

2023 – 2024
Anoka Area Hockey
Association
TRYOUT PACKET

For Traveling Team Hockey



Welcome to the 2023-2024 Tryout Process

Tryout Mission Statement:

To select balanced teams formed with players of similar skill.

The tryout process is commonly understood across the youth athletic world to be a challenging component of preparing for any sports season. While avoiding disappointment is ideal, evaluating the ability of young athletes and placing them on teams when many of them are friends & acquaintances is complicated to say the least. Combine that with the expectations and perceptions of loving family members, and it is likely that some decisions will be misunderstood. Disappointments are likely to result somewhere. The Anoka Hockey Board of Directors will strive to make the process understandable, relevant and fair.

Important Information

- A tryout calendar will be available after registration at <http://www.anoka.pucksystems2.com>.
- **AAHA Tryouts are closed to public viewing.** Only judges, volunteers, players, Tryout and rink staff are allowed within the rink. IF players need assistance with equipment and/or uniform, 1 parent will be allowed in the vestibule of the Rink. Medical emergencies will be an exception.
- Tryout numbers will be assigned at check in of the first tryout session. It is the responsibility of the player to check in with the same tryout number jersey for each session. A player will not be allowed on ice without their assigned number.
- Tryout numbers will be collected after each final pool play session. Players not returning tryout numbers will be charged a replacement fee.
- Every effort has been made to minimize potential conflicts with fall season youth sports, High School sports, Religion, & popular local events. With over 200 players trying out each season, it is impossible to coordinate around everyone's individual schedule, some conflicts may arise. Consideration has also been given to minimize the need for skaters to have to skate more than one session per day.
- Tryouts will begin no sooner than **Thursday, September 29th** and will end around **Friday, October 14th**. All specific tryouts times and dates for each group will be posted on the website (<http://www.anoka.pucksystems2.com>)

- **Required Uniform** – Skaters must use a reversible maroon and white pinnie and socks issued to them at tryouts. Jersey worn under the pinnie must be reversible maroon and white with no logos or other distinguishing markings (these can be purchased at open house or tryouts if needed). No exceptions without prior approval. All skaters that tryout for a Travel Team will be required to have a **maroon helmet with NO** stickers or markings (excluding safety stickers), maroon breezers (pants) and maroon socks handed out, also skate laces and gloves of a complimentary color (maroon, grey, white, black) as stated in AAHA policy.
- Please note the changes & clarifications on the player participation & movement policy that the AAHA Board adopted August 30, 2022. The policy can be read starting on page six of this packet.
- Volunteers are needed to make the tryouts successful.
NOTE: Tryout volunteer hours count as part of the twelve required volunteer hours. Please watch the AAHA website for tryout opportunities. If you have any questions, please contact the Volunteer Director, Mike Schouviller. Please note, a volunteer may **not** work a volunteer post that grants them access to view the on-ice session during a time that they have a player on the ice.
- A separate Co-op packet is being formed for the Anoka/Rogers Co-op teams. This packet will be approved by the Anoka Board of Directors. Refer to the Co-op packet for details regarding tryout information and Co-op move-up policy. All information in the Co-op packet will supersede information in this document when approved by the Anoka Board of Directors.
- Throughout this tryout packet the following terminology will be defined as follows:

Player =	All hockey players participating in tryouts
Skater =	Any forward or defenseman participating in tryouts.
Goaltenders =	Any player participating in tryouts as a goalie

Suggestions for all players:

- Focus on what you can control- such as your effort, your attitude, and your listening and attentiveness to instructions. Come mentally and physically prepared. Think positively.
- Skate your hardest every shift - every shift is being evaluated.
- Regardless of the result for you, learn from the experience, and remember you are still playing a great game.

Suggestions for Parents / other family members:

- Remember, this is a small facet of these young athlete's life - help them all learn from their experience and have fun.

Some reminders for everyone:

- The players are competing to make a **team** and to play a **game**.
- All parents and family members are proud of their kids and want them to do well - so let's be proud of all the players competing - and remember that we just might not see our loved ones in the exact same light as others - so please respect the process.
- **Remember** - youth develop at different levels. This season's teams will look different next season, and every season after that.
- Unfortunately, heartache and disappointment in life occurs. Competing for a team - just like competing for a job later in a young athlete's life, is a part of life. Do your best to learn from this experience and keep "the big picture" in mind.
- It is OK to feel disappointed if you do not make the team you hope to. That is natural. Keep a positive attitude. Players **Do not give up.** There are numerous examples of players not making the teams they wanted as youth and developing into High School, Junior, College & Pro players!
- Tryouts are not intended to provide feedback on a player's ability.
- Best of Luck to everyone!

Mark Rice
Tryout Director
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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q. How are the players assigned / grouped and tracked?

Players are randomly assigned to a "group" and assigned a Jersey (pullover/ pinnie) and number. Players will have this same number throughout the tryout and will skate at the same time as the rest of their group, but not always necessarily on the same team.

Q. Who are the evaluators (judges)?

All evaluators have met the following criteria and have been approved by the AAHA Board of Directors. They must have played post High School hockey and/or Head coached 2 years of Bantam A or higher. They are knowledgeable and experienced with evaluating hockey skill, and they are dedicated individuals who are passionate about hockey. The list of evaluators ***may*** include individuals from within AAHA. If an evaluator has a child or relative playing for AAHA that evaluator will not be involved in evaluating the age level that their player is associated with nor any age level that has skaters whom the evaluator previously had a coaching relationship with at anytime.

Q. How are the skaters initially scored / tracked?

Each player will be scored by multiple judges. Players are tracked by a number - not name. Judges will be evaluating two skaters per shift.

Q. How is the Top Level Team team decided?

The Top Level coach receives a list of the top judged players from tryouts. Number of players on the list is determined by playing level and number of players that will be on each team at that age level. No ranking or scores are provided to the coach at any time. The Top Level coach then determines their final team selection after additional tryout sessions and has to recommend the team roster for AAHA Board Approval.

Q. Who approves the Coaches team selection?

After evaluating the Top Level players for up to 4 hours, the coach recommends their proposed team to a committee of AAHA Board members. The committee reviews and questions the coach about their selections before approving the final team. Committee members will be able to use the tryout scores & rankings to question the coach. No Board member is allowed to attend any such meeting where they have a child competing in the same age group.

Q. Who is who - and what is their role?

To assist with the Tryout process, the following volunteers are working to receive credit for their hours worked requirement. *Jersey Coordinator, On-Ice Coordinator, Bench Worker* (assigned only to manage the doors and *Clock Operator*, line assignments as directed). None of these positions are involved with the judging or scoring of players. All *Bench Workers* and *On-Ice Coordinators* are directed to do "no coaching". Any communication with the players will pertain only to instructions necessary for the organization/management of the Tryout. *Bench Workers* and *On-Ice Coordinators* cannot be involved with any level where their child is competing.

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

The judges are looking at the player's physical skills and abilities (i.e. skating, shooting and puck handling) as well as their knowledge of the game (hockey sense, what does the player do without the puck) and play-making. When skating at a defense position, the player will be judged as a defensive player, not as an offensive player placed at defense. The judges also look at the competitiveness, desire, attitude, team-oriented play, persistence and perseverance. Basically, it's the "whole package" - no one skill set is graded higher than another.

Q. What is a "Ghost Skater"?

If necessary (due to mathematical necessity for evaluation time equity), ghost skaters will be utilized. All skaters **may** be assigned to ghost skate. Ghost skaters **will not** be evaluated while they are skating that assigned shift. The number of ghost skaters needed depends on the number of skaters trying out at each level. One change from prior seasons, neither the players nor the bench workers will know whether or not they are a ghost skater or their shift is actually being scored. Players should assume that they are being scored every shift that they are on the ice. Related to this change, players will no longer be expected to double or triple shift to act as ghost skaters.

Q. What if a player is absent for a tryout session?

Besides being absent for a family emergency or medical issue, there is zero tolerance for a player missing a tryout session. If a player misses their allotted tryout time, they will receive a zero for that session. If a player leaves halfway through a tryout session (with the exception of illness, injury or family emergency), their previous scoring will remain, however all future shifts for that session will be scored a zero. In the event of an unavoidable absence, the Tryout Director or AAHA President should be notified of the absence.

The only exception to the policy stated above is if the player is missing because of a logistical conflict with participating in the District 10 Tier 1 Youth or Girls select team tournaments. In this case, the Parent/Guardian of a player must approach the AAHA Tryout Director and President with an appeal for a tryout session waiver. AAHA will allow for a waiver only if the conflict is within the 2 Hour Rest Rule as defined by MN Hockey. If a waiver is granted, the player will instead receive a 'null score' for the missed session (total score averages will be summed from remaining attended sessions for that tryout phase) instead of a zero (0) score.

Tryout Selection Process

The following tryout selection process will be used for teams authorized by the AAHA Board prior to the start of tryouts.

I. PLAYER PARTICIPATION & MOVEMENT POLICY

Player Movement & Advancement:

The AAHA Board of Directors believes that players should generally play on teams as defined by the Minnesota Hockey age groups. Once tryouts have started at the players chosen level, they are required to stay in the pool they have selected to tryout for that season unless noted otherwise in the policies below. Tryout fees are nonrefundable.

Playing with Peer Grade:

For the player who is not eligible for the level of their "peer grade" per the birth date parameters, they will have the opportunity to play up a level should they choose, provided their birth date is within one year of the cutoff date mandated by Minnesota Hockey. This affects young players relative to their grade. Players not eligible per their birth date, but entering:

- 4th Grade: may play Squirrels/U10
- 6th Grade: may play Peewees/U12
- 8th Grade: may play Bantams/U15

These players will have the opportunity to move-up a level, should they choose to when they register. Playing with a child's Peer Grade is not subject to AAHA Board approval, but parents may be required to produce verification of the child's school grade if requested.

Top Team Declaration Changes & Player Movement

If AAHA approves a change in the Top Level team declaration to a lower playing level as compared to prior year (A vs. AA) any player who was a member of the Top Level team the previous year, and is in their final year at the current playing level, may without the requirement of board approval, move up a playing level the following year regardless of birth year or peer grade eligibility. Players electing this option must inform the AAHA President in writing, no less than 48 hours prior to 1st night of tryouts. Once tryouts have started the player will not be allowed to make a change to their chosen playing level. Players eligible for, and electing this movement option, are not required to be judged as a top 2 (goaltenders) or top 5/top 15 (skaters) as required in the articles below for other player movement requests and will stay at their declared level regardless of score and team placement.

Goaltenders

A maximum number of 2 goalies will be permitted on each team. Goalies requesting move ups will only be considered if maximum number of goalies at move up level has not been previously reached, and the goaltender requesting move up is a 2nd year player at their current level and was not an early move up to the current level.

All goalies moving to next age group must make top 2 after initial tryout period. Goalies making the top two but not chosen by coaching staff for top level team, must stay at move up age group and will be placed on next highest-level team. Goalies not finishing within top 2 after initial tryout period will be moved down to original age group level, unless there is a need to fill out a minimum goalie requirement for each team at the higher level.

Mites/U8 to Squirt/U10:

A Mite/U8 skater who exhibits exceptional skills is welcome to tryout for the Squirt / U10 traveling teams, following the criteria listed below:

- The skater or goaltender must be within 1 year of Squirt / U10 eligibility, based on age
- The Mite age skater must land within the top 15 skaters after the scrimmage portion to continue with the tryout process at the Squirt Level. The Skater is only guaranteed a position on the top level team if they place in the top 5 skaters. If the Mite age skater places 16 or greater they will return to play another year in the Mite program.

Squirt/U10 to PeeWee/U12:

Players in their final year of Squirt / U10 eligibility by age that have played at least one year at the Top level team will be eligible to tryout for PeeWees / U12. They must make the top 5 skaters to stay at the PeeWee / U12 level. If the player does not make the top 5, they must go back to the Squirt / U10 level, where they will be guaranteed a spot on the top level team.

PeeWee/U12 to Bantam/U15:

Players in their final year of PeeWee / U12 eligibility by age that have played at least one year at the Top level team will be eligible to tryout for Bantam / U15. They must make the top 5 skaters to stay at the Bantam / U15 level. If the player does not make the top 5, they must go back to the PeeWee / U12 level, where they will be guaranteed a spot on the top level team.

Squirt/PeeWee/Bantam:

Players may not move up to Squirt/PeeWee /Bantam without requesting approval from the AAHA Board of Directors.

Other Player Movement

Once a player begins the tryouts selection process, it is understood that the player will have declared their intent to play that season at the level they have chosen regardless of the outcome of tryouts, unless noted above. A player may be moved after the start of tryouts only for extreme reasons; regardless if the move is up, down, lateral, or across youth & girl's divisions. Once selected to an AAHA team, the Parent, both coaches involved, and the AAHA's Executive Board & Traveling Directors must all agree to the move.

- Any persons requesting approval to play at an older level not covered in the grade level policy above or the Mite/U8 policy above must submit the request in writing to the Tryout Director and AAHA President a minimum of 10 days prior to September 29th.
- All move-up requests are subject to final approval by AAHA's Board of Directors.

II. TRYOUT SCRIMMAGES (All Levels)

Required Uniform - Skaters must use uniform and socks issued to them at post-registration. No exceptions without prior approval.

To maximize ice time, skaters should be at the arena 45 minutes early and be ready to skate at least 10 minutes before the scheduled session. PARENTS, THIS IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY. The preceding session may be completed early.

Using a random schedule, skaters will be divided into groups for each scrimmage session. Each skater will participate in three scrimmage sessions. Each group will be broken down into lines of four or five skaters. These lines will skate together for 60-second shifts. The lines are changed by random selection (set via a computer program) so each skater is skating with new skaters for additional shifts. Each judge will evaluate 2 skaters at a time, one from each team.

If necessary (due to mathematical necessity for evaluation time equity), ghost skaters will be utilized. All skaters **may** be assigned to ghost skate. Ghost skaters **will not** be evaluated while they are skating that assigned shift. The number of ghost skaters needed will be determined by the number of skaters trying out at each level.

If a player arrives late and the tryout session has started (warmups completed & scrimmage is underway) the player will NOT be allowed on the ice and will receive a zero (0) score for that session.

III. TRYOUT SCORING

Each skater will receive an overall score comprised of impressions from all of the following hockey player qualities. (the "whole package", **no one skill is more valuable**) . Each player will be graded from 1 to 9 with 1 being the lowest. Judges will base the player's scores on the following (but not limited to) skills:

1. Offensive Skills to be evaluated are as follows:

- a) Skating (forward, backward and lateral mobility)
- b) Positional Play (what does the player do without the puck)
- c) Shooting
- d) Puck Handling
- e) Play-making
- f) Passing

2. Defensive Skills to be evaluated are as follows: _____

- a) Skating (forwards, backwards and lateral mobility – backward and lateral mobility is especially important for defense)
- b) Positional Play (reading the play and reacting to it)
- c) Angling
- d) Back-checking

3 . Attributes which affect both offensive and defensive skills:

- a) Competitiveness
- b) Desire / Attitude on Ice / Team Play
- c) Hustle / Persistence / Perseverance
- d) Aggressiveness / Giving and Taking Body Contact / Body Checks (Bantam only)
- e) Unselfish and team play characteristics

Evaluators and coaches are instructed to deduct points from players' score for any penalties they believe are flagrant.

At the end of the all of the scrimmage sessions, skaters will be ranked from highest to lowest total (scrimmage) scoring points and the top players, depending on the number of teams authorized by the AAHA Board, will participate in coach's tryouts. The tiebreaker system established in the "Notes" section will be used to break all ties.

TEAM SELECTION PROCESS

Team size (skaters and goalies) will be determined by majority vote of the AAHA Board prior to selection of Top Level teams.

The number of players making the Top Level coach's tryout list may vary depending on the number of players that tryout at that level, as determined by the Tryout Director with approval from the Traveling Director and the Executive Board. The top 5 ranked players, based on the judge's scoring, will automatically make the Top-Level team.

Up to the top 25 skaters and top 2-3 goaltenders, will have up to 4 hours of ice tryout time with the Top-Level coach. The coaches may use drills, internal scrimmages and external scrimmages for these sessions. The coach has the ability to pull players off the ice during scrimmages.

The Top-Level coach will present his/her proposed players selection to the Tryout Selection Committee (appointed by the AAHA Board) – made up of at least 3 members including the Tryout Director – for discussion and approval. Selection Committee members will be excluded from the meeting at levels their child(ren) is involved.

The players not selected for the Top-Level team along with up to the next 15 highest scoring players will have up to 4 hour's ice tryout time with the Next Level coach. Coaches may use drills, internal scrimmages and external scrimmages for these sessions.

Next Level coach will present his/her proposed players selections, which must include the players not selected to the Top-Level team, to the Tryout Selection Committee.

The players not chosen by the Next Level coach will compromise the remaining team(s), or possibly be offered to a team outside AAHA.

NOTES

1. All skaters and goalies are expected to attend all scheduled drills and scrimmage sessions including Coaches' Selection ice times. Under extreme circumstances, the Tryout Director or AAHA President should be contacted to request an absence. See '**Procedures for Injuries**' if absence is due to a medical issue.
2. The following systems will be used for all situations in which two or more players have identical scores. Of the four tie-breakers below, the first tie-breaker will be used to determine which player has scored the highest in that area. The player scoring the highest will be given the position. We will continue down the list until the tie is broken.

Skater - Tie Breakers

- 1) Third scrimmage total score
- 2) Second scrimmage total score
- 3) First scrimmage total score
- 4) Individual shift total, starting with the last shift skated.

3. In the event a Bantam skater is selected for a High School Varsity or JV team, the Top Level coach will select another player from the Next Level pool. If a Bantam goalie is selected for a High School Varsity or JV team, the next highest scoring goalie will move into that goalie position. All skaters and goalies are expected to attend all scheduled team sessions unless prohibited by the Minnesota State High School rules.
4. Any questions regarding the tryout and team selection process shall be directed to the Tryout Director.

GOALIES

**Goalies should arrive at the arena 45 minutes early for each scheduled session.
(PARENTS: THIS IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.)**

Pre-skate and drill familiarization:

Depending upon the number of goalies, there may be more than one session. Goalies will be notified what session they will be in after the final registration dates.

Each drill will be demonstrated and then each goalie will have an opportunity to work on the drill at least once (or more if time permits).

No judging will be done at this time.

A. Drills

Each goalie will perform four drills to demonstrate their overall goaltending proficiency. Each goalie will receive an overall score comprised of impressions from all of the following goaltending qualities (the "whole package", **no one skill is more valuable**) . Scoring will be based on playing angles, playing and control of rebounds, saves, stick position, glove positions, basic stance, quickness and agility. Each goalie will be graded from 1 to 9 with 1 being the lowest. The scoring will be done by the goalie specific evaluators. Each goalie will receive a score from each evaluator for each drill skated.

B. Scrimmages

Goalies will participate in all scrimmage sessions. Using a preset random schedule, participants will be assigned to each session by group. The goalies will follow a predetermined rotation to change ends during the scrimmages to assure equal opportunities to get scored. The rotation schedule will be determined by the number of goalies participating in each session.

Goalies will be evaluated at both ends of ice but will receive only one score from each judge per appearance on the ice. These skills will be graded from 1 to 9 with 1 being the lowest.

C. Selection for Traveling

The goalies will be ranked by their cumulative scores after the scrimmages and drills are finished. The tie-breaker system established for skaters will be used to break all ties in goalie selection process.

The top 2-3 scoring goalies will have up to 4 hours ice tryout time with the Top-Level team. The Top Level coach will select 1 or 2 goalies (depending on total goalies and number of teams at the playing level) and present his/her selection to the Tryout Selection Committee (appointed by the AAHA Board) – made up of at least 3 members including the Tryout Director – for discussion and approval. Selection Committee members will be excluded from the meeting at levels their child(ren) is involved.

The goalie(s) not selected for the Top-Level team will be placed on the next level team and along with the next 1-2 highest scoring goalies will have up to 4 hours ice tryout time with the Next Level coaches. The goalie not chosen for the second team along with the lowest scoring goalie will comprise the third level team.

Note: The “highest score” will be used to select goalies at any level for teams added after the start of tryouts. Traveling teams are not obligated to carry 2 goalies.

D. Goalie Tie Breakers

The following systems will be used for all situations in which two or more players have identical scores. Of the four tie-breakers below, the first tie-breaker will be used to determine which player has scored the highest in that area. The player scoring the highest will be given the position. We will continue down the list until the tie is broken.

GOALIE TIE-BREAKERS

- 1) Drill score total
- 2) Third scrimmage
- 3) Second scrimmage
- 4) First scrimmage

Procedures for Injuries

1. The Parent/guardian must notify the AAHA Board President or the Tryout Director in writing, of the player injury prior to or during tryouts.
2. **Injured or sick players must provide a written doctor's note to the Tryout Director.**
3. Policy pertaining to "Timing of Injuries":

Prior to tryouts:

Coach must hold spot at designated level if player is cleared to return to ice prior to the end of 2nd level tryouts. Coach may hold spot at designated level if player is cleared to return to ice after the end, but prior to October 31st, 2023.

During 1st level tryouts:

If at least 60% of the possible opportunities have been scored, the remaining percentage of scores will be averaged. If less than 60% of the possible opportunities have been scored, then the injury policy prior to tryouts will be utilized.

During 2nd level tryouts:

Coach must hold spot at designated level if player is cleared to return to ice **prior to** October 31st, 2023.

Coach may hold spot at designated level if player is cleared to return after October 31st, 2023.

Second Year Player:	<u>Team Last Year</u>	<u>Opportunity At</u>
	AA, A, B-1, B-2, C	1 st level
First Year Player:	<u>Team Last Year</u>	<u>Opportunity At</u>
	AA, A or B-1	1 st level
	B-2 or C	2 nd level
Mite to Squirt:	<u>Team Last Year</u>	<u>Opportunity At:</u>
	A-Mite	1 st level
	B-Mite or lower	2 nd level

4. After obtaining a written release from a doctor, the player will practice with the team according to the "timing of the injury policy". The team coach will report to the Tryout Selection Committee as soon as possible, but not more than four scheduled ice hours later, the status of the player and if he/she wants to select them or not.

If not selected, the coach of the next lower rated team has the same privilege, etc. All reasoning and selection choices will be approved by the Tryout Selection Committee.

If the injured player has an injury that will not allow them to participate until after the cutoff date for roster sign off with Minnesota Hockey (October 31st, 2023) then the coach in descending order of the held open team has the option of choosing that player for his/her team with approval from the Tryout Selection Committee. In this situation, the player is not guaranteed a position on a traveling team. Coaches are encouraged to select players and finalize their roster as soon as possible. If the player is not chosen, he or she can join the lowest level team if space is available. If AAHA does not have a team at that level, the player may be waived to another association.