



Single Letter Team Formation Process

Through the years, either through misunderstanding or general misinformation, most everyone has their own idea on how the single letter teams are formed in the Lakeshore Minor Hockey Federation (LMHF). We often hear people say that the evaluations are a “mysterious process.” In order to get a better idea on what exactly the procedures are for the LMHF team formation process, the Board of Directors would like to explain how the process works.

This document contains an explanation as to what to expect over the next few weeks. This information is for your review, understanding and appreciation of the Team Formation Process. We hope all parents will read this material and then take a moment to discuss the process with the players. We also hope this memo will help put everyone on the same page, clear up some of the misunderstandings that may have circulated through the years and ultimately help reduce some of the anxiety that occurs at this time of the year.

Evaluations happen all across hockey in both house leagues and competitive leagues. At the house league level, the association and the coaches, as a collective, use tryouts to identify strong players from weaker players in an attempt to create balanced teams.

If you are unsure about something or if you have any questions during this process that may not have been addressed in this document please contact the VP Single Letters or anyone of the SL Coordinators or Level GM's. As always, please visit our website from time to time (www.lmhf.qc.ca) for additional or updated information regarding the tryout schedule.

We all look forward to another season of great hockey from our players, coaches and the volunteers of LMHF.

The Administration

Evaluation Objectives

The evaluation objectives are simply to place all players on the team for which they are best suited, in a manner which is standardized, fair and transparent for all players alike. The objective is to also provide a fair, consistent and comprehensive evaluation that will result in players participating at a level that is based upon their skill level, when compared to athletes of the same age and category.

The primary goal of the evaluation process is to provide the very best possible conditions for the players to showcase their skills. LMHF strives to provide a fair opportunity for the player to be seen as often as possible and in as many situations as possible.

While most would agree that it is next to impossible to completely satisfy everyone, we hope that the following clarifies what the process is and how LMHF applies it.

Responsibilities during the Process:

LMHF Responsibilities

- ❖ Oversee the overall process
- ❖ Increase public awareness of the tryout process
- ❖ Administer the process including ensuring that all documentation has been received and all fees have been paid before players participate in the sessions
- ❖ Ensure the confidentiality and integrity of the information collected during the process

Individual Board Member Responsibilities

- ❖ Assist with the process in whatever appropriate manner possible
- ❖ Ensure that personal information is kept confidential

Level GM/Convenor/Evaluator Responsibilities

- ❖ Remain impartial during the try out process
- ❖ Provide fair and consistent comprehensive evaluations of players total hockey skills
- ❖ Maintain confidentiality of player scores and rankings at all times
- ❖ Ensure confidentiality and integrity of the information collected during the process

The Evaluations

This is the time of the year again when we embark on the process that eventually leads to the forming of LMHF Single Letter teams. Each year, the players in the program go through a 'Player Evaluation/Tryout' process. The purpose of holding Player Evaluations is to evaluate the player's skills and abilities and as mentioned above, to ensure that our players are placed on teams at which every player is of similar skills and abilities to both develop and benefit by being placed at that level. The sessions are also a good opportunity for everyone to start getting back into "game shape."

A big concern amongst our hockey community during this time of the year is that the evaluations have different effects on different people. We must all remember that this is no different than many other facets that our kids will face as they go through life. They will be challenged during school, while playing amongst friends and ultimately when embarking on their careers. While some are just happy to get back on the ice, for others it can be quite the opposite because of undue pressure to make a "CERTAIN LEVEL." Players and parents can find the process intimidating and impersonal. It can be a traumatic and tense time for many players and parents alike (especially some who value the selection to the higher level teams as a prize, an ego boost or even a rise in social standing in their local hockey community if their child plays on a higher level team). It does not have to be nor should it be such an experience for anyone. Both parents and players have to remember that hockey is just a GAME. Hockey is supposed to be a GAME for all of us to enjoy whether as a player, a spectator or a coach. Pressure and unrealistic expectations are the biggest problem that a player has to deal with during the evaluation process. We must remember that the level a child plays at today is not necessarily an indication as to the level they might attain as an older player.

It is simply a matter of skill development. If they play at a level where they enjoy success and can try and improve on some new skills, they will learn much more in a shorter period of time than they would have if placed at a level that is perhaps over their heads.

The Tension

Every year we hear stories how either the kids or parents are devastated if they don't make THE level. Not making THE level is not cause for devastation. Our newspapers, hospitals, neighboring communities are riddled with cases of real devastation. Simply put, there is nothing wrong with aspiring to play at a certain level and there is equally nothing wrong with not making it at that level. Remember that how one reacts in the face of this setback is what determines ones future success. Everyone has the right to be disappointed, but we can't forget that disappointments are truly a part of life. As someone very smart and knowledgeable once said, "The size of your success is measured by the strength of your desire, the size of your dream and how you handle disappointment along the way." The more we shelter children from every disappointment, the more difficult it will be to handle any future disappointments. Let's all better understand the process, relax and above all, just have some fun!!!

Let's continue to work with our players and kids and prepare them for everything life is undoubtedly going to throw at them...not just hockey. *We encourage you to use these guidelines as a starting point to discuss the tryouts with your child.* It is imperative that all players understand they are subjected to the possibility of getting released from their desired level. If you're the parent of a youngster who is getting ready for a tryout, we believe that a parent plays an important role in preparing, supporting and encouraging a child with positive reinforcement. A key element to a successful hockey tryout is to have children be properly prepared physically and mentally before taking the ice in front of the people who are going to be evaluating them. Remember that players need to enjoy themselves during the tryout process. Parents play a key role in keeping expectations realistic and that is especially true for the younger players.

Initial Group Assignment

Pre-Season groups will be formed based on the players previous year's category and evaluations from coaches. LMHF accumulates year end evaluations from coaches to monitor progression and recommendations. Players have been assigned to groups according to a variety of items including skill level and previous evaluations. These groups do not confirm in which level your child will ultimately be placed. The final placement will be based on various evaluations and in comparison to all players in the category. There will be adjustments of the groups during the evaluations process and if your child changes groups you will be advised. **All players MUST remain with their assigned group unless they are reassigned by Lakeshore.** If a child misses a session, that child cannot join another group. Players should be told to simply go out and do their best and above all, have fun!

Structure

Over the years the components of the LMHF tryouts have indeed changed. They have gone from timed testing, to drills to evaluate specific hockey skills, and have evolved to today's intra-squad games within groups. Based on feedback from players, parents, coaches and LMHF's own self evaluation, it has evolved to the current format of using scrimmages as the initial screening and placement tool as it has proven to give a sound method for evaluating skills, hockey IQ, attitude and behavior during games. The intra-squad games allow the evaluators to see which players can integrate their skills with other players on the ice and make it easier to identify players with game understanding (hockey sense and "read-and-reacting" skills). A total of 8-10 on-ice sessions are scheduled for all groups. At the end of the sessions, all players will have been evaluated in order to make balanced teams at all levels.

The Evaluators

The tryouts are a very effective tool in the player 'placement' process. At the same time, it challenges the integrity of all involved, from the coaches to the administrators who are empowered to oversee a process that must be fair, all the time knowing that the process of selecting players is an art rather than an exact science; it is a subjective exercise based to some degree, on the premise that "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder" and therein lies one of the major problems and fundamental sources of frustration every year; disagreement over player selection. While not all will agree with the final selections, the LMHF can only make sure the process is fair and all players are given ample and equal opportunity to be evaluated. Children are evaluated during try-outs by former coaches as well as the Level GM. Typically the 4 - 5 evaluators turn in scores for each session and average the results, thereby reducing the chance for errors. So, whether your child is an eight-year-old looking to join their first

organized team, or a player trying for a higher-level team, the player has to prove themselves to the evaluators. They have been chosen mostly due to their previous coaching background and experience in evaluating players. Please remember that for the most part, they are volunteers who are giving their time to the LMHF program and to the kids. All LMHF asks and tries to ensure is that the Evaluators are committed to doing their very best to evaluate the skills and ability level of each player.

Evaluation process, player rankings and team formation

During the sessions, players are given a score for each of the criteria being evaluated. The rating is a number scale 1 to 5, 1 being a low score and 5 being the highest score. At the end, level GM and VP Single Letters takes all the scores from all the sessions and an overall ranking of players is established. Once all scores are in place, the Level GM, the SL Coordinators and, the VP Single Letters start placing players on teams based on a combination of the try-out score and the coaches' evaluation. Obviously the players that score the highest in their age level, are placed on a higher team and subsequently, the lower the score the lower the placement.

In order to standardize the SL evaluation process, we have documented the details of the evaluation process to be used for the on-ice sessions. The format is very similar to what was used during the past few seasons and the aim is to standardize these methods used to ensure that the evaluations and rankings are as accurate as possible in order to balance the teams.

The ranking process is as follows:

- 1) The evaluation form has 5 sections which will be scored 1, 3, or 5. A player can score anywhere from 5 to 25 on the evaluation sheet. The new form also asks to list the top 5 and bottom 5 of the group
- 2) The player will have 2 actual scores/rankings. One score within their group and one score in comparison to all players in all groups. The score within their group is basically the evaluation score converted over 100%
- 3) The second score/rank will be an adjusted score based on the group they are in and in comparison to all groups. The overall score/rank should be calculated as follows:

Group 1	Players receive 100% of their score for their overall rank
Group 2	Players receive 90% of their score for their overall rank
Group 3	Players receive 80% of their score for their overall rank
Group 4	Players receive 70% of their score for their overall rank
Group 5	Players receive 60% of their score for their overall rank

Examples

-A player in Group 2 who scored 95% in his group will have an overall score/ranking of $(95 \times 90\%) = 85.5$ overall

-This also means if this same player from Group 2 moves to Group 1, he will have a lower overall ranking as his score in Group 2 will be lower in comparison to Group 1

-A player who moves down a group will also be compared accordingly. A player who scores 60% in Group 3 and is moved to Group 4 will have his score/rank within his group adjusted as follows: $(60 \times 110\%) = 66\%$

Final selection of the teams is done after all the evaluations. Players are allocated by the level GM, the SL Coordinators and the VP Single Letters. Once all releases have been made, the teams may play against each other to gain a better balance. **PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR CHILD FULLY UNDERSTANDS THAT SPOTS ON ANY OF THE TEAMS ARE NOT GUARANTEED UNTIL TEAMS ARE FINALIZED.** Players must play on the team they are evaluated on or assigned to and player movement from team to team may occur during the balancing process.

Player Evaluations & Rankings

- a) Players are evaluated at every session, so every effort should be made to attend
- b) Players will be ranked within their group as well as in comparison to all players of all groups using the evaluation process outlined to the evaluators
- c) The compiling of the evaluations is done by the category GM and used in making the final overall rankings of the category
- d) A player should have a minimum of 4-5 evaluations in order to have a realistic assessment of their skills (This does NOT apply to players released from DL tryouts late in the SL sessions)
- e) For players with insufficient evaluations, the category GM, COORDINATOR and coaches will review the ranking prior to the making of the teams
- f) Goaltender rankings are done at each session and a separate goaltender evaluation session is scheduled for all categories

Team Formation

- a) The number of teams per category will be confirmed to the COORDINATOR & category GM asap subject to the number of registrations and the Hockey Quebec rules
- b) The teams will be built based on the rankings of all players. GMs must be sure to balance all impact players as well as ensure that each team has players in most rounds
- c) The teams will be made by the GM and the COORDINATOR (there is no open draft)
- d) Coaches input is sought in the form of listing their top 20 players in Group 1 and their top 12-15 players in all other groups in order to validate the rankings and scores. Furthermore coaches

will submit a list of players they would draft per round. They should be advised that only their child and 1 other will be guaranteed with all other selections subject to the balancing of teams

A few simple rules LMHF follows:

- a) No player is ever moved down in level within the same age bracket , (i.e. a "B" level peewee player cannot be moved to the "C" level peewee the following year)

Conditions to be met:

- i. Player must be trying out for same position as previous year when level was attained

If a player switches position (i.e. Forward to Defense, Goalie to Forward etc), then the player's level attained the previous year is no longer a consideration

- b) Prior year coaches ranking and comments are given consideration when ranking and placing players

The Evaluations

So by now, you are probably asking yourself, "Self, what is it that these people are looking for in a hockey player?" While skills are important and are usually one of the first criteria, having the sense of what is happening on the ice is just as important. Regardless of how much ability, skill or finesse a player possesses for a sport, the success or quality of his or her performance will, in the final analysis, probably depend on his or her personality, motivation and attitude.

It is also important for players to have a good understanding of what they'll be facing when they get on the ice. Coaches evaluate a player's hockey sense and skill set in a game situation but they are also looking at the player that gives maximum effort consistently and who plays a strong team game. There are no points for standing around waiting for the puck to come to you during this process. It is not difficult to pick out the players that let their team mates do all the work and they stand around looking to put the puck in the net... or the player that only works in the offensive zone.

Prospective players will be evaluated not only on the basic skills (skating, passing, shooting, stick-handling, etc.), but just as importantly, on how well they function as part of a team. Their attitude and behavior both on the bench and on the ice are also factored into the evaluation.

The breakdown (in no particular order) of the evaluations will be as follows:

TECHNICAL: (Skating, Agility, Passing, Puck-Control, Shooting)

- How well does the player skate?
- Individual offensive skills, puck carrying, shooting

TACTICAL: (Sense of the game, positioning, read and react)

- Getting open for passes and going to the net. Offensive support. Does the player get involved in the offense or just wait for the puck?

- Individual defense. Is the player aggressive to check the puck and does he/she stay on the defensive side between the puck carrier and the net
- Does the player work to get back into the play during transition (back-checking)?
- Team defense. Does the player cover pass receivers away from the puck and protect the middle of the ice from the defensive side?

MENTAL: (Motivation on the ice, intensity, attitude, work habits)

- Is the player aggressive chasing loose pucks? More than half the game is made up of loose puck situations
- Does the player make good things happen when he/she is on the ice? Many effective players don't look pretty and many pretty players aren't effective
- Attitude on the ice and in the dressing room
- How does the player react in the face of adversity (stick slamming, berating teammates etc.)?

While everyone at LMHF tries their very best to make your child's and our coaches' experience throughout this process as positive and fun as possible, you can also assist by making sure your child is adequately prepared for evaluations (proper equipment, attendance at the right sessions, etc.). Be calm, go out and have a blast!

Here is a list of helpful hints to remember during tryouts.

Players Do's and Don'ts Checklist:

Do:

- ❖ Present your best effort during all activities
- ❖ Remain calm and play close attention to instructions
- ❖ Make sure your equipment is in great shape
- ❖ Always be on time and ready to go
- ❖ Attend every session
- ❖ To realize that their level of effort and performance during this tryout determines their placement for the year
- ❖ Be relaxed, go out and have a lot of fun

Don't:

- ❖ Be nervous or anxious
- ❖ Be afraid to ask questions
- ❖ Forget that an all out effort is important
- ❖ Forget to have fun
- ❖ Forget it is truly only a game

Parents Checklist Do's and Don'ts:

Do:

- ❖ Ensure your child attends every session
- ❖ Ensure that you and your child are ready for the level of commitment expected at the desired level. Generally speaking, A teams require a greater level of commitment than B teams and so on
- ❖ Ensure that their child has all proper equipment and that it fits properly and is in good working order
- ❖ Keep the tryouts in the proper perspective

- ❖ Keep everything positive
- ❖ Have fun with your child
- ❖ Stay calm for your child

Don't:

- ❖ Create additional pressure for your young players
- ❖ Get uptight during the tryout process
- ❖ Create a negative environment
- ❖ Set unrealistic expectations

BOTTOM LINE, the tryouts are all just part of the process of putting a team together. It isn't a question of whether a coach likes or dislikes anyone, or that any politics are involved. It's simply a question of skills and the ability to play. Players that show the selection committee they have the skills will be placed on a team with other players equal to that level. Please always keep in mind that there are sometimes more qualified players than there are spots.

Special Circumstances

As referenced above, the primary goal of the evaluation process is to provide the very best possible conditions for all players to showcase their skills. The process tries to provide a fair opportunity for all players to be seen as often as possible and in as many situations as possible. Keeping in mind that special circumstances may occur during the tryout period warranting special consideration, the LMHF would like to provide the following guidelines:\

A) Out of Town during the Tryouts

If a player is unable to attend any portion of the LMHF tryouts, she/he will be included, time permitting, in the remaining portion of the tryouts. Player must still pre-register and pay all applicable fees

B) Illness or Injury

Any illness or injury which prevents participation in the tryout process must be reported to the VP Single Letters immediately. Should the illness or injury prevent a proper evaluation as determined by the evaluation committee and the LMHF Board of Directors: then mediating conditions "may" apply. (See below). A doctor's note and/or other documentation may be required at the discretion of the LMHF Board of Directors.

All players will be required to provide proof that they have been cleared to return to play after an injury that prevented them from participating in the tryout process.

Other Circumstances

Any other circumstance not covered above, but which prevents participation by a player in the tryout process, must be brought to the attention of the VP Single Letters immediately. The LMHF Board of Directors will rule on the legitimacy of the circumstances and may choose to impose mediating conditions, or not.

Mediating Conditions:

The evaluation committee may use previous evaluations and/or history of level played as the basis of their player placement for special cases (such as injury or illness). The selection committee would then appoint that player to the appropriate team. The Evaluation Committee's decision is final and not appealable.

Please note that not attending tryouts due to commitments to other sports, or being on vacation for the entire, or part of the process is not a mediating circumstance and will not be treated as such.

Grievances/Breaches of Conduct

Concerns with respect to the evaluators, the evaluation process or any other related matter must be submitted to the LMHF Board of Directors in writing within three days of the occurrence of the alleged incident.

In the spirit of fairness and equal opportunity please do not approach evaluators during the tryout ice sessions.

The LMHF Discipline Committee will investigate and deal with any attempts to approach, influence or interfere with any evaluator(s) before, during or after the evaluation process.

Disclaimer: While every attempt has been made to provide, clear, accurate and detailed information, the LMHF reserves the right to make changes as circumstances warrant.



GO LAKESHORE GO!!!
