



# STETTLER MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

## Player Acceleration Policy & Procedure

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*Date of Policy Adoption: June 19, 2024 (formerly Exceptional Player Policy)*  
*Date of Policy Amendments: May 2026*

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### **Policy Statement:**

The purpose of the Association's Player Acceleration Policy & Procedure is to determine eligibility for player requests to advance above their prescribed age division.

### **ACCELERATED PLAYER EVALUATION**

SMHA adopts Hockey Canada's recommendation that players develop and play within their age category. However, with rationale, a player may seek permission to evaluate for the highest team within the next age division (ie. U9, U11A, U13A, U15A, U18A).

At the Board's discretion, SMHA will consider any such request and may grant accelerated evaluation based on the player possessing:

- hockey skills superior to players in his/her own age division (considerably advanced for his/her age)
- ability to compete at a level consistent with the top players at the next age division
- physical and social maturity that match his/her superior hockey skills
- well-roundedness in all aspects of his/her development

The Association recognizes that decisions affect the individual player requesting acceleration evaluation as well as other players throughout the Association's hockey program. When reviewing requests for underage player advancement, the following factors will also be considered:

- The safety of the players in the lower age division and whether the size, speed, skill, strength and other factors of the player requesting acceleration may detrimentally affect the safety of other players if he or she plays in an age division below his or her skill level;
- The safety of the player requesting the acceleration and whether the size, speed, skill, strength and other factors of the player will allow the player to safely compete with players in the higher age division;
- Other developmental considerations of the player applying for acceleration; and/or
- Overall Association registration numbers and general effect on potential team formation, if allowing the advancement of an underage players in a division may better balance player numbers between divisions.

Approval to participate in accelerated evaluations is granted for one season only, and does not guarantee placement in the higher age division. There is also no guarantee that acceleration tryout requests will be accommodated by the Association every year, even if a player has been granted underage status in previous seasons.

## **ACCELERATED PLAYER ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA**

### **To U13, U15, U18 Divisions**

In order for a player to be awarded acceleration status and granted a roster spot on the highest-level team in the higher age division, the player must participate in accelerated evaluations in accordance with SMHA Evaluation Policy and at the conclusion be ranked:

- Top 3 Forward
- Top 2 Defense
- Top 1 Goaltender

### **From U9 to U11 Division**

In order for a player to be awarded acceleration status and granted a roster spot on the highest-level team in the higher age division, the player must participate in accelerated evaluations in accordance with SMHA Evaluation Policy and at the conclusion be ranked:

- Highest-level team (U11A)

### **From U7 to U9 Division**

In order for a player to be awarded acceleration status and granted a roster spot in U9, the player will be evaluated by the VP Development, U7 and U9 senior coaches and/or an appointed evaluator as deemed necessary. At the conclusion, the player must be ranked:

- Within top 10% of U9 skaters
- Other factors as listed under Accelerated Player Evaluation may also be considered.

Player evaluations and acceleration criteria are considered final and are not subject to appeal.

PLEASE NOTE: SMHA reserves the right to request a player(s) move up an age level, with parent(s)/guardian(s) approval, and without the need for this full procedure. This would be applied only if enrolment numbers at said higher division were at an extreme low. The player(s) chosen would be assessed and considered physically and mentally capable of managing the higher division, and awarded acceleration status for one season only.

SMHA may also determine each season that no positions in the higher age category are available for accelerated player movement (ie. If U18 has 40 player positions open, and 40 players registered, SMHA would not displace a U18-aged player to accommodate an under-aged player requesting accelerated status.)

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Application for Accelerated Evaluation**

1. All players must first register and pay fees within their appropriate age division.
2. Next, player will complete and submit SMHA's Player Acceleration Application form (requesting evaluation) along with a \$100 non-refundable application fee.
  - Submit application to:  
registrar@stettlerminorhockey.com & vpoperations@stettlerminorhockey.com
  - EMT application fee (clearly labeled "Player Acceleration Application Fee") to:  
treasurer@stettlerminorhockey.com
  - **Application Deadline: September 1**
3. If the Association approves a player acceleration tryout, the associated tryout fee is due immediately. Players must pay all registration and tryout fees in full before tryouts begin.
4. Players must continue to attend evaluation skates of their own age division in addition to the higher division until a final decision is made, and permitting ice times do not conflict. This may require payment of two separate tryout fees if participating in evaluations for more than one age division.
5. Any difference in registration fees will be collected upon final decision of team placement.

### **Decision-Making on Accelerated Evaluation Requests**

1. The SMHA Evaluation Committee will review and determine eligibility for accelerated evaluation requests.
2. Any Evaluation Committee member with a conflict of interest, including a familial relationship with the applicant player, will remove themselves from discussion and decision-making regarding that application.
3. A decision will be supplied to the player in writing at least 5 days prior to first scheduled evaluation skate and is considered final.

### **Decision-Making on Acceleration Team Placement**

1. Players participating in evaluations and meeting requirements as stated in the Accelerated Player Acceptance Criteria, will be granted the opportunity to move up to the next age division for one season.
2. Assessment will be completed by evaluators and decision presented to Evaluation Committee to finalize.
3. Placement becomes final when player's name is approved as part of a team's roster. Prior to this approval, the player may request a release from the higher age category and move back down to his/her applicable age category without penalty (application and tryout fees non-refundable).



# SMHA PLAYER ACCELERATION APPLICATION

Player Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth:(yyyy/mm/dd) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Age Division: \_\_\_\_\_ Division Applying for: \_\_\_\_\_

Coach Reference(s):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes *I have included a personal appeal / position statement as to why this player is applying for Acceleration Status and possible upwards movement within SMHA. \*Please limit submission to one page and attach to the application form.*

No *I have not attached any further documentation for consideration in this application.*

**By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the process outlined in SMHA's Player Acceleration Policy & Procedure.** A \$100 application fee (non-refundable) will be submitted with this form prior to the stated deadline to be considered for evaluation and possible accelerated placement.

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please submit completed application (and any attachments) to:  
[registrar@stettlerminorhockey.com](mailto:registrar@stettlerminorhockey.com) & [voperations@stettlerminorhockey.com](mailto:voperations@stettlerminorhockey.com)

**Deadline: September 1**