



Player Evaluation & Team Placement Policy

Evaluation Process

Player evaluation can be one of the most difficult tasks for a youth hockey association to deal with. It can also be the foundation for which an association is built upon.

In most cases player evaluation is used to place players onto teams. NYHA will also use player evaluations as a tool to develop players based on their individual strengths and weaknesses.

Placing players on a team is one thing, but what you do with those players once teams are formed is another. Some communities only have enough players for one team in each category, we have many teams in each category, thus tiering occurs. Whether you have one team or multiple teams in each category, player evaluation can still be used, and should be used, as a way of developing players.

Having a solid player evaluation process in place will help make the process a lot easier. Not only will it give NYHA a reference point in educating players and parents, it will also give the coaches a starting point to determine where your players are at skill-wise.

Skills Evaluated

In order to evaluate players from a large pool of candidates, it is necessary to establish criteria on which to make comparisons among players. Thus, the first step in player evaluation is to determine what variables to measure. What qualities are you looking for in your players?

Are some of these more important than others? The answers to these questions will depend to a great extent on the age category as well as the competitive level of your team. For example, at the Mite level there will likely be more of an emphasis on evaluation basic skills rather than individual and team tactics. Similarly, physical characteristics such as strength and endurance will be more relevant at the Midget category than at the younger levels.

The following is a list of some of the player qualities which are evaluated by the coaching staff during the season (Coaches' Evaluations) and during the 2 day evaluation period. The coaches' evaluations paint a picture of the player's ability during the whole year which enables the player placement committee to get a detailed summary of the player's strengths and weaknesses.

Individual Skills:

- skating
- passing
- pass receiving
- shooting
- stick handling
- checking

Team Skills

- offensive tactics
- defensive tactics
- ability to play with others

Mental Qualities

- intelligence

- reading and reacting
- concentration

Physical Qualities

- strength
- muscular endurance
- cardiovascular endurance
- balance
- agility
- coordination
- power

Emotional Characteristics

- self-control
- patience
- desire

What About Goaltenders?

As you might expect, the characteristics which should be evaluated for goaltenders differ significantly from those players at other positions. In addition to individual skills such as skating, puck handling, and passing, goaltenders are evaluated on their ability to stop the puck using the stick, gloves, pads and body. Mental, physical, and emotional characteristics are also evaluated. Once again, however, there may be a difference between goaltenders and other players in both the specific components to be assessed as well as their relative priorities.

How We Evaluate

Once we have determined what to evaluate, our next step is to organize the tryout sessions in such a way that the players can be assessed on the identified variables. NYHA's assessment is carried out using the following methods:

Specific Skill Drills

Individual skills such as skating and passing are evaluated using combination skill drills. Initially these drills may be very artificial with little or no resistance, however, there is an attempt made to simulate game conditions in a progressive manner.

Skill Testing

A number of skill tests are available, particularly for skating speed and agility. These are used by coaches as a means of comparing players. As a cautionary note, however, it must be remembered these tests are typically quite far removed from actual game situations.

Competitive Drills

Paired races and other drills which pit two players against one another in a confined space with a specific objective (e.g., beat your partner to the loose puck) are excellent methods of evaluating individual skills as well as mental and physical qualities. For example, you can learn a great deal about a player's desire and ability to use strength in the corner.

Although competitive evaluation drills can be used throughout the tryouts (and during the season as practice drills), they are particularly useful in the latter stages of the tryouts when the evaluators wish to create specific pairings to compare players.

Scrimmages

Naturally, the best way of evaluating a player's ability to play the game is to evaluate the individual under game conditions. Scrimmages will be effectively used throughout the evaluation period. NYHA will evaluate most of the previously listed player characteristics during scrimmages. Furthermore, they provide perhaps the only real means of assessing a player's ability to read and react.

Player Identification

To make it easy for the evaluator, each player is assigned a pinnie. The number assignment is done before the evaluation session begins so time is not wasted. Therefore, all players are asked to arrive to the rink one half hour before the session begins. An evaluation sheet is handed to the evaluating coach with all the associated numbers. The players are then evaluated on a skill from one to five with five being the highest.

Team Placement Process

Once all the players have been rated, the evaluation sheets are entered into a spreadsheet program and the evaluations are computed. Five classifications per player are utilized (skating, passing, stick handling, shooting, and hockey sense) with an overall final rating number computed by averaging the five categories. The players are then listed in order by overall rating then birth date or age.

This process will set the "initial" roster and it will then be compared to the coaches' evaluations that include even more detail as to the players' skills and hockey sense. These evaluations will be used in conjunction with the Spring Evaluation data to further refine the roster. At this point the Player Placement Committee will look at the players that are on the bubble between teams and make the necessary adjustments. If discrepancies are identified between the Spring Evaluation data and the Coaches' Evaluation data, the Player Placement Committee may engage the coaching staff to further determine the ideal placement of the player.