

MANUAL OF OPERATIONS – EXCEPTIONAL PLAYER POLICY



Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear, consistent process for moving an “exceptional player” to a higher age division or category while prioritizing player safety, development, and team stability.

Guiding Principles

1. Players are expected to play within their birth year division.
2. Movement to an older age division or higher category is rare and will only be considered when it is clearly in the best interests of the player’s development and does not negatively impact team viability at either level.
3. Movement is only considered at the AAA Level.
4. All decisions must comply with Hockey Canada, OHF, and ALLIANCE regulations.

Eligibility Criteria

To be considered for Exceptional Player status, a player must:

1. Be registered and in good standing with the Association (fees paid, no discipline issues (see **“External Applicants”** section below)).
2. Have hockey skills significantly above their current age group and be projected to rank among the top players on the team at the higher division/category (not simply able to “keep up”).
3. Demonstrate appropriate physical size, strength, stamina, emotional maturity, and social readiness to compete safely with older players.
4. Have a strong attendance and effort record in practices and games.
5. Not create an unreasonable competitive or roster gap in their original team if moved.

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Movement is limited to one age division older (e.g., U11 to U12), unless otherwise permitted by governing body regulations.

Application and Evaluation Process

1. Request Initiation

- A written request must be submitted by the player's parent/guardian **using the official Exceptional Player Application Form provided by the Association for the applicable season**. The applicable form can be found [HERE](#) on the WMHA website. Informal or verbal requests will not be considered.
- The completed application must be submitted no later than **March 5th of each season**. Applications received after this date will not be considered except in extraordinary circumstances as determined by the Association.
- A \$150.00 non-refundable application fee is required at the time of submission. The fee may be e-transferred to:
bookkeeper@waterloominorhockey.com
- The Director of Operations will notify the Representative Committee Chair of the application.
- The Representative Committee Chair will present the information to the Representative Committee for review and approval.
- Should the Committee approve the request to proceed, the Director of Operations will be notified and the process outlined in Section 3 below will commence.

NOTE: External Applicants

External players (non-WMHA registered players) may be considered under certain circumstances and in accordance with governing body regulations.

- The candidate must complete the official Exceptional Player Application Form.
- The candidate must contact the Director of Operations directly to receive additional eligibility requirements, documentation obligations, and any applicable OHF/ALLIANCE regulations.
- Submission of an application does not guarantee that an external candidate will be permitted to participate in the evaluation process.

2. Supporting Information must include:

- Current coach's written assessment and recommendation.
- Future coach's written assessment and recommendation.
- Letter from Player indicating why they want to play at a higher age group

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3. Evaluation

- The player should attend at minimum the first 2 on-ice evaluations with both age groups (player's current age group and the requested higher group).
- After these two evaluation sessions, a decision will be made as to whether the player should continue with both age groups or only one group for the remainder of the evaluation period.
- Evaluations will consider skills, game sense, compete level, physical readiness, and impact on both rosters.
- Feedback from both Coaches during the evaluation process will be considered.
- Representative Committee Members will be present at evaluations (as many as they can feasibly attend) to review player's performance during evaluations.
- The Representative Committee Members may appoint outside evaluators to assist with feedback on the player's performance.

4. Decision Authority

- The Representative Committee, after reviewing all data and information, will render a decision.
- The decision of the Representative Committee is final, and no appeal is permitted.

5. Outcomes

- Approval: Player is permitted to continue to try out for, and if selected, roster with the higher division/category.
- Denial: Player remains in their age-appropriate division.