

Tryout Guidelines

Tryouts 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. At the competitive level or DL teams, you conduct the tryouts to evaluate whether a player has enough skill to play at a specific level and how to best regroup players to form competitive teams. This letter, which will focus on tryouts for a DL team, contains a little bit of an explanation as to what to expect over the next few weeks. This information is for your review, understanding and appreciation of the Evaluation Process. We hope parents will read this material and then take a moment to discuss it with your child. We hope it will help to reduce some of the questions and anxiety at this time of the year.

From time to time, please visit our website at www.lmhf.qc.ca for additional or updated information regarding the try-out schedule.

If you have any questions during this process, please contact the VP Double Letters

We all look forward to another season of great hockey from our players, coaches and the volunteers of Lakeshore Minor Hockey Federation

The Tryouts

So, here we are again; it is that time when hockey players, parents and coaches are gearing up for hockey tryouts. With some help from Mother Nature we've actually been gearing up for the last couple of months. Given our weather this year, people may actually look forward to being in an arena where it's not raining. Mother Nature has also helped with keeping the outdoor temperatures at a level consistent with the temperature inside an arena. How nice of her. Remind me to thank her next Mother's Day. (but I digress once again)

This is the time of the year when we embark on the process, which will eventually lead to the forming of our Double Letter teams. Each year the players in our program go through a 'Player Evaluation/Tryout' process. The purpose of holding Player Evaluations is to evaluate player's skills and abilities so as to ensure that our players are placed on teams in which every player is of similar skills and abilities; where they will most easily develop and gain the most benefit. The tryouts are a good opportunity for everyone to get some pre-season skill observations which can tell us and the athlete where work may be needed. We view the tryouts as a very effective tool in the player 'placement' process.

We also recognize that 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 a perfect science; it is a subjective exercise based to some degree, on the premise that "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." Well therein is one of the major problems and

sources of frustration every year; disagreement over player selection. While not all will agree with the final selections we can only make sure the process is fair and all players are given ample and equal opportunity to be evaluated and selected. All we ask and try to ensure is that our Evaluators are committed to doing their very best to evaluate the skills and ability level of each player. They do their best to try and form teams in which each child is of relatively equal skill and ability and where the players can compete and enjoy their hockey experience. A team is a combination of different types of players, all who will be able to make a contribution, as long as the right players are all “relatively equal in skill and ability”. After all, we want each player to play at the level consistent with his or her skills, desire and commitment.

The next biggest concern is that the tryouts have different affects on different people. 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 DOUBLE LETTER TEAM. Players and parents can find the process intimidating and impersonal. It is a traumatic and tense time for many players and their parents. Especially those who value the selection to the higher level teams as a prize, or an ego boost or a rise in social standing in their local hockey community if their child plays on the top team. It’s a matter of skill development. If they play at a level where they enjoy success and can try new skills, they learn more in a shorter time then they will if placed at a level that is over their heads Both parents and players must remember it is not a matter of life and death. It is supposed to be a game for all of us to enjoy whether as a player or spectator or coach. Pressure and unrealistic expectations are the biggest problem that a player has to deal with during the tryout process. Let us remember that the level a child plays at is not reflective of the level they might attain as an older player.

Of course a few 'butterflies' in the stomach are normal and healthy, who wouldn't be a little nervous. You know what even the coaches are just as nervous and are feeling those same butterflies. Ask any coach what the most stressful time of year is, and most respond "tryouts". Nerves – player, parent, and coach – run rampant and blood pressure exceeds the recommended normal. Players just want to survive the process and hopefully make a team with their friends on it. Parents want their son or daughter to make the team they deserve to play on. While coaches just want to leave the arena and not see their tires slashed. Finally administrators don't want their houses burned down. So let's all try to relax and have some fun. Every year we hear of how kids are devastated or parents are devastated. Not making the team you aspired to make is not cause for devastation. Our newspapers, hospitals, neighboring communities are riddled with cases of devastation. Everyone has the right to be disappointed, however disappointments are 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 future disappointments. Lets continue to work with our players and kids to prepare them for everything life is going to throw at them, not just hockey.

We will try to do our very best to make your child's and our coaches' experience, throughout this process, as positive 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 ball!

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

Players Checklist:

Do:

Present your best effort during all activities.
Remain calm and pay close attention to instructions.
Make sure your equipment is in great shape.
Always be on time and ready to go.
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:

Keep expectations realistic.
Know your child needs to enjoy himself/herself and be relaxed.
Remind your child this is not a matter of life or death.

Do:

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.

And finally we would like to leave everyone with this thought. Playing on a double letter team requires commitment. There is a difference between being interested in playing and making the commitment to play. One you do when it's convenient, while the other involves some sacrifices.