

PLACEMENT GUIDELINES

Placements determine the placement of all players participating on GSL travel teams. The Association follows the guidelines below for conducting Placements and placing players on the appropriate team. Please also review the USA Hockey editorial below about Placements that follows the guidelines.

PARENTS AND THE PLACEMENT PROCESS

Tryouts! The word can send shivers down the backs of coaches, parents and players. Does it have to? Absolutely not! As the parent of three sons in youth hockey, I'm convinced that the tone we set as parents can make the process positive.

The most important group in a successful tryout process is not the coaches or the players, but the parents. Parents must build a positive image of their local program and the placement experience with the player. We don't want our children to start looking for someone else to blame if they don't meet their goals.

The attitude of the parents is the most critical element to ensuring a positive experience. Too often in youth sports the outcome is far more important to the parents than it is to the player. Kids who naturally want to please their parents then feel pressure and anxiety.

Tryouts are rehearsals for college admissions and job applications. There will be achievements and disappointments, but the ultimate success will often be based on how they deal with the results. I've seen players who did not make the "top" team, but turned it into an opportunity to develop at a faster pace as better players on other teams. I've also seen the tryout become the high point of a player's season. As one of the lesser skilled players on a better team, self-confidence can be challenged, ice time reduced, and skill development slowed.

When tryout time comes, check your own ambitions at the door. If it's their goal to make a certain team and they are successful, let them enjoy the moment. If not, help them deal with it, but emphasize they now have an opportunity to be a key member of their team and develop into a better player as a result.

Mark Johnson
USA Hockey Athlete Director,
Former NHL player and member of the 1980 "Miracle on Ice" Olympic team
USA Hockey Magazine, September 2000

HHA PLACEMENT GUIDELINES

These guidelines are a rewrite of the placement guidelines from May 1996, updated in August 1999, and further updated in 2005 & 2011 as a result of several recommendations of the HHA Board. The original (May 1996) guidelines were a result of work by a previous incarnation of the Placement Committee that, in turn, updated the March 1994 version of the placement guidelines.

DEFINITIONS

“Placement Committee” – The Placement Committee is a standing committee of the HHA Board that consists of a minimum of three and a maximum of five (5) persons appointed by the HHA Board and may consist, in part, of persons who are not members of the HHA Board. The Placement Committee shall generally oversee the placement process, as set forth in greater detail in these Placement Guidelines, and shall periodically review the placement process and, to the extent that changes or improvements can be made to the process, make appropriate recommendations to the HHA Board.

“Placement Committee” – Prior to the commencement of Placements each year, a Placement Committee shall be appointed by the Placement Committee for each of the following levels (Mite, Squirt, Pee Wee, Bantam and Girls). The Placement Committee shall consist of at least three (and preferably five) persons with hockey backgrounds. One member of each committee shall be a prospective coach for the level who is recommended to participate on the Placement Committee by the Coaching Coordinator.

“Lead Evaluator” – The Placement Committee shall appoint a Lead Evaluator on each Placement Committee, who shall have the duties set forth in these Placement Guidelines.

“Placement Coordinator” – Prior to the commencement of Placements, the Placement Committee shall appoint one or two Placement Coordinator(s) for each level, who shall have the duties set forth in these Placement Guidelines.

“On-Ice Facilitator” – The On-Ice Facilitators are the persons selected by the Lead Evaluator, often with assistance from the Placement Committee, to run the placement sessions and drills. The On-Ice Facilitator shall not serve on the Placement Committee.

- A. The Placement Coordinator will serve as the liaison with parents, the Placement Committee and the Placement Committee. The Placement Coordinator’s role is to facilitate the placement process for the designated level. The Placement Coordinator will be the primary contact with parents and shall serve as the placement spokesperson for the level, it being generally understood that the Placement Committee shall be insulated during the course of Placements from having to respond to parent questions and concerns. The Placement Coordinator is not eligible to serve as a evaluator. The Placement Coordinator will also assure that these Placement Guidelines are followed as closely as possible and interpret the intent of the guidelines as necessary. The Placement Coordinator will be responsible for promptly notifying the Placement Committee of team selections so that team postings can be posted per these guidelines, after the Placements are completed, make recommendations to the Placement Committee for improvements to the process.
- B. The Placement Coordinator shall ensure that these Placement Guidelines are handed out and explained to the parents before Placements. A meeting to explain the placement process shall be arranged by the Placement Coordinator and is usually held during the

initial placement session. The On-Ice Facilitator and/or the Lead Evaluator shall likewise convey the Placement Guidelines to players at the beginning of the placement.

- C. A player's ability, as demonstrated during the placement, should be the basis for determining level of play, not his or her past performance which is only a factor to be considered when trying to differentiate between two otherwise equal players. Selection criteria to determine ability will be age specific and includes: skating (forward, backward, turns), puck handling, shooting and team skills.
- D. For the players on the borderline between two teams, the Placement Committee shall make reasonable effort to contact the prior year's coach for input prior to the last placement session. This means that there should be at least one day off between the last two placement sessions to give the evaluators time to evaluate input from prior year's coaches. In addition, the placement Committee will hold a meeting prior to the final placement with the Lead Evaluator and Placement Coordinators to provide a forum to address any outstanding issues, questions or concerns that have arisen during the placement process (such as parent concerns, policy issues, etc.). The Placement Committee shall not, however, become involved with player evaluation and this process is designed solely to address matters of policy and interpretation of guidelines.
- E. Age (first versus second year in a given age group) or previous year's level (assuming previous year was in the same age group) should be taken into consideration only when two players are of equal ability. In these cases, the second year player or the one playing at the higher level the previous year should have preference. No player should be guaranteed a position on a team due to the previous year's level of play.
- F. There should be a minimum of three placement sessions for each age level with the exception of Bantams and Mites. When there is a large number trying out, extra sessions may be added in the discretion of the Placement Committee.
- G. With the exception of the coaching representative, other members of the Placement Committee shall not have a vested interest in the team. Selection of the team should be based on the consensus of the committee as a whole. Only the Placement Committee members and the Placement Coordinator may be in the room when teams are being selected.
- H. The Lead Evaluator shall be responsible for finding on-ice volunteers for each placement session to run the Placements according to the Lead Evaluator's plan. The plan will be designed to allow the evaluators to make their judgments based on the criteria in these Placement Guidelines.
- I. Except in the case of a parent coach selected by the Coaching Coordinator to participate on the Placement Committee, the Placement Committee shall not contain persons who are related by blood or marriage (parent, grandparent, aunt/uncle, etc.) to players being selected at the level. In the case of a parent coach, the Placement Committee shall ask the parent coach to leave the room when his or her child is being discussed. The

remaining members of the Placement Committee shall render a decision on the appropriate placement of the parent coach's child as soon as possible during the process, it being understood that certain players, especially returning players on the green team, often can be identified early in the process and that much of the later discussion by the Placement Committee is focused on the selection of players who are on the borderline between two teams. The coaching coordinator should postpone assignment of team coaching responsibility until teams are chosen.

- J. The Placement Committee shall identify a goalie coach consultant to attend placement sessions for each age level and make a recommendation to the Placement Committee on the placement of goalies. Goalies should be assigned based on ability so that each team has at least one goalie. The goalie consultant may be identified, at the discretion of the placement Committee, as a participating member of the Placement Committee.
- K. The time and manner of posting of team members will be determined by the Placement Committee and announced prior to the end of the last placement. All teams in the same level will be posted at the same time. Coaches or members of the Placement or Placement Committees should not call or otherwise notify players until teams are posted.
- L. The Placement Committee shall determine team assignments. After Placements are completed, all questions on player placement shall be directed to the Placement Coordinator or the HHA President. There is no right to appeal player placement on the grounds that the Placement Committee improperly evaluated a player. The sole grounds to appeal a decision shall be based on an egregious failure to apply policy that can be shown on a clear and convincing basis, after consultation with the Placement Committee, to have resulted in a player being placed at a different level than he would otherwise have been placed.
- M. Registration is for age group only and does not require a commitment on level of play. A parent does have the option to request a player be placed on a less competitive team prior to Placements.
- N. The number of players per team will be based on number of players, ability of players and an attempt to have teams of similar size (generally no less than 12 and no more than 15 skaters absent special circumstances such as a number of skaters at the level that is less than 36, but more than 30). Based on this guideline, the Placement Committee shall make a final determination of team size, unless special circumstances exist, in which case the Placement Committee shall be consulted with to approve any departure from this guideline (usually at the meeting that takes place prior to the final placement session).
- O. Colored jerseys with numbers on the front and back should be worn at Placements to assist with identification of players. The Placement Coordinator shall ensure that the jerseys are handed out and collected prior and after each placement session and that a record is maintained of the players and their jersey number. The same jersey number should be assigned for each session.

P. Attendance is required at all sessions. Players will be excused only for bona-fide reasons by the Placement Committee provided the Placement Coordinator is informed prior to the placement. Sickness or injury is a bona-fide reason to miss a team placement session, and it is not expected or encouraged to allow a sick or injured player to attend team placement session(s). If a player is injured or ill and unable to participate in team placement sessions the following provisions apply:

- A parent / guardian must notify the Placement Coordinator before the start of placement sessions.
- The Age Level Placement Committee (Mite, Squirt, Peewee, Bantam) shall determine the best approach for team placement of injured / ill players. Each injured / ill player situation will involve unique circumstances and therefore the Age Level Placement Committee may use very different approaches and criteria to determine placement of injured / ill players. For example, in the case of an injured / ill player with a long history at HHA, it may be very easy for the Age Level Placement Committee to determine team placement. In other cases, where less is known about player history, it may be more difficult to determine team placement.
- The Age Level Placement Committee may consider any information about player skills deemed relevant to team placement, including but not limited to prior leagues / teams, player age, prior coaches, and any other reliable information about the player's hockey history.
- In all cases the Age Level Placement Committee shall strive for expeditious placement of all injured / ill players so the Placement process can be concluded and teams finalized. In the absence of sufficient reliable information about injured / ill players the Age Level Placement Committee shall be conservative in player placement (e.g. tending toward blue and red team levels).
- These provisions do not apply to injured / ill players participating in placement session(s) and players already placed on a team.
- Appeal provisions for team placement is the same for ill / injured players and players participating in placement session(s).

Q. It is expected that players who have the pre-selected to play at the lowest tier will attend the initial placement session so that the Placement Committee can have a chance to evaluate the broad talent of the group since the relative strength of teams at all levels can influence the placement of players on the borderline between two teams.

PLACEMENT SKILLS ASSESSMENT FOR SKATERS

OVERVIEW

This document summarizes the hockey skills that are evaluated during the Placements for HHA travel teams. It is intended to serve three purposes:

1. This summary will help parents understand the multitude of factors that are assessed when evaluators make team assignments.
2. This summary can serve as a guideline for the Lead Evaluator assigned to prepare the on-ice activities at each level.
3. This information will help ensure that evaluators are consistent in applying evaluation criteria.

The skills summary presented below closely parallels the guidelines that were published in the July 1999 edition of the New England Hockey Journal. These in turn broadly encompass the detailed list of skills established by USA Hockey for each level of play. **As such, this summary is not intended to provide a complete checklist of skills required at each level, nor is it intended to serve as a specific rating sheet for players. Instead, it is offered to give parents an overall feel for what evaluators evaluate during the placement sessions.**

The Association would like to thank HHA Coach Carl Lovejoy for providing the original framework for this document. We are also grateful to the many HHA coaches who have contributed insight to shape some of the comments that are included. Finally, we owe a special debt of gratitude to Dick Dodds (HHS Head Coach), Bob Gaudet (Dartmouth Men's Head Coach) and Roger Demment (former Dartmouth Men's Head Coach) for serving as reviewers of these guidelines.

VARIATIONS WITH AGE GROUPS

The list of skills below serve as the evaluation criteria for players at all age levels within the Association, from Mites through Midgets. However, the relative importance of certain skills or other attributes (e.g., size) varies between the entry-level Mite group and the advanced Midget group. This naturally reflects the level of individual and team skills that are expected at each level as well as the changing nature of the game as checking and physical play are introduced at the PeeWee and higher levels. Because of this, the on-ice activities used to evaluate players also vary with the age group being assessed.

In general, individual skills are weighted more strongly in the younger age groups, whereas team skills become relatively more important in the upper levels. For example, at the entry level Mite age group, the ability to skate and mastery of fundamentals play a strong role in the selection process. At the Squirt level, team play begins to play a more important role, in particular for groups that will play at very competitive levels. An understanding of more complex team concepts (e.g., forechecking responsibilities) becomes a factor at the PeeWee level, as does physical play with the introduction of checking. These become even more important at the Bantam and Midget levels where fast, aggressive play is the norm and a strong understanding of game concepts is expected.

Based on the relative importance of individual and team factors, as well as the depth of understanding of the game expected of players at different levels, the actual on-ice drills to assess skills varies considerably from Mites through Midgets. At the entry level, skills can frequently be assessed using a mix of well-designed drills supplemented by game situations (e.g., scrimmaging). At the Mite level, for example, game situations may account for less than one-third of the on-ice activities. The amount of time devoted to game situations is expected to increase at each higher age group due to the greater demands on positional play and team concepts. At the Bantam and Midget age groups, for example, as much as two-thirds of the Placements can focus on evaluating the players in game situations. In considering game situations, a variety of formats may be used, including situational drills (1:1, 2:1, 3:2, etc.) and scrimmaging (3:3 or 5:5, full-ice or half-ice).

SKILLS SUMMARY

Below are the ten key criteria that are evaluated as part of the placement. Three levels of information are presented. The most fundamental criterion is presented in **boldface**. Following that, several specific elements are listed. More in-depth ideas and comments from specific coaches on what they look for are shared in *italics*.

It is important to note that the information in *italics* is presented to give the reader a more thorough background on considerations that are part of placement evaluations. These comments are not designed to be comprehensive, but instead are intended to convey nuances of the selection criteria in order to better educate parents and evaluators. Also, it is expected that the degree to which these specific points are expressed and applied will vary from one coach/evaluator to another and from one level to another.

1. **Skating** – test for balance, agility, and lateral movement, acceleration and speed, forwards and backwards.
Ability to stop/start quickly, both ways
Is skater in “ready” position?
Cross-over, forward and backward, effective use of edges inside and out
Check transitions, forward-backward and vice-versa
2. **Puck-handling** – test for the ability to control the puck at various speeds in various situations, while skating both forwards and backwards.
Can a player skate and handle the puck?
Is puck “cradled” and controlled both forehand and backhand, or dragged?
Can he/she do the aforementioned with his/her head up?
Does player effectively protect the puck using his/her body?
Can he/she beat a player in a 1 v 1 situation?
3. **Moving the puck** – test for passing skills, head-manning, and playmaking.
Can player pass/receive using both forehand and backhand?
Is his/her head up?
Does puck carrier look to pass to the open man?
Does player make simple play to the open man in a better position?
Can player anticipate an opportunity and move puck accordingly?

Does player pass quickly or hold the puck too long and get caught passing late?

4. **Shot** – test for accuracy and velocity; wrist, snap and slap shots as appropriate.
Does the player employ proper mechanics?
Can he/she shoot (and pass) without slapping the puck?
Can the player take a backhand shot?
Can he/she shoot “on the go?” Can player one-time a shot?
Does player have a quick release?
5. **Scoring ability** – test for ability to create scoring opportunities and to capitalize on those opportunities.
Does player see open ice and become a threat (with and without the puck)?
Does player go to the net and/or fill slot as appropriate?
Does player have stick on the ice ready to receive a pass?
Can player convert when presented with an opportunity to score?
Can player fake and/or freeze a defender/goalie to improve scoring opportunity?
Is player hungry in front of net, able to gain rebounds?
6. **Defensive skills** – evaluate positional play, body positioning, back checking and one-on-one play.
Does the defenseman know how to play a 1 v 1? A 2 v 1? A 3 v 2?
Does player play between puck carrier and the open man if covering open man?
Does player gain position between opponent with the puck and the net?
Does the player know where to position himself/herself when backchecking?
Is the player willing to backcheck?
Does the player prevent opponent and/or puck from advancing?
For Mites and Squirts, can player properly execute a poke check?
For PeeWees and higher, can player initiate, maintain and finish a check?
Does player have good judgment (e.g., step up vs. play back, play body vs. puck, etc.)
Does player understand when to “pressure” and when to “contain?”
Does he/she understand basic forechecking strategies and responsibilities?
When checking, does player work to eliminate opponent’s time and space?
7. **Positional play** – test for ability to understand and react to team situations.
Does a player work to get open?
Does he/she understand the offside rule and work to remain on-sides?
Does player maintain speed in neutral zone? Execute a neutral zone regroup? Does player understand cross-ice flow or merely play “up-and-down” the ice?
Does the player know enough to cover “open” opponents?
Does player adjust transitionally when puck is turned over?
Does player know where to line up on a face-off and understand responsibilities?
Does player know defensive zone responsibilities and play with discipline?
8. **Hockey sense** – test for ability to anticipate and adjust to situations.
What does player do away from the puck?
Does he/she pass to open man or does he/she force passes into a crowd?

Does he/she lead a player with passes?
Does player control the puck and find best option, or quickly dump/slap the puck?
Does player look to follow up a shot, either to gain a rebound or play defense?
Does player have good judgment at the blue line? Clears the puck when in
defensive zone? Skates, passes or dumps appropriately near offensive zone?

9. **Non-skill related variables** – evaluate hustle, desire, aggressiveness, toughness, enthusiasm and listening skills.
Who “on the bubble” is going to work extra-hard to make a team?
Who wants to listen and learn?
Who will work hard at every practice and give 100% in every game?
10. **Past performance** – gain knowledge of leadership, attitude, commitment to team, character, relationship with peers, relative maturity plus attributes covered in 9. (As per the placement guidelines, these criteria are applied when players are deemed to be of equal ability in the other criteria.)
Did player show respect to coach, teammates, self.
Was the player a pleasure to have on the team?
Did he/she work hard?
Was the player committed to the team?
Did he/she get along with teammates?
Did player enhance or detract from performance of teammates and team spirit?

PLACEMENT SKILLS ASSESSMENT FOR GOALIES

OVERVIEW

This document summarizes the hockey skills that are evaluated for goalies during the Placements for HHA travel teams. It is intended to serve three purposes. First, the summary will help parents understand the multitude of factors that are assessed when evaluators make team assignments. Also, it can serve as a guideline for the Lead Evaluator assigned to prepare the on-ice activities at each level. Finally, this information will help ensure that evaluators are consistent in applying evaluation criteria. **This summary is not intended to provide a complete checklist of skills required at each level, nor is it intended to serve as a specific rating sheet for players. Instead, it is offered to give parents an overall feel for what evaluators evaluate during the placement sessions.**

The Association would like to thank Cardigan Mountain School Coach Dave Hagerman for providing most of the information in this document. (We also thank him for the many hours that he has volunteered to conduct our goalie clinics and serve as a “goalie consultant” during our Placements.) We are also grateful to the many HHA coaches who have contributed insight to shape some of the comments that are included. Finally, we owe a special debt of gratitude to Dick Dodds (HHS Head Coach), Bob Gaudet (Dartmouth Men’s Head Coach) and Roger Demment (former Dartmouth Men’s Head Coach) for serving as reviewers of these guidelines.

VARIATIONS WITH AGE GROUPS

The list of skills below serves as the evaluation criteria for players at all age levels within the Association, from Mites through Bantam. However, the relative importance of certain skills or other attributes varies between the entry-level Mite group and the advanced Bantam group. This naturally reflects the level of individual and team skills that are expected at each level as well as the changing nature of the game at different age groups.

In general, athleticism and potential may be weighted more strongly in the younger age groups, whereas positional play and control of rebounds become relatively more important in the upper levels. For example, at the entry level Mite age group, the ability to make the first save, whether through good positioning or quickness, is very important. At the older age groups a greater emphasis may be placed on a goalie being in a sound position to react and handle rebounds after the first save is made.

SKILLS SUMMARY

Below are the ten key criteria that are evaluated as part of the goalie placement. These skills may be evaluated in short sessions that focus on the goalies, as part of drills that involve all players on the ice, or during scrimmage sessions. Three levels of information are presented. The most fundamental criterion is presented in **boldface**. Following that, several specific elements are listed. More in-depth ideas and comments from specific coaches on what they look for are shared in *italics*.

It is important to note that the information in *italics* is presented to give the reader a more thorough background on considerations that are part of placement evaluations. These comments are not designed to be comprehensive, but instead are intended to convey nuances of the selection criteria in order to better educate parents and evaluators. Also, it is expected that the degree to which these specific points are expressed and applied will vary from one coach/evaluator to another and from one level to another.

1. **Skating** – test for balance, agility, forward and backward movement, stops and starts, and pivots.
Ability to stop/start quickly, both ways
Is goalie in “ready” position?
Can goalie move laterally and change direction (coach uses hand signal to move front, back, left, right, up and down)?
Evaluate quickness of movement (under control)
2. **Crease movement** – test for the ability to execute standard movements in the crease, including post-to-post, “chops” along crease, forward-backward to-from the face-off circle.
Post-to-post
“Chops” along the crease arc
Forward and backward to and from the face-off circle
3. **Standard moves** – test for ability to execute standard goalie moves.
Butterfly

“Stacking”

4. **Components** –evaluate the various goaltending components individually.
Use of hands, both blocker and glove
Use of feet (kick save)
Stick position during movements and saves
Evaluate quickness (without over-reaction)

5. **Puck control and stick handling** – evaluate goalie’s ability to control rebounds, direct the puck to desired areas.
Does goalie maintain proper stick position during setup and movement?
Can goalie control a rebound?
Can goalie redirect a shot to desired area?
Can goalie stop the puck and make a pass to sides of the net?
Have goalie execute “through-arounds”, moving behind next to stop puck being sent behind the goal, show ability to control puck for a teammate

6. **Angles** – test for ability to understand and work with angles.
How does goalie respond to movement?
Does goalie understand angles and the impact of the opponent’s stick/puck position?

7. **Game situations**– evaluate ability to handle specific game situations.
Look for skill and understanding of how to handle dekes?
Evaluate ability to stop first shot and be in position to handle rebounds
Does goalie take himself/herself out of position when executing saves?
How does goalie react to pressure in the crease?
Does goalie try to maintain vision when given obstacles in front of the net?

8. **Hockey sense** – test for ability to anticipate and adjust to situations.
Does goalie have an awareness of game situations?
Does goalie react appropriately to play?
Does goalie help direct the defense?
Does goalie take charge of the crease area?

9. **Non-skill related variables** – evaluate hustle, desire, aggressiveness, toughness, enthusiasm and listening skills.
Who “on the bubble” is going to work extra-hard to make a team?
Who wants to listen and learn?
Who will work hard at every practice and give 100% in every game?
Does the goalie, in particular at the upper levels, have the courage to face hard shots and opponents who are crashing the net?
How does goalie respond under pressure?
Who will maintain a positive attitude when faced with adversity?
Can goalie remain focused and “bounce back” after giving up a goal?
Does goalie exhibit strong team skills, for example, does he or she remain positive with teammates even when they make mistakes?

How determined is the goalie to prevent the puck from entering the crease?

10. **Past performance** – gain knowledge of leadership, attitude, commitment to team, character, relationship with peers, relative maturity plus attributes covered in 9. (As per the placement guidelines, these criteria are applied when players are deemed to be of equal ability in the other criteria.)

Did player show respect to coach, teammates, self.

Was the player a pleasure to have on the team?

Did he/she work hard?

Was the player committed to the team?

Did he/she get along with teammates?

Did player enhance or detract from performance of teammates?

Did player enhance or detract from team spirit?