

SRA Policy on Player Advancement for Provincial Teams

Adopted June 01, 2016

Sudbury Ringette Association

While the Sudbury Ringette Association (SRA) **strongly prefers and recommends** that players participate in their age-appropriate division, SRA recognizes that from time to time we must consider requests to allow an underage player “play up” an age group. Such exceptional circumstances are clearly defined in this policy, along with the evaluation and decision-making policies to be applied to each and every case. SRA supports the Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) framework adopted by Ringette Canada. The LTAD framework takes into consideration not only an athlete’s physical capabilities, but also considers their cognitive and social development along with their leadership potential. SRA will abide by the guidelines set out in this policy when considering any request for player advancement at the **Provincial level**. In **all** cases, consideration will be given to what is best for the participant(s) in question and the effects of the move on other participants and our Association as a whole.

1. Circumstances that Warrant Consideration for Player Advancement

A request for player advancement may be initiated in three circumstances:

- a) SRA may request player advancements if player numbers are insufficient to form a team of a particular age division, or to relieve excess numbers in a particular age division.
- b) A player, parent, or coach may request player advancement when a player’s skills are such that they should or could play at the next competitive level when there is NOT an A or AA level at their own age group.
- c) A player, parent, or coach may request player advancement when there IS an A or AA level team at their own age group, but only when the player’s skills are clearly exceptional and the player is perceived to exhibit the mental, emotional, and physical development required for playing at a higher age level.

In all cases, adherence to the processes outlined for requests, evaluation and decision-making must be followed, and clear communication among affected parties is paramount. The decision to move or not move an underage player to a higher age level team must involve all parties (parents, SRA Executive, coaches and the Player Advancement Committee).

2. Procedures for Requesting, Evaluating, and Ruling on Player Advancement

The following Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 outline the procedures based on the three circumstances that warrant player advancement listed above.

2.1 Requests initiated by SRA

A decision by SRA to request a player to play up a level is one that is not taken lightly. Sometimes parents or coaching staff may feel the calibre of their team could be adversely affected by such a move. Parents, players, and coaches are asked to remember that such a request would be made for the good of the Association as a whole, and to ensure each player has a chance to play on a reasonably sized team.

There will be times when registration numbers are such that the ability to field a team at a given age and division relies entirely on SRA requesting that one or more underage players participate in that division. Asking a player (or players) to “play up” benefits SRA in general, but more importantly, a group of other players who would otherwise be unable to play on a reasonably sized team. Decisions will be made only after consulting with the coaches, players and parents involved.

When players must be advanced to enable a team to be formed at an older age group, or to relieve excess numbers at a lower age group, the following guidelines will apply:

- a) Every attempt will be made to maximize player involvement at the age appropriate level when forming Provincial Teams. A minimum of 10 skaters is recommended to form a Provincial level team, and player advancement will only be requested by the SRA Executive and/or the Player Advancement Committee once it is determined that 1) there are insufficient players of the appropriate age and calibre to form a team at the higher level, or 2) there are too many players of appropriate calibre at the younger level and some players are of the calibre to play at the higher level.
- b) The Player Advancement Committee will identify players who could safely play at the next age level.
- c) After the Player Advancement Committee identifies the players to advance to the higher level, the Committee, SRA Executive, Parents, and Player will collectively decide if the Player will play at the higher level.

2.2 Requests initiated by a player/parent/coach when there is NOT a Provincial team at the lower age level

This scenario applies to a U10 age player wishing to play for a U12 Provincial Petite team, or in a case where there is not a Provincial team at the age-appropriate level that season. When a player wishes to play at the next competitive level and there is no competitive team at their age-appropriate level, the following guidelines apply:

- a) For U10-aged players, only players in their final year of U10 will be permitted to try out at the Provincial Petite level.

- b) It must be the judgment of the Player Advancement Committee that based on previous years of play and overall development, this player stands a reasonable chance of success in playing at the higher level, and the player demonstrates that ability by attending tryouts and earning an offer to play on that team.
- c) No underage player may displace an age appropriate player on a Provincial level team if the age appropriate player is within the calibre expected of a Provincial player.
- d) The Player Advancement Committee will make the final recommendation to the SRA Executive to allow or reject the request for player advancement.

2.3 Requests initiated by a player/parent/coach when there IS a Provincial team at the lower age level

It is not the position of SRA to force a player to play at a level that is well below their demonstrated ability and the ability of their peers at the Provincial level. In this situation, the SRA has developed the following policy guidance and decision making process. The Player Advancement Committee OR the SRA Executive will determine if the request merits review based on meeting ALL of the following requirements:

- a) The request has been made in writing by SRA or the interested party (preferably using the Player Advancement Request Form).
- b) The player(s) are in their final year at the lower age level.
- c) The player is deemed to be of Provincial calibre by the SRA Executive and/or Player Advancement Committee based on prior knowledge of player ability; in cases where no prior knowledge is available, this requirement will be waived.

If the request merits review, the affected player(s) must first attend the tryouts of the lower (age-appropriate) age group to demonstrate superior competitive calibre as determined by the Player Advancement Committee. While the request is being considered the player should attend the older age group tryouts in an attempt to earn a spot on that team, with no obligation on the part of SRA to grant the request. After evaluations, the Committee will make their recommendation to the SRA executive. Factors dictating the decision made by the Committee include, but are not limited to:

- a) The athlete's skill level is *clearly superior* to that of peers in the lower age division;
- b) The athlete's development will benefit greater by playing in the next age division than it would from being a leader in the lower age division.
- c) No underage player may displace an age-appropriate player if the age-appropriate player is deemed to be of Provincial calibre by the Player Advancement Committee.
- d) The affected coach of the lower age group team will be consulted by the Committee (in writing) to assess her/his view of the impact of the player(s) being released from the lower age group.

- e) The affected coach of the older age group team(s) will be consulted by the Committee (in writing) to assess her/his view of the impact of the player(s) being permitted to advance to the older age group team.
- f) Social factors – age spread, maturity and social issues between the youngest and oldest player on the team

The decision taken by SRA on the Player Advancement Request will be final and not subject to appeal. The decision will be to either:

- i. Accept the request to allow the player to move to the older division and attend tryouts if they have not yet attended the older-age level tryouts
- ii. Accept the request to allow the player to move to the older division if they have already attended the older age-level tryouts and are offered a position on that team
- iii. Reject the request to allow player advancement

3. Composition of Player Advancement Committee

The Player Advancement Committee will be composed of three members of former coaches, officials, past Executive members, or individuals with direct knowledge of the qualities and abilities of Provincial-level players. The committee will be chosen and approved by the SRA Executive. Members of the committee must be free of real or perceived conflict of interest, and should not have a direct interest in the teams affected by their evaluations. In all cases, it is preferred that the recommendation of the Committee to the SRA Executive will be reached unanimously, but in cases where this is not possible the recommendation made will be that of the majority of the Committee.