



**MOUNDS VIEW IRONDALE  
YOUTH HOCKEY  
ASSOCIATION  
(MVIYHA)**

**TRYOUT MANUAL**

# **MVIYHA Tryout Manual**

This **Tryout Manual** has been drafted as a supplement to the MVIYHA Handbook and Bylaws. It highlights the information associated with the MVIYHA Tryout Process and will be reviewed and potentially modified by the Board of Directors on an annual basis. Please direct any questions or comments regarding the manual to the **MVIYHA Tryout Director**.

MVIYHA Tryouts are conducted under the direction of the Tryout Director, with the assistance of the Director of Hockey, the Boys/Girls Coordinator, and the appropriate Level Coordinators (when applicable), under the guidelines identified and approved by the MVIYHA Board of Directors.

This manual will be comprised of the following sections:

## **Important Information**

## **Suggestions for Skaters and Parents**

## **Reminders**

## **Tryout Anecdotes**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

## **Tryout Selection Criteria**

## **Team Selection Process**

## **Player Departure Policy**

## **Injury Procedures**

## **Confidentiality**

## **Important Information**

- Optional pre-season **Warm-up Sessions** are scheduled for Bantam, Peewee, Squirt, 15U, 12U, and 10U hockey teams. The cost for the pre-season warm-up sessions is included in the tryout fee for each skater.

There are warm-up sessions scheduled for each level associated with the tryout process. In the case of multiple sessions at a particular level, players will be assigned to a certain session by last name.

The pre-season warm-up sessions will begin in early September and proceed through the end of the month. Please refer to the MVIYHA website ([www.mvihockey.org/tryouts](http://www.mvihockey.org/tryouts)) for specific details on dates, times, and rinks.

- A **Tryout Informational Meeting** is held in advance of the tryout process every season. While all parents are encouraged to attend and learn about the process, what to expect, and what is expected, much of the material will be geared to address skaters and families new to the MVIYHA tryout process (Squirts, 10Us, and those new to the Association).
- Efforts have been made to coordinate the MVIYHA tryout process with other important events within the community, however, avoiding all conflicts is not feasible. Minnesota Hockey and the statewide MEA break typically dictate our tryout dates. Please refer to the MVIYHA website for specific details on dates, times, and rinks.
- Individual **Tryout Sessions** are scheduled for Bantams, Peewees, Squirts, 15U, 12U, 10U, and goaltender-only sessions. Tryout evaluations will consist of four to five total sessions per level, and a supplemental goalie-only session for goaltenders.

While goaltenders will be required to attend each of the tryout evaluation sessions at their appropriate team level, they will also be required to attend a 60-minute evaluation session specifically for goaltenders.

- Please arrive early to allow your player time to be checked in, get dressed, and ready to take the ice at least **5-10 minutes** before your assigned session. Failure to appear on time to a tryout evaluation may impact your score.
- Unless specifically excused **IN ADVANCE OF THE FIRST TRYOUT SESSION** by the Tryout Director, a player must attend all tryout sessions. The Tryout Director, with assistance from the Director of Hockey and Boy's/Girl's Coordinators, will determine the status and eligibility of anyone not able to attend all sessions using pertinent information to make this decision.

Any circumstances not covered by the tryout policy will be addressed by the aforementioned individuals and their decision(s) will be approved by the MVIYHA Board of Directors.

- **Only the independent tryout evaluators, select tryout volunteers, applicable coaches, the Tryout Director, the MVIYHA President, Director of Hockey, level coordinators, and/or the applicable Boys/Girls Coordinators are allowed in the evaluation area** of the arena (i.e. inside the actual ice rink area) while the players are on the ice.

- Composite tryout scores are **strictly confidential**. For privacy reasons, the scores will not be posted publicly and will only be available to the Tryout Director, Boys/Girls Coordinators, Level Coordinators, Director of Hockey, and/or MVIYHA President, and their designees.
- Players are required to wear their assigned reversible tryout jersey. Players should follow the MVIYHA Equipment Policy during tryouts (black helmet, black breezers, black gloves) and must wear all required equipment (including mouth guard and neck laceration protection). Hockey socks must be MVIYHA socks from previous seasons, or be black, white, gold, and/or green. Socks, breezer covers, or helmet stickers showing affiliation with any club hockey or AAA hockey team will not be allowed. Players will not be allowed on the ice without all required protective equipment and tryout scores may be impacted.
- The tryout results will be posted on the MVIYHA website at a time designated by the Tryout Director. Final results are typically posted to the website within 72 hours of the final tryout at each level.
- **Volunteers are always needed to help make the tryout process successful.** Please visit the DIBS section of the MVIYHA website frequently for tryout volunteer opportunities and direct any questions you may have to the Tryout Director.
- **All skaters and goaltenders are expected to attend all scheduled drills and scrimmage sessions.** Under extreme circumstances, the Tryout Director should be contacted to request an absence. See the Procedures for Injuries section if an absence is due to a medical issue.
- All warm-up and tryout dates, times, and rink locations will be posted on the website by the first week in September.

The Association reserves the right to change ice dates/times and/or rink locations, based on changing conditions with available ice and pool scrimmages with outside associations.

While the time slots that are published in early September typically do not change, **please check the Tryouts section of the website often**, as this will be the most up-to-date listing of the ice sessions for our Association. Skaters/goaltenders will be responsible for reporting at the correct date, time, and location.

## **Suggestions**

The following are some basic suggestions to help both skaters and parents alike. Many of these suggestions have been offered by Minnesota Hockey and have been proven to help players/parents successfully navigate the hockey tryout process.

### **For players:**

- Relax and focus on the things that you can control.

***Your effort, your attitude, and your ability to listen are just as important as your hockey skills.***

- Come mentally and physically prepared.

***Always think positively but be sure to rest up and eat appropriately beforehand.***

- Work to the best of your abilities on every shift.

***You never know what might catch the evaluators' eyes.***

- Regardless of the result, learn from the experience.

***Exercise modesty/humility in success, fortitude/perseverance in failure.***

- Have fun.

***Remember, after everything is complete, you are still fortunate enough to be playing a great game.***

### **For parents and other family members:**

- Remember, the tryout process is a very small facet of your skater's life.

***Try to help them learn from their experience (both good and bad) and try to have fun.***

- Take the opportunity to get involved and volunteer to help with the tryout process.

***Many prior volunteers have learned a lot about the tryout process and have provided their input to improve the tryout process for future skaters.***

## **Reminders**

As adults, we need to remind ourselves and our sons and daughters of the relevance of this process in the big picture.

- The players are competing for a roster spot on a **team**, to play a **game**. It seems obvious and simplistic, but it's something that we all need to remind ourselves about regularly.
- While most participants aim to make the highest team possible, the purpose of the process is not to 'weed-out' players in pursuit of making an 'A' team. **The purpose of the tryout process is to align players of similar ability and make sure they are playing at the right level** so that they can enjoy the game and develop in an appropriate setting.
- As parents and family members, it is a basic instinct to be proud of our children and want them to succeed to the best of their abilities. However, this instinct may tend to cloud our perspective.

The independent evaluators are just that, independent. While they may not see your skater in the same light as you, please respect their **independent** opinions and the tryout process. Be assured that we are making every effort to make your son or daughter's tryout experience as fair and objective as possible.

- The teams in the MVIYHA this season will look different next season, and every season after that. Young skaters continue to develop at different rates, and we all need to understand that last year's success or failure is not a measurement of this year's final placement.

**Because your skater made an A or B team last year, they are not guaranteed similar placement this season**, especially as players move up. 'Backsliding' does, and will continue to, occur.

Every year is different and prior accomplishments are not considered in team placement.

- Unfortunately, heartache and disappointment in life will occur. Competing for a team (just like competing for a job later in life) is a part of a maturation process. Both skaters and parents need to do their best to learn from this experience and keep things in perspective.

Your player's success will allow you to teach them modesty and humility. Failure to make a certain team is not failure in general, yet it will allow an opportunity to teach fortitude and perseverance in pursuit of a goal.

## Tryout Anecdotes

In support of these helpful reminders, we provide the following anecdotes:

The late Herb Brooks was not only the coach of the 1980 *Miracle On Ice* team, but he also was the **last player cut** from the gold-medal-winning 1960 Olympic team.

According to legend, Brooks and his father were watching the final game together. When the final buzzer sounded, giving the US the gold medal, the elder Brooks did not curse the Olympic tryout methodology or process. He did not condemn the evaluations that prevented his son from being part of that deliriously happy event. He simply said:

*"Well, it looks like they cut the right guy."*

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Similarly, the following story comes from another north suburban hockey program.

As a skater growing up, a certain young man never made an 'A' team. After making Varsity in 1998 as a Junior (on a team that went to the State Tournament), the young man met with his coach.

With tears in his eyes, he stated: *"Coach, all my life I have never made an 'A' team, I will not let you down."* By his senior year, he:

- Was selected by his teammates as Captain, where he led his team to the State Tournament and won the State Championship.
  - Went on to play Junior hockey and subsequently played Division I hockey at the University of North Dakota.
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Lastly, one of our own MVIYHA alumni recently had the following experience:

After a tough Squirt tryout, the young skater was evaluated as the last skater to make the A team. Upon learning many of his friends would be skating on the B team, he opted to forego his spot on the A team he earned, to play with his friends at the B level.

While many questioned his decision, citing his hockey development would be stunted by such a decision, the player went on to become:

- Mr. Hockey Minnesota
- a member of the Wisconsin Badgers
- a member of the 2014 US Olympic team
- the captain for the New York Rangers
- Winner of 2 Stanley Cup Championships

**Everyone develops at a different pace and very little of your skater's future will be determined by these (or subsequent) athletic tryouts.**

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

The following is a list of Frequently Asked Questions that have been compiled by MVIYHA. This list will be reviewed annually and revised as appropriate.

### **Q. How are the skaters assigned / grouped and tracked?**

*A. Players are assigned to a group and provided with a reversible tryout jersey and number. Each tryout participant will have the same number throughout tryouts. The skater will only be tracked and scored by color/number and not by name.*

### **Q. Who will be the tryout evaluators?**

*A. The tryout/team selection process will be conducted by the Tryout Director and will utilize 4-5 independent evaluators who have no children playing at the level they are evaluating in the MVIYHA. They have been asked to observe and evaluate all skaters in the tryout process at a given level. The MVIYHA Board of Directors has found each of the evaluators to be knowledgeable and experienced with evaluating hockey skill, as well as dedicated individuals who are passionate about hockey.*

*Our current independent evaluation team has playing and coaching experience at the youth, high school, collegiate, and semi-professional levels.*

### **Q. How are the skaters scored?**

*A. Each skater will be scored by multiple evaluators based on their hockey playing ability. Evaluator scores will be compiled each session. These scores will be used to create similar skill level groups for later tryout sessions and ultimately these scores will be used to determine team placement at the conclusion of tryouts.*

### **Q. What are the skills and attributes desired and scored?**

*A. Players will be scored based on their overall hockey ability, including skating, stick handling, shooting, positioning, level appropriate body contact/physicality, hockey sense, and attitude.*

## **Tryout Selection Criteria**

Selection criteria at each level include the following:

- Skating ability
- Puck skills (stick handling, passing, shooting)
- Positioning and hockey sense - both with the puck and away from the puck
- Level appropriate body contact
- Hustle/intensity/aggressiveness
- Attitude/sportsmanship

Separate sessions will also be conducted for goaltender evaluations. Goaltenders must also attend the assigned group sessions at their appropriate level. The goaltender evaluators will score goaltenders during the drill and scrimmage sessions, as well as during the goaltender-only sessions.

## **Team Selection Process**

MVIYHA traveling level teams (Boys Bantam, Peewee, Squirt, and Girls 15U, 12U and 10U) will generally consist of 13-17 players (12-15 skaters and one to two goaltenders) if player numbers allow. These numbers may vary depending upon expected registration numbers, team declarations, and other factors.

Team rosters will be selected as follows, upon the conclusion of the final tryout session:

- The top skaters based on evaluator scoring are placed on the top team (AA or A). The final skaters can be selected by the top team (AA/A) head coach if this coach has been identified prior to and attends the final tryout session. Parent head coaches are not able to select their own child to their team if they are not in a locked position based on evaluator scoring. See Table 1 for the number of players eligible for coach selection based on roster size.

**Table 1: Head Coach Roster Selection - # Players Eligible by Roster Size**

<b># of Skaters on Roster (not including goalies)</b>	<b># of Locked Skater Spots (based only on evaluator scoring)</b>	<b># of Skaters Head Coach Can Select</b>	<b>Player Ranks Available for Coach Pick</b>	<b>Comment</b>
10	8	2	9-12	Coach may select 2 out of next 4
11	8	3	9-14	Coach may select 3 out of next 6
12	9	3	10-15	Coach may select 3 out of next 6
13	10	3	11-16	Coach may select 3 out of next 6
14	10	4	11-18	Coach may select 4 out of next 8
15	11	4	12-19	Coach may select 4 out of next 8
16	11	5	12-21	Coach may select 5 out of next 10
17	12	5	13-22	Coach may select 5 out of next 10

- This process repeats for each subsequent level. For instance, the top 10-12 remaining skaters based on evaluator scoring are placed on the 2nd highest team, and the final 3 skaters can be selected by the head coach of the 2nd highest team (if this coach has been identified prior to and attends the final tryout session).
  - Example:
    - Bantam AA has 15 skaters. Skaters ranked 1-12 are automatically placed on the Bantam AA team. Bantam AA head coach selects players ranked 13, 15, 17 as final 3 players.
    - Bantam A has 15 skaters. Skaters ranked 14, 16, 18-27 are automatically placed on the Bantam A team. Bantam A head coach selects players ranked 28, 29, 31 as final 3 players on the team.
- Head coach selections can apply to all levels as long as the head coach has been identified prior to the end of tryouts and attends the final tryout session. Parent head coaches are not able to select their own child to their team if they are not in a locked position based on evaluator scoring. See Table 1 above for head coach player selection criteria.
- If a given team's head coach is not selected prior to the final tryout session, or that coach does not attend the final tryout session, then all players on that team will be selected based solely on evaluator scoring.
- In the event two B-level teams are declared at any age level, the goal of MVIYHA will be to have the two teams at that level be balanced. The teams will be composed by selecting the top scoring individual at the B-level to one of the teams, the next two highest scores to the other team, repeating until the equal B-level teams have their allotment. If B level head coaches are eligible to select the final 3 skaters on their teams, this same alternating selection format will be used.
- C-level: If numbers allow for more than one C team, the attempt will be made to balance the skill levels between the teams. However, consideration may also be given to geography, coach availability, player age, etc.
- Goaltenders will be placed on teams based on the composite evaluator rankings, with the intention of having two on each team if possible. If goaltender numbers do not allow for two goaltenders being assigned to each team, efforts will be made to assign the goaltenders based on their evaluator rankings, with comparable goaltenders being placed at similar levels.
- In the event a Bantam or 15U skater is selected for a High School Varsity team, the AA/A-level Head Coach may choose to select another player from the next available skaters for the given roster size (see Table 1, Head Coach Roster Selection), according to the evaluator rankings. This player selection must be approved by the Tryout Director, Director of Hockey, and/or the applicable Boys/Girls Coordinators. If additional players from B/C teams are needed to move up and fill vacancies, the same approach will apply. If a Bantam or 15U goaltender is selected for a High School Varsity team, the next highest scoring goaltender may move into that position and must be approved by the Tryout Director, Director of Hockey, and/or the applicable Boys/Girls Coordinators. All skaters and goaltenders are expected to attend all scheduled team sessions, unless prohibited by the Minnesota State High School rules.

## **Exceptions to Team Selection**

Every season will vary, depending on the total number of skaters at any given level and the District 2 team declarations. The MVIYHA Board cannot accurately predict how many players will register to try out for the youth association, depart to another hockey association, depart to high school, or opt to quit playing hockey.

Every effort will be made to follow the designated team selection process. However, the MVIYHA Board reserves the right to modify team sizes and District 2 designations, as appropriate.

While this is a fluid process, the MVIYHA Board will attempt to communicate the final team declarations and sizes, prior to the commencement of the tryout process.

## **Player Departure Policy**

As part of their participation in the MVIYHA tryout process, players and their parents are obligated to agree to their ultimate placement on a MVIYHA traveling team for the upcoming hockey season.

Participation in the tryout process is defined by those players that have completed the tryout process, by stepping on the ice for their final (4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>) tryout session.

**If, upon completion of the tryout process and assignment to a MVIYHA traveling team, the participant elects to withdraw from the MVIYHA and not participate with their assigned team during the upcoming hockey season, they will be found in violation of the MVIYHA tryout process. This includes any Bantam/15U players that depart MVIYHA to play on the HS team after tryouts are completed.**

Those found to be in violation of the MVIYHA tryout process will be deemed **ineligible** for the following season's tryout process. Players who are deemed ineligible for tryouts, or do not tryout, will be placed on a C team.

### **Example:**

- Player X completes four tryout sessions in the fall of 2025 for the 2025-2026 hockey season.
- Player X fails to report to their assigned team upon completion of tryouts, and opts to withdraw from MVIYHA, thus violating the MVIYHA tryout policy.
- Player X departs their assigned team after tryouts to play HS hockey and opts to withdraw from the MVIYHA, thus violating the MVIYHA tryout policy.
- Player X is ineligible for the following year's tryout process (2026) for the 2026-2027 season.
- Player X will be offered a place on a C team if they opt to play for MVIYHA in the 2026-2027 season.
- Player X will be eligible to participate in tryouts in the fall of 2027, for the 2027-2028 season.

The Departure Policy is intended to give families pause and dissuade the player from opting to leave the MVIYHA, due to unsatisfactory placement from the tryout process.

For those players who move outside of our district or attend school outside of our district, School Waivers will be processed before the start of the season. Players departing after tryouts and team assignment creates numerous problems for other association families. We simply ask that you consider that your decisions will impact several other players/families.

We understand that parents and/or participants may not always agree with their placement. However, failure of a player to report to their designated team, after teams are posted, also creates significant problems for the Association when shuffling players to/from other posted teams.

## **Procedures for Injuries**

In the case of an injury, **the parent/guardian of the injured skater must notify the Tryout Director in writing, immediately upon incurring the injury**, either prior to or during the tryout process. The player will be placed in "Injury Protocol" per the following:

In either case, both injured and/or sick skaters must provide a written doctor's note to the Tryout Director. This note must be dated within seven days of the first day of tryouts or within 24 hours of an injury during tryouts. The note should state the nature of the ailment, that they are unable to participate in the hockey tryout process, and when the player might be able to return to play.

Players unable to participate in any tryout due to injury or illness will be placed appropriately at the discretion of the applicable Boy's/Girl's Coordinator, Director of Hockey, and the Tryout Director. Information available from prior year tryout scores and placement, peer scoring and peer team placements, and prior year coach feedback will be considered. Additional input may be sought from the MVIYHA Board.

In the event proper documentation is not provided from a physician, the skater will forfeit the tryout session score and be placed in accordance with their current score total if injured during tryouts, or will be placed on the lowest level team at that age group if injured prior to the first tryout.

## **Missed Tryout Policy**

- Any session absence that is **Unapproved** or short notice to tryout staff will result in a zero score for the absent player for the given session.
- Any session absence that is **Approved** will result in the player receiving an absent session score equal to the lowest score among attended tryout sessions.
- Examples of **Approved** missed tryouts:
  - Family emergency, life event (funeral, wedding)
  - In-season Fall High School sports games, mandatory school events
  - Minnesota Hockey events (i.e. Tier 1 game, etc...)
- Any session absence that is **Semi-Approved** will result in the player receiving an absent session score equal to the lowest score among attended tryout sessions, but deducted further by 5-20% based on tryout staff discretion and advanced notice timing.
- Examples of **Semi-Approved** missed tryouts:
  - Fall AAA hockey game
  - Club lacrosse game
  - Any other youth sport conflict

## **Confidentiality**

Under no circumstances will final tabulated composite tryout scores be shared with skaters, parents, or Association coaches. The tabulated results will be used to identify team rosters. Skaters will be listed by team on the MVIYHA website, listed by skater last name and appearing in alphabetical order.

The results will only be available to the Tryout Director, Boys/Girls Coordinators, Director of Hockey, the MVIYHA President, and other individuals deemed appropriate by the MVIYHA Board of Directors.

In addition, all individuals involved in the MVIYHA tryout process will be held in strict compliance with these rules of player/score confidentiality.