



## **ACADIA MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION(AMHA)**

### **COMPETITIVE TRYOUT POLICY 2026-2027**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The following is an overview of the tryout process, aimed at assisting players and their families in understanding how the process is designed. AMHA understands that tryouts can be stressful for both players and their families and with this in mind have attempted to take the appropriate measures to make our tryouts as enjoyable as possible, yet professional and impartial.

#### **2. EXPECTATIONS OF COMPETITIVE HOCKEY**

It is important that all players and their families realize what is expected of them if they are successful in making a competitive team in AMHA. Our coaches strive to deliver a fair play program that will allow all players to develop, while at the same time, recognizing that hockey is a team sport, and therefore, players are expected to attend all practices, games and team-sanctioned events.

Obviously, situations will arise where players will have to miss certain events, which is totally understandable, but players who regularly miss practices, games, and other events will miss out on development opportunities, and this could lead to reduced playing time during games, at the discretion of the head coach.

In addition to this, there are often other expectations at the competitive level, which may/ may not include the following:

- Early morning/late evening practices on weekdays/weekends.
- Fundraising to help support the costs of rep fees/tournament fees. Parents/ guardians who chose not to fundraise will be expected to pay the equivalent amount themselves.
- Tournaments and the costs associated with them such as gas, motel/ hotels, and meals.

- An average of 1–2 games per week (home and away), 2 practices per week, as well as the possibility of exhibition games.

### **3. TRYOUT COMMITTEE**

The Tryout Committee is chaired by the AMHA Competitive Chair – Chris Flaherty. The Tryout Committee consists of members of the AMHA Board of Directors and/or AMHA members in good standing as well as the AMHA Technical Director.

The Committee will define the tryout schedule for the season and oversee the entire tryout process, which includes the selection of evaluators, communication of tryout times, posting of tryout groups, review of player absenteeism requests, and any other information deemed necessary.

### **4. FEES & PAYMENTS**

To be eligible to tryout for a competitive team, players must be registered with AMHA prior to the start of tryouts and all applicable registration fees and tryout fees must be paid prior to the beginning of tryouts. Players will not be permitted on the ice for the first tryout session in the event fees have not been submitted.

### **5. COMMUNICATION**

The AMHA website is the ONLY means of communication during tryouts. AMHA will also endeavour to communicate using our Facebook page and strive to send out e-mails to the addresses provided to the association during player registration. All competitive tryouts will take place at the Acadia Arena.

### **6. OUT OF ASSOCIATION PLAYERS**

In accordance with Hockey Nova Scotia, out of association players wishing to tryout for an Acadia Minor Hockey team must initially register with their home association prior to registering for AMHA tryouts. Player registration with their home association will be confirmed by the AMHA Registrar prior to the start of tryouts. Any player found to be in violation of this ruling will be deemed ineligible for participation in AMHA Tryouts.

In any situation where a player can tryout for two different teams within a division, the player must tryout for their home association first, with the understanding that there is an obligation to make and play for their home association. If these players are successful in making an AMHA team, a transfer request will be submitted to their home association through the AMHA Registrar.

## **7. PLAYER SELECTION BY POSITION**

For the purposes of scoring and evaluating players, AMHA requires all players competing for positions on competitive teams at the U13 level and above to identify the position for which they wish to compete prior to tryouts beginning. **Parents cannot request a position change once evaluations have started.**

For players being evaluated in the U11 age group, a “preferred position” will be requested directly to the player during their first evaluation check-in. Appropriate positions considered will be: goaltender, forward, defence, or forward/defence. These “preferred position” submissions may be information a coach considers when evaluating an evaluation bubble.

## **8. UNDERAGE PLAYERS**

If an underage player wants to tryout for a team in the next age division up that player must get permission from the HNS Regional Director and notify the AMHA Competitive Chair prior to the start of tryouts. The underage player must make the highest-level team offered by AMHA that season in the older age division. Since this circumstance is reserved for exceptional status players, in order to make the team in the next age division up the player must be locked as either the top 2 forwards, top 1 defencemen, or top 1 goalie after the first intersquad game. If the player is not locked in one of those positions at that time they will be released back to their appropriate age division and must participate fully in that tryout.

## **9. CLOTHING/GEAR**

AMHA asks players to avoid wearing helmet stickers, pant shells, team socks, etc from outside programs, however, AMHA recognizes the growth of hockey province wide as a positive and wants our players to be as comfortable as possible during their evaluation process. With that said, players are encouraged to wear Acadia colors. The Competitive Chair reserves the right to request any player remove or replace any gear or decorative additions. Helmet stickers can remain as well as pant shells where approved. We do encourage all players and families to be reasonable and respectful as far as gear is concerned and remember that evaluations are based strictly on player performance.

Jerseys – players are expected to bring their own jerseys to evaluations. Jerseys must be plain in nature and shall not have team logos, be branded or have any markings that may cause a player to stand-out. If a player is being evaluated for a forward position, they are to wear a white practice jersey. If a player is being evaluated for a defence position, they are to wear a black practice jersey.

Pinnies – Numbered/colored pinnies will be issued prior to each session. Absolutely no trading of pinnies or jerseys is permitted.

All players taking part in AMHA tryouts/evaluations must be fully outfitted in safe, functioning hockey gear including neck guard, well-fitted CSA-certified helmet & securely attached facial protector. The Competitive Chair reserves the right to refuse any player's gear that is deemed unsafe. In said situation, the player may lose their opportunity to tryout for that ice time if they do not have access to replacement gear that is deemed safe for player usage.

## **10. TRYOUT ABSENTEEISM**

In order to accurately and fairly evaluate all participating players fully throughout the different stages of the tryout process, it is expected that players will attend all tryout sessions. If a player cannot attend a tryout session(s), it is critical that a parent/ guardian inform the Chair of Competitive as soon as possible as tryout committee approval is required for a player to be considered for a competitive team. Failure to do so may impact a player's evaluation, resulting in a score of zero for the session(s).

It is, however, understood that there are valid circumstances that prevent players from attending one, multiple or all tryout session(s). As a result, the tryout committee has established guidelines to be taken in these situations.

### **Sickness or Injury**

If any player becomes sick or injured and only attends one session the player will be ranked for the session they participated in, and their score will be pro-rated for the sessions they are unable to attend.

If any player becomes sick or injured and attends two or more sessions but is unable to attend remaining sessions the player will be ranked for the sessions they participated in, and their score will be pro-rated for the sessions they missed.

If a player is excused from all tryouts due to sickness or injury a note from the player's family Physician/Nurse Practitioner or an attending Physician shall be required by the Tryout Committee.

### **Compassionate Reasons**

In addition to sickness or injury, players may be unable to attend for "other" reasons. The following situations shall be considered under compassionate reasons:

- Family tragedy
- Religious holidays

Absenteeism for a competing sporting event may not be approved by the tryout committee. An exception may be made for players competing in a provincial level or higher competition but must be approved by the tryout committee in advance.

If a player is excused from all tryout sessions due to reasons outlined above, the committee may use the following to determine a player's ranking:

1. Where did the player play last year?
2. How did they develop through that year?
3. How strong was the player at the end of that year relative to others?
4. A discussion with previous coaches regarding other qualitative factors.

## **11. OBJECTIVES OF PLAYER EVALUATION**

- To provide a fair, consistent and impartial assessment of all players
- To create an environment where each player has a reasonable opportunity to be selected for the level appropriate to their skill, physical maturity and ability where they may continue to grow and develop as a player
- To establish an evaluation and selection process that provides consistent and comprehensive evaluation based upon the skills and ability demonstrated of each player
- To ensure that all players and player families understand the expectations upon which players will be evaluated
- To ensure all evaluators are objective, unbiased, free of conflict of interest, and have a thorough understanding of the Association's objectives with the tryout process
- To provide for the ongoing review and improvement of the player evaluation and team selection process, ensuring that the process continues to meet the demands placed upon the association.
- Evaluators will not know players' names, share opinions, or see other evaluators' scores. Major discrepancies between evaluators are rare but will be investigated. In extreme cases where an evaluator has scored someone significantly different than the other evaluators this score may be discounted if determined as necessary by the Tryout Committee.

## **12. EVALUATORS**

Members of the Acadia Axemen Men's Varsity hockey team will be the evaluators for the tryouts of the 2026-2027 Season.

The role of the evaluators during the tryout process will be to:

- Review and understand the evaluation factors/criteria that they are being asked to evaluate in each session
- Ensure that each assigned player receives a full evaluation and a representative score based on said evaluation
- Respect the confidentiality of the process and do not discuss any evaluations outside of the actual process and those involved
- Refrain from sharing comments/ opinions with anyone outside of the tryout process.
- Direct any questions, comments or concerns to the Tryout Committee.

### **13. VIEWING EXPECTATIONS**

Parents are not allowed on the bench or to stand around the glass during evaluations. Viewing is only permitted from the stands located on the west side of the Acadia arena which is immediately underneath the announcer's gondola, above the dressing rooms, across the ice surface from the player's benches. This policy will be monitored to ensure players can perform independently without distraction.

During evaluations, parents, siblings, guardians, friends, or other interested parties are not allowed to loiter in the following areas without special permission:

- In the check-in area;
- In the dressing room;
- Outside the dressing room; and
- Near evaluators.

### **14. EVALUATION PROCESS**

AMHA strives to cooperate with our neighbouring Minor Hockey Associations to understand what their association's team submissions will look like in order to have a coordinated schedule that doesn't conflict with our association's policies. The intent is to have a smart and diligent evaluation process to ensure no player misses an opportunity. This means that every effort will be made to try to schedule the evaluations for the highest level of competitive hockey as early-on evaluation schedule with the lower levels of competitive hockey occurring after the higher-level rosters are selected. Coordinating this scheduling effort will be challenging when teams have players from multiple associations trying out.

Players will be evaluated on their individual skills and game play performance. Therefore, AMHA tryout process is broken into three phases and scores will be carried forward through all sessions & games:

- Skill Sessions

- Intra-squad games
- Exhibition games or Equalizer games

## **Evaluation Factors**

### **Skill Evaluation:**

- Skating: acceleration, speed, agility, balance, stride, crossovers and pivoting
- Passing: forehand and backhand passing and receiving
- Puck Handling: head up/awareness, quick hands, puck protection and control
- Shooting: velocity, accuracy, quick release, shooting in stride
- Intangibles (goalies and skaters): work ethic, consistency, attentiveness.

### **Game Execution:**

- Skating: as above
- Puck Skills: passing, puck handling and shooting
- Offensive Play: creativity, determination, driving the net, vision, play making, confidence and speed with the puck, positioning with and without the puck, two-way play (forechecking and backchecking), break out, scoring ability and battling
- Defensive Play: angling, gap control, vision, checking, positional play, puck movement, net play, point play
- Intangibles: work ethic, compete level, discipline, stamina, team play, attitude and communication skills

### **Goalie Evaluation:**

- Goalies will have one dedicated goalie skill evaluation session
- Skill Sessions: stance, mobility, positioning, save technique, rebound control
- Games: in addition to above, game performance, anticipation, tracking, cardio; determination

## **Evaluation Phases**

**Skills Phase:** There are two sessions in the Skills Phase. Players trying out for competitive teams will be grouped to create approximate evenly skilled groups for the first two skills sessions. The purpose of the grouping is to facilitate a fair ranking process by reducing risk of excessively strong or weak groups.

- Session 1 – Individual Skills – Drills designed to test the player's individual skills – skating, puck handling, shooting and passing abilities.
- Session 2 – Tactical Skills – Drills designed to test the player's tactical skills in game-like situations such as battle drills, one-on-ones, two-on-ones, etc.

Intra-Squad Game Phase: There will be three Intra-squad Games:

- Game 1 – Intra-squad – The combined evaluation scores from Session 1 and 2 will be used to rank the players and tier them into teams for the first Intra-squad game.
- Game 2 – Intra-squad – Scores from Game 1 and the skills scores will be combined (based on the weighting table) to re-group the players for Intra-Game 2.
- Game 3 – Equalizer – Selected top evaluated players may sit out the equalizer game at the discretion of the Tryout Committee. From there, each game will have some players move up to a high ranked game. This will allow players from the lower ranked game to have the opportunity to play with higher ranked players. Equalizer games will only be played as necessary when there is no ability to schedule an Exhibition game.

Final Phase: The final phase of the tryouts involves evaluation of the players' overall skills and abilities as demonstrated in an exhibition game against an opponent from another association OR an intra-squad game/equalizer when the situation requires it.

The exhibition games may have larger teams than necessary to facilitate the evaluation process. The normal number of players on the teams during this phase are may be as follows:

- Up to 12 forwards, 8 defence and 3 goalies

Prior to the exhibition game, 6 forwards, 4 defence and 1 goalie will have their team selection locked in. The head coach reserves the right to sit the locked in players during equalizer/exhibition game to better assess the remaining players. Players (other than the locked players) attending the exhibition game are not guaranteed to make that team. The Tryout Committee may add players to the exhibition games as required.

After an equalizer/exhibition game the coach will make the final selections to complete the roster. Players who are cut from an evaluation process for a non-AMHA hosted team must participate in AMHA tryouts.

AMHA players who play in the U13AAA exhibition game and are released after that game will automatically have a spot on the AMHA U13AA team. However, in order to secure that spot, players cut after the U13AAA exhibition game who decide to tryout for another association's U13AAA team must come to a minimum of 1 AMHA U13 tryout in order to maintain their spot on the AMHA U13AA team.

AMHA players who are invited to phase 3 of the U15AAA Valley Wildcats tryout and are cut after the final tournament will be considered for the U15AA team even if they did not participate in all AMHA tryout sessions. However, players not signed by the U15AAA

Wildcats before phase 3 of the Wildcats tryout must attend a minimum of 1 AMHA tryout session in order to be considered for the U15AA team.

All coaches are to fill their roster with 9 forwards, 6 defence and 2 goalies. In extreme circumstances there may be an exception made to this rule as approved by the Tryout Committee.

### Scoring

The evaluators utilize a point rating system developed by Hockey Canada. The scoring are whole numbers ranging from 0-10 over several categories:

- Skill Sessions Games
- Skating
- Passing Puck Skills
- Shooting Physical/Work Ethic
- Puck Handling Game Sense/Hockey IQ/Team Play
- Work Ethic/Hockey IQ

Scores will carry over throughout the whole tryout process, and are weighed as shown in the following table to determine the final rankings:

| Age Groups  | # of Sessions  | Skills #1 | Skills #2 | Intrasquad #1 | Intrasquad #1 | Equalizer/ Exhibition (if req'd) |
|-------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| U11         | 4 (each group) | 25%       | 25%       | 25%           | 25%           | N/A                              |
| U13/U15/U18 | 4 (each group) | 15%       | 15%       | 35%           | 35%           | N/A                              |

### 15. CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

A meeting of all evaluators will be held prior to the start of evaluations.

Members of the Tryout Committee will not be in the presence of any evaluators when their child is being evaluated, regardless of their position within the Association.

Evaluators and Tryout Committee members will always respect the confidentiality of the process.

Evaluators are not given players' names and are not provided with the other evaluators' scores.

Scores will be inputted into our 3rd party electronic scoring system, Team Genius. After input, all scores are locked and cannot be adjusted or changed.

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A potential head coach's child must score within the top 9 forwards, top 6 defence or top 1 goalie after the second intrasquad game for them to be head coach.

#### **16. APPEAL PROCESS**

There will be NO appeals of the tryout selection results.