

February 1, 2010

SKATING UP

General Statement:

The ESHA Mission Statement, among other things, indicates that all players will be given the opportunity to learn and play the game of hockey in a safe environment. That being said, there is a clear preference that players will skate with their designated age group. In the past, however, players have been allowed to “skate up” for a variety of reasons, including: skill level; desires of parents and coaching staff; creating acceptable numbers for a given team; because given parent coaching a “senior” team, player/parent decisions to “skate up” or cross the bridge, etc. While a firm rule of “no skating up beyond age grouping” would be easy to administer, it denies past practice and applied without exception going forward would arbitrarily “punish” players previously allowed by ESHA to skate up, establish relationships, etc. To that end, this policy is intended to clarify the ESHA position on this matter going forward.

General Rule:

Players in the ESHA program must skate with their appropriate age grouping as established by USA Hockey with the following exception: in certain circumstances, an appeal can be made pre-season to the ESHA Board requesting exception *along with* facts to support request. Requests will be handled on a case by case and evaluated each year; considering all aspects of the teams involved and the overall program.

Application for Exception:

While exceptions are discouraged and if granted at all should be rare, the Board is entitled to consider the following in granting an exception to the general rule of no skating up:

- Skill level of player involved
- Opinions of coaching staff (for both “senior” and “junior” team)
- Past hockey experience of player requesting exception (i.e., if transferring from different program, what was age grouping, etc.)
- Involvement of parent in coaching staff (insures close monitoring and assessment of player skills and safety in practices and games)

Acceptance of Risk:

USA Hockey does not have a formal position on skating up though they do want parents and players to acknowledge the increased risk of playing with bigger, faster skaters. To that end, the Waiver of Liability, Release Assumption of Risk & Indemnity Agreement each parent and player is asked to sign specifically speaks to this issue. When a player is allowed to skate up in the ESHA program, we will highlight the designated language on the form so that all participants are fully informed.