



SWZ Hockey Player Evaluation Policy (2019-2020)

1.0 SWZ Hockey Player Evaluation Policy Statement

The goal of the SWZ player evaluation process in Pee wee (AA and Tier 1), Bantam and Midget categories is to fairly and consistently evaluate players for the purposes of placing them on teams with other players of similar ability. This allows SWZ to tier its teams in accordance with the tiering policy of Hockey Edmonton.

This goal will be achieved through the establishment and maintenance of a consistent evaluation program.

The SWZ Evaluation Committee, will oversee the player evaluation process to ensure consistent application and implementation of the SWZ Player Evaluation Policy.

2.0 Player Evaluation Process:

2.1 General Procedure Pee wee:

For SWZ Pee wee only, evaluations will be conducted on a tryout basis. Players released by SWZ from the tryouts will return to their respective operating areas (Confederation and SWAT) and will participate in those organizations' evaluation process.

A fee will be charged for the tryout. The tryout of each player will be based on his or her performance in a series of not less than 2 evaluation games. The Pee wee Director shall determine the number of evaluation games required to select players and form teams.

2.2 General Procedure Bantam/Midget

All players will participate in evaluation games regardless of tier. The number of games required to form teams is at the discretion of the respective Category Director. Tryouts are not conducted at any tier for Bantam and Midget.

2.3 Evaluation and Team Formation

Players will be ranked and grouped for initial evaluation games according to their previous playing history within SWZ or their previous operating area. (See Appendix I for general guidelines). Player groupings will be adjusted by the category director to account for registration numbers and positional needs. If a player has not previously played for SWZ or any of its operating areas, the Category Director, in consultation with the Evaluation Committee will group the player on the best information available.

Players may be moved to different skating groups at the sole discretion of the Category Director. The reasons for making such moves may include, but are not limited to:

- Allowing evaluators to see the player perform against players of different skill, size, and experience
- SWZ's need for players to fill spots in certain skates where there may be a shortage of players of a particular position.

2.4 Body Checking (Bantam & Midget)

Body checking will be allowed at tiers 1 through 3 inclusive. There will be no body checking allowed in tiers 4-6.

It is assumed that all players are willing to participate in body checking evaluation games unless they officially "opt out" during the registration process or indicate directly to the Category Director, via email, that they wish to amend their registration selection. Any player that opts out of body checking will continue to participate in evaluations but will not skate in any evaluation game involving body checking, and will not be placed on a team above Tier 4, regardless of skill or evaluation results.

The willingness to participate in body contact throughout the evaluations does not guarantee placement on a body checking team or tier. Players will be evaluated and placed on teams (and as such tiers) commensurate with the hockey skills they exhibit to the Evaluators.

Players wishing to opt out of body checking were able to identify themselves during registration. If a player chooses to change their election (opting in or out) it is expected they will do so by contacting the Category Director before the start of the evaluation games.

Should a player wish to change their election once the evaluation games have started, they must submit their request via email to the applicable Category Director

for consideration. The player's best interest and ability will be the primary factors in making such a decision.

2.5 Game Evaluations

2.5.1 Evaluation by Position

For the Pee wee, Bantam and Midget categories, players will be required to declare in advance of the game evaluations whether they wish to be evaluated at the forward or defence position. Their relative rankings throughout the evaluation process will be based on their ranking at that position.

Goaltenders must declare their position when registering with SWZ and will be evaluated against all other goaltenders in their category.

2.5.2 Formation of Initial Evaluation Teams

The group of players for each evaluation game will be divided into two teams of relatively equal strength in accordance with paragraph 2.3 above for initial evaluation games and section 3.0 below for goaltenders. When arriving at the rink, players will be assigned pinnies or jerseys randomly. The list of players will be prepared alphabetically by the Category Director so as not to infer any rankings of the players. Goaltenders may be asked to keep their pinnies for the duration of evaluations.

2.5.3 Individual Player Evaluations

In evaluation games, players will be evaluated on their ability to play against other players of similar ability. They will be scored relative to the group they are skating with in accordance with the following scoring criteria:

- Offence – 1 to 10 points (scoring, shooting, fore checking, puck carrying, stickhandling, passing)
- Defence – 1 to 10 points (back checking, checking/contact, positioning, taking away scoring chances)
- Team Play – 1 to 10 points (passing, puck movement, positional play, sportsmanship/attitude)
- Physical Play – 1 to 10 points (effective corner work, winning battles, ability to give and take check/contact, aggressive play)

2.5.4 Ranking of Players Following Evaluation Games

Following each evaluation game, players will be ranked in accordance with their score in that game relative to other players at the same position (i.e. forward, defence, or goaltender). Once this has been completed, the Category Director will make decisions regarding any movement of players up or down to adjacent groups for the next set of evaluation games. See Section 2.3 for further discussion.

Unless opted out, a player may be moved into or out of skate groups with body checking throughout the evaluation process (see Section 2.4)

2.5.5 Miscellaneous

From time to time, situations may arise where a large number of players of roughly equal skill are in different groups. In these circumstances, the Category Director, in consultation with the Evaluation Committee has the discretion to arrange additional evaluation games involving a broader range of players from two different groups. This may involve the removal of certain players from those groups whose relative ranking has been clearly established in prior evaluation games.

2.6 Final Ranking and Team Selection

After all evaluation games in a category have been completed, a final ranking of all players within the category will be created based on the aggregate of each player's scores from the evaluation games. It should be noted that direct comparison of evaluation game scores between groups within a category is not possible as each group is expected to play at a different level (i.e. a score of 25 out of 40 in Group C is not equivalent to a score of 25 out of 40 in Group A). Should the Category Director feel enough information has been collected on players to group some into a specific skill level, the Director may begin to form teams before all players at other skill levels have completed their evaluation games.

Once the final ranking of players has been completed, team lists will be submitted by the Category Director to the Evaluation Committee for validation. The Category Director will then create the final team lists in consultation with the Evaluation Committee.

Final selections for some teams may require additional evaluation skates, practices or exhibition games, encompassing a select group of ranked players. The Category Director and Evaluation Committee will further evaluate the above group and determine final team selection. This additional process may be undertaken to determine the ranking of selected players, or to properly balance teams within similar tier.

In the interest of optimum player development, the Evaluation Committee and Category Director will endeavor to form teams based on the following guidelines:

Peewee – 15 Players and 2 goalies (9 forwards, 6 defence)
Bantam – 17 Players and 2 goalies (11 forwards, 6 defence)
Midget – 19 Players and 2 goalies (12 forwards, 7 defence)

It should be noted that these guidelines may not be achieved in certain circumstances due to factors such as the number of players registered in a category or by position.

For Peewee AA team formation only, Head Coaches may be involved in the final selection of teams by providing input to the Category Director. Use of this method is at the sole discretion of the Category Director and is intended to be consistent with final team selection at the Elite Hockey level within other clubs and zones.

2.7 Team Blending

SWZ Hockey is mandated by the Alberta One Standardized Tiering Model to place equally blended and balanced teams in most, if not all, tiers. In most cases, there will be two or three teams in each tier. There is limited discretion provided to SWZ in this regard as the requirements are based solely on the number of registrants in each category of play, without consideration of the relative skill level of those players however, registered players that have opted out of body checking or are deemed to have insufficient skill to play at the body checking level may impact team placements within the Tiering Model at the sole discretion of the Category Director with support from the Evaluation Committee and approval by Hockey Edmonton. The Standardized Tiering Model does enable re-tiering of teams within the season if warranted, subject to approval by the League Governor and HE Tiering Committee.

3.0 Goaltender Evaluation Process

3.1 General Information

All players registered as goaltenders must attend the SWZ goalie skills evaluation sessions. Excepted are goalies who are registered to try out for Elite hockey and are released to join the SWZ evaluation process after the evaluation process is underway.

3.2 Goaltender Evaluation Process

3.2.1 Skills Sessions

All goalies in Peewee, Bantam and Midget will go through one skills evaluation session prior to participating in any evaluation games in order to assess their relative goaltending skills unless there is not enough goalies in a given category to warrant a skills session.

3.2.2 Placement into Evaluation Games

After the completion of the skills session, each goalie will be ranked relative to the other goalies in his or her category and that ranking will be used to place the goalies into groups for the initial evaluation games. These scores and rankings will not make up more than 20% of the final rankings. As a result of late registrations due to releases from Elite programs, not all goalies will be available to participate in the earlier evaluation games. Because of the need for goalies in evaluation games, goalies may be assigned to play in evaluation games well above or below where their relevant ranking may otherwise have them placed.

3.2.3 Game Evaluations

The number of goalies participating in each evaluation game will be determined by the Category Director. Goalies will be given an equal amount of ice time during evaluation games and may be rotated throughout the game.

Following each series of evaluation games within a category, the evaluation of each goalie will be reviewed by the Evaluators and goalies will be re-ranked relative to the other goalies in their category. This ranking will then be used to place goalies into groups for the next series of evaluation games. Again, due to the need for goalies in all evaluation games, goalies may be assigned to participate in evaluation skates at levels that may not reflect their current ranking.

Upon completion of the final series of evaluation games within a category, the evaluation of each goalie will be reviewed by the Evaluators and Category Director and each goalie will be given a final ranking relative to the other goalies in his or her category. A second skill session may be required to directly compare all goalies as many enter the evaluation process late as a result of being released from an Elite Hockey tryout. Goalies will then be placed on teams for the season based on final ranking.

4.0 Player Evaluators

SWZ will be contracting all evaluator positions to independent third parties. These individuals will not be parents of the players involved and, will be pre-screened by SWZ to ensure they have the appropriate qualifications.

5.0 Administrative Policies

5.1 Absenteeism and Injured Players

Players missing any or all of the evaluation games will be placed into groups at the discretion of the Category Director and Evaluation Committee. Players cut from Elite programs, returning from injury, or entering the evaluations late can expect to be placed in skate groups based on factors such as, but not limited to:

- Where their teammates from the prior year are placed
- Their relative skill level of peers based on past coach feedback, and/or
- Based on direct knowledge of the player's ability by SWZ officials.

Players released from Elite programs will not automatically be placed in the top skate group, and should not expect such.

Scores derived from partial attendance at the evaluation sessions will not simply be extrapolated to give full scores as this is unfair to those attending all evaluation sessions. Absentee players will be considered on a case by case basis.

5.2 Late Registrants/Participants

Players missing the evaluation process entirely will be asked to practice with as many teams as necessary to ensure their proper placement at the discretion of Category Director and Evaluation Committee.

5.3 Prior Playing History

Subject only to other applicable provisions of this policy, player ranking and team selection is based solely on the current year's evaluation results. A player is not guaranteed a minimum positioning in the evaluation rankings based on their prior year playing history in the category. For clarity, a player who played in the same category in the prior year at a certain tier/level may be ranked and placed on a team in a lower tier/level in the category in their second year.

5.4 Player Acceleration

SWZ is regulated by the operating directives of Hockey Edmonton and Hockey Alberta, including its policy on "Player Acceleration". A player wishing to evaluate in a category higher than his or her applicable age category must meet Hockey Edmonton's qualifications and have written support of all the following prior to the commencement of the evaluation process: Category Director, Evaluation Committee, SWZ President and Hockey Edmonton.

Hockey Edmonton's player acceleration policy can be viewed in their operating directives as posted on their website.

5.5 Team Size Restrictions

SWZ will make all efforts to have a player play at the appropriate skill level or tier. However, maximum roster sizes are mandated and should all positions be full for players at a particular tier, a player may be placed in a tier lower than they might otherwise be. This typically only occurs in specific circumstances with players who come to SWZ late, have missed evaluations, and teams have already been formed.

5.6 Player Movement Between Teams

SWZ reserves the right to move players between teams in the same tier in order to correct a skill or roster size imbalance between teams. Such movement may take place at any time prior to the roster freeze date determined by Hockey Edmonton. Criteria for movement will be determined by the Category Director. SW Zone recognizes that such movement may be unwelcome and viewed negatively by affected players, parents, coaches or others; however all decisions for player movement will be made in the interest of the overall program and to ensure compliance with the Alberta One Standardized Tiering Model. All player movement decisions are considered final, and any undesirable actions by affected parties as a result of such movement may be grounds for discipline.

6.0 Dispute Process

SWZ acknowledges that special circumstances affecting the tiering of a particular player may occur. If it appears that a player's ranking has been grossly unfair, that ranking may be disputed.

All disputes will need to be submitted to the SWZ Evaluation Committee in writing.

The dispute process is intended only to review instances where a player's evaluation has been grossly affected due to a documented medical condition or injury that may have significantly impeded the player's ability to perform during the evaluations. Disputes may also be founded on compassionate grounds, such as personal tragedy or family deaths.

The dispute process will **NOT** accommodate claims based on lack of preparation by a player, player absence due to holidays, lack of understanding of drills by a player, minor illness, lack of effort during evaluation, tiering results of previous years, tiering results of former teammates and other players in the evaluation process, or tiering results from other hockey clubs.

Similarly, dissatisfaction with evaluators, Category Directors, the Evaluation Committee or the evaluation process itself, or allegations of tampering, persecution, or mismanagement of the evaluation process are not grounds for an appeal of a player's rankings, but should be brought to the attention of the SWZ Discipline Committee.

7.0 Confidentiality of Data

Data collected by SWZ relating to player evaluation results are the sole property of SWZ and are used solely for the purpose of ranking players and forming teams. Data is not collected for the purpose of delivering individual reports or summaries of individual player performances. SWZ will not distribute any evaluation data to parents or players.

Should SWZ be provided with evidence of evaluation data being in possession of someone not authorized to have the information, or of someone distributing this information in any way, SWZ may place sanctions against the player related to the persons involved. This may include game suspensions or cancellation of registration with SWZ.

Appendix I

Example player groupings for levels where skills sessions are not applicable for evaluations:

Bantam player placement for evaluation games:

Group 1: Previous year Bantam 1, 2 and 3

Group 2: Previous year Bantam 4 and Peewee 1

Group 3: Previous year Bantam 5 and Peewee 2 and 3

Group 4: Previous year Bantam 5 and Peewee 3, plus any players previously above Tier 4 that have “opted out” of body checking

Group 5: Previous year Bantam 6 and Peewee 4

Group 6: Previous year Peewee 5 and 6

Midget player placement for evaluation games:

Group 1: Previous year Midget 1 and 2

Group 2: Previous year Midget 3 and 4, Bantam 1

Group 3: Previous year Midget 5 and Bantam 2 and 3

Group 4: Previous year Midget 6 and Bantam 4, plus any players previously above Tier 4 that have “opted out” of body checking

Group 5: Previous year Bantam 5

Group 6: Previous year Bantam 6

The above example grouping is intended as a guideline and may be amended at the sole discretion of the Category Director and/or Evaluation Committee.

Should a player in Bantam or Midget have opted out of body checking, their skate group will be limited to non-body checking evaluation games.