

Needham Youth Hockey Association

## **2013/14**

Below is a summary of the tryout process. A few key points for people to review:

- Injured player policy listed at the end of the document
- Parent section and Parent Policy

Once teams are announced all placements are finalized. Contacting the Director of Tryouts, the Age Level Coordinator, or other members of the NYH board will not change your child's placement.

Placement on 2012/13 team does not set placement for 2013/14. Players progress at different pace and with the 2 year age range in hockey – who they are trying out against changes dramatically each year. Returning players to an age level are not guaranteed a spot on their current team. Ex: PW A or Bantam A level player could be placed on a B team if they are not viewed by the evaluators to be one of the top 15 skaters in their age group for tryouts regardless of their current placement.

## **Tryout Process**

The tryout process has been designed and developed by the NYHA Board of Directors to achieve fair, impartial, accurate player evaluation. Tryout coordinators, evaluators, and coaches are volunteers putting in a huge amount of time and personal commitment to ensure that the process is carried out in a consistent manner. The Board recognizes that tryouts inherently cause a great deal of anxiety among the participants. Any NYHA player or parent who has further questions should feel free to contact the Director of Tryouts. Of course, we strongly discourage any contact with either the Tryout Coordinator or the Evaluators by parents during the tryout process as it presents a clear conflict of interest. We ask that you respect the process.

We understand that there will be scheduling conflicts. We ask that parents send an email to the Director of Tryouts detailing any conflict that your player may have. Each case will be assessed by the Director of Tryouts and the Tryout Coordinator for that specific group. We will use all information at our disposal to make a reasonable placement decision based on the facts of each individual's situation. A player must attend at least one session of the tryouts in order to be placed on a team for the subsequent year. It is strongly encouraged that players attend all of their scheduled sessions. The NYHA Board approval is required for a player to be placed on a team without having attended a single tryout session. The Board and Director of Tryouts will review each specific situation and make a fair and equitable decision based on the circumstances.

**Tryout Coordinators** are responsible for the tryout process of a specific level, Midgets, Bantams, Pee Wees, Squirts, Mites. Tryout Coordinators are responsible managing the evaluation process and ensuring every player's thorough evaluation and proper team placement. The Tryout Coordinator and the Director of Tryouts are responsible for assembling Evaluators and On-Ice Instructors to run the Tryout in accordance with the approved procedure. Evaluators and On-Ice Instructors are chosen based on their experience in the game of hockey and their demonstrated coaching ability. The Tryout Coordinator will not have a child trying out at the age group they are running.

**Evaluators** – there will be 3 to 5 evaluators chosen based on several components including their playing experience, coaching experience, knowledge of players, and ability to fairly and independently evaluate players. The evaluation committee will consist of at least one evaluator who coached (either at the head or assistant coach level) at the age level that players played at from the most recent season. The goal is to provide first-hand knowledge of the players from the most recent 7 month season. The Board recognizes that this policy on occasion may result in a parent/coach serving as a member of committee evaluating their own children. The Board understands the conflict of interest this might represent, but has determined that the benefits of including a coach with knowledge of the most recent season outweigh the potential conflict of interest. The board will look to minimize involvement of a parent as an evaluator, but on occasion when it happens the parent will remove themselves from all discussions involving their children and will leave the room when their children are being ranked. There will be paid independent evaluator as part of the evaluation team providing input into the player rankings and placement. Paid goalie evaluator will rate the goalies.

### **Tryout Timing and Sessions**

- **Midget, Bantam, Pee Wee, squirt, girls** players will try out in the spring within a couple of weeks of the end of the season.
- **Mite** players will try out in the fall right before the season begins.

There will generally be three separate skating sessions for player evaluation; however the actual number may vary based on the total projected number of players per age level, as well as the ice time available for the tryouts in a given year.

- **1st Session** – Total group will be split alphabetically.
  - This session will consist of a predetermined mix of skill based drills that are designed to separate the players based on their fundamental ability.
- **2nd Session** – Players will be split into 2 or 3 groups based on results of the evaluators' assessment from Session 1.
  - The 2<sup>nd</sup> Session will be a mix of skill based drills and a variety of small area games, including but not limited to 2 vs. 2, 3 vs. 3, 4 vs. 4, or full ice 5 vs. 5. Small area games allow evaluators to see many skills including: skating ability, edges, puck control, passing, shooting, speed, stops, starts, turns, tenacity, and effort.
- **3rd Session** - Players will be split into 2 or 3 groups based on results of the evaluators' assessment from Session 2.
  - The 3<sup>rd</sup> Session will consist of full ice scrimmages (most likely either in 4 on 4s, or 5 on 5s).
  - Final selections will be made after 3<sup>rd</sup> Tryout.

### **Player Assessment Methodology**

#### **Skills to be assessed:**

- Skating - Stride, Edges, Speed, Crossovers, Forwards & Backward Skating
- Puck Skills - Puck Handling, Shooting, Passing, Control
- Game Sense - Playing Position, Getting Open, Play Making
- Effort – Small Battles, Fore-check, Back-check, Overall Aggressiveness

- Coach Evaluation - Team Rank, Effort, Attendance, & Coaches Comments

**Note:** The number of goals a player scores during scrimmage play does not necessarily mean he/she will receive high ratings for that tryout session. Ratings are based on overall skill, performance and knowledge of the game. All of the factors listed above contribute to the overall rating. The same holds true for physical play. Body checking (allowed at bantam and midget level) and aggressiveness are but two of a myriad of factors to be considered. Encouraging your son/daughter to play more physically aggressive than would be the norm or appropriate for game like situations or to focus only scoring goals will not be advantageous to their rating.

Coaches' evaluations will be reviewed when distinguishing between equally ranked players or to reconcile inconsistencies in the player rankings. In addition, dedication to NYHA has always been a priority. Commitment levels, as measured by attendance at practices as well as games, may influence team placement. Likewise, behavior, sportsmanship, and other relevant information from current coaches will be considered in the placement decision. The Director of Tryouts shall be informed should any non on-ice factors result directly in the placement decision of a player. If 2 players are being considered for the last spot on the same team and both have been evaluated and determined to be of equal skill, the 2nd year player will be placed ahead of the younger player.

Teams will be formed with the unanimous consent of committee members voting on each player. The 1st team will be filled from 1 to 15 (or total player count for the team in question) and each subsequent team will be filled in the same manner, with each evaluator discussing and voting on each individual player.

We recognize that every player is unique and his or her development curve may jump ahead or lag behind his or her peers. With this in mind, the Tryout Committee will try to acknowledge the forward progress of each skater for the next season, but in some instances, that will not be possible and a player may remain stationary or in some instances drop back. Player placement is not lockstep from year-to-year.

Every effort will be made to have the best possible Head Coach available to coach each team. The selection of a Head Coach will occur ONLY after teams have been formed.

### **Absent or Injured Player Policy**

When a player is absent or injured and not able to any of the tryouts: A player staying at the same age level will be placed no lower than their current team and maybe placed on a higher team if the tryout evaluators feel there is clear evidence from the coaches evaluations that the player should be on a higher team. If a player is moving up in age level, they will be placed on a team at least one level lower than the current team(examples: squirt b1 move to pw b2 or b3). The team placement will be made by the evaluators based on coaches evaluation and where similar ranked players from their team were placed, but will not be on the same level or higher level team. If a player becomes sick or injured during the tryout process and only misses part of the tryout will be placed based on the data already gathered by evaluators (both their observations during the players time trying out and coaches feedback).

### **Parents**

The Board has created what it believes to be a fair process that relies on good, thoughtful, and fair people doing the best they can. Please do not attempt to contact evaluators or coaches during the tryout process, as that type of communication undermines the integrity of the process. As is the case in most youth sports, what particular team level a player plays at as a 7 to 13 year old rarely affects their later years. In fact, in most cases the relative ability ranking of players in a sport changes greatly over these years.

### **Parent Attendance Policy**

We strongly recommend parents do not go into the rink area (ex: Fessenden Rink) during the tryouts. Assist younger players as needed before they go on ice and if a parent plans to stay at the rink, please stay in the waiting area.

The purpose of the tryout is for evaluators to watch your child. Far too many parents are “engaging” with their kids by providing direction or shouting instruction during tryouts and it only distracts your player.

Over the past few years, the behavior of a subset of Needham Parents has gotten worse both during the tryout process and afterwards when they learn of their child’s placement. While you may not agree with the final results, NYH expects that you will respect those investing their time and energy to evaluate and place the kids as fairly as they can