



HOCKEY CALGARY

Hockey Calgary Team Formation Guidelines

Overview of Hockey Calgary Program

Vision: Everyone's Game

Mission: Through our Membership, we promote:

- Healthy & Safe Competition
- Positive Life Skills
- Fair Opportunity/Inclusivity
- Skill Development
- Access to the Game
- Fun

Executive Overview

Hockey Calgary is the governing body for all sanctioned hockey within the city of Calgary (hockey that falls under the Hockey Alberta and Hockey Canada umbrella). Currently the organization has approximately 15,000 players that participate in the various streams across Calgary including Elite Hockey, Community Hockey, Girls Hockey and Recreational Hockey.

Within our program we have 18 Member Clubs who operate independently within the Hockey Calgary umbrella. These Clubs are tasked with operating a quality hockey program and experience throughout the hockey season. This starts out with the very important team formation component and works its way through all elements in the season.

The following guideline document provides families with an overview of what they can expect in the team formation procedure within a specific Member Club, but gives the Member Club flexibility to operate the team formation procedure with nuances that best fit that organization. Each program has the ability to have slightly different steps in their process, but are required to follow the guiding principles that are noted in this document.

This guidelines document provides Hockey Calgary member clubs with a comprehensive framework for assessing players at each competitive age level. This framework aligns with Hockey Canada player development standards and incorporates current best practices from Hockey Alberta and peer organizations across Canada.



Objectives

- To provide a fair and consistent approach to team formation across all Member Clubs, each organization may have slightly different methodology, but the process will be managed in a fair and equitable way
- To ensure that all athletes are placed on a team that is appropriate for their level of play and aids in their overall development as an athlete
- To provide a reliable and consistent process in each Member Organization, so that all athletes and families know what to expect throughout the process.
- To allow the Member Clubs of Hockey Calgary to have some flexibility to manage the team formation procedure within their organization to meet the constraints they may have such as access to ice, and timelines to make decisions. It is not a one size fits all program.
- To form balanced and competitive teams that align with the seeding requirements put forward by Hockey Alberta to enable all players to enjoy a successful season

Member Club Responsibilities

Member Clubs must ensure they have a comprehensive 'Team Formation Procedure' that has been communicated to families and is easily accessible to view on the Member Club website. At a bare minimum this policy must include the following key components:

- Team Formation Objectives & Philosophy
- Schedule & Important Dates (updated annually, may be a separate document)
- Evaluation Structure & Components
 - o # of Pathway skates
 - o Initial Placement/Grouping
 - o Scoring Ranking
 - o Player Movement
 - o Procedure for Goaltenders
- Evaluators
 - o Volunteer or Paid Organizations
- Absentee or Injury/Sick Policy
- Evaluation Inquiries/Appeals
 - o Appeal Process
 - o Factors Considered
 - o Timeline & What to Expect
 - o Cost
- Communication Procedure
 - o Contacts
 - o Expected Response Timeline



Parent Responsibilities

- Thoroughly read all communication and the 'Team Formation Policy' of your 'Member Club', and attend any meetings required by the Member Club prior to the start of Evaluations
- Ensure that you and your player understand the process and the requirements for the 'team formation' time frame
- Ensure your family is aware of all ice times and the time commitments for the process
- Practice proper sports etiquette and adhere to the principles of Respect in Sport and Hockey Calgary.
- Assist your player in being prepared. Ensure your player is at the rink well in advance of the scheduled ice time and prepared to start at the allocated time.
- Ensure player arrives with all equipment, and it fits properly for the beginning of a new season. Please note kids can change over the summer and having properly fitted equipment will help in both evaluations and in the safety of your child
- Stay positive and support your athlete through the process. Team Formation is a challenging time and players will perform better when their stress level is lower
- If you have concerns follow the 'Communication Process' as communicated by the Member Club. These processes are their for a reason and will help manage the expectations of all involved.

Annual Review

Hockey Calgary is committed to ongoing review of 'Team Formation Procedures'. Each year the Presidents of all Member Clubs meet and discuss best practices that can be shared across the city. These guideline documents are reviewed and updated annually by each Member Club if necessary:

Key Review Questions:

1. Were age-specific criteria clear and measurable?
2. Did evaluation sessions accurately predict team fit and player success?
3. Were evaluators consistent in applying criteria?
4. Did appeal process reveal problems with original assessment?
5. Have Hockey Canada or Hockey Alberta standards changed?
6. What feedback did coaches provide after team assignments?



Appendix

Age-Specific Evaluation Criteria

U7-U9 (Fundamentals 1 & 2)

Hockey Canada Development Stage: Fundamentals – Introduction to Physical Literacy

Player Age Range: 5-8 years old

Overall Goal: Fun, foundational skating skills, basic puck control, introduction to hockey concepts.

Evaluation Criteria & Focus Areas

<u>Criterion</u>	<u>Key Assessment Points</u>	<u>Why This Matters</u>
Skating Skills	Balance, edge control, forward/backward skating, stopping, transitions (forward to backward)	Foundation for all hockey movement; age-appropriate physical literacy development
Puck Handling	Basic stick control, simple passes/catches, basic shooting technique (not accuracy)	Introducing puck interaction in fun, low-pressure environment
Positioning	Following coach direction, basic spacing, understanding "your area"	Introduces hockey structure without complex tactics
Coachability & Engagement	Listening, following instructions, enthusiasm, trying skills in games	Predicts success in structured environment



U7 SKILLS

LTPD STAGE - Fundamentals 1



Balance and Agility	Edge Control	Starting and Stopping	Forward Skating and Striding	Backward Skating	Turning and Crossovers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic stance Getting up from the ice Balance on one foot Jumping on 2 feet / 1 foot Gliding on two skates Gliding on one skate – fwd and bwd Lateral Crossovers – step and plant / continuous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inside edge glide Figure 8's – forward – inside & outside edge Figure 8's – backward – inside & outside edge Slalom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> T-start Front v-start Crossover start Backward c-cut start One o'clock – eleven o'clock Outside leg stop Two-foot parallel stop One-leg bwd stop Two-leg bwd stop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C-cuts – left foot / right foot / C-cuts alternating T-push Forward striding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C-cuts – left foot / right foot / C-cuts alternating – backward Gliding on two skates – backward Gliding on one skate – backward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glide turns Tight turns C-cuts – around circle – outside foot – forward & backward Crossovers – forward & backward Backward on-foot stop and t-start Pivots – bwd to fwd & fwd to bwd Pivots – open & reverse
Stationary Puck Control	Moving Puck Control	Stationary Passing and Receiving	Moving Passing and Receiving	Shooting	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stance Narrow Wide Side – front – side Toe drag – front & side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow Wide Open ice carry – forehand & backhand Weaving with puck Toe drag – front & side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stationary forehand pass Stationary backhand pass Stationary bank pass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving forehand pass Moving backhand pass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forehand - sweep shot Forehand - wrist shot Backhand - sweep shot Forehand - flip shot 	
Individual Offensive Tactics	Individual Defensive Tactics				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Body fakes Stick fakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angling 				

U9 SKILLS

LTPD STAGE - Fundamentals 2



Balance and Agility	Edge Control	Starting and Stopping	Forward Skating and Striding	Backward Skating	Turning and Crossovers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic stance Balance on one foot Gliding on two skates Gliding on one skate – forward and backward Lateral Crossovers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Figure 8's – forward – inside & outside edge Figure 8's – backward – inside & outside edge Heel to Heel (Mohawk) 1 leg weaving – fwd / bwd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Front v-start Crossover start Backward c-cut start One o'clock – eleven o'clock stops Outside leg stop Two-foot parallel stop One-leg backward stop Two-leg backward stop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C-cuts – left foot / right foot / alternating Crossunders T-push Forward striding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C-cuts – left foot / right foot Gliding on two skates – backward Gliding on one skate – backward Backward Striding 1 Crossover / Reach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glide turns / Tight turns C-cuts – around circle – outside foot – forward & backward Crossovers – forward & backward Pivots – bwd to fwd & fwd to bwd Pivots – open & reverse
Stationary Puck Control	Moving Puck Control	Stationary Passing and Receiving	Moving Passing and Receiving	Shooting	Individual Offensive Tactics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stance Narrow / Wide Side – front – side Toe drag – side/front Attack Triangle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow / Wide Open ice carry – forehand & backhand Weaving with puck Toe drag – front & side Attack the Triangle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stationary forehand pass Stationary backhand pass Stationary bank pass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving forehand pass Moving backhand pass Pass and Follow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forehand - wrist shot Backhand - sweep shot Forehand / backhand shots in motion Forehand - flip shot Backhand - flip shot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Body fakes Stick fakes Dekes Moves in Combination Net Drives
Individual Defensive Tactics	Team Play				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angling Basic 1 on 1's Escape moves Puck retrievals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Positioning – all players should play all positions 				



U11 (Learn to Play)

Hockey Canada Developmental Stage: Learn to Play – Fundamental Skill Development with Introduction to Tactics

Player Age Range: 9-10 years old

Overall Goal: Refine skating and puck-handling skills, introduce tactical positioning, build confidence, emphasize enjoyment with skill development.

Evaluation Criteria & Focus Areas

<u>Criterion</u>	<u>Key Assessment Points</u>	<u>Why This Matters</u>
Skating Ability	Straight-line speed, agility, edge control, transition (F-B and direction changes), acceleration/deceleration	Foundation for all play; measurable and objective
Puck Skills	Stick control under light pressure, passing/receiving accuracy, basic shooting technique, puck protection	Core technical skill; buildable through coaching
Game Awareness	Basic positioning, simple spacing concepts, effort/compete, ability to execute simple tactics (stay in lane, pass first)	Early indicator of hockey IQ and coachability
Attitude & Coachability	Listening, effort, accepting feedback, enthusiasm, sportsmanship	Supports long-term development and team fit



U11 SKILLS

LTPD STAGE – Learn to Play



Balance and Agility	Edge Control	Starting and Stopping	Forward Skating and Striding	Backward Skating	Turning and Crossovers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Skating Skills from Initiation and novice Forward Scissor Skate Lateral Crossovers C-cuts toe on puck 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Figure 8's – forward – inside & outside edge Figure 8's – backward – inside & outside edge Heel to Heel (Mohawk) 1 leg weaving – fwd / bwd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Front v-start Crossover start Backward c-cut start Outside leg stop Two-foot parallel stop One-leg backward stop Two-leg backward stop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forward striding Linear crossovers Acceleration Quick Feet Evasive skating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C-cuts – left foot / right foot Backward Scissor skate 1 Crossover / Reach Backward Striding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glide turns / Tight turns C-cuts – around circle – outside foot – forward & backward Crossovers – forward & backward Pivots – bwd to fwd & fwd to bwd Pivots – open & reverse
Stationary Puck Control	Moving Puck Control	Stationary Passing and Receiving	Moving Passing and Receiving	Shooting	Individual Offensive Tactics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow / Wide Side – front – side Toe drag – side/front Attack Triangle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow / Wide Open ice carry – forehand & backhand Weaving with puck Toe drag – front & side Attack the Triangle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stationary fhd pass Stationary bhd pass Forehand saucer pass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving forehand pass Moving backhand pass Pass and Follow Cross and Drop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forehand - wrist shot Backhand - shot Forehand / backhand shots in motion Forehand - flip shot Backhand - flip shot Tips / Deflections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Body fakes Stick fakes Dekes Moves in Combination Net Drives
Individual Defensive Tactics	Team Play				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angling Basic 1 on 1's Escape moves Puck retrievals Gap Control Tracking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Positioning – D Zone Basic Breakouts Basic Entries 				



U13 (Learn to Train)

Hockey Canada Development Stage: Learn to Train – Fundamental & Tactical Development

Player Age Range: 11-12 years old

Overall Goal: Refine all skills, introduce positional hockey, early tactical play, and develop intermediate game sense. First true tiered competitive divisions.

Evaluation Criteria & Focus Areas

<u>Criterion</u>	<u>Key Assessment Points</u>	<u>Why This Matters</u>
Skating Ability	Speed, agility, edgework at pace, acceleration/deceleration, multi-directional transitions, repeatability of pace	Consistent predictor of performance
Puck Skills & Awareness	Stick control at game speed, passing/receiving under pressure, shooting accuracy, puck protection, quick decision-making	Foundational for tactical play
Game Play & Tactics	Positioning (zone and man), simple forecheck/backcheck concepts, basic team play, decision-making in game (pass vs. shoot vs. skate), compete & effort	Most predictive of competitive success at this stage
Physical Engagement	Legal stick checks, positioning angles, physicality level (age-appropriate), willingness to battle for puck	Introduction to physical game; tied to maturity
Coachability	Acceptance of feedback, effort consistency, attitude, sportsmanship	Character indicator for team environment



U13 SKILLS

LTPD STAGE – Learn to Train



Balance and Agility	Edge Control	Starting and Stopping	Forward Skating and Striding	Backward Skating	Turning and Crossovers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Skating Skills from Initiation, novice and atom Fwd / Bwd Scissor Skate Lateral Crossovers C-cuts toe on puck 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Figure 8's – forward – inside & outside edge Figure 8's – backward – inside & outside edge Heel to Heel (Mohawk) 1 leg weaving – fwd / bwd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Front v-start Crossover start Backward c-cut start One-leg bwd stop Two-leg bwd stop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forward striding Linear crossovers Acceleration Quick Feet Evasive skating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C-cuts – left foot / right foot Backward Striding 1 Crossover / Reach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glide turns / Tight turns C-cuts – around circle – outside foot – forward & backward Crossovers – forward & backward Pivots – bwd to fwd & fwd to bwd Pivots – open & reverse
Stationary Puck Control	Moving Puck Control	Stationary Passing and Receiving	Moving Passing and Receiving	Shooting	Individual Offensive Tactics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow Wide Side – front – side Toe drag – side/front Attack Triangle Quick hands Range of motion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow / Wide Open ice carry – forehand & backhand Weaving with puck Toe drag – front & side Attack the Triangle Quick hands Range of Motion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stationary forehand pass Stationary backhand pass Forehand saucer pass Backhand saucer pass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving forehand pass Moving backhand pass Moving fhd saucer pass Pass and Follow Cross and Drop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forehand - wrist shot Backhand - shot Forehand / backhand shots in motion Forehand - flip shot Backhand - flip shot Tips / Deflections Snap / Slap shot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Body fakes / shot fakes Stick fakes / fake pass Dekes Moves in Combination Net Drives Change of pace Puck protection Control skating Saving ice
Individual Defensive Tactics	Team Play				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angling Basic 1 on 1's Gap control Escape moves Puck retrievals Tracking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Positioning – D Zone Basic Breakouts Regroups Entries Forechecks 				



U15 (Train to Train)

Hockey Canada Development Stage: Train to Train – Advanced Tactical Development & Competition

Player Age Range: 13–14 years old

Overall Goal: Advanced game sense and tactical play, position-specific excellence, competition at high level, physical development awareness.

Evaluation Criteria & Focus Areas

<u>Criterion</u>	<u>Key Assessment Points</u>	<u>Why This Matters</u>
Game Play & Decision-Making	Speed of play, decision quality in game situations, game awareness, reading plays, tactical positioning, advance/retreat timing	Most predictive of competitive performance
Skating Ability	Game-pace speed, multi-directional agility, endurance/repeatability at pace, transitions under game speed	Supporting tool; used to contextualize game performance
Puck Skills at Pace	Stick control in game situations, passing accuracy under pressure, shooting selection and finish, physical one-touch plays	Execution under game conditions matters more than isolated drills
Physical Engagement	Legal body checking, physicality/compete, edge management, positioning angles	Increased physical capacity at this age; important for competitive play
Consistency & Attitude	Effort consistency across all minutes, coachability, resilience, sportsmanship	Predictor of professional character and team fit



U15 / U18

LTPD STAGE – Train to Train



Skating	Individual Offensive Play Puck Control	Individual Offensive Play Passing / Receiving	Individual Offensive Play Shooting	Team Play / Offensive Skills	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong On Feet • Stride • Edges • Transition And Pivots • Change Of Direction • Acceleration / Crossovers • Stability • Power • Agility • Quick Feet • Evasive Turns • Escapes • Skate The Game • NZ Speed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control • Carry With Speed • Protection/In A Crowd • Driving To The Net • Stick Fakes • Body Fakes • Dekes • Moves In Combination • Creativity • Deception 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puck Management Skills • Passing • Look Offs • Receive And Control Consistently • Pick up Bad Passes • 1st Pass Threat • Finding Seams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being An Option • Quick Release • In Stride • Change Puck Angle • Shot Choice • Shot Mentality • Find Shooting Lane 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Up • Puck Protection • Puck Management • Quick Transition • Smart Puck Support Principles (Under Pressure) • Entries • Retrievals • Hinging • Delays • Cycling • Net Drives • Anticipation 	
Individual Defensive Skills	Team Play / Defensive Skills	Intangibles	Hockey Sense		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angling • Stick On Puck • Defensive Side Positioning • Shot Blocking • Boxing Out • Fronting • Controlled Skating • Tracking • Transition From Defense To Offense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timing And Support - Spatial Awareness • Situational Gap Control • Read and React • Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedication To Being An Elite Athlete • Be In Every Battle • Resiliency • Work Ethic • Communication Skills • Emotional Control • Does "Whatever It Takes" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability To Make Decisions That Affect The Play • Ability To Understand The Tactics Necessary To Compete At This Level • Adaptability 		



U18 (Train to Compete)

Hockey Canada Development Stage: Train to Compete – Elite Performance & Specialization

Player Age Range: 16+ years old

Overall Goal: Elite-level play, position specialization, advanced team systems, competitive excellence.

Evaluation Criteria & Focus Areas

Criterion	Key Assessment Points	Why This Matters
Game Performance	Execution at high pace, decision-making under pressure, game IQ, consistency across all shifts, physical competitiveness, maturity	Dominant weighting; game play is the evaluation
Skating Ability	Game-pace speed, endurance/repeatability, acceleration/deceleration, edge work at high speed	Context for game play; used as tiebreaker only
Positional/Role Fit	Position-specific excellence (F/D specialization), understanding of system, role acceptance, team chemistry readiness	Increasingly important for competitive placement
Leadership & Attitude	Consistency, coachability, resilience, communication, team commitment	Character indicator for competitive team environment
Physical Readiness	Maturity relative to age group, physical conditioning, injury history considerations, legal physicality	Baseline awareness; not primary driver



U15 / U18

LTPD STAGE – Train to Train



Skating	Individual Offensive Play Puck Control	Individual Offensive Play Passing / Receiving	Individual Offensive Play Shooting	Team Play / Offensive Skills	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong On Feet • Stride • Edges • Transition And Pivots • Change Of Direction • Acceleration / Crossovers • Stability • Power • Agility • Quick Feet • Evasive Turns • Escapes • Skate The Game • NZ Speed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control • Carry With Speed • Protection/In A Crowd • Driving To The Net • Stick Fakes • Body Fakes • Dekes • Moves In Combination • Creativity • Deception 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puck Management Skills • Passing • Look Offs • Receive And Control Consistently • Pick up Bad Passes • 1st Pass Threat • Finding Seams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being An Option • Quick Release • In Stride • Change Puck Angle • Shot Choice • Shot Mentality • Find Shooting Lane 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Up • Puck Protection • Puck Management • Quick Transition • Smart Puck Support Principles (Under Pressure) • Entries • Retrievals • Hinging • Delays • Cycling • Net Drives • Anticipation 	
Individual Defensive Skills	Team Play / Defensive Skills	Intangibles	Hockey Sense		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angling • Stick On Puck • Defensive Side Positioning • Shot Blocking • Boxing Out • Fronting • Controlled Skating • Tracking • Transition From Defense To Offense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timing And Support - Spatial Awareness • Situational Gap Control • Read and React • Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedication To Being An Elite Athlete • Be In Every Battle • Resiliency • Work Ethic • Communication Skills • Emotional Control • Does "Whatever It Takes" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability To Make Decisions That Affect The Play • Ability To Understand The Tactics Necessary To Compete At This Level • Adaptability 		