

YOUTH PROPOSAL #3: USA Hockey Pilot Project – 13 Only Tier I National Championship

The 13 Only Tier I Pilot proposal allows the Youth Council to authorize a pilot program to create a "Thirteen (13) (Tier I National Bound Teams Only) (13O) classification. This new level of classification shall go into effect for 2023-24 season through the 2024-25 season. In conjunction with the Tier I National Championships, USA Hockey shall conduct a twelve team National Championship event (one team from each District) in 2024 for this classification. All other USA Hockey Rules and Regulations applicable to the Youth Tier I levels shall be applicable to the "Tier I Youth 13 Only" classification. Furthermore, the Playing Rules for "Tier I Youth 13 Only" shall be consistent with the Tier I Youth 14U classification and any other playing rule modifications recommended by the Player Development Committee and approved by the Youth Council. Tier I Youth 13 Only eligibility shall be limited to only those players who's birthyear is 2010 for the 2023-24 season. For the 2024-25 season, Tier I Youth 13 Only eligibility shall be limited to only those players who's birthyear is 2011.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. Can a 12U player be rostered on a 13O team?

A. No. This tournament is set for 13 Only players.

Q. Why did USA Hockey add a National Tournament at 13O?

A. USA Hockey wanted to stay consistent with our Tier II tournament and complete the 14U Tier I age group. We noticed the number of 13U players who were participating in the 14U Tier II tournament and wanted to offer opportunities for the 13 year old player at the Tier I level.

Q. Will USA Hockey add a 12U National Tournament?

A. No

Q. What season will this start?

A. 2023-24.

Q. I noticed that there will only be 12 teams at the 13O National Tournament, why does this tournament have less teams?

A. USAH wants to take the 'rankings' out of the mix at the 13O age classification. This tournament will only include the 12 District Champions. The 12 District Champions will participate in the National Tournament. There will be no At-Large Participants at this tournament. This will allow Clubs and Coaches the freedom to play a more 'desirable', effective, local schedule without being consumed with fear of rankings. Strength of schedule, winning margins and empty net goals will not come into play at this age level and National Tournament. Teams that win the District tournament will earn their way to nationals.

Q. My player's team is ranked first in the World, but we lost at the District Tournament. Will we be considered to play in the National Tournament?

A. No. See the answer above.

Q. Does my player need to move away from home to play Tier I and gain exposure at the 13O National Tournament?

A. The downside of adding younger tournaments is ultimately recruiting. Aggregating players for championships is nothing new in our country. Hopefully, your family and player have good conversations regarding what it takes to move away from home at an early age. Hopefully, you have local clubs that can offer high performance training for 13O players. If players are thinking about leaving home, training opportunity, quality of program, academics and lifestyle should be thoroughly considered. USA Hockey promotes Long Term Athletic Development and before making any decision to leave home, it is important to consider the long road in front of a young hockey player.