



West Ottawa Ringette Association

Under-Age Player Request Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the criteria and decision-making process to determine if it is appropriate to consider moving a player up an age division.

2. Scope

This policy applies to WORA players from U12 to U16.

3. Principles

The West Ottawa Ringette Association (WORA) is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all young athletes and making decisions in the best interest of all participants.

As a general rule, "playing up" (competing in an older age division) will not be permitted in most cases. WORA values the importance of players remaining with their social peer group, as this supports both leadership development and skill improvement.

From U14 to U19, the use of tiering when forming teams provides an appropriate separation of skill levels, ensuring that all players are appropriately challenged. Therefore, players are strongly encouraged to compete at the most suitable tier rather than moving up an age division.

In alignment with Ringette Canada and Ringette Ontario, WORA ensures that players participate in their age-appropriate division. However, in exceptional circumstances only, a player may be permitted to "play up" an age group. These exceptional circumstances, along with the decision-making process and evaluation procedure for Under-Age Player (UAP) requests, are outlined in this policy.

4. Process

The process is also outlined in the UAP Decision-making and Player Evaluation Flow Chart (seen below).

- 4.1. The parent/guardian of a player must outline their request in writing to the WORA Vice-president. Requests should be submitted at least 7 days prior to the start of the evaluation period.
 - 4.1.1. The request should indicate the player's current age division, desired age division, number of years played at current division, their previous season's Coach, and why this request should be considered.
- 4.2. A Committee will be formed of WORA Board members and an independent, qualified person, if needed, to review UAP requests. The Committee will be composed of, at a minimum, the Vice-president, the Competitive or Regional Director, and Player

Development Director. Should there be a conflict of interest (i.e., family members) where bias may exist, the WORA board will appoint alternate committee members.

- 4.3. The Committee will determine if:
 - 4.3.1. There are impacts of the UAP request on the same-age or upper age divisions in terms of team formation and viability (enough players to field a team); and if,
 - 4.3.2. The UAP is one year removed from the upper age division. For example, an 11-year old could request to play in U14, however a 10-year old could not.
- 4.4. The UAP is considered to be truly elite and exceptional by **ranking in the top three in the upper age division at the AA-level**. This means getting overall top scores across all skill assessment categories, as compared to the majority of players in the requested age division.
 - 4.4.1. The UAP must not displace an age-appropriate player.
- 4.5. Finally, the Committee will consider other factors such as the UAP's physical size and maturity level.
- 4.6. If the Committee has majority agreement after considering the above items, a recommendation will be sent to the WORA board for approval. Approval will also need to be granted by Ringette Ontario.
- 4.7. The UAP may only begin playing with the requested age division once approved by all governing bodies.
- 4.8. If the Committee does not have majority agreement, the Committee will inform the parent/guardian that the UAP is not eligible to move as per this policy. Once a decision has been made, it is considered final and will not be subject to revision or appeal.
- 4.9. The WORA board may make exceptions to this policy for the overall good of its programs.

Under-Age Player Request Flow Chart

