

Player Evaluation and Team Selection – IMHA

Goals

To provide a fair, comprehensive, and timely evaluation that will be consistent with Innisfail Minor Hockey Association philosophies.

To place players in appropriate groups based on age, skills and maturity levels.

To clearly communicate the criteria for evaluation prior to the evaluation camp.

Player Evaluation and Team Selection Procedures

In any given year, one of the most difficult tasks faced by a hockey organization is the process of player evaluation and team selection. The challenges are common, regardless of the size of the organization. It should be noted that there are many ways of approaching this process and all of them would be considered acceptable if, in the end, all players are given a fair and equal opportunity to exhibit their abilities, and the evaluators maintain their objectivity. This policy will present the procedure implemented by the Innisfail Minor Hockey Association.

Objectives

It is useful for associations to establish objectives for goals before the process begins. The following are objectives which have been used as a guideline.

1. Being well organized throughout the entire process.
2. Ensuring IMHA provides sufficient ice time so that goals of fair and comprehensive player evaluation may be accomplished.
3. Using an efficient number of volunteers.

Administration

The process is people intensive and requires a number of volunteers who are prepared to be involved throughout the entire process. The following points outline the requirements for volunteers who must be organized prior to the commencement of the process.

The Vice-President shall chair the Team Selection / Player Evaluation Committee and shall appoint a coordinator who will be responsible for the workings of the entire procedure. The coordinator is generally the Director of Hockey Development. Members of this committee shall include the Division Directors, Hockey Development Director, and President.

Evaluators shall be chosen based on their level of hockey knowledge with a view to assembling the best people within the organization. The evaluators should have the ability to rank the player's Hockey Playing Ability relative to the group he/she is trying out with.

Additional volunteers will be asked to supervise dressing rooms, conduct on-ice drills, and supervise player benches during scrimmage sessions. Division Directors will assign pinnies with individual numbers to each of the players for evaluation sessions. Evaluators will only be given the players pinnie number.

Individuals who have applied to Coach a particular level shall not be involved in the initial evaluations of players at that level, however, Coaches at all levels will work with the Chairperson and Co-ordinator of the Team Selection / Player Evaluation Committee in determining the final selections for each team.

Any appeal of an evaluation ranking must be submitted by the team coach to the Team Selection / Player Evaluation Committee for a final ruling.

Parents, or guardians of players on the ice will also not be involved in the initial evaluations.

Goalies shall be evaluated during each ice session as well as during a specific goalie evaluation session. Evaluators of goalie sessions shall have a sound goaltender background.

The Process

Players must be given a fair opportunity to display both their skills and how they think the game. The process presented here is not etched in stone and must remain flexible to ensure that fairness is maintained. Variations to the evaluation format will require the approval of the evaluation chairperson and the evaluation coordinator. The following is a session by session detailed description of the evaluation / team selection process.

1. Players at the U11, U13, U15, and U18 levels shall indicate at the time of registration their intent to try out for Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 4 (the league levels IMHA teams generally play at). Players shall also indicate their last level played as part of their registration.
2. Evaluation at the U11 level will occur within a combination of skills and scrimmage sessions. Evaluations shall be 1 skills session followed by 2 scrimmage sessions. Evaluations at the U13, U15, and U18 levels shall occur during scrimmage sessions only. Players shall be divided into teams for each of the scrimmage sessions. The teams shall be divided as evenly as possible according to age and previous playing levels.
3. The evaluation process shall begin at the Tier 1 level. Evaluation numbers will be totaled at the conclusion of the ice sessions after which players will be ranked.
4. Evaluators shall rank each of the players out of 5 (1 being poor and 5 being excellent) based on the following criteria - overall these are referred to as Hockey Playing Ability:
 - Skating** (fast, quick, agile, backwards, forwards, stopping, turning)
 - Puck Handling** (shooting, passing, receiving passes, stickhandling)
 - Effort Level** (attitude, passion, determination)
 - Hockey Intelligence** (head up, seeing the ice, anticipation, team play)
 - Competition Level** (toughness, puck battles, position battles)
5. Evaluation rankings at the conclusion of the ice sessions shall divide the players in each of the Tier levels within the division into three groups.

Group 1 - The top three forwards, two defensemen and a goalie.

Group 2 - an additional fifteen players based on the next group of player rankings shall be given to the team coach from which he may draw his final team selections. Coach's criteria in making the final selections for the team may be based on his/her discretion eg. needs more forwards or defense, on playing side (shoots right or shoots left), or based on size, speed, strength, or maturity.

Group 3 – those players whose evaluation rankings were not high enough to fit into Group 1 or Group 2 shall begin evaluations with the next tier level.
6. Tier 2 tryouts shall begin immediately following the completion of the Tier 1 tryouts and shall follow the same general format as the Tier 1 evaluations. All players not selected for the Tier 1 team shall begin evaluations with the Tier 2 group. No evaluation numbers shall be carried forward with these players moving from Tier 1 to Tier 2 tryouts.
7. All players cut from Tier 2 tryouts as well as those indicating Tier 4 as their playing preference shall be divided evenly among the Tier 4 teams when Tier 4 consists of 2 or more teams. These players may be evaluated as well only to ensure an even split among the Tier 4 teams.
8. Players (including goaltenders) absent or injured before or during evaluations shall be added to the coaches selection list at the highest appropriate level, as decided by the Team Selection / Player Evaluation Committee taking into consideration their evaluation ranking at the time of injury and/or playing level in previous years.
9. U7 and U9 tryouts will vary somewhat in that they may not be asked to indicate their tryout preference during registration. Instead, these levels will be divided for their first skate, which may include a scrimmage session or a basic skill evaluation session. The rankings from this first skate will be used to form new groups for further evaluations. Players will then be ranked and divided similar to the U11 – U18 process.
10. Goaltenders shall participate in specific goaltender evaluation sessions. Goaltenders will also be evaluated during scrimmage sessions at each level. Goaltender evaluations will determine the top goaltender to be assigned to the teams tried out for. Additional goaltenders determined from the evaluation rankings may be added to the coaches selection list to allow the coach to play several goalies in practices / exhibition games before making his final selection.

Final Decisions

The choice of the last two or three players is always the most difficult and usually there are only minute differences between the abilities of the five or six players from which the last choices are made. The coaches do have the option of having these players /goaltenders play exhibition games before making the final decisions. However, dragging the process out can be difficult on the players and deadlines for the final selections may be set by the director or evaluation coordinator.