



Manual of Operations

Title: Players Playing Up in Higher Divisions	Number: MO- 06-24
Source: Executive Director	
Approved By: Executive Director	Date Approved: March 2026 Date Last Reviewed: March 2026

The U22AA Team is exempt from this policy. Any age player can try out for the U22AA team with the recommendation of the U22AA head coach and subject to approval by the WGHA Executive Director and/or his/her delegate

WGHA is committed to supporting players to play at the highest level of competition they are capable of, while striving for fairness and not displacing individuals who can play competitively in their own age group.

In rare circumstances, individuals with exceptional skill and ability may be capable of playing at an age category above their own. The following criteria and requirements are in place where a player wishes to apply to play or try out for a team in the age category above their own age group. Such a player is described as an “underage” player.

An underage player is only permitted to

- play one division above their own age division; and
- play on Tier 1 Representative teams or, in special circumstances, in the House League programs.

The approval of the Executive Director is required before an underage player may try out and/or be selected for a Representative team or placed on a House League team.

There is a maximum of two underage players allowed per team (Rep or House League).

Where a player is also an import, the criteria for import players must be met first before the player will be assessed as an underage player.

The criteria, process, and requirements for application (and potential selection) as an underage player to a **Representative Team** are as follows:

1. The player/parents must submit a request in writing to the Executive Director as soon as possible in the current season after a player has made the decision to request to play as an underage player in the following season. The request must be made by February 1st of the current season. Under exceptional circumstances an extension to this deadline may be granted by the Executive Director.
2. The application will be reviewed by the Executive Director prior to tryouts commencing, and a decision will be made as to the player’s eligibility to attend



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tryouts.

- a. As part of the application review process, the Executive Director, if practical, may request to meet with the player (and family) to discuss the request and understand player ability, strength, and maturity and discuss/address any safety concerns. The Executive Director may also begin discussions with the player's current Head Coach as well as the Head Coach for the team that the player wishes to try out for.
 - b. Where possible and practical, based on when the application has been received, the Executive Director may attend on-ice activities in the current season to begin an independent assessment of the underage player.
3. If the player is approved to attend tryouts as an underage player, and after two tryouts the head coach has identified the underage player as a potential selection to the team in the higher division, the head coach will notify the Executive Director immediately following the second tryout.
 4. The Executive Director will convene an independent evaluation committee (of not less than 3 members) to conduct benchmarking assessments of the player's ability relative to the rest of the players. This could include assessment of both on-ice and off-ice activities.
 5. To be selected as an underage player, the head coach and Executive Director must agree, at their sole discretion, that the underage player can play at the Tier 1 level.
 6. The decision of the Executive Director is final and may not be appealed.

With approval of the Executive Director and under special and extenuating circumstances, an underage player may be permitted to try out for (and therefore be selected to) a Tier 2 or Tier 3 team. The underage player must follow the process above and may be requested to attend the Tier 1 tryouts at the higher level as well.

At the request of the Executive Director the underage player may also be required to attend the Tier 1 tryouts in their own age category.



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If the underage player has been released from the team in the higher age division, they will be permitted to join the tryouts in their own age division. It is understood that the underage player and their family have been in communication with the head coach from their current age division so that coach is aware of the situation. The underage player, where possible, should attend their current age category tryouts as well.

The criteria, process, and requirements for placement as an underage player on a **House League Team** are as follows:

1. Only under exceptional circumstances will a house league player be permitted to play as an underage player.
2. The player/parent must apply to the executive director as soon as possible in the current season after a player has made the decision to request to play as an underage player in the following season. The request must be made no later than 1 week before House League evaluations are scheduled to commence.
3. Where an underage player has attended try-outs for a representative team, which includes teams at their age category and has been released, the Executive Director will request assessments from the head coach of the last team in which the player was released to aid in understanding the player's skill level.
4. The Executive Director will review the recommendation and decide regarding the underage players' placement.

The decision of the Executive Director is final and may not be appealed.

In all cases (Rep and House League) of players playing up in higher divisions, final approval is subject to OWHA's approval of the team roster with the underage player.