



## MDRA Player Assessment Guidelines for Competitive Teams

MDRA Player Assessment Guidelines for Competitive Teams  
Adopted (April 2026)



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## Introduction

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These guidelines ensure a consistent and transparent approach to evaluating athletes at the competitive level. They will be followed unless an exception is approved by a vote of the MDRA Board of Directors.

Tryouts are held each year to place athletes on teams with others of similar age and ability. Schedules will be posted on the MDRA website at [www.mdra.ca](http://www.mdra.ca); please check regularly during tryouts for updates.

We encourage athletes to compete at the highest level they feel comfortable with and are capable of. However, tryout goals should be realistic. A general benchmark is to move up one skill level in the second year of an age group and drop one level when advancing to a new age group. Player development rates and team needs may vary.

All parents, athletes, and coaches are encouraged to review these guidelines before each tryout season.

## Eligibility

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Athletes may attend MDRA competitive tryouts **in accordance with [Ringette Ontario Team Formation Policy](#)**, including right-of-refusal requirements and limits on multi-association tryouts. Athletes must attend their home association's tryouts first where applicable.

## Tryout Jerseys

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All athletes trying out for MDRA will be required to wear a tryout jersey (with numbers on the front and back of the jersey) which can be purchased in advance and retained by the player for future year tryouts and team practices. Each player will be identified by a unique jersey

number which helps to reduce confusion when assessing.

## Out of Association Athletes (OOA)

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Please refer to the following [MDRA Out of Association Policy document](#).

## Underage Athletes

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Please refer to the following [Underage Player Policy document](#).

## Expectations and Competitive Contract

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Competitive athletes will be asked to complete a Competitive Contract and Commitment Survey before tryouts, outlining the commitments expected throughout the season. This ensures athletes understand and accept their responsibilities from the start.

## Tryout Attendance

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Athletes must attend their home association tryouts and are required to attend every session they are asked to participate in. Failure to do so will jeopardize the player's ability to make the team. Attendance is tracked for every tryout session and is reported to Ringette Ontario **within 24 hours of the session or prior to the next tryout**, as required by Ringette Ontario policy.

The Director of Competitive should be notified in advance if a player cannot attend any of the sessions.

## Injured, ill or absent athletes

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Athletes attending competitive tryouts are expected to be in good health and prepared to participate fully in all sessions they are invited to attend. Athletes who are injured or seriously ill at the start of tryouts should only participate once fully recovered.

In accordance with **Ringette Ontario Team Formation Policy**, athletes must be **on the ice for at least one (1) official tryout session** to be eligible for consideration for a roster spot, unless otherwise approved by Ringette Ontario.

### Injury or Illness During Tryouts

If an athlete becomes injured or ill **during** the tryout process and is unable to complete all scheduled sessions:

- The athlete must notify the Convenor or Director of Competitive in writing as soon as possible.
- The athlete is not guaranteed a roster spot or provisional placement.
- Any consideration will be assessed case by case, based on:
  - Performance in tryout sessions completed (if applicable)
  - Prior documented evaluations, where appropriate and available
  - Overall team needs and roster composition
  - Compliance with Ringette Ontario policy

No performance allowances or score adjustments will be made to compensate for illness or injury during tryouts.

### Athletes Unable to Participate in Any Tryout Sessions

Athletes who are unable to participate in **any** tryout sessions due to injury or illness are **not automatically eligible** for roster consideration. Exception requests may be reviewed only where permitted under Ringette Ontario policy and must be approved through the appropriate Ringette Ontario process.

MDRA does not guarantee placement in these circumstances.

## **Post-Tryout Assessment (Where Permitted)**

Where an athlete has participated in at least one tryout session and an assessment outcome is not clear:

- The athlete may be required to complete an additional evaluation once fully recovered, such as:
  - One practice with the target team, followed by
  - Evaluation in a fall exhibition or league game, if applicable
- All such assessments must be conducted by independent evaluators and/or MDRA officials with assessment experience.
- The Head Coach may provide input but may not use a coach's selection ("coach's pick") for an injured or ill athlete.

## **Placement Determination**

Two possible placement outcomes may result:

### **Clear and Obvious Placement**

An athlete may be placed based on available evaluation information, including completed tryout sessions and relevant historical performance data. If the athlete disagrees with this outcome, they may proceed to additional assessment where permitted.

### **No Clear Placement**

If a placement decision cannot be reasonably determined, the athlete must complete a full assessment once healthy and available. No roster position is held during this period.

## **General Conditions**

- Athletes must be fully recovered before participating in any assessment.
- No accommodations will be made for reduced performance due to injury or illness.
- No previously selected athlete will be displaced to accommodate a late addition.
- Any post-tryout addition must comply with roster size limits and be approved by MDRA in alignment with Ringette Ontario policy.

The Convenor, Head Coach, and Director of Competitive will work together to ensure team integrity and coordinate placement options with the appropriate level where required.

## **Provision of a Trainer**

For all sessions a qualified trainer will be identified and will be available to assist as needed.

## Team size and composition

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Team size and composition are determined in accordance with **Ringette Ontario Team Formation Policy** and are influenced by registration numbers, the caliber and number of athletes attending tryouts, positional balance, and overall team viability.

For A-level teams, rosters must meet **Ringette Ontario minimum roster requirements**, including a **minimum roster size of thirteen (13) athletes**, and must comply with applicable **home/current player composition rules** for the age group and level of play. Final roster sizes are approved in alignment with these requirements.

MDRA aims to form balanced, competitive teams with appropriate positional coverage, including the required number of goalies and skaters, while ensuring full compliance with Ringette Ontario standards.

### Goaltender Considerations

If there are a limited number of goaltenders within an age division and multiple teams are being formed:

- A primary goaltender will be rostered where possible.
- Where appropriate and permitted, **Ringette Ontario Two Team Player Agreements** may be used to support goaltender coverage, in accordance with Ringette Ontario Two Team Player Procedures and only where necessary for team viability.

### Two Team Player Agreements

At the discretion of the Head Coach and with MDRA approval, **Ringette Ontario Two Team Player Agreements** may be used to support roster completion or positional balance. All such agreements must comply fully with current Ringette Ontario policies and procedures.

No roster decisions may be made that conflict with Ringette Ontario roster size, composition, or eligibility requirements.

## Tryout Cost

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There is a tryout fee that is assessed every year. For details on the assessment fee, please see the following [registration information on the MDRA website](#).

## Evaluators

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The Director of Competitive is responsible for appointing qualified, independent evaluators for each tryout session. Evaluators must be **18 years of age or older**, possess relevant experience at the age group and level being evaluated, and be free from real or perceived conflicts of interest.

Independent evaluator support, including **specialized goaltender evaluators**, may be used as required. Where necessary to assess overall team viability and caliber, external evaluators with experience at higher competitive levels and **no affiliation to MDRA** may be engaged.

Evaluators may only participate if they have **no family members or close personal relationships** with any athlete participating in the tryouts. All conflict-of-interest standards outlined by Ringette Ontario must be strictly followed.

Evaluation committees will be structured in accordance with Ringette Ontario policy, including:

- A minimum of two (2) different evaluators assessing each athlete over the course of the tryout process
- An appropriate evaluator-to-athlete ratio to ensure fair and comprehensive evaluation
- Consolidation of evaluation data and discussion at formal assessment meetings

Evaluators are responsible for assessing athletes using standardized criteria and providing objective rankings and feedback to support roster decisions. Final roster selections are made **collaboratively**,

based on evaluator input and in accordance with Ringette Ontario Team Formation Policy.

Head Coaches may provide input where permitted but may not participate in evaluation or decision-making involving their own child and may not override evaluator assessments.

## The Role of the Head Coach

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Prior to the start of tryouts, MDRA invites applications for the Head Coach position for each competitive team. Applications are reviewed by the Coaching Selection Committee, which makes a recommendation to the MDRA Executive for approval.

- Non-parent coaches may be confirmed and announced prior to the start of tryouts.
- Parent coaches may be named as provisional Head Coaches. Their appointment is confirmed only after their child has been independently selected to the team through the evaluation process.

Before the first tryout session, the Director of Competitive and the Vice-President of Coaching will meet with the provisional or confirmed Head Coach to discuss high-level team considerations, such as general roster structure, positional balance, and overall team needs. These discussions are **planning-focused only** and do not involve athlete evaluation or selection decisions.

During the tryout process, the provisional or confirmed Head Coach may work with the independent evaluators, the Director of Competitive, and the Tryout Committee (as approved by the Board of Directors) to support the organization of athletes into balanced line-ups for scrimmages or exhibition games. Where possible, athletes will be rotated through different line-mates to assist evaluators in observing performance in varied game situations.

### Assessment and Conflict of Interest

Head Coaches may participate in assessment meetings and provide input **once permitted** under Ringette Ontario policy. However:

- A Head Coach must not evaluate, rank, or make selection decisions that directly or indirectly affect their own child.
- In all such cases, the Head Coach is required to fully recuse themselves from discussion and

decision-making related to their child.

- Final roster decisions are informed by evaluator assessments and must comply with Ringette Ontario Team Formation and Conflict of Interest policies.

The role of the Head Coach during tryouts is to support the evaluation process, contribute Ringette knowledge where appropriate, and help form a balanced, competitive team **without overriding evaluator recommendations or Ringette Ontario requirements**.

Head coaches can also participate in assessment meetings – please see [Assessment Meetings](#).

## Registration and Tryout Organization

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Parents should register, decide which team tryout session to attend, and continually check the web site for tryout schedule/location changes. Tryouts are held in descending order from the most competitive level to the least competitive level.

All athletes will be informed of the outcome of their tryout by email (including when/where to go for the next tryout session if necessary). Every effort will be made to distribute the email follow-up within 24 hours of a tryout session (see section [Communication with Athletes](#)).

At the tryout session, volunteers approved by the Board of Directors will take attendance and hand out jerseys. Once athletes are on the ice, the Director of Competitive, President and Convener will hold a short parent information meeting outlining the process for evaluations and expectations for those successful in making the team. Tryout session formats are outlined below.

## Tryout Composition

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MDRA's competitive tryouts for U14A and U16A will be composed of the following:

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Tryout #1 (Mandatory)*	Skills session	No releases made
Tryout #2 (Mandatory)*	Intrasquad scrimmage	First releases made after tryout #2
Tryout #3	Intrasquad scrimmage	Second releases made after tryout #3
Tryout #4	Exhibition game	Third releases made after tryout #4
Tryout #5	Exhibition game	Final decisions made and roster set after tryout #5

\*Out of association (OOA) players must attend a minimum of one (1) of the first two (2) tryouts to be considered for future tryouts.

## Format for Tryouts #1 and #2

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The goal of Tryouts #1 and #2 is to assess athletes on both individual skill execution and game-based performance. Every effort will be made to evaluate all athletes against the full assessment criteria by the end of Tryout #2, using standardized assessment templates to assign scores and record evaluator feedback.

MDRA Tryout Plans and MDRA Tryout Drills will be made available to athletes in advance of the tryout process and will be posted on the MDRA Competitive Webpage.

Athletes are **strongly expected** to attend Tryouts #1 and #2 to allow evaluators sufficient opportunity to assess performance across all criteria. In accordance with Ringette Ontario policy, athletes must be **on the ice for at least one (1) official tryout session** to be eligible for roster consideration. Any absences due to illness, injury, or exceptional circumstances must be communicated in advance and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## Format for Tryout #3

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For the 2026-2027 season, an extra intrasquad scrimmage has been added to tryouts to allow athletes more opportunities to play in their preferred position before the exhibition games.

## Format for Tryouts #4 and #5

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Exhibition games for Tryouts #4 and #5 will be arranged by ERRRA.

Bench helpers will follow assigned rosters and ensure athletes are played in their designated positions. Ideally, each bench will have at least two helpers and one trainer. Family members should not be on the same bench (e.g., a father and daughter).

The goal is to evaluate all athletes in game situations and form a team that fits the desired composition for the level of play. Evaluators will score athletes across defined criteria using a standardized assessment template to ensure fair and consistent evaluations.

## Intrasquad Scrimmages

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Two teams will be formed, with athletes evaluated in their requested positions. Bench helpers will follow provided rosters and ensure athletes are played accordingly. When possible, lines will be adjusted midway through scrimmages. Buzzers may be used to help ensure equal ice time.

Convenors and the Director of Competitive will coordinate with the provisional coach to set line combinations and shift lengths. A volunteer is needed for the game clock and shot clock. Ideally, each bench will have at least two helpers and one trainer. Family members may not be on the same bench (e.g., a father and daughter).

## Evaluations during Tryouts

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Evaluators will be responsible for assessing athletes and goalies using the criteria provided (please see [Assessment Criteria for Athletes](#) and [Assessment Criteria for Goalies](#)). Evaluators will also be able to provide general written comments on as many competitors as possible.

## Positions Played During Tryouts

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Athletes will have an opportunity to play in the positions they identified as their preferred positions at sign up. Athletes may be asked to play other positions during tryouts.

Please note that preferred positions indicated at tryouts are not guaranteed if a player is offered a position on the team. The head coach and bench staff will determine the best positions for all athletes.

## Assessment Meetings

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All athletes attending Tryouts will be independently assessed by the evaluators. The Director of Competitive will record all scores into a single document that will complete the numeric component of the assessment. The evaluators will use this numeric summary and their own notes to rank athletes and determine releases after Tryout #2 and #3. There may be between 16 and 20 athletes moving into Tryout #4 and #5.

**If applicable:** Once the provisional head coach's child is selected to the team, they are confirmed as the head coach and may participate in the tryout assessments and meetings following each tryout.

The head coach should take their own notes using the assessment criteria and will have one vote, as does each assessor.

The head coach may select athletes ranked nine through the team target size for team

composition. The head coach will have an equal vote in the selection of goalie(s). The final selections are subject to review by the Tryout Committee who can bring it to the Board of Directors for review if the choices are inconsistent with the evaluator's data. The President or an executive member selected by the President must be present for the head coaches' selections.

Non-parent head coaches may participate in all assessments and meetings and have one vote.

## Athletes on the Bubble

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After the initial assessment meetings there are usually a handful of athletes who are "on the bubble" or those for whom it is very difficult to decide who should make the team.

- **IF** your child is "on the bubble" and makes the team, this will be an opportunity to play with some athletes who are more skilled. This may result in added pressure of trying to perform to the same level as the rest of the team.
- **IF** your child is "on the bubble" and doesn't make the team, this will be an opportunity to play with athletes who have slightly less skill and to be a leader on the team with the rest of the athletes.

## Communication with Athletes

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Decisions/releases will be made after **Tryout #2**. The division Convenor or Director of Competitive will contact each player within 24 hours to explain the selection process and whether the player will be attending the next session. Some athletes deemed to have already made the team might be asked not to participate in Tryout #3, #4 and/or #5 so that evaluators may better assess the skills of the remaining athletes.

After **Tryout #3 and #4** further decisions/releases will be made. The division Convenor or Director of Competitive will contact each player within 24 hours to explain the selection process and whether the player will be attending the next session

After **tryout #5** the final decisions/releases will be made. The division Convenor or Director of Competitive will contact each player within 24 hours to explain the selection process.

Should a parent or player be interested in feedback they should contact the Director of Competitive, who summarizes what the evaluators noted and will only be provided once all tryouts have been completed.

## Assessment Criteria for Athletes

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*Evaluator scores are one component of the assessment process and are reviewed alongside evaluator observations, discussion, and overall team needs when determining roster decisions.*

The **assessment of the skills** will be based on a 1 to 5 point system as well as comments provided by the evaluators for **tryout #1**. The evaluators will group each player into top, top-middle, middle, bottom-middle and bottom based on their own comments and the athletes performance of the skill criteria.

The **assessment of gameplay** will be based on a 1 to 3 point system as well as comments provided by the evaluators for **tryout #2, #3, #4 and #5**. The evaluators will group each player into top, middle and bottom based on their own comments and the athletes overall performance during gameplay.

After each tryout session the evaluators will discuss their rankings with the Tryout Committee, their scores and rankings for that session, and/or for the entire tryout sessions to date.

### **The Athletes skills that are assessed during the tryouts are the following:**

1. **Skating:** Agility; quick feet; balance; pivots; acceleration/deceleration; full ice-speed; power; stop/starts, tight turns
  - **During Gameplay:** Applies skating skills consistently in game; support with timing; drive to net; change of pace to gain ice and/or closing gap.

2. **Passing, stabbing and pass receiving:** Forehand and backhand; accuracy; strength; quickness of ring movement; presents target; opens to pass (body positioning and timing)
  - **During Gameplay:** Decision making to pass; willingness to pass; support option; done at game speed
3. **Ring Handling and protection:** Use of fakes/dekes; move to open space; head up; feet moving; use of body to protect ring; confidence and composure in small space and/or under pressure
4. **Shooting:** Power; accuracy; quick release; shot in stride; variety of shots (location); variety of shot (type); always a threat to shoot; shot for rebounds; shot for resets; scoring and/or scoring opportunities; awareness
5. **Checking and Channeling:** Angling inside - out; body position/stick position to take away options; control of body and stick; goal side; pin/close gap "move it or lose it"; transitions/change of directions; awareness to be aggressive/conservative; discipline
6. **1 VS 1 Defensive skills:** Backward mobility/transition to Def.; gap control; positioning in triangle; coverage (tight; eyes on ring; goal side; inside); owning your blue line; break out 1st; support to D/C on Break out
7. **1 vs 1 Offensive skills:** Acceleration/deceleration; pursuit to ring; create space on breakout; ring reception in neutral zone; creativity in offensive zone vs predictability; support in offensive zone (play away from ring); coverage creates turnovers - into attack;
8. **Game play:** Anticipation; vision; versatility (both sides of ring); support and transition; decision making (timing; composure; confidence; aptitude); discipline; knowledge of systems (mental game, knows where to play, knows when to change, communicates with team mates, skates to open spaces, executes free passes well) (executes breakout, plays defensive triangle effectively, fakes and shoots well when in attacking zone)
9. **Intangibles:** Passion (wants to compete); fitness (able to play at level under pressure); drive/work ethic (constant desire to excel); mental toughness (rebounds well, distraction control); discipline (temper, follows rules and game plan); teamwork (communicates effectively with teammates, supports team strategies, collaborates well under pressure)

## Assessment Criteria for Goalies

*Evaluator scores are one component of the assessment process and are reviewed alongside evaluator observations, discussion, and overall team needs when determining roster decisions.*

The **assessment of the skills** will be based on a 1 to 5 point system as well as comments provided by the evaluators for **tryout #1**. The evaluators will group each player into top, top-middle, middle, bottom-middle and bottom based on their own comments and the athletes performance of the skill criteria.

The **assessment of gameplay** will be based on a 1 to 3 point system as well as comments provided by the evaluators for **tryout #2, #3, #4 and #5**. The evaluators will group each player into top, middle and bottom based on their own comments and the athletes overall performance during gameplay.

After each tryout session the evaluators will discuss their rankings with the Tryout Committee, their scores and rankings for that session, and/or for the entire tryout sessions to date.

**The Goalie skills that are assessed during the tryouts are the following:**

1. **Saves:** Makes many saves with blocker, catcher, pads, stick; stops most to all shots; does not let in "weak" goals due to poor readiness, reaction, or positioning.
2. **Ring Distribution:** Throws low and flat passes to safe zones on ice (goal line by side of net; not in front); makes stick passes with accuracy and timing; communicates with teammates to signal where and when to start to break out.
3. **Positioning:** Stays square to the shooter; pushes out to manage angles and reduce the amount of net showing to shooter; hugs post when ring is behind net and close to goal line; backs into net on breakaways.
4. **Mobility:** Basic stance: feet shoulder-width apart, weight on inside edges, hands out, head up, back arched, hips low (but not crouching too low); performs butterfly, sliding butterfly, and power push to move side to side; keeps stick flat on ice during movement; avoids bobbing up and down while moving laterally; can do T push and shuffle step
5. **Rebound Control:** Controls direction of rebounds with pads or stick; absorbs/cushions ring with stick on low shots.
6. **Recovery:** Returns to basic stance and proper positioning after being down on ice.

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7. **Intangibles:** Passion (wants to compete); fitness (able to play at level under pressure); drive/work ethic (constant desire to excel); mental toughness (rebounds well, distraction control); discipline (temper, follows rules and game plan); teamwork (communicates effectively with teammates, supports team strategies, collaborates well under pressure)