post-tryout numbers fall below the minimum, teams may be realigned by the HGHA
 - Example: 44 expected but 30 register = fewer competitive teams

4.2 Team Categorization

- All HGHA teams will be automatically rostered to B level.
- Any coach wanting to move up a level must notify the Competitive Director by email
- It is suggested that any coach intending to move up a level should participate in a minimum of two exhibition games and/or an OWHA sanctioned tournament to assess their team's competitiveness at the higher level
- Following these preseason games the coach will make a final recommendation of level to the Competitive Director prior to the declaration date determined by the league, typically end of September.
- The board of directors shall review and approve all level assignments.

4.3 Tryout sequence:

- Contingent on **summer ice availability**. We encourage the town to maintain summer ice access but will proceed with caution based on availability.
- Two key priorities:
 - Ice Availability – tryouts and team selection depend on consistent access to ice time.
 - Player Retention – scheduling is designed to support player retention within the association.
- Tryouts will begin early across all levels to allow coaches to sign players promptly.

- Tryouts will end later to give players not selected by other teams the opportunity to return to Huntsville.
- No player will wait more than 5 business days without communication

4.4 Goalie Assignment Objectives:

- Ensure at least 1 goalie per team.
- Where there are multiple division teams (ie u15HL, u15B, u15A) and limited goalies to support teams, the HGHA board shall determine goalie numbers per team.
- Incentives offered to support HL goalie development (such as subsidized equipment, reduced registration, and training sessions)
- Provide pick up (see definition) opportunities if any competitive team has only one goalie.

4.5 Tryout Fees & Eligibility

- Flat-fee registration system (see appendix) and are non-refundable
- The Competitive Director reserves the right to refuse walk-ins.
- Late registrations allowed at the discretion of the Competitive Director; late fees may apply.
- Players may move between levels at no extra charge.
- Must be registered, paid in full, and in good standing (refer to the HGHA bylaws) before attending tryouts.
- Permission to skate is mandatory where applicable, a hard copy must be submitted on the first tryout day sign-in desk and emailed to the Competitive Director (competitive@huntsvillegha.ca)
- Held after the Provincial Championships or Easter weekend, whichever is later, typically mid-April to the late-May as set by OWHA
- Players are expected to attend the entire tryout process and must notify the coach in writing if they cannot attend a tryout
- **Players must attend at least one tryout to be eligible for team selection**, an exception may be granted by the Competitive Director on a case-by-case basis. The request must be submitted in writing by the coach and the approval, communicated with the board

5.0 Team Selection Policy

5.1 Player Evaluation

- The coach is responsible for selecting the team and determining the appropriate level (For example: B, BB, A, AA) with input from independent evaluators.
- Coaches are required to keep tryout notes in case of dispute
- The Competitive Director shall oversee the tryout process for all divisions and be provided with a list of all independent evaluators, whom must be approved by the Competitive Director
- Player selection based on:
 - On-ice performance
 - Attitude, effort, coachability

- Positional needs
- All offers of acceptance or letters of rejection will go to the player/parent directly from the coach within 5 days of the final tryout
 - Recommend doing this in person after the final tryout – to provide players that are on the bubble or cut with constructive feedback and development goals
- The coach is responsible to submit the final roster to the Competitive Director and Registrar
- The coach may decide to hold a maximum of 3 spots for fall selection
- Players who are offered a spot on a higher-level team and decline the offer are not guaranteed placement on a lower-level team.

5.2 Complaints Resolution Process

- Coach selections are final and not subject to appeal by players/parents.
- Parent complaints shall first be directed to the coach and/or team manager.
- Should the parent and staff not find resolution in the matter, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Competitive Director who will refer the matter to the board of directors.

6.0 Local Catchment Area

- To protect our ice allocation, the local catchment area is the tax base for Huntsville.
- Priority zone 1 – tax base town of Huntsville: Huntsville, Utterson, and Port Sydney
- Priority zone 2- regionally adjacent communities that do not have OWHA associations
 - Gravenhurst and all communities north including Burks Falls
 - Parry Sound and all communities east including Haliburton
 - Any player rostered to HGHA in the previous season, outside of zone 1
- Priority is given to players residing within this zone 1, followed by priority to zone 2 residents.
- Residency is determined by the player's primary address at the time of registration and must be verified.
- Where players of equal skill, attitude, effort, and coachability have tried out for the team (as determined by the coach) offers shall be first granted to the zone 1 resident, otherwise a zone 2 player may be selected
- Any proposed team roster below 75% Huntsville tax base must be approved by the Competitive Director

7.0 Out-of-Town Players

- Out-of-town players (outside the defined catchment) may be considered only when there are not enough local priority zone 1 or 2 players to form a competitive team.
- Must submit release/transfer forms.
- Limit of 2 out-of-town players per team, unless otherwise approved by the Competitive Director, should be evaluated as a top 5 players on the team.

8.0 Playing Up a Division

- Requests must be submitted 7 days prior to tryout

- Must demonstrate top-tier skill (e.g., top 3 F, top 2 D, starting G).
- Final decisions made by the board after consultation with the player/parent and coaches of the respective teams.

Pros:	Cons:
Accelerated development	Social and developmental issues
Opportunity for exposure	Increased pressure
Advanced competition	Increased chance of injury

9.0 Coaching & Staff Requirements

- Per the OWHA Team Staff Qualification Requirements Document (posted on our website)
- All staff must complete:
 - Respect in Sport – Activity Leader
 - Vulnerable Sector Check (background screening)
 - Declaration (if applicable)
 - Concussion Training
 - Gender Identity and Expression
- Email the Registrar if you have any questions about getting rostered
- Each team must have at least one Level 1 certified trainer, and that trainer must be female.
- Additional trainers may be permitted and can be male. **However at least one female trainer must be present for all games, practices and dry-land training.**
- All teams must have two designated female dressing room monitors, this may be a non-bench staff (uninsured) or may be female bench staff members
- All teams must have a designated manager, if the manager is participating on the bench the manager must be rostered as staff.
- HGHA covers the rostering fees for up to 5 bench staff. Any additional staffing expenses shall be covered by the team.
- All staff must sign and submit an OWHA bench staff code of conduct to the Competitive Director
- No person shall be permitted to hold any HGHA staff position if they are under suspension from a youth sports organization or other youth program.
- Teams may create their own social media accounts to promote team activities and celebrate player achievements. However, the association must be granted administrative access to all such accounts. All content must align with the HGHA's Code of Conduct and branding guidelines.

10.0 Association Fees (effective 2026/2027 season)

- Need to be sufficient to fully outfit and ice a uniformed team without relying on sponsorships.
- See appendix for fees:
- Fees cover:
 - Exhibition games
 - Ice time (practice and home games)
 - Referee fees
 - Player and bench staff insurance
 - Practice jerseys (to be returned at the end of the season for reuse)
 - Game/practice socks, and helmet stickers
 - Administrative fees (league registration, OWHA roster fee, provincial bond, etc.)
 - Team photo
- Payment structure: One-third of the association fees are due upon a player's acceptance of an offer. **The remaining balance is payable before the start of exhibition games (typically middle of August when OWHA allows teams back on the ice) and may be split into two equal payments.**

11.0 Team Fees *(effective 2026/2027 season)*

- The team staff will determine a list of additional items included in the team fee and provide to parents with the team budget.
- Fees may include, but not exclusive to:
 - Tournaments
 - Playoff and play down games, as required
 - Pant shells, track suit, hockey bag, team water bottles
 - Non-parent bench staff accommodation, if required
 - Team events
 - Player intro music

12.0 Uniform Policy *(effective 2026/2027 season)*

- The association provides game jerseys; however, players may purchase their own if they require a specific size or number
- All name and sponsor bars on a team must be consistent in design, using either black on white or white on black. Sublimated name bars are permitted, provided they are uniform across the entire team
- Items owned by the player may be reused in future seasons if they remain in good condition and are uniform across the entire team, subject to approval by the team manager.
- Player jersey numbering priority:
 1. Player with an already purchased jersey
 2. Then Major

3. Then Minor

- Black helmet & gloves required for visual team consistency

13.0 Sample Budget

- To assist with your planning, an example template is included in the appendix, showing how to calculate revenue, expenses, and a balanced net outcome.
- Budgets must be emailed to the Competitive Director for review
- **Any unspent or surplus team funds at the end of the season must be returned to the HGHA**
- Ensuring budget accuracy falls under the responsibility of the coach and team manager, errors or omissions are not attributable to the board

14.0 Fundraising & Sponsorship

- Refer to Fundraising policy.
- Covers permitted activities, reporting, and logo use
- Violations may result in sanctions

15.0 Travel Expectations

- Travel is a regular requirement for both games and practices
- Early practices may be scheduled before school
- Practice towns may include, but not exclusive to:
 - Huntsville, Burk's Falls, Baysville, Bracebridge, Humphrey
- Ice allocation is determined by the board annually and is based on town allocation policies, house league requirements, age distribution of players/teams etc.
- Any team travel outside of Ontario will require a travel permit issued by OWHA

16.0 League Play

- The team's league loop is determined by the OWHA/OWHL and may fluctuate from year to year, depending on the number of teams in the division and locations of participating associations
- Categorization deadline for OWHL is typically the end of September, as per league rules
- Final league placement and scheduling will be communicated after team registration is complete and league groupings are confirmed. Typically happens in September or October

17.0 Tournaments

- Teams are required to participate in a minimum of **4 tournaments** each season, which include Provincials and the HGHA home tournament.
- If a team does not qualify for Provincials, they are welcome to participate in an additional tournament of their choice in lieu.
- Coaches may consider additional or special tournaments (see definition).

- Any special tournaments being considered must be communicated to parents in the tryout package before team selection to ensure transparency and allow families to plan accordingly.
- Out of province tournaments will require OWHA approval

18.0 Important Dates & Deadlines

Date	Task and deadline description
Early January	Registrar summarizes registration numbers for projections
Mid January (after the HGHA tournament)	Coaching applications posted
Late January to mid February	Coach selections announced
Mid April	Advertise tryout levels on website and social media
Mid to late March	Tryout registration opens
Mid April to end of May	Tryouts take place
Mid August to date announced by OWHA	Fall tryouts, if needed

19.0 Code of Conduct

- All members must sign and adhere to the code:
 - Respect
 - Commitment
 - Sportsmanship
 - Representation
 - Cellphone use regulations
 - Alcohol, drugs and vaping regulations
- Violations may lead to removal from team or role

20.0 Questions & Submissions

- For any questions related to this policy, or to submit forms, approvals, waivers, or other related materials, please contact the Competitive Director at competitive@huntsvillegha.ca
- Using this centralized contact will help reduce redundancy and ensure all communications are properly directed.

21.0 Acknowledgement

- I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Competitive Hockey policy. I agree to abide by all the terms and conditions set forth herein and will ensure compliance with my team.

Team Name and Number

Team Manager Name (print)

Date:

Coach Name (print)

Date:

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