

SWAT Player Evaluation Policy

Revised August 2022

1.0 SWAT Player Evaluation Policy Statement

The goal of the SWAT Player Evaluation Process in the U13, U11 and U9 categories is to evaluate players fairly and consistently, for the purposes of placing them on teams with other players of similar ability. This allows SWAT to tier its teams in accordance with the tiering policies of Hockey Edmonton, the Edmonton Federation Hockey League (EFHL) and the Alberta One Standardized Tiering Model.

The goal of the SWAT Player Evaluation Process in the U7 category is to assess the skill level of those players who are in the early stages of their hockey playing experience, so that skate groups of equal relative strength can be formed in U7.

The above goals will be achieved through the establishment and maintenance of a consistent evaluation program.

2.0 Player Evaluation Process (U13, U11 and U9)

General Procedure

The evaluation of each player will be based on his or her performance in a series of evaluation games (we attempt to have all players participate in 3 games at U13 and U11, and 2 games at U9). Depending on the category, each player's initial evaluation game group will be based on his or her scoring in a standardized skills session (see paragraph 2.2.1) or his or her previous playing history (see paragraph 2.2.2).

Subsequent evaluation game groups will be based solely on a player's performance in the prior evaluation game(s). Scores from the standardized skills sessions that are used to determine initial game groups will not be used in the determination of a player's final ranking. 100% of a player's final ranking will be determined by his/her rankings in the evaluation games.

Separate evaluation streams may be held for the top tier(s) of U13. The U13 evaluations will be held by the South Side Athletic Club (SSAC) and Canadian Athletic Club (CAC). The evaluation process and any associated costs for the U13 SSAC and CAC evaluations can be found on their websites.

Other than affecting the placement of players for their initial evaluation game in certain categories, player evaluations will not be influenced by player history or any other pre-conception of a player's ability.

The SWAT VP Evaluations, Tiering, Coach and Player Development (VP Evaluations) will oversee the player evaluations to assist Category Directors with, and ensure the consistent implementation of, the SWAT Player Evaluation Process. Questions or concerns can be communicated to SWAT via vp-tiering@swat.ca

Initial Evaluation Game Groups

Skills Sessions

In those categories where skills sessions are used to establish groups for the initial evaluation games, the drills to be used in the skills sessions will be determined by the Category Director in consultation with the VP Evaluations. The skill sessions will consist of age appropriate drills designed to allow players to demonstrate their particular level of ability.

Players will generally be evaluated in on-ice groups of 16 to 50 players. Each on ice group of players will be further split into an appropriate number of sub-groups to ensure an efficient evaluation process. The grouping of players for the skills sessions will be at the discretion of the Category Director. These groupings will have no bearing whatsoever on a player's ultimate ranking after the skills sessions, as all players will start out with a zero score and their score from the skills session is not relative to the performance of other players within their group or sub-group. After the completion of all skills sessions within a category, players will be ranked within their category and that ranking will be used to place them into groups for the initial evaluation games.

If a player falls during the skills sessions, the player may be allowed to repeat the drill solely at the discretion of the VP Evaluations, Category Director or their delegate.

Playing History

In situations where skills sessions are not used, players will be ranked and grouped for initial evaluation games according to their previous playing history within SWAT. If a player has not previously played for SWAT, the Category Director, in consultation with the VP Evaluations, will pre-group the player on the best information available. In both situations, the final decision will be at the sole discretion of the VP Evaluations in accordance with the goals of the SWAT Evaluation Policy.

Game Evaluations

Evaluation by Position

In the U11 and U9 categories, while players will play both forward and defense in the evaluation games, they will be ranked against all other players within their category. For the U13 category only, players may be required to declare in advance of the game evaluations whether they wish to be evaluated at the forward or defense position and their relative rankings throughout the evaluation process will be based on their ranking at that position.

Team Formation

The group of players for each evaluation game will typically be divided into 2 teams of relative equal strength based on player rankings in accordance with paragraph 2.2 above (for initial evaluation games) and in accordance with paragraph 2.3.3 below (for all subsequent evaluation games). When arriving at the rink, players will be given jerseys (or another means of on-ice identification) in random assignment. The VP Evaluations may on occasion approve the pre-assigning of players to teams if it is deemed necessary to balance the competition at a specific level(s). Identification numbers will have no relevance to ranking. The lists of players will be prepared alphabetically by the Category Director so as not to divulge the rankings of the players.

Individual Player Evaluations

In evaluation games, players will be evaluated on their ability to play against other players of similar

ability. Evaluators may be SWAT evaluators, evaluators from an outside agency, or some combination of the two. They will be scored relative to the group they are skating with, in accordance with the following scoring criteria:

- Technical Skill - 1 to 7 points (Passing, Shooting & Stick Handling)
- Skating Ability - 1 to 7 points (Forwards, Backwards & Pivot/Transition)
- Hockey Awareness - 1 to 7 points (Positional Play, Read/React & Back Checking)
- Compete Level - 1 to 7 points (Battling, Strength & Work Ethic)

Total Score for each player based on the above categories will be between 4 and 28 points

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Poor/ Mis-Tiered	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Good	Excellent/ Mis-Tiered

Ranking of Players Following Evaluation Games

Following each evaluation game, players will be ranked in accordance with their performance in that game, relative to the other players. As part of this process the Category Director (in consultation with the VP Evaluations) will normalize the scores (the scores of the players on the two teams will be compared to ensure that the range and mean of all players' scores are generally equal), review individual player and evaluator scores for anomalies, and make any necessary adjustments. Once this has been done, the Category Director and the VP Evaluations will make decisions regarding any movement of players up or down to adjacent groups for the next set of evaluation games.

Miscellaneous

From time-to-time situations may arise where a large number of players of roughly equal skill are in different groups. In these circumstances the Category Director, in consultation with the VP Evaluations, has the discretion to arrange evaluation games involving a broader range of players from two different groups. This may involve the removal of certain players from those groups whose relative ranking is clear.

At the discretion of the Category Director, in consultation with the VP Evaluations, players may be removed from future evaluation games after the second evaluation game to allow a more effective evaluation of other players in the group.

Final Ranking and Team Selection

After all evaluation games in a category are complete, a final relative ranking of all players within the category will be created based on each player's average score from the evaluation games. In the U13 category only, players will be ranked based on their selected position - defense or forward). It is noted that direct comparisons of evaluation game scores between groups within a category is not possible as each group is expected to play at a different level (i.e., a score of 19 out of 28 in Skate Group 3 is not equivalent to a score of 19 out of 28 in Skate Group 1).

Once the final player ranking is complete, tentative team lists will be submitted by the Category Director to the VP Evaluations, who will then create the final team lists in consultation with the Category Director.

Final selection for some teams may involve an additional 1 or 2 evaluation skates, encompassing a selected group of ranked players. The Category Director, VP Evaluations and Selected Coach

(selected in accordance with 11.6.2 of the SWAT Policies and Procedures Manual) will further evaluate the above group and determine final team selection.

In the interest of optimum player development, the VP Evaluations and the Category Directors will strive to compile final team lists in accordance with the following guidelines, where possible:

U13: 9-11 forwards, 2-6 defense and 1 to 2 goalies

U11: 13 to 16 players and 1 to 2 goalies

U9: 16 to 20 players (no dedicated goalie)

*It is noted that these guidelines may not be met in certain circumstances due to factors such as the number of players registered in a category. Final team numbers are within the sole discretion of the Category Director and the VP Evaluations, and their decision is final.

Team Blending

Category Directors are required to blend teams where a group of players of generally equal skill will form two or more teams that will begin play at the same EFHL level. Category Directors will submit a written recommendation, with justification, to the VP Evaluations for final approval.

This process is mandated by Hockey Alberta, under the Alberta One Standardized Tiering Model.

Friends Playing with Friends

Requests from players wishing to play together will be given consideration, but such requests must be made during the registration process by all players involved. Such requests will only be considered in circumstances involving players at the same tier (see paragraph 2.5 above) or in the case of players in different tiers if the higher tiered player moves to the tier of the lower player. A move of one tier will generally be considered, but the granting of such requests is solely within the discretion of the Category Director and VP Evaluations, and their decision is final.

Female Teams (U13, U11 and U9)

Establishment teams at the U13, U11 and U9 level consisting entirely of female players will be managed through Southwest Zone (SWZ). Teams will consist of players from both SWAT and Confederation (the two associations who comprise SWZ for these categories). SWAT girls who are unable to be placed on an all-girls team, or who choose not to join an all-girls team, will be evaluated through the SWAT process and placed within a co-ed SWAT cohort on the basis of their SWAT evaluation results.

3.0 Player Evaluation Process (U7 Discovery, Junior and Senior)

U7 Discovery and U7 Junior level players will participate in an entry level hockey program with no regularly scheduled games. As a result, there will be no skill evaluation process for the Discovery category.

All U7 Senior players will participate in one Skills Session in accordance with the format set out in paragraph 2.2.1 above. Following that skills session, the players will be ranked relative to all other players in their own category. Players will be placed into the U7 Senior program emphasizing skate groups of equal relative strength.

U7 Junior aged players must register in the U7 Junior program; however, if ALL U7 Junior core skills are demonstrated, these players can be considered for the U7 Senior program. They may be assessed

at evaluations and moved to U7 Senior on the basis of their evaluation results. The list of Core Skills by category can be found on the SWAT website under the Categories tab. Once the skills have been demonstrated, these requests will be reviewed by the Category Director and VP Evaluations, and their decision is final.

Requests from Timbits players wishing to play together will be given consideration, but such requests must be made during the registration process by all players involved. Although reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate these requests, the final decision with respect to whether or not a request can be accommodated is within the sole discretion of the Category Director and the VP Evaluations, and their decision is final.

4.0 Goalie Evaluation Process

General Information

The evaluation of those players wishing to commit to playing as a goalie is separate from the player evaluation process. Those players wishing to be evaluated as a goalie in the U13 and U11 categories must commit to playing goal on a full-time basis throughout the season. There are no goalie evaluations in the U9 or U7 categories. In the U9 category, all players will be encouraged to try the position and NO individual player will be able to play more than 40% of the time. At the U7 Senior level, goalie equipment may be made available for players to try at various times throughout the season.

Each goalie will be evaluated based on his or her performance in two skills sessions and in the evaluation games. Separate evaluation streams may be held to evaluate goalies for the top tier(s) of U13. The U13 evaluations will be held by SSAC and CAC.

The VP Evaluations will oversee the goalie evaluations to assist with and ensure the consistent implementation of the SWAT Goalie Evaluation Process.

General Procedure

Skills Sessions

All goalies in the U13 and U11 categories will be invited to participate in two skills sessions. The drills to be used in the skills sessions will be determined by the Tiering Committee.

The skills sessions will be run by personnel chosen by the Category Director. The goalies will be evaluated by goalie evaluators approved by the VP Evaluations, the applicable Category Directors and the VP Player Development/Programs and such evaluators may be SWAT evaluators, evaluators from an outside agency, or some combination of the two.

For each drill/skill station the goalies will be scored on the following point criteria or by similar criteria established by a qualified third party evaluator:

1	2 – 4	5 – 6	7 – 9	10
Unable to perform the required skill(s)	Demonstrates a below average degree of skill	Demonstrates an average degree of skill	Demonstrates an above average degree of skill	Demonstrates an excellent degree of skill

After the completion of each skills session, each goalie will be ranked relative to the other goalies in his or her category and that ranking will be used to place the goalies into groups for the initial evaluation

games. These rankings will be used only for the placement of the goalies in the initial evaluation games. **A goalie's final ranking within his or her category will depend solely on his or her performance in the evaluation games.**

Game Evaluations

The number of goalies participating in each evaluation game will be determined by the Category Director in consultation with the VP Evaluations and will depend on a number of factors including the number of players wishing to be evaluated as a goalie in that particular category. Goalies will be given an equal amount of ice time during the evaluation games and will be rotated throughout the game.

During the evaluation games, the goalies will be evaluated by goalie evaluators chosen by the VP Evaluations and the applicable Category Director, and such evaluators may be SWAT evaluators, evaluators from an outside agency, or some combination of the two. The evaluations will be based on the following criteria:

1. **Mobility** - Balance, Agility, Challenge, Lateral Movement
2. **Position** – Alignment, Body Stance, Angles
3. **Skills** – Feet, Glove, Stick
4. **Reaction** – Anticipation, Quickness, Recovery, Reflexes
5. **Rebound Control** – Controlling, Covering, Cushioning, Placement
6. **Competitiveness** – Communication, Crease Movement, Work Ethic

Following each series of evaluation games within a category, the evaluation of each goalie will be reviewed by the VP Evaluations and the applicable Category Director, and each goalie will be re-ranked relative to the other goalies in his or her category. This new ranking will then be used to place goalies into groups for the next series of evaluation games.

Upon completion of the final series of evaluation games within a category, the evaluation of each goalie will be reviewed by the VP Evaluations and the applicable Category Director, and each goalie will be given a final ranking relative to the other goalies in his or her category. Goalies will then be placed on teams for the season based on this final ranking.

5.0 Player Evaluator and On Ice Instructor Selection

Player Evaluators

SWAT Evaluators must have an appropriate background to effectively evaluate player skills and performance. Volunteer Evaluators will typically have coaching experience or have similar qualifications of SWAT coaches. Some examples of appropriate qualifications include:

1. Experience with player evaluation and performance systems;
2. Background in hockey as a player;
3. Coach training qualifications for the category;
4. Acceptable ratings from previous years SWAT Coach Evaluation Program;
5. Experience as a coach.

Using the criteria above, the Category Directors shall strive to have a good cross-section of Evaluators, including the parents of players at different skill levels within a category and, if possible, in different categories. It is desirable to have a consistent group of Evaluators throughout the entire process. Preference will therefore be given to Evaluators that are able to commit to the entire evaluation process, which includes the orientation session, the skills sessions (where applicable), and all game sessions. A list of proposed Evaluators shall be submitted by the Category Director to the

VP Evaluations for final approval.

At the discretion of the Tiering Committee, an outside agency may be utilized to evaluate one or more categories of players. The selection criteria and remuneration must be approved by the Board prior to awarding a contract.

For evaluation games, enough Evaluators should be present to achieve an appropriate sample. It is recommended that at least 8 Evaluators be in attendance for each U13 or U11 evaluation game, with half of them evaluating one team and the other half evaluating the other team. Evaluators will be randomly assigned a team for evaluation, but parents will not be allowed to evaluate their child. In addition, Evaluators who feel their objectivity towards a player is compromised are expected to not evaluate that player or to request a different team.

Evaluators are expected to sit in an appropriate location where they can see the entire game surface. They should sit apart from parents in the arena during the evaluation sessions. Evaluators must watch the game in its entirety and score based on the complete game. Evaluators are expected to behave professionally and not to discuss the results of their evaluations with others in the arena. Any Evaluator not acting in the spirit of fairness and honesty will not be allowed to participate in future evaluations.

On-Ice Instructors

The On-Ice Instructors will be responsible for organizing players during the skills sessions, leading the players in a proper warm up, explaining the drills to the players and demonstrating the drills for the players. On-Ice Instructors will be selected by the Category Director in consultation with the VP Evaluations, based on the following criteria:

1. Previous coaching experience or experience communicating drills to young players.
2. Adequate skating and athletic ability to demonstrate the drills correctly; and
3. Ability to quickly organize players and to stay on schedule during the evaluations.

Evaluator and On-Ice Instructor Training

Prior to the start of the evaluation process an Evaluator Information and Training Meeting will be held for all Evaluators and On-Ice Instructors. The meeting will be chaired by the Category Director. The VP Evaluations may also attend to explain the SWAT Player Evaluation Process. The meeting will explain the overall role of the Evaluators and On-Ice Instructors. The following points will be covered at the meeting:

1. SWAT Player Evaluation Process Generally
2. Expectations of Evaluators
 - Time commitment
 - Duty to learn and understand scoring criteria for evaluation games
 - Duty of fairness, objectivity and impartiality
3. Role of On-Ice Instructors
 - Control and organization of players
 - Leading a proper warm up
 - Explanation to players of drills and skills being scored
 - Demonstration of drill
 - Timing consistency and repeat policy
4. Review of Category drills and scoring criteria
5. Distribution of Category Drill packages for review and use at evaluation sessions

The Category Directors will be responsible for providing all Evaluators and On-Ice Instructors with sufficient notice of the evaluation session times, coordinating On-Ice Instructors and Evaluators, notifying players about their evaluation session times, greeting and marshalling players at the evaluation sessions, coordinating and distributing player identification.

6.0 Administrative Policies

Absenteeism

Players missing any of the evaluation sessions will be placed into groups at the discretion of the Category Director and the VP Evaluations. Scores derived from partial attendance at the evaluation sessions will not simply be extrapolated to give full scores as this is felt to be unfair to those attending all of the sessions. Absentee players will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Late Registrants

Players missing the evaluation process entirely will be asked to practice with as many teams as necessary to ensure their proper placement.

Overage/Underage Players

SWAT is regulated by the policies of Hockey Alberta and Hockey Edmonton, including their policies on Overage Player Approval and Player Acceleration. Hockey Edmonton's policy can be viewed in the operating directives at www.hockeyedmonton.ca [under Admin / By-laws & Policies / HOCKEY EDMONTON – Operating Directives].

7.0 Appeal Process

SWAT acknowledges that special circumstances affecting the tiering of a particular player may occur. If it appears that a player's ranking has been grossly unfair, that ranking may be appealed under the SWAT Appeal Policy.

The appeal process is intended only to review instances where a player's evaluation has been grossly affected due to a documented medical condition or injury that may have significantly impeded the player's ability to perform during the evaluations. Appeals may also be founded on compassionate grounds, such as personal tragedies or family deaths.

The appeal process will not accommodate claims based on lack of preparation by a player, player absence due to holidays, lack of understanding of drills by a player, minor illness, tiering results of previous years, tiering results of former teammates and other players in the evaluation process, tiering results of other hockey clubs, dissatisfaction with Evaluators, Category Directors, the Tiering Committee or the tiering process itself, or allegations of tampering, persecution, or mismanagement of the evaluation process. Movement to another category will not be considered as a remedy to a tiering issue.

A player's ranking will not be considered to be grossly unfair if only a move to the next tiered team above his current team is contemplated. Player movements under this appeal process will not be made at the expense of another player's position and moves will only be made if there is reasonable room on another team's roster.