ST.ALBERT MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

EVALUATION HANDBOOK

St. Albert Minor Hockey Association

2026–2027

The evaluation process is a fundamental component of our program. This document will act as the general guideline for all involved to ensure consistent application of the evaluation principles are applied throughout the process. **The process aims to provide players with the best possible experience in an environment where they can grow as hockey players and young people.** This can be a tension-filled, laborious, and frustrating experience for some minor hockey coaches, parents, and players. This document aims to make it a more fulfilling and positive experience for all. All the information in this document shall set a tone for evaluations and increase the transparent nature of the process.

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EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

St. Albert Minor Hockey Association remains committed to supporting the following objectives throughout the evaluation process:

- Provide an impartial, consistent, and comprehensive evaluation of a player's total hockey skills, resulting in the best chance to develop.
- To form teams that maintain a skill balance where players can develop, participate, and have fun playing hockey.
- To develop a transparent and trusted evaluation process by players, parents, and coaches.
- To provide coaches with the opportunity and flexibility to build a team based partly on their coaching philosophy and knowledge of player skills and attitude.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why does St. Albert Minor Hockey evaluate players?
Player evaluations are a requirement of Hockey Alberta and are designed to place players with others of similar age, skill, and ability.

By placing athletes with teammates of similar skill and ability, we create environments where players are appropriately challenged, supported in their development, and able to enjoy the game while reaching their full potential.

How many evaluation sessions will there be?
Each player will have a minimum of 3 evaluation sessions for U9 – U18.

What is being evaluated?
If you would like more information on the specific skills, tactics, and behaviours being evaluated, please refer to the section on Player Selection Criteria (pages 6-7).

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Who will do the evaluations?
There are two key groups involved in the evaluations:

- Off-ice evaluators will evaluate every player on the ice during the allotted time. There may also be on-ice evaluators if deemed necessary. The staff from *200 Hockey* and some volunteer coaches will evaluate players this season.

- Off-ice volunteers and Association staff will coordinate the evaluation process, track evaluations, oversee team selection, contact parents and players, and schedule sessions.

GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Overall Structure

The players within the division are ranked based on the evaluator's assessments. Each player is evaluated on different skills 35 – 45 times over two or more scrimmages. In divisions U13 - U18, players declare their intention to play forward, defence, and goaltender in the registration process and are ranked by position. Teams are formed from this ranking.

Timelines

Evaluation timelines will be set annually based on ice availability and in conjunction with league start dates for each division. Every effort is made to ensure that teams are finalized at least seven (7) days before league play, allowing time for practice(s) before gameplay.

Below are the general timelines based on prior league history:

- U7 Evaluations - Last weekend in September
- U9 Evaluations - Starting Late August - Early September
- U11 Evaluations – Starting Early September
- U13 Evaluations - Starting Mid September
- U15 Evaluations - Starting Late-September
- U18 Evaluations - Starting Late-September

*Timed Skill Skate assessments are completed in March for U9 and U11 players.

**Every attempt will be made not to hold evaluations on the long weekend in September and limit assessment during the first whole week of school.

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Parental Involvement

To ensure that we can provide a fair evaluation and minimize stress during the evaluation process, we ask that parents refrain from distracting any skaters or evaluation personnel during the sessions. Please be guided by the following:

- Please keep away from the glass, benches, and boxes during evaluation sessions.
- Parents may not contact evaluators before, during or after evaluations to discuss any part of the process or results.
- Parents are asked only to spectate sessions when their player is participating.
- Please refrain from yelling from the stands during the sessions. Players should be ready to remain focused on the on-ice proceedings without external influences.

Players may experience anxiety during evaluations. Please keep the emphasis on having fun and try to provide a supportive environment for your player. We value your help in ensuring a transparent, thorough, and balanced process that will result in a successful and enjoyable season.

IMPORTANT: Parents who do not adhere to the above will be asked to leave the arena building.

Guidelines for Contacting Players and Parents

Here are a few guidelines that the Association has adopted to keep stakeholders informed:

- Advise players and parents of the date, time, and location of their scheduled evaluation date as soon as possible.
- Advise players to arrive a minimum of 30 minutes prior to the evaluation to register and assign the proper jersey.
- If a player is unable to attend an evaluation, please refer to ***Absent Player Placement Policy*** ***and complete*** **the** **online form.**

Player Movement

The evaluation process is structured to allow players to move between tiering groups based on their performance. While initial placement is designed to promote upward movement, players may be moved up or down from a group at any time during the evaluation process. Decisions on player movement are made after each session, and any movement will be applied for the next evaluation session.

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PLAYER SELECTION CRITERIA

The following general overview of the skills is a reference that will be provided to evaluators prior to the player selection process.

U9 – U18 Selection Criteria

1. **Skating**

   Speed, Quickness, Technique:
   - Forward and backward skating
   - Ability to turn in both directions
   - Ability to stop in both directions
   - Maintaining a good position for stability and strength

2. **High-Speed Skill**

   Ability to perform these basic skills in combination at a high speed:

   Passing: Technique, Control, Vision
   - Passing with both forehand and backhand
   - Passing to both moving and stationary targets
   - Scanning with eyes and selecting the best option

   Puck Skills: Technique, Open Ice, Confined Space
   - Open carry with speed
   - Executing dekes and fakes while handling the puck and skating forward with speed
   - Handling the puck in traffic and tight spaces
   - Maintaining control while being checked

   Shooting: Technique, Accuracy, Velocity
   - Shooting with both forehand and backhand
   - Wrist shots and snapshots
   - Shot velocity
   - Accuracy

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3. **Hockey IQ**

   Decision Making, On-Ice Awareness: Consistently making the right decisions both offensively and defensively, driven by strong on-ice awareness and an understanding of the game and its flow.

4. **Competitiveness**

   Compete Level, Grit, Consistency:
   - Performing consistently in the gritty areas of the game.
   - Winning free/loose pucks and battles, puck protection, drive skating, and shot blocking.
   - Playing under pressure with composure and confidence.
   - Outworking opponents and consistently winning 1-on-1 battles.

EVALUATION FORMS AND SCORING

Evaluation forms will use a **1-7** scale (1 = POOR/LIMITED, 2 = BELOW AVERAGE, 3 = AVERAGE, 4/5 = ABOVE AVERAGE, 6/7 = OUTSTANDING/DONINATE).

The 1-7 scale has several purposes. It will allow evaluators to group players into similar categories. We want to ensure that the evaluation scores accurately reflect the comparability of players and believe the 1-7 scale accomplishes that goal.

*Players are scored relative to other players within their on-ice grouping.

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GOALTENDER EVALUATIONS

The evaluation of goaltenders requires specific attention outside of the regular player evaluation sessions. The Association will make every attempt to include the goaltenders in all sessions and will also schedule separate goaltender specific evaluations.

The goaltender specific evaluations shall include the following basic progression of skills:

1. Basic Skating Skill
2. Position-Specific movement skills
3. Positional/Save movement skills
4. Rebound – Control/Recovery/Tactical
5. Transitional Play
6. Advanced Positioning

Depending on the level of play and the age and development of the goaltender, the evaluation process for goaltenders may incorporate all 6 of these basic areas. *Dave Rathjen Goaltending* will be evaluating goaltenders in the 2026-2027 season.

PLAYER POSITIONS

U9 - positions will not be assigned to players.

U11 - players will be assigned a position by the volunteer working the bench. The player is expected to play the position they are assigned for that respective shift. Players are to be evaluated for those shifts based on the position that they line up for at the face-off. If a player lines up to play defence at the face-off, then he or she will be evaluated for their defensive skill sets during that shift.

U11 Player/Goalie
All player/goalies will be evaluated as both a 'Goaltender' and a 'Skater' and will receive a minimum of 2 sessions at each position.

U13, U15 and U18 - players will be required to indicate their position (forward, defence, or goaltender) at the time of registration and will be evaluated according to their position.

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EVALUATION PROCESS BY DIVISION

U7

The objective of evaluations at this age is to group players of similar skill and ability together. This will lead to an increase in puck touches and ensure players have a successful introduction to hockey.

Players will be evaluated by volunteer coaches with the support of the Timbits U7 (Hockey Canada) Skill Evaluation guide and Team Genius (online evaluation tool).

Information for Parents of U7 Players

- Players should plan to arrive 15-20 minutes prior to skate time.
- Only one parent per player in the dressing room.
- Upon arrival players will receive an evaluation jersey to ensure they can be easily identified on the ice.
- Players at this age can anticipate moving through a series of stations to evaluate their fundamental skills; drills will be made available before evaluations start.
- The session is 30 minutes long.
- Parents are not permitted on the ice.

U9

The objective of the evaluation process is to evaluate a player's skating ability, puck possession skills and competitive spirit. Players at this age are taking their early strides in the game. Our focus is to ensure this is a positive experience and a place to form friendships and develop hockey skills, through fun and fair play.

The evaluation will provide the very best conditions for players to showcase their skills and provide an equal opportunity for them to be seen as often as possible and in as many situations as possible. Regardless of ability, all players will receive the same amount and number of ice sessions.

Players are encouraged to attend all sessions of the evaluation to ensure they are properly assessed by the team of evaluators.

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Players will participate in three (3) evaluations sessions:

Session 1 (Spring)	Timed Skills Evaluation
Session 2	Scrimmage
Session 3	Scrimmage

PART 1 - TIMED SKILL EVALUATION

Players in U9 will take part in one timed skill skate. The focus of this session is to capture measurement of the fundamental skills of each player. Players will be put through a variety of drills to test their skating speed, agility, edge control and puck handling. The purpose of this assessment is to group players into scrimmage groupings before moving to the second part of evaluations.

- Players are grouped based on last names.
- The group sizes will range between 20 - 30 players.
- Players will be ranked from top to bottom based on the average from all their timed drills and ranked from top to bottom in their age category.
- Each player's best score from the two-timed attempts for each respective drill will be used. The other scores will not be used for averaging purposes.
- Players will be scored based on the average of all their timed drills.

PART 2 - HALF-ICE SCRIMMAGE

Evaluation teams will be created with desired roster sizes of sixteen (16) players. These teams will be split into two groups of eight (8) for each game. These two groups will participate in two simultaneous half-ice games with another team. The format will be 4-on-4 hockey with no designated positions. Shifts will run in 90-seconds intervals, giving each player the same amount of gameplay while playing every second shift.

The rules of gameplay will follow the Hockey Alberta Intro to Hockey Half-Ice gameplay model. Players will not be required to participate as a goaltender during the evaluation game process: however, if players would like to, they must notify the *Evaluation Director* prior to the start of evaluations. When possible, evaluation games will utilize shooter tutors instead of goaltenders.

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Information for Parents of U9 Players

- Players should plan to arrive 15-20 minutes prior to skate time.
- Upon arrival players will receive an evaluation jersey to ensure they can be easily identified on the ice.
- Only one parent per player in the dressing room.
- Skill Evaluation: Players at this age can anticipate moving through a series of stations to evaluate their fundamental skills.
- Scrimmage: Players will have a 10-minute warm-up and 40-minute scrimmage.
- The session is 45-50 minutes long.
- Parents are not permitted on the ice.

U11

The objective of the evaluation process is to evaluate a player's skating ability, puck possession skills and competitive spirit. Our focus is to ensure this is a positive experience and a place to form friendships and develop hockey skills, through fun and fair play.

The evaluation will provide the very best conditions for players to showcase their skills and provide an equal opportunity for them to be seen as often as possible and in as many situations as possible. Regardless of ability, all players will receive the same amount and number of ice sessions.

Players are encouraged to attend all sessions of the evaluation to ensure they are properly assessed by the team of evaluators.

Players will participate in four (4) evaluations sessions:

Session 1 (Spring)	Timed Skills Evaluation
Session 2	Scrimmage
Session 3	Scrimmage
Session 4	Scrimmage

Information for Parents of U11 Players

- Players should plan to arrive 15-20 minutes prior to skate time.
- Upon arrival players will receive an evaluation jersey to ensure they can be easily identified on the ice.
- Only one parent per player in the dressing room.

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PART 1 - TIMED SKILL EVALUATION

Players in U11 will take part in one timed skill skate. The focus of this session is to capture measurement of the fundamental skills of each player. Players will be put through a variety of drills to test their skating speed, agility, edge control and puck handling. The purpose of this assessment is to group players into scrimmage groupings before moving to the second part of evaluations.

- Players are grouped based on last names.
- The group sizes will range between 20 - 30 players.
- Players will be ranked from top to bottom based on the average from all their timed drills and ranked from top to bottom in their age category.
- Each player's best score from the two-timed attempts for each respective drill will be used. The other scores will not be used for averaging purposes.
- Players will be scored based on the average of all their timed drills.

PART 2 - SCRIMMAGE

Evaluation teams will be created with desired roster sizes of thirteen (13) players and two (2) goalies. The format will be 5-on-5 hockey with designated positions. Shifts will run in 90-seconds intervals, giving each player the same amount of gameplay while playing every second shift. Players will have a 5-minute warm-up and 40-minute scrimmage.

U13

The objective of the evaluation process is to evaluate a player's skating ability, puck possession skills and competitive spirit. Our focus is to ensure this is a positive experience and a place to form friendships and develop hockey skills, through fun and fair play.

The evaluation will provide the very best conditions for players to showcase their skills and provide an equal opportunity for them to be seen as often as possible and in as many situations as possible. Regardless of ability, all players will receive the same amount and number of ice sessions.

Players are encouraged to attend all sessions of the evaluation to ensure they are properly assessed by the team of evaluators.

Player will participate in four (4) evaluations sessions:

Session 1	Scrimmage
Session 2	Scrimmage
Session 3	Scrimmage
Session 4	Scrimmage

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Information for U13 Players and Parents

- Players should plan to arrive a minimum of 15-20 minutes prior to skate time.
- Upon arrival players will receive an evaluation jersey to ensure they can be easily identified on the ice.

SCRIMMAGE

Evaluation teams will be created with desired roster sizes of thirteen (13) players and two (2) goalies. The format will be 5-on-5 hockey with designated positions. Shifts will run in 90-seconds intervals, giving each player the same amount of gameplay while playing every second shift. Players will have a 5-minute warm-up and 40-minute scrimmage.

After Times Skill Skates players will be ranked in their division-based score as it pertains to their designated position (forward or defence). The Association will utilize this ranking to place players onto evaluation teams.

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U15 & U18

The evaluation process will provide the very best conditions for players to showcase their skills and provide an equal opportunity for them to be seen as often as possible and in as many situations as possible. Regardless of ability, all players will receive the same amount and number of ice sessions.

Players are encouraged to attend all sessions of the evaluation to ensure they are properly assessed by the team of evaluators.

Player will participate in three (3) evaluations sessions:

Session 1	Scrimmage
Session 2	Scrimmage
Session 3	Scrimmage

Information for U15 Players

- Players should plan to arrive a minimum of 15-20 minutes prior to skate time.
- Upon arrival players will receive an evaluation jersey to ensure they can be easily identified on the ice.

SCRIMMAGE

Evaluation teams will be created with desired roster sizes of thirteen (13) players and two (2) goalies. The format will be 5-on-5 hockey with designated positions. The expected shift length is 90-seconds, and players will change on the fly. Players will have a 5-minute warm-up and 40-minute scrimmage.

The Association will utilize the previous seasons ranking to place players onto evaluation teams.

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PLAYER EVALUATION AND APPEAL PROCESS

An internal appeal mechanism is hereby established for the limited purpose of whether player selection was not made according to the rules or process.

Dissatisfaction with the selection of a head coach or assistant coach is **not** grounds for appeal.

Any appeal shall be made via the online Evaluation Appeal form. The Evaluations Committee shall evaluate whether the appellant has valid grounds for appeal. A **$400** fee initiates the appeal process; should the Committee determine grounds for appeal, this amount is refunded. If no reasonable grounds for appeal exist, the Evaluation Director shall notify the appellant in writing that the appeal will not be heard. If reasonable grounds for appeal exist, the Evaluation Director shall then convene an appeal hearing before the Executive Board of Directors within 7 days. The appellant shall present evidence and testimony to the Board. Following testimony, the Executive Board of Directors shall close the hearing, begin deliberations, and render a written decision via email.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Evaluation Director

- Act as an impartial representative on behalf of St. Albert Minor Hockey Association, its members, and its players
- Form an Evaluation Committee annually with the Hockey Operations VP
- Responsible for overall coordination and oversight of player evaluations
- Participate in the ongoing review of the evaluation process and present proposals to the Evaluations Committee for changes to the player evaluation process
- Periodically attend evaluation sessions for all age groups and provide guidance ensuring the ongoing integrity and consistent application of processes as outlined in the Association's policies
- Ensure that any behaviour inconsistent with the Association's policies, Respect in Sport is immediately sent to the Admin VP and Executive Director

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Executive Director

- Arbitrate any disputes arising during players' evaluations
- Participate in the ongoing review of the evaluation process and present proposals to the Evaluations Committee for changes to the player evaluation process
- Periodically attend evaluation sessions for all age groups and provide guidance ensuring the ongoing integrity and consistent application of processes as outlined in the Association's policies

Hockey Operations VP

- Coordinate on ice coaches with the Director of Coach Mentorship
- Ensure each division has coordinated volunteers for the following: Check-In Desk, Jersey Handout, and Dressing Room/Bench Supervision
- Act in an unbiased and impartial manner during the evaluation process

Data Coordinator

- Provide registration information with regular updates to evaluators
- Advise Evaluation Director of all pertinent timelines and procedures
- Post evaluation information on the website as required
- Participate in the draft process to support the transfer of players within Team Snap
- Always ensure data integrity and confidentiality throughout the process

Operations Coordinator

- Work with the Evaluation Director and the Executive Director to schedule the appropriate number of skates and time per age group
- Provide appropriate intervals between skates to accommodate data entry, review and posting of future skate times
- Liaison between the Association and the City of St. Albert facility operations
- Work with the Ref in Chief to schedule referees for all scrimmages

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Director of Volunteers

- Work with Division Coordinator, Hockey Operations VP, and Evaluations Director to coordinate the volunteer scheduling
- Consistently ensure compliance with Policies
- Act in a confidential manner ensuring the integrity of the evaluations process
- Be visible and accessible throughout the process to answer general questions from parents and player
- Communicate the process and skate times with the players and/or parent/guardians in a timely manner
- Responsible for notification of injured, absent or late players to the Evaluation Director
- Along with the Division Coordinator, ensure that all necessary equipment including pucks, pylons, clip boards and other on-ice equipment are present for the beginning of each session and in good, working condition
- Work with Check-in Desk/Jersey Coordinator to ensure player check-in process is successfully executed.

Volunteer On-ice Coaches

- Report to the Evaluation Director
- Submit the Coach/Volunteer intake form through the Association website
- Consistently ensure compliance with Association Policies and Procedures
- Review and understand the drills and skills identified within the practice plans to ensure a clear understanding of the on-ice process
- Act in an unbiased and impartial manner during the evaluation process
- Keep the pace and flow of the drills to finish within the allocated ice time providing equal opportunity to all players
- Encourage players to perform to the best of their ability
- Ensure that players understand the drills and have equal opportunity to participate

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Check-In Desk / Jersey Coordinator

- Each Division will have a Check-in Desk /Jersey Coordinator
- Check-in Desk/Jersey Coordinator reports to the Division Director for that
- specific age group
- Manage the “check-in desk” process and ensure any player absences are immediately reported to the Division Director
- Hand out jerseys and inform skaters of dressing room assignment, jersey number and colour;
- Maintain confidentiality of the team and number list, do no permit photos of players lists to be taken
- Collect all jerseys after each skating session and at the end of the day
- Arrange to have jerseys washed at the end of each session

Dressing Room & Bench Supervisors

- Provide supervision in the dressing rooms prior to and after each session
- Manage the benches i.e. shift changes, player position rotation, player conduct, during scrimmage play
- Consistently ensure compliance with SAMHA Policies and Procedures
- Act in an unbiased and impartial manner during the evaluation process
- Encourage players to perform to the best of their ability
- Responsible to not be on the same bench as their own child

Paid Evaluators

- Review and understand the drills and skills identified within the practice plans to ensure a clear understanding of the on-ice process
- Review the evaluation criteria prior to the process to ensure they are evaluating the same skill with the same intent as the other evaluators
- Stay physically separate and independent from all other Evaluators and parents during the evaluation program
- Provide a fair, unbiased and thorough analysis of all players
- Does not compare notes, scores or rankings with other Evaluators during sessions

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- Will not share comments or opinions with any parents/players or other interested observers
- Maintain confidentiality of player scores and/or rankings at all times
- Review evaluation rankings at the end of each session
- Submit evaluation data immediately following the completion of each ice session

Volunteer Evaluators

- Refer questions, comments or complaints that you may receive to the Evaluation Director without offering comment on the question or complaint
- Immediately inform the Evaluation Director of any potential conflicts of interest prior to the start of a session, or as soon as it has been identified
- Will not evaluate their own child
- Do not take any photographs of evaluation materials, team lists, sign in sheets etc
- Review and understand the drills and skills identified within the practice plans to ensure a clear understanding of the on-ice process
- Review the evaluation criteria prior to the process to ensure they are evaluating the same skill with the same intent as the other evaluators
- Stay physically separate and independent from all other Evaluators and parents during the evaluation program
- Provide a fair, unbiased and thorough analysis of all players
- Does not compare notes, scores or rankings with other Evaluators during sessions
- Will not share comments or opinions with any parents/players or other interested observers
- Maintain confidentiality of player scores and/or rankings at all times
- Review evaluation rankings at the end of each session
- Submit evaluation data immediately following the completion of each ice session

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Parent Responsibilities

- Practice what you have learned in Respect in Sport
- Do not take any photographs of evaluations materials, team lists, sign in sheets etc.
- Be aware of the importance of evaluations and the corresponding schedules.
- Players are required to attend all scheduled sessions, missed sessions may alter the placement of a player

Help your player to be prepared:

  - Be at the rink early enough for your child to be completely ready 10 minutes before the ice time starts.
  - Make sure all their equipment fits, skates are sharpened, and all items are in the equipment bag when you leave your home.
  - Full equipment including neck and must be in place for your child to participate in the evaluation process.

- Promote positivity and support.
- Understand the process yourself.
- Be as informed as possible about the association's evaluation process.
- Contact the Association early if you have a question or if you player is sick or injured complete the online form.
- Respect the Association Evaluators and do not ask Evaluators for player information.
- Promote and support having fun throughout the process.

Evaluations Committee

An ad hoc committee formed each season to support planning and improvement of the evaluation process; committee is supported by the Board of Directors and operates under a defined term of reference.

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