

Simsbury Youth Hockey Association

SECTION 1. DIVISIONS

[Revised 9/1/17]

USA HOCKEY AGE CLASSIFICATIONS

SYHA will divide its players by the age classifications promulgated by USA Hockey from time to time, unless otherwise approved by the Board of Directors. Players on Travel Teams (defined below) will skate at their age level. SYHA strongly discourages exceptions to this policy, as past experience has demonstrated that the negative effect on SYHA as a whole outweighs the benefit afforded any individual player. SYHA does realize there will be special circumstances that require review. The President, the Division Directors of both affected divisions, and the Director of Coaching will review each individual case. If the decision is made to stay in the appropriate age group then no Board intervention is required. If it is deemed appropriate for a player to participate in an older division, serving both the needs of the organization and those of the individual player, both Division Directors and the Director of Coaches, in consultation with the player's family, will initiate an exception to SYHA policy. The Board will review this proposal and by a majority vote approve or deny any proposed exceptions to this policy brought to it by the Division Directors and Director of Coaching taking into account the player's assessed skills, maturity, desire, and the special circumstances related to both the player and the organization.

COMPOSITION OF DIVISIONS

SYHA will subdivide each Division into travel teams and recreational/developmental ('house') groups based on the following factors: the number of players in the Division, the ages of the players in the Division, the general level of skill and desire of players in the Division, and such other factors as shall advance and serve the philosophy of SYHA. The Divisions may be subdivided as follows, but such subdivision is ultimately at the discretion of the President, the Vice President of On-Ice Operations, and the Division Director(s) in their determination of the best interests of the program, and may change from year-to-year based on the needs and best interests of the program:

MITE U8	SQUIRT U10	PEEWEE U12	BANTAM U14	MIDGET U18	GIRLS U10/U12/U14
Travel A	Travel A	Travel A	Travel A	Elite	Travel A
Travel B	Travel A1	Travel A1	Travel A1	Travel A	Travel B
House	Travel B	Travel B	Travel B	Travel B	Developmental
	House	House	House		

SYHA believes strongly that the emphasis in the **Mite U6/U8 Division** is and should remain primarily skill development. SYHA recognizes that competition is a necessary adjunct to skill development for all skaters, but believes that skill development is best achieved for skaters other than those on the Travel Teams through practices and intra- program competition. Often, there is sufficient player enrollment to subdivide the House Programs into equal numbered groups of approximately equal skill level in order to implement effective teaching and intramural competition.

The **Squirt U10, Pee Wee U12, Bantam U14 and Girls Division** Directors, in consultation with the President and the Vice President of On-Ice Operations, determine the annual structure of their divisions based on enrollment and have the discretion to restructure their divisions as necessary in the best interests of the program.

The **Midget U18 Division** is for participants grouped in the USA Hockey-defined Midget age group. The division is divided into "A" and "B" Travel Teams based on player skill levels and commitment. Midget players may come from the SYHA's Core Geographic Area with exceptions made based on the needs of

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the program at the discretion of the Division Director, the Vice President of On-Ice Operations, and the President. The Midget season will run from September through Mid-November. At the end of this “split season” the Division Director will determine if there are enough players to register a Midget team for the remainder of the winter season.

Elite Midget Team. At the discretion of the Midget Division Director, the President, and the Vice-President of Operations, in consultation with the Board, SYHA may offer an open Tier 1 Midget team available to all interested participants and is not restricted to SYHA’s Core Geographic Area. The goal of the Tier 1 team is to compete in the USA Hockey Regional and National Tier 1 tournaments. Participants who tryout, but are not selected for, the Tier 1 Midget team and are not from SYHA’s Core Geographic Area may not try out for the Midget “A” or Midget “B” teams.

SYHA includes a **Girls Division** for those who wish to participate in girls-only competition consistent with the CHC Hockey Girls Division age guidelines. The Division Director, in consultation with the Head Coaches in the Girls Division, has broad discretion to structure the Division based on enrollment and the best interests of the program. The Division Director will base competitive schedules on the ages and skill levels of the girls enrolled in the program and the particular structure of the Division in a given year. The Girls program shall follow the SYHA policies and procedures unless waived by the President and the Vice President of On-Ice Operations. Girls of Mite age are strongly encouraged to participate in the Mite Division as SYHA believes this will best meet their needs in terms of skill development.

The **House (Recreational) Program** in each Division is comprised of those players who do not wish to participate in a competitive hockey program or were not selected for a Travel Team after the completion of the tryout and selection process. The emphasis of the House Program in each Division is the development of hockey skills (skating, passing and receiving, stick handling and shooting) through practice drills and intramural competition. Minimal travel to play games against other local CHC programs is required (Squirt / PeeWee House and Girls Limited Travel Divisions only).

GOALIES

In the **Mite U6/U8 Divisions (House and Travel)**, SYHA will expose as many players as possible to the goalie position, encouraging all players to experiment with goaltending. All players interested in trying the goaltender position will get an opportunity to do so through team play and the SYHA Goalie Skill Sessions. At this age it is important for all players, even players with a strong goalie interest, to develop their skating skills.

In the **Squirt U10, PeeWee U12, Bantam U14, Girls U12/U14, Midget U18 Divisions**, SYHA will continue goalie development with skill-based teaching through team coaches and SYHA Goalie Skill Sessions. *Only players in these divisions will be given the opportunity to tryout as a Goalie.*

TEAM SIZE

Travel Teams in the **Mite U8 Division** will adhere to USA Hockey American Development Model (ADM) recommendations for team size and cross ice play.

Travel Teams in the **Squirt U10, PeeWee U12, and Bantam U14 Divisions** will consist of a target size of 15 players up to the maximum allowed by Connecticut Hockey Conference or Connecticut Girls Hockey League (CGHL) guidelines. The final roster size of the team will be at the discretion of the Head Coach, the Vice President of On-Ice Operations, and the Division Director. If a team consists of fewer than 20 regular players, additional players may be added to the roster (to the CHC division maximum) as alternates to be called up in the case of injury or unavailability of regular players.

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STATE TOURNAMENTS / NUMBER OF GAMES

Each Travel Team will register for the CHC State Tournament for its Division. The Girls Program teams will also register for the CGHL State Tournament. Registration fees for the CHC and CGHL tournaments are included in the SYHA participation fees for such teams and shall be paid by SYHA. During the regular season, the pronounced goal of SYHA is for Travel Teams to play two games a weekend, excluding tournaments, to ensure that such teams will have played the minimum-required number of games with registered opponents by the CHC tournament cutoff date to qualify for participation in the appropriate CHC tournament. As a matter of policy, the targeted start date for SYHA travel teams to begin games is mid- October.

SYHA will adhere to all post season state tournament guidelines as set by the Connecticut Hockey Conference. Squirt U10, PeeWee U12 and Bantam U14 teams will play as non-tiered and will be ranked periodically throughout the season by www.CTHockeyRatings.com. The end of season rankings will determine team placement for CHC Tier 2, Tier 3, and Tier 4 state tournaments.

Annually, the Midget Division Director, in consultation with the President and the Director of Coaching, and after consulting with division coaches and reviewing the prior season for all teams in their division, will recommend to the Board an appropriately competitive level of play for the Midget division for the upcoming season. An open discussion at a Board meeting in the late spring or early summer (prior to the required CHC declaration deadline), followed by a simple majority vote, will then determine the assumed level of play for the upcoming season.

