



## South West Zone Hockey Player Evaluation Policy

### 1.0 SWZ Hockey Player Evaluation Policy Statement

The goal of the Southwest Zone (SWZ) player evaluation process in the U15 and U18, as well as the female U9, U11 and U13 categories is to evaluate players fairly and consistently 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 [Alberta One tiering model](#).

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:

#### General Procedure:

All SWZ players registered to play in the Edmonton Federation Hockey League (EFHL) 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.

There are no evaluation procedures for players registered for U15, U18 or U21 Recreational Hockey.

#### Evaluation and Team Formation:

SWZ will employ both an initial skill skate, as well as evaluated games to assign players to their respective tiers in accordance with the Alberta One tiering model. The evaluation process will include a sport specific skill evaluation followed by evaluation games.

Initially all players will take part in an evaluation of sport-specific skill components such as speed, agility, and transitioning. The drills will be posted in advance of the skills skate on the SWZ website.

Each player will be given two attempts of each timed drill, and the better of the two times will be used. Players will then be ranked and grouped based on a weighted average of their skill skate results for the evaluated games.



If a skill skate is not utilized for any reason, then players will be sorted to initial evaluation game groups based on the groupings described in Appendix I.

Each player will participate in a minimum of two evaluated games to allow for player movement up and down within the ranks, prior to team formation.

Player groupings may be adjusted by the category director to account for registration numbers and positional needs.

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.

### **Body Checking:**

At the U15 and U18 age categories, the EFHL consists of tiers 1 to 3 body checking and tiers 1 to 3 non-body checking. There is no body checking at the U9, U11 or U13 age categories.

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 in the body checking tiers, regardless of skill or evaluation results.

The willingness to participate in body checking 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. The player's best interest and ability will be the primary factors in placing that player in an appropriate tier.



## **Game Evaluations:**

### **1. Evaluation by Position**

Except for the U9 and U11 age category, 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. 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 suggest any rankings of the players. Goaltenders may be asked to keep their pinnies for the duration of evaluations.

### **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)

### **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 at the U15 or U18 age category may be moved into or out of skate groups with body checking throughout the evaluation process (see Section 2.4)

## **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.

## **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 (e.g., 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:

U 9 - 18 to 20 Players

U11 - 12 to 15 Players and 2 goalies (9 forwards, 4 defence)

U13 - 13 to 16 Players and 2 goalies (9 forwards, 4 defence)



U15 - 17 Players and 2 goalies (11 forwards, 6 defence)

U18 – 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.

SWZ will receive player and goaltender cuts from the SSAC, KC, MLAC and CAC U15 and U18 AA/AAA tryouts, during the evaluation process. These will be integrated into the SWZ evaluation process at the earliest opportunity.

## **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 and EFHL Tiering Committee.

## **3.0 Goaltender Evaluation Process**

### **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.

### **Goaltender Evaluation Process**

#### **1. Skills Sessions**

All goalies will take part in one skills evaluation session prior to participating in any evaluation games to assess their relative goaltending skills unless there are not enough goalies in a given category to warrant a skills session.



## **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. 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**

### **1. Absenteeism and Injured Players**

Players missing any or all 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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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, Committee, SWZ President and Hockey Edmonton. Evaluation Hockey Edmonton's player acceleration policy can be viewed in their operating directives as posted on their website.

## **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 placed. This typically only occurs in specific circumstances with players who come to SWZ late, have missed evaluations, and teams have already been formed.

## **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.

## **7. Refunding of Registrations Due to Filled Rosters**

SWZ reserves the right to refund player registrations in situations where all rosters are filled and there are not sufficient remaining registered players to create an additional team. This situation may arise because of later registrations by players to SWZ. SWZ will endeavour to assist those players in finding a place for those players with another association for that season. Those players are welcome to register with SWZ for the next season.

## **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:

### **U11 player placement for evaluation games:**

Group 1: Previous Year U13 tier 1, 2 and 3 and U11 tier 1 and 2.

Group 2: Previous Year U13 tier 4 and 5 and U11 tier 3, and 4.

Group 3: Previous Year U13 tier 6 and U11 tier 5 and 6.

### **U13 player placement for evaluation games:**

Group 1: Previous Year U13 tier 1, 2 and 3 and U11 tier 1 and 2.

Group 2: Previous Year U13 tier 4 and 5 and U11 tier 3, and 4.

Group 3: Previous Year U13 tier 6 and U11 tier 5 and 6.

### **U15 player placement for evaluation games:**

Group 1: Previous year U15 tier 1, 2 and 3 body checking.

Group 2: Previous year U15 tier 1 non-bodychecking and U13 tier 1

Group 3: Previous year U15 tier 2 non-bodychecking and U13 tier 2 and 3

Group 4: Previous year U15 tier 3 non-bodychecking and U13 tier 3,

Group 5: Previous year U13 tier 4, 5 and 6

### **U18 player placement for evaluation games:**

Group 1: Previous year U18 tier 1 and 2 body checking

Group 2: Previous year U18 tier 3 body checking, and U15 tier 1 and 2 body checking

Group 3: Previous year U18 tier 1 and 2 non-bodychecking and U15 tier 1 non-body checking, and tier 3 body checking.

Group 4: Previous year U18 tier 3 non-bodychecking and U15 tier 2 and 3 non-bodychecking

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 U15 or U18 have opted out of body checking, their skate group will be limited to non-body checking evaluation games.