



## TRAVEL TEAM EVALUATIONS

One of the most difficult and stressful times during the hockey season is the evaluation process — especially for parents. Research has shown that kids in many cases handle the pressure of evaluations better than parents do, making this time of the season a potentially upsetting experience for all. This letter attempts to explain the Berkshire Bruins evaluation process and provide answers to questions especially for those parents who have not been through this process before.

### OBJECTIVES OF PLAYER EVALUATIONS

- To provide a fair and impartial assessment of a player's total hockey skills during skating, skill-based stations, small area games, and scrimmage sessions
- To place players on the most appropriate team based on their current level of skill, measured against their peer group, during on-ice evaluations while also factoring in feedback from previous coaches and certain hockey “intangibles” (e.g. work ethic, coachability, attitude, etc.)
- To provide uniformity and transparency in the evaluation process such that player and parent expectations are consistent from year to year as players move through the various levels of the program's age groups (8U, 10U, 12U, 14U)
- To form teams that are competitive at each level and provide the best opportunity for all players to further develop their skills and to HAVE FUN playing hockey

### PLAYER EVALUATION FAQ'S

The following are frequently asked questions that hopefully will help build greater understanding of how the process works:

**1. How many evaluation sessions will there be?**

There will be 3 evaluation sessions for each level.

**2. Why do we have evaluations?**

The Berkshire Bruins conducts evaluation sessions to provide player assessments each season and to place players on travel teams. There are enough players to have multiple teams at each level (one team at 14U) and they are divided per ability to maximize the potential for each player and each team to improve and have a successful season. The goal of Berkshire Bruins is to provide the best opportunity for all players to further develop their hockey skills.

**3. Does my skater need to participate in the evaluation process?**

If your child wants to play travel hockey, then attending evaluations is required so that your child can be properly evaluated against his/her peer group and placed on the appropriate level team to maximize your child's opportunity to further develop their hockey skills. Players must participate in at least 2 of the 3 evaluation sessions to be considered for one of the travel teams. Players wanting to participate in the House program only ARE NOT required to attend any evaluation sessions.

**4. Is my child guaranteed to make the same team, or higher, than the one they participated on during the prior season?**

Placement on a specific team is not guaranteed. All children wishing to participate on a travel team are required to participate in the evaluation process. As stated above, the goal of the evaluation process is to place the participants on the appropriate level team in order to maximize their opportunity to further develop their hockey skills. Depending on the skill level of those that participate in evaluations, it is possible that a child that played on an A level team the prior year is placed on the B team at the same level for the upcoming season (or B to A). Past participation on travel teams also does not guarantee a travel team placement this season. These decisions are made in the best interest of the child's development as well as what is best for each team.

**5. Who will do the evaluations?**

There are two key groups involved in the evaluations:

- On-ice coaches to take players through the session.
- Off-ice evaluators who will be responsible for evaluating every player on the ice during the time allotted. Evaluators from outside the Berkshire Bruins program may also be used to supplement the program evaluators.
- On-ice evaluators will also be utilized and may provide feedback related to coachability and attitude during evaluation sessions.
- On-ice coaches and off-ice evaluators will meet to discuss their observations and recommendations for placement of players.

**6. What is being evaluated?**

Refer to the section on Player Selection Criteria for more information on specific skills, tactics and behaviors that are being evaluated. This section gives an outline of what is being evaluated each session.

**7. Will the player be evaluated in a skill and game environment?**

To give every player a fair opportunity to exhibit the range of skills that they possess, they will be evaluated within skill stations, small area games, and full ice scrimmage environments. At the younger age levels a greater emphasis will be placed on the evaluation of skills - as the players get older the small area game and scrimmage sessions will have a greater overall impact on the player's placement. Your son/daughter will have the chance to evaluation in the position they are most comfortable in but may be asked to play a different position to give the evaluators an understanding of their overall game knowledge and on-ice awareness.

**8. Will prior season evaluation information be used?**

The evaluation process will include prior season assessments and feedback from the prior year's coaches if available. Players will be selected based not only on individual skills but several intangible traits. These traits are as follows:

- Attendance & commitment — A player's commitment, as specified by his or her previous seasons' coaches, may be used as a factor in final player placement.

- Attitude & behavior — Hockey is a team sport and individuals with stronger skills but who are selfish can often be counterproductive to achieving team goals and upset team chemistry. Hockey is a long season and the right team chemistry (on and off the ice) is crucial to a successful program. The program will place great value on these traits when making team selections.
- Determination, drive, intensity, work ethic
- Discipline
- Positive team player
- Coachability

**9. After the evaluation sessions, how are the players notified of their final standing?**

Players will be informed via an email from the Berkshire Bruins on Friday, October 22.

**TEAMS & TEAM COMPOSITION**

Team composition and size will be directly related to evaluation registration and final commitment numbers. The Berkshire Bruins Executive Committee reserves the right to increase or decrease the number of travel teams based on the number of players possessing the necessary skills to play travel hockey and the number of actual commitments received following the completion of evaluations.

**PLAYER SELECTION CRITERIA**

**Skating:** Acceleration, speed, mobility, agility, balance, stride, crossovers, pivots/transitions, acceleration out of turns, quick feet, controlled skating, change of pace.

- Can the player perform the basic forward and backward stride?
- Good skaters will use long strides with a complete recovery of the stride leg before striding with the other leg. Their strides will look very smooth and appear not to require much effort to move around the ice.
- Does the player look smooth when they skate or do they appear off balance?
- Can the player turn in both directions with little trouble or do they struggle to turn in one or both directions?
- Can the player stop in both directions? Younger players will often have trouble stopping in one direction.
- Can the player keep up with the play or do they struggle to stay with the other players on the ice?

**Passing:** Passing, receiving, passing choices, on backhand, unselfish with the puck, presents a good target, and retains with control.

- Does the player have the basic skills to execute a forehand pass?
- When the player passes the puck do they slap at it or is the motion smooth with the player following through to the intended target?

- Can the player make an accurate pass to a moving target?
- Can the player receive a pass on their backhand or do they tend to shift their body to receive the pass on the forehand?
- Can the player pass the puck off the backhand with some speed and accuracy?
- Does the player call for the puck vs. banging their stick on the ice or saying nothing at all?
- Does the player passing the puck make eye contact with the intended receiver or do they just pass the puck blindly?
- Can the player pass the puck off the boards to another player?

**Puck Control:** Head up, good hands, protection in small spaces and in traffic.

- Is the player ready to handle/carry the puck using a hockey stance with hands away from the body?
- Does the player appear to be comfortable handling the puck while skating or do they appear to fight the puck and have trouble skating with some speed while handling it?
- Can the player keep his/her head up while carrying the puck?
- Can they execute dekes and fakes with the puck?
- Can they stop quickly or change direction while handling the puck?
- Can the player continue to handle the puck while in traffic and under pressure?
- Does the player get pushed or checked off the puck easily?

**Shooting:** Power, accuracy, quick release, shooting in motion, rebound control, variety of shots - wrist shot, snapshot, backhand, slapshot (not applicable for Squirts).

- Does the player exhibit balance within the shooting motion?
- Can the player execute the technique of a wrist shot and backhand (weight shift)?
- Does the player follow through to the target on all shots?
- Can the player raise the puck?
- Is the puck shot with some velocity?
- Does the puck sit flat in the air or does it wobble?
- Can the player execute a one-time shot?
- Is the player accurate when shooting?

**Positional Play:** Ability to see the play developing both offensively and defensively and moves to support, judgment, anticipation, understands position, disciplined.

- Does the player seem to understand where he/she is to play on the ice?
- Do they support the puck in defensive and offensive situations?
- Does the player show patience or do they tend to panic when pressured?
- Do they protect the middle of the ice and force opposing players inside out?
- Can the player angle another player off the puck?

**Body Contact Concepts:** Angling, good body position with balance and control, defensive side position, aggressive checker, strength, receiving checks (if applicable).

- Can the player execute basic stick check?
- Does the player understand angling and how to effectively angle an opposing player?

#### 14U Only

- Does the player check properly with their hands down or do they get their arms up to give a check?
- Can the player receive a check properly, not turning their back and staying close to the boards?
- Can the player check an opposing player and pin them on the boards?
- Does the player shy away from other players?

**Goaltending:** Balance, mobility, quickness, low shots, rebound control, proper angles, post play, stick control, reaction, posture, flexibility, and concentration.

#### PARENT COMMITMENT

As stated above, evaluations are a very stressful time for both players and parents. While your child is busy working on the ice, we ask that you please commit to follow these simple rules during evaluations:

- Always stay positive with your child.
- Stay away from the glass during evaluations. Parents and bystanders should not stand along the glass. Please sit in the bleachers during the evaluations.
- Please do not count shots that each goalie gets or time how long your child is involved in a specific drill or scrimmage.
- Stay focused on the big picture and trust that our goal is to put every child into the best opportunity for them to succeed.

- Stay away from talking about other players or comparing your child to other children. This can only cause negative or hurt feelings.
- Stay with the program and help your child have a great year!

### **COMMITMENT TO THE BERKSHIRE BRUINS**

Upon completion of the evaluations, players offered a travel team invitation will need to complete an additional registration with the Boys and Girls Club of the Berkshires. Players and families invited to join a travel team will be sent information on October 22. Those wishing to accept the invitation are asked to complete registration by October 25. If you do not plan on accepting your invite to a travel team, please send an email to [berkshirebruinshockey@gmail.com](mailto:berkshirebruinshockey@gmail.com) as soon as possible. We can then offer an opportunity to another player. We recognize this is a quick turnaround, but we must act quickly in order to finalize rosters, order jerseys, and begin league play. We appreciate your patience.

### **COACHES**

Coaching announcements for all travel teams will be communicated prior to the commitment deadline.

### **CLOSING REMARKS**

We hope the information above provided some clarity regarding the evaluation process at the Berkshire Bruins. If you have any further evaluation or team placement questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Coaching Director, [John Hammill](#), or a member of the [Berkshire Bruins Executive Committee](#).

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO A FUN AND SUCCESSFUL HOCKEY SEASON!**

