



Policy Title: TRYOUT & IMPORT PLAYER POLICY

Revision Date: March 2026

Next Scheduled Review: March 2027

SECTION A: TRYOUT POLICY

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this Tryout Policy is to ensure that all Woodstock Wildcats Girls Hockey Association (WWGHA) players are evaluated through a fair, transparent, and consistent process. This policy supports a development-focused environment where players are assessed according to objective standards aligned with OWHA and Hockey Canada guidelines. It also ensures that players and families understand the expectations, procedures, and timelines associated with representative team selection.
- 1.2. This policy applies to all players participating in WWGHA tryouts from U9 through U18, as well as their parents or guardians. It also governs the responsibilities of coaches, evaluators, on-ice assistants, and all team officials involved in the selection process. The policy is binding for all participants and is intended to create a dependable and respectful environment.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. This section defines key terms used throughout the policy.
 - 2.1.1. The *Tryout Period* refers to the officially scheduled dates for evaluations at each age group.
 - 2.1.2. *Tier Levels* represent competitive categories (Tier I through Tier IV).
 - 2.1.3. A *Release* means a formal notice that a player is no longer being considered for that tier.
 - 2.1.4. A *Permission to Skate (PTS)* is an OWHA-approved form that allows a player to attend tryouts with another association.
 - 2.1.5. An *Import Player* is defined separately in the Import Player Policy.
- 2.2. These definitions help ensure clarity for all families.

3. Governance & Compliance

- 3.1. The WWGHA Board of Directors oversees this policy. The Director of Coaching & Development is responsible for interpreting and applying it in a consistent manner. Any exceptions to the policy must receive prior Board approval.
- 3.2. Where OWHA or Hockey Canada regulations differ from this document, the higher governing body's rules will take precedence.

4. Timing & Posting

- 4.1. WWGHA publishes all tryout schedules on the association website to ensure full transparency.
- 4.2. U11–U18 tryouts occur in the spring immediately following the OWHA Provincial Championship weekend.
- 4.3. U9 tryouts take place in the fall.
- 4.4. Any changes to schedules or procedures are communicated through official association channels and the association website.

5. Registration & Eligibility Requirements

- 5.1. All players must register prior to attending tryouts and must pay the required tryout fee. No player is permitted on the ice without payment.
- 5.2. Players who were rostered with another OWHA association the previous season must present a valid Permission to Skate form upon arrival.
- 5.3. All players must sign in at every session to ensure accurate attendance and tracking. Families are responsible for notifying the coach or registrar if a player withdraws from tryouts.
- 5.4. To accommodate high registration numbers and maintain competitive alignment, players are encouraged to begin tryouts one tier above their most recent level of play.

6. Attendance Expectations

- 6.1. Players are expected to attend the first tryout session and all subsequent sessions to give evaluators the opportunity to fairly assess their skills and readiness.
- 6.2. While missing a session does not automatically disqualify a player, consistent attendance significantly improves the accuracy of evaluation results and supports a successful team selection process.

7. Tryout Structure by Tier

- 7.1. WWGHA offers a structured and tiered evaluation system to ensure players are assessed against comparable competition.

- 7.2. Ice time lengths may vary based on participant numbers and OWHA game length requirements.
- 7.3. Exhibition games are scheduled by the head coach. If a head coach has not been pre-selected, the executive board will schedule the exhibition game.
- 7.4. These structures ensure adequate evaluation time tailored to the competitive demands of each tier.
 - 7.4.1. **Tier I** consists of up to five on-ice evaluation sessions, including one exhibition game. Players may be released after the first evaluation.
 - 7.4.2. **Tier II** consists of up to four on-ice evaluation sessions, including one exhibition game. Players may be released after the first or second evaluation, at the discretion of the head coach.
 - 7.4.3. **Tier II** consists of up to three on-ice evaluation sessions. Players may be released after the first or second evaluation, at the discretion of the head coach.
 - 7.4.4. **Tier IV** consists of two on-ice evaluation sessions, and no releases may occur until all sessions are completed.
 - 7.4.5. If the Tier IV is house league and numbers support an additional (5th) team, house league formation may be delayed until fall to accommodate new players.

8. Evaluation Guidelines

- 8.1. Evaluators assess players based on skill performance, hockey knowledge, work ethic, and coachability. Evaluations may include timed drills, scrimmage components, and position-specific assessments.
- 8.2. Numbered jerseys are assigned for identification purposes, and coaches track player performance throughout each session. Jerseys must be returned after each session.
- 8.3. For U9 and U11 divisions, formats may vary based on updates from OWHA or Hockey Canada's long-term player development models.

9. Conflicts & Injuries

- 9.1. Players who encounter scheduling conflicts must speak directly with the head coach. These situations are considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 9.2. Injured players must submit a doctor's note confirming their inability to participate. A player who cannot attend due to injury may still be considered for a team based on prior evaluations and demonstrated performance.
- 9.3. All decisions must be finalized before the next tier begins its tryouts.

10. Rosters & Player Movement

- 10.1. The standard roster size for representative teams is 17 players, consisting of 15 skaters and 2 goaltenders.
- 10.2. Any team wishing to carry fewer or additional players must seek Board approval.
- 10.3. Rosters must be finalized prior to the start of the next tier's tryouts to ensure fairness.
- 10.4. Movement up an age division is rare and will only be considered under the conditions outlined in the WWGHA Handbook.

11. Selection Process & Communication

- 11.1. Team selections for U11–U18 are completed during spring tryouts.
- 11.2. Coaches will communicate releases through the association website.
- 11.3. Coaches may also use letters, website postings, or in-person discussions.
- 11.4. Before final rosters are published, players will be referenced by identification codes to protect privacy. Only the names of players on finalized rosters will be publicly posted.
- 11.5. Adding any player after rosters are finalized requires Board approval.

12. Financial Expectations for Tier I & II

- 12.1. Before a player attends their first tryout session, the head coach must provide families with clear information on team expectations, including financial commitments beyond registration fees.
- 12.2. Once a player accepts a roster spot, families are responsible for all team fees for the season, which may include tournaments, apparel, or specialized training.

13. Evaluators & On-Ice Staff Requirements

- 13.1. All head coaches must use independent evaluators who have no conflict of interest with the players being assessed.
- 13.2. Names of evaluators must be submitted to the Board prior to tryouts.
- 13.3. On-ice assistants must be fully credentialed and cleared in accordance with OWHA standards, including appropriate background checks.
- 13.4. Parent involvement is discouraged to maintain fairness.
- 13.5. Situations involving team officials' children require the Board to appoint additional evaluators.

SECTION B: IMPORT PLAYER POLICY

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy supports player loyalty within the Woodstock Wildcats Girls Hockey Association (WWGHA), promotes roster stability, and ensures sustainable growth. It prioritizes opportunities for Woodstock-area players to compete at the highest level available that matches their goals and abilities.

WWGHA recognizes the value that import players bring and acknowledges that some players outside Woodstock may lack access to competitive girls' hockey. However, the Association's primary focus is to maximize development and competitive opportunities for girls residing within its boundaries.

To balance competitiveness, development, and fairness, WWGHA sets limits on the number of import players permitted on teams at each competitive level.

2. Definition of an Import Player

- 2.1. An import player is any skater or goalie who was rostered with an OWHA-recognized association other than WWGHA in the previous season. These players are required to submit a Permission to Skate form to attend tryouts. Understanding this definition ensures consistent application of import limits across all tiers.

3. Import Limits by Tier

- 3.1. To maintain development opportunities for local players, the number of import players per team is limited.

	Tier I	Tier II	Tier III	Tier IV/Tier V
# of Import Players:	Up to 3	Up to 2	None	None

- 3.2. Tier III, IV, and V teams are not permitted to roster import players except in cases where roster numbers fall below the standard 17 players, and even then, only if doing so does not displace a current WWGHA player or Woodstock resident.

- 3.3. Import limits do not apply to U7 or Kittens Fundamentals program.

4. Exemptions to Import Status

- 4.1. Several categories of players are exempt from being classified as imports.

4.2. This includes:

- 4.2.1. Players who were rostered with WWGHA the previous season,
- 4.2.2. Players new to OWHA hockey
- 4.2.3. Players who left WWGHA solely to play at a higher level not offered by the association, and
- 4.2.4. Players who were unable to be placed on a WWGHA team due to association constraints.
- 4.2.5. Players who recently moved to Woodstock may also be exempt upon Executive approval.
- 4.2.6. Import players must demonstrate a higher level of skill than local players to be selected.

5. Achieving Non-Import Status

- 5.1. An import player becomes a non-import player after completing one full season on a WWGHA roster and fulfilling all bond requirements, whether through volunteer hours, exemption, or payment. This transition supports long-term commitment to the association.

6. Coach Requests for Exceptions

- 6.1. Coaches seeking exceptions to import limits must submit written requests to the Board prior to the start of tryouts.
- 6.2. If an unexpected need arises during tryouts, the request may be submitted to the Director of Player & Coach Development, who will bring it forward for Executive decision.
- 6.3. All exceptions are evaluated carefully to protect fairness and player development goals.

7. Annual Review

- 7.1. The WWGHA Board reviews the import policy annually to ensure it reflects current association needs, OWHA regulations, and player development priorities. Any amendments or exceptions require formal Board approval.