



ESSENDON HOCKEY

JUNIOR SELECTION POLICY

(Feb 2025)

Purpose

The purpose of this Junior Selection Policy includes ensuring that the Essendon Hockey (EH) approach to junior selection is fair, consistent and contributes to junior player development and enjoyment.

Applicability

This policy is applicable to:

- Under 16 down to Under 10 age levels
- Indoor and outdoor competitions
- Winter and summer competitions

General Considerations

The following general considerations should be taken into account when creating and selecting junior teams:

1. **Participation, learning and enjoyment** - Junior players should be in teams where they will be readily able to participate, learn, be challenged, taste success and enjoy themselves.
2. **Equal opportunity** - All eligible junior players should have an equal opportunity to be considered for selection in a team subject to the applicable Selection Criteria.
3. **Game time** - Junior players should be provided equal game time in their regular team.
4. **Positions** - Junior players should learn to play in different positions and be given opportunities accordingly in their regular teams.

Teams

Team Entries

The Junior Committee will endeavour to determine the number and make up of teams entered in each age group, in consultation with coaches, as early as possible in the pre-season. Entries are highly dependent on factors such as player numbers, abilities and Hockey Victoria allocations (especially in the case of Shield competitions). There is always some inherent uncertainty in this process and flexibility and pragmatism is necessary.

Team Sizes

If possible, bench sizes should be small to moderate (1 to 3) to maximise field time, minimise interruptions, while allowing for player absences.

Age Groups

Junior players should be allocated to a regular team in their respective age group.

Competitive Selection (U12 and above)

Applicability

Competitive Selection should be used for the Under 12 age group and above where players need to be graded into multiple teams.

Coordination

The Age Group Coordinator is responsible for coordinating Competitive Selection within their respective age group with the assistance of coaches.

Age Group Streams

In order to simplify selection and subject to the number and make up of teams within an age group, juniors may be organised into streams during selection. Streams should be along the lines of the following:

- One of:
 - Mixed, or
 - Boys Only
- Girls Only

All players will be allocated to a Stream. Girls may optionally nominate for a Mixed Stream in addition to a Girls Only Stream.

Selection Process Overview

An overview of the Competitive Selection process is as follows:

1. The number and make up of Streams is determined for the age group.
2. One or more Independent Co-Selectors are appointed to each Stream.
3. Trials are scheduled.
4. Coaches, parents and players are provided details of the selection process and trial dates.
5. Trials are conducted.
6. Players are scored and ranked by the Selectors.
7. Players are allocated to teams based on their ranking.
8. The Age Group Coordinator publishes the teams for the season start.

Assessment Period

The player assessment period starts with the commencement of pre-season training up until when teams are finalised (which should be at least two weeks before round 1).

Independent Co-Selectors

One or more Independent Co-selectors should be appointed to each selection stream.

An Independent Co-selector should be an experienced player or coach and have no conflict of interest including having no relatives being considered for selection.

The Independent Co-selector appointment(s) should be by agreement between the Team Coach, Age Group Coordinator and nominated co-selector(s).

Precedence of teams

Higher graded teams have precedence when selecting players. The order of precedence is as follows (ordered highest to lowest):

1. Mixed Shield teams (where selection is open to boys and girls equally)
2. Non-mixed Shield teams
3. Pennant teams
4. District teams

Selectors

The Selectors for each Stream are the respective Team Coaches and Independent Co-Selector(s).

Player Unavailability

Junior players should not be penalised for being unavailable to attend pre-season sessions training and trials due to valid reasons (e.g. family, school, representative or summer sport commitments, illness or injury).

Where a player is unable to attend sufficient pre-season training sessions or trials due to a valid reason, Selectors may estimate the player's ranking at their discretion and in consultation with other Selectors.

Trials

1. At least two trials should be scheduled of at least 1 hour each.
2. Trials should include drills, fitness assessments and practice games appropriate to the age group.
3. Trials should be scheduled during standard training times.
4. Selectors must attend all trials.

Selection Criteria

The following considerations should be taken into account when undertaking competitive selection of junior players:

1. **Performance** - Including the following:
 - a. Individual skills
 - b. Teamwork
 - c. Decision making
 - d. Physical fitness
2. **Attitude** - Including the following:
 - a. Showing respect to players, coaches and officials.
 - b. Listening and responding to coaches

- c. Being positive and constructive
- 3. **Effort** - Including the following:
 - a. Attendance
 - b. Work rate
 - c. Endeavour

Ranking Players

IMPORTANT: Selectors must do their best to ensure that all players are assessed objectively and consistently during selection.

The process to rank players in a Stream is as follows:

1. Following the trials period, each Selector will:
 - Give each player a relative score out of 5 for each of the 3 criteria (Performance, Attitude and Effort).
 - Calculate an overall Selector Score for each player using the formula:
Selector Score = 2 x Performance + Attitude + Effort
 - Rank all players according to the Selector Score.
2. The player's final rank is then determined as the average of all individual Selector rankings in the respective Stream.

The top-graded Team Coach will decide on the final ranking in the (unlikely) event of a tie between players.

Non-Competitive Selection (U10 and below)

Non-competitive Selection should be used for Under 10 teams and below.

The Age Group Coordinator (or delegate) will determine team makeups in consultation with coaches and parents taking into account factors such as the following:

- Player participation and enjoyment
- Fielding balanced teams across each age group
- Individual player maturity and ability
- Allowing friends and siblings to play together
- Allowing players to be in a team coached by a parent
- Ride sharing and other conveniences

Scheduling

Team selections should be completed and team lists provided to the Age Group Coordinator at least two weeks prior to the first game.

Doubling Up

Doubling Up (where a player plays more than one game in a round) may be required to help make up team numbers from time to time, provide suitable players with an opportunity to play at a higher level and to otherwise support teams needing assistance.

Doubling up should be used fairly and minimise any impact to regular players.

Doubling up should be by agreement between the respective coaches, Age Group Coordinator, player and parents. Doubling up opportunities should be shared amongst eligible players.

Player Movement During the Season

Movement of players between teams during the season should be minimised. Where a player is moved between teams, care should be taken to ensure the player and parents are informed of the following:

1. The reasons why the player is being moved.
2. How long the movement will be for.
3. If a player is being moved to a lower graded team, what is required for the player to regain their position in the higher graded team and when this might be possible.

Policy Exceptions

In some circumstances it will be necessary or desirable to make exceptions to this policy. Exceptions should be reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances. Exceptions are subject to agreement between the Team Coach, Age Group Coordinator and parents and should take into account the best interests of all affected players.

Arbitration

Parents, coaches and Independent Co-Selectors should raise any disputes or other concerns relating to junior selections with the Age Group Coordinator. The Age Group Coordinator may attempt to facilitate a resolution. If a resolution cannot be reached, the Age Group Coordinator will escalate the matter to the Junior Vice President who will make a final determination at their discretion.

Junior Committee

Feb 2025