



Manual of Operations

Title: Players Playing Up in Higher Divisions	Number: MO- 06-24
Source: LMC	
Approved By: WCHA Board	Date Approved: August 2020 Date Last Reviewed: May 2024

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 the explicit approval of LMC.

WCHA 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 are capable of playing 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 LMC is required before an underage player may try-out and or be selected to 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 an application to the Director of Representative Hockey as soon as possible in the current season after a player has made the decision to request to play as an underage player in



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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 LMC.

2. The application will be reviewed by LMC prior to try-outs commencing and a decision will be made as to the player's eligibility to attend try-outs.
 - a. As part of the application review process, members of LMC, 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 LMC may also begin discussions with the players current Head Coach as well as the Head Coach for the team which the player wishes to try out for.
 - b. Where possible and practical, based on when the application has been received, members of LMC will attend on-ice activities in the current season to begin their independent assessment of the underage player.
3. If the player is approved to attend try-outs as an underage player, and after two try-outs 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 Director of Representative Hockey immediately following the second try-out.
4. The Director of Representative Hockey will convene an independent evaluation committee (of not less than 3 members), selected by the LMC and that committee will 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 independent evaluation committee must agree, at their sole discretion, that the



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underage player is capable of playing at the Tier 1 level.

6. The Head Coach and independent evaluation committee must submit their recommendation to LMC for final approval prior to making the selection of an underage player.
7. The LMC will provide the Head Coach with their decision as soon as possible following the receipt of the recommendation.
8. The decision of the LMC is final and may not be appealed.

With approval of the Board of Directors, 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 try-outs at the higher level as well. The underage player will also be required to attend the Tier 1 try-outs in their own age category.

If the underage player has been released from the team in the higher age division, they will be permitted to join the try-outs 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 try-outs as well

The criteria, process and requirements for placement as an underage player to 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 submit an application to the Director of House League 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



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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 Director of House League will request assessments from the Head Coach of the last team in which the player was released in order to aid in understanding the player's skill level.
4. The Director of House League and the House League Convenor will make a recommendation to the LMC following House League evaluations and prior to placement of the underage player on a team.
5. The LMC will review the recommendation and decide regarding the underage players placement.
6. The Director of House League will communicate the decision to the player as soon as possible following House League evaluations.

The decision of LMC 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.