



Team Formation Process

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1. Introduction and Philosophy

The LRA/BRA Partnership Committee has compiled this document to outline the general principles behind the evaluation process. The intent of this document is to facilitate the process by which the Evaluation Committee (EC) can place each player at a level appropriate to their skill, desire and commitment.

This document was created to provide information regarding the process, ensure clarity, and result in the greatest possible degree of fairness. The committee will strive to make the process as transparent as possible. No member of the evaluation committee will be present for any final discussion or decision involving an age division where they have a child or close relative (e.g., niece, nephew, etc.).

Evaluations require significant planning and execution, based on player numbers which often fluctuate week to week, day to day. As such, changes to the process may be required which may not be presented fully in this document, and cases may arise where deviating from this process is necessary. Final authority for what process occurs rests with the EC. Where deviations occur, the Chair of the EC will report any deviations to the LRA and BRA boards.

The Evaluation Committee will meet after the evaluations to go over the process with a mind to improve where possible. This process, then, is intended to be a living document, as the EC strives for continually better evaluations.

It is the philosophy of the EC that every athlete be placed at an appropriate level, based on the athlete's current skill level, ringette experience, and physical maturity. Evaluations then are not tryouts but rather opportunities for athletes to showcase themselves. For this to happen, the EC will:

- create appropriate evaluation drills and measurements
- communicate the process to parents/guardians and athletes
- provide a minimum of two evaluation sessions, except as noted below for certain players assigned to Step 1. The Evaluations Committee may opt to forgo a second evaluation session for any U10, if deemed appropriate by other team formation criteria.
- provide feedback, when requested, to each athlete as to the decisions on their placement. This feedback will be limited to the player's UAA times and scores, and outside evaluators comments. No discussion will be entertained regarding placement of other athletes, or the scoring/ranking of the athlete in question.

1.1. Committee Members and Roles

The Evaluation Committee (EC) will be made up of ten members, representing the BRA and LRA boards. Each board will appoint four voting representatives, plus a co-Chair. Co-Chairs will not be eligible to cast a vote on any matter except to break a tie (except as noted below). Prior to the meeting, the co-Chairs will decide on which age-groups each will hold the tie-breaking vote.

Each age group shall be assessed and athletes placed by not fewer than five committee members. The EC shall declare all age group conflicts by the board meeting preceding evaluations weekend. The non-tie-breaking co-Chair may vote where the EC could otherwise not form a 5 member committee due to conflicts. To that end, all eligible board members shall declare conflicts at the board meeting. The EC may appoint additional committee members for specific age groups, if necessary to reach the 5-person threshold.

Prior to evaluations weekend, the EC shall:

- Collect athlete information including quantity of registrants per age group, previous year's placements, overage/underage requests, etc.
- Evaluate the above to determine possible outcomes for teams, based on quantities of athletes per age group.
- Develop strategies in advance to create appropriately-sized, balanced teams, such as asking players to move to a higher age group.

2. Evaluation Sessions

Evaluation schedules will be created by the EC, in conjunction with the association Ice Allocators. Where possible and practical, all or the majority of the evaluation sessions will take place within the first few weeks of September. The intent is to form the teams as early as practical while still maintaining a fair and open process.

2.1. Evaluators

The EC will use paid external evaluators for all age levels to evaluate the players during scrimmage sessions. The purpose of external evaluators is to provide an unbiased and objective assessment of the player's abilities. Depending on the number of players to evaluate there will be a minimum of 3 evaluators, the average score for all of the evaluators will be used.

Evaluators will be directed by a single representative from each association, appointed by the EC, who will work with the entire evaluation team to establish age appropriate standards for the grading system. They will agree on what is the appropriate score for that athlete's skill

level. This will then be applied to all athletes.

Evaluations will be scored in comparison to others competing in the same scrimmage. These scores may not be comparable across different scrimmage groups. Where additional comparisons are required, additional scrimmages may be necessary.

Evaluators will:

- give a rating in every category for any athlete assigned to them as well as a tiering number (overall rating compared to the group)
- may be assigned to evaluate players positionally, where applicable (U14-U19 only)
- give these results to the EC for compilation of results

2.2. Evaluator Independence

During the scrimmage sessions the evaluators will sit in a location away from parents and coaches. Parents and Coaches cannot have any contact with the evaluators. The appointed representatives are to act as the sole liaisons between the evaluators and the EC during scrimmage sessions.

It should be noted that it is expected that evaluators WILL sit together for discussion throughout the course of the session.

2.3. Grading Sessions

For U12-U19, players will be tiered. Each grading session will consist of scrimmages. Evaluators will use forms in Appendix A.

For U10, a similar approach will be followed with respect to grading skill sessions. **However, the grading session scores will be one of several factors used to determine what U10 Step each player is best suited to. Age, previous experience (what level played last season), physical maturity, former coach input where necessary, as well as team size are factors that will also be used when placing players. **

For U10-U14, EC will use the UAA assessment as created by Ringette Alberta as the primary assessment tool for skating skill.

Following the UAA session (if applicable), scrimmages will be run for the remaining grading sessions. There will be volunteer coaches on each bench ensuring proper organization of shifts and balance of positional play. This will be achieved by the use of numbered pinnies or jerseys. Players will line up on the bench in numerical order and each shift for U12 will be assigned positions based on that numerical order; the first two players off the bench will be forwards, followed by a center, then two defense. In this manner, the evaluators will know what positions have been assigned to the players.

Direct coaching is not appropriate during evaluated scrimmages, but encouragement can be given to the athletes. Parents may not be involved in a scrimmage in which their child participates.

For U14 to U19, players may be allowed to play their preferred positions during scrimmages when possible. Evaluators will have lists of preferred positions.

The overall intent of the scrimmage evaluations is to determine the rank of the athletes based

on their ability to play Ringette. Every effort will be made to ensure the scrimmage teams are balanced.

The underlying intent of the evaluation sessions is to provide the EC data concerning the various players and their strengths and weaknesses.

TABLE #1 WEIGHTING OF GRADING SCORES BY AGE DIVISION

	U10	U12	U14	U16	U19
UAA SKILLS SESSION	Primary**	60%	40%	N/A	N/A
DRILL/SCRIMMAGE SESSION	Secondary* *	40%	60%	100%	100%

** See above.

2.4. Universal Athlete Assessment (UAA) Session (U10-U14)

Developed by Ringette Alberta, these are repeatable, timed skill measurements which do not require Evaluators. Each skill session is designed to test a particular skating skill specific to Ringette. Each drill will be explained (and demonstrated if needed) to the group before proceeding. Each station will be staffed by separate individuals to time and record scores.

At the option of the EC, UAA sessions will be run by coaches and other volunteers, and in accordance with Ringette Alberta guidelines. Because UAA's are a data collection activity and not a subjective evaluation of skills, there is little opportunity for bias. As such, it is the EC's opinion that using qualified, familiar people (e.g., previous year coaches) is acceptable but is not necessary. Parents will not be involved in a station where their child is being evaluated.

2.5. Individual Athlete Placement

After the completion of the UAA assessment, athletes will be assigned to an initial scrimmage group based on UAA scores for U10-U14 and based on previous year division for U16-U19.

2.6. Scrimmage Evaluation Sessions

Full scrimmage sessions may be a part of each evaluation. At the beginning of each session there will be a warmup followed by a Scrimmage. 5v5 or 3v3 scrimmages may be used at skate #1, with 5v5 scrimmages for successive skates, except at the U10 level. If U10 scrimmages occur, they will use the Step 2 game format.

The purpose of the scrimmage sessions is to allow athletes to showcase their skills, positional and team play as well as spatial awareness. These are all to be done in a competitive situation. Free ring and goalie ring distributions may be used to simulate real game situations.

Players in U12 will be rotated through all positions, while players in U14-U19 may be permitted to play their preferred position when possible.

After the first scrimmage and based on scrimmage results, the paid evaluators may identify up to 10% of the top and bottom of each age group that do not require further evaluation. These players may be excluded from subsequent scrimmage sessions. These players should not be

removed from scrimmages if an uneven team balance is created, eg. Removing centers. Players should only be removed from further scrimmages if the paid evaluators deem that they are strongly influencing the scrimmages and the abilities of other players to demonstrate their abilities.

2.7. Final Skates

Final skates, if necessary, are by invitation only and will not affect the rankings used to determine protected player status from previous evaluations. The intent of the final skates is to evaluate the discretionary (i.e., 'bubble') players in an environment where they're afforded the best opportunity to compete against their competitive peers. The invitees will include some protected players out of necessity to create a large enough group, but those players will not be evaluated and their rankings will not change.

The Evaluation Committee will have the right to remove from final skates:

- any players who, by virtue of their initial scores, place them within the mandatory selection of the team
- any players at the other end of the spectrum mathematically eliminated from making the next level.

Final skates are therefore used to aid evaluators by comparing an athlete against athletes of comparable experience and skill. Removing the players at either end of the spectrum at the final stages makes this comparison easier.

2.8. Goalies

It is the intent of the EC that part time and primary goalies be evaluated appropriately, in order to encourage all athletes who wish to be a goalie, whether on occasion or as their primary role within the team.

U10 players will only be evaluated as skaters.

All athletes in U12 must participate as skaters in the UAA's. If they wish, players with an interest in goal may dress as goalies in the remaining sessions. Players who wish to be evaluated as a skater and as a goalie will be given the opportunity to do so, where possible. It is the player's responsibility to communicate this to the EC prior to scrimmage sessions.

At U14 to U19, if a player desires to play a mix of goalie and skater, may be placed on a team that matches the lower of their two skill levels. A player that evaluates only as a goalie will be expected to play solely as a goalie. It is the player's responsibility to communicate this to the EC prior to scrimmage sessions.

3. Team Formation – U10

U10 is unique among the age divisions. Due to the large size, the three-year age span and the diversity of experience present, U10 teams will be formed using several factors, in addition to evaluation results.

- Players who will be seven (7) or younger in the current playing year will be eligible to play Steps 1 and 2 only.

- Goalie play does not play a role in evaluations, as no player shall play the position full time
- Physical maturity (i.e., height) may be a minor factor when determining where a “bubble” player will be suited to develop best. It will also be used to distribute players between teams of the same Step
- First year U10 (7 and 8 years old) have little game play experience, and as such, evaluations may be limited to skating ability (UAA) only. Game play evaluations for these players have been shown to be of limited additional value.
- Returning players may be evaluated in game play situations.

3.1. Process

U10 Players will be initially organized into skating groups according to birth year and level played last season for UAA sessions.

Following UAA scoring, players’ rankings will be initially set, within the birth year limits. Skate groups may be adjusted.

At this point, most Step 1 and beginner players will be completed evaluations. There may be an additional skate if ice availability permits.

Remaining players will participate in one or two further skates with players rankings and groups adjusted as needed. The Step 2 game format will be used for scrimmage sessions.

Based on the distribution of players according to age, experience and skill level, team number per Step and team size will be determined by the EC.

Once a final ranking of players has been completed, Step 3 teams will be formed first, followed by Step 2 teams then Step 1 teams. In each case, the process noted below in Paragraph 5 will be followed.

4. Team Formation U12-U19

The number of teams at each level (A/B/C) will be determined following Ringette Alberta guidelines (RAB policy 4.0), once team size has been determined by the Evaluation Committee. Team size will be determined by dividing total number of players by the total number of teams, to arrive at approximate team sizes. Lower level teams may be afforded additional players to help provide stability of numbers while providing opportunities for affiliation up. At U16 and U19 this imbalance may be several players.

At each age group, the A teams will be formed first, followed by the B teams, and then the C teams. In each case, the process noted below in Paragraph 5 will be followed.

5. Assigning Players to Teams

There will be a number of protected players in each age group equal to no less than 75% of the total team size. These players are the players with the top rankings from the Evaluation Process, based on their cumulative scores. The remaining players will be selected from those whose rankings are within 125% of total team size. Specific numbers and additional details are shown in Appendix B.

The EC may use information obtained from previous year’s head coaches and/or assistant

coaches of the bubble players to determine the appropriate placements. No other players rankings or placement will be discussed or disclosed, and player scoring results will not be disclosed. Subsequently, based on the players evaluation scores and feedback from previous coaches, the EC will fill the remaining roster spots.

*Notwithstanding the above, the EC may expand the bubble window to include players within 0.5 points of the lowest ranked of the 125% cutoff players.

Should the Evaluations Committee offer a player an age division movement, the Committee shall rank the player based on their discretion. This may include moving them into protected status on the higher team, within the bubble, or onto the lower team.

The Evaluations Committee may opt to place late registrants on any age-appropriate team at their sole discretion. Consideration may be given to placing players on a skill-appropriate team, bolstering numbers for a team, or any other criteria.

5.1. Goalies

The EC supports the guidelines as laid out by LTAD and Ringette Alberta regarding the specialization of positions and goalies in particular. Every effort possible will be made to place goalies on teams wherein the best development for the athlete lies. Goalies in U12 should be encouraged to play multiple positions, even if their primary position is goalie, but as noted above they may evaluate solely as goalies if desired.

Players in U10 should be discouraged from primarily playing goal until U12.

6. Miscellaneous

6.1. Missed Sessions

In our attempt to create fair evaluations and treat athletes equitably, it is our policy that all athletes should attend all evaluations (barring 6.2 below). Any athlete missing a session will not be given a score, and the remaining sessions averaged. For those athletes missing more than one session, and when those averaged scores place an athlete within the protected mandatory pick zone, the athlete will be positioned one spot outside the mandatory zone, yet within the eligible pick zone.

The rationale for this is not to punish the athlete, but to ensure that every athlete is evaluated fairly. For this to happen, they must be evaluated on different occasions. The more times an athlete is viewed the more accurate the rating.

Missed UAA sessions may be replaced by the EC with a score from the previous season for player evaluation purposes.

6.2. Injured / Sick Player Missing All Evaluations

There may be circumstances beyond their control which prevent an athlete from participating in evaluations. The Evaluation Committee must be made aware of this before the first skate, and a health practitioner note may be requested.

The Evaluation Committee will determine the approximate ranking of the player who has missed the session. This will be done using past evaluations, coach assessments, etc.

6.3. Age Division Movement

Playing Up means playing in a Division higher than defined for the Player's age. Normally, Levels within Divisions provide sufficient separation of skill levels. Playing Down means playing in a Division lower than defined for the Player's age. In all cases of Player movement, the needs of the Player (not the parents, not the Association, not the Teams, and not of others) must be paramount.

6.3.1. Scope

This process applies to all player movement (up or down) for all divisions/levels. Player movement is typically initiated by players or parents but in some circumstances such moves can be requested by the association as outlined in this document.

6.3.2. Philosophy and Intent

This process is intended to deter player movement between levels outside of the Ringette Alberta divisional rules. Exceptions will be considered in rare cases and must meet the criteria outlined in this process.

6.3.3. Criteria for Player Requests to move up/stay down a Division

- a) Any player requesting to play up or play down must fill out a "Player Movement Request" form and pay the fee.
- b) The player must attend evaluations for the requested age level and must attend evaluations for their own age level, if required by the EC to do so, in case the request to move is not granted.
- c) Should the player qualify for the next age level, registration fees for that level will need to be paid.
- d) A Player Movement Request may be denied if it would prevent a viable team to be formed at their own age level.
- e) In exceptional years, it may be necessary for the EC to move players to balance age levels and create viable teams. Should a player movement be requested by the EC, parent consent is required and there will not be a registration fee change or movement fee.
- f) Final approval for all player movement will be the decision of the Evaluation Committee.
- g) All documents must be received no later than the first Executive meeting in September.
- h) The EC may wish to move players up a level to balance the numbers on the teams. If the EC wishes to move a player up, a list of the players whose parents have indicated they would not be opposed to such a move will be considered. All players wishing to move up will be invited to attend an evaluation session for the higher level. The EC can consider factors such as skill level, player maturity, family considerations, etc. in deciding who to ask to move up.

6.4. Appeals

Team selection is final and a player's placement may not be appealed.

7. Policy History

Approval Date	Policy Version	Revision Description
19 Jun 2025	0.0	New Process

APPENDIX A: Evaluation forms

Evaluation Sign-in Sheet

[illegible]

APPENDIX B: Team Formation

TEAM FORMATION: Mandatory vs Discretionary

# skaters	Pick Type	75%	Discretionary Pick Window
10	Mandatory	8	5
	Discretionary	2	
11	Mandatory	9	5
	Discretionary	2	
12	Mandatory	9	6
	Discretionary	3	
13	Mandatory	10	6
	Discretionary	3	
14	Mandatory	11	7
	Discretionary	3	
15	Mandatory	12	7
	Discretionary	3	
16	Mandatory	12	8
	Discretionary	4	

- Players tied in the ranking for the last mandatory spot will be included in the mandatory zone and number of discretionary picks reduced accordingly
- In the highly unlikely event that the mandatory pick zone has been expanded due to players being tied and the zone exceeds the determined team size, the mandatory pick zone will be reduced by one

APPENDIX C: Forming Balanced Teams

Where balanced teams are being formed, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. If required, the pool of players to be split will be determined first (e.g., if two B teams and a C team are to be formed, the pool of B players will be finalized as the first step).
2. Each player will be permitted to nominate **one** player that they would like to be on the same team with. ONLY IF both players select each other, then those two players will be kept together. No other requests will be considered by the EC.
3. Players will be ranked by their evaluation scores and assigned to teams via a snake draft, i.e., Team 'A' is assigned player #1, Team 'B' is assigned players #2 and #3, Team 'A' is assigned players #4 and #5, etc.
 - a. Where players are 'paired' (see above), they will both be assigned when the higher-ranking player is assigned. The player one rank above the lower-ranking of the pair will be assigned to the opposite team. (for example, players 2 and 8 are paired. When player 2 is assigned to Team 'B', player 8 is also assigned to Team 'B'. Player 7 is assigned to Team 'A', and the snake draft continues.)
4. Once teams are formed, the EC may organize a game between the two teams (or other teams) to evaluate competitive balance. Further adjustments may be made at the EC's discretion.