



# 2025-2026 Player Evaluation Policy

Cochrane Minor Hockey Association

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# 1 Introduction

This document outlines the Cochrane Minor Hockey Association (CMHA) player evaluation process for the 2025-26 season.

Each year in Canada more than 3500 minor hockey associations undertake the task of placing players on teams. In each association, the ultimate goal of these processes is to provide players with the best possible experience in an environment where they can grow as hockey players and young people<sup>1</sup>.

For many minor hockey volunteers, evaluators, coaches, parents, and players this can be a stressful experience – the first goal of this document is to help outline a clear and transparent workflow that any stakeholder can reference to ensure they understand the evaluation process.

This document includes details on the various stakeholders, their roles, and the processes they follow in working through the task of evaluating and assigning CMHA Players to their teams for the upcoming hockey season.

Like all CMHA policy and process, the CMHA Player Evaluation Process is managed under a set of continuous improvement principals. Annual evaluations are considered by the Evaluation Committee and the CMHA Board of Directors as opportunities to measure and observe how well our process works for our community. Each year, committee, vendor, and community sourced feedback and process observations are compiled and reconciled to ensure that year over year we do not miss opportunities to improve on our evaluation experience.

## 2 Evaluation Goals

The evaluation processes and policies outlined in this document are compiled to support a set of program goals. These stated program goals represent an underlying set of guiding principals. These guiding principals will inform decision maker and stakeholder action in any situation where gaps or shortcomings in policy or process are discovered during evaluations.

These program goals are:

- To provide a fair and impartial assessment of a player's total hockey skills during technical and skating scrimmage sessions.
- To ensure players have a reasonable opportunity to be selected to a team appropriate to their skill levels as determined during the evaluation process.
- To provide uniformity and consistency in the evaluation process from year to year as players move through the various levels of the association's programs.

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<sup>1</sup> Hockey Canada Player Evaluation Manual <https://cdn.hockeycanada.ca/hockey-canada/Hockey-Programs/MHA/downloads/mha-player-evaluation-guide-e.pdf>



- To form teams that maintain balanced and competitive play, allowing athletes to develop, participate equally, and have fun playing hockey during the season.

### 3 Stakeholder Responsibilities

The annual player evaluation process is a large undertaking, CMHA employees, Board and Committee volunteers, Parent and Community volunteers, Facilities staff, and Evaluation vendors dedicate countless hours preparing and executing process and policy to ensure a smooth and efficient evaluation process.

A diverse set of stakeholders work together to make this happen. These roles and a general description of the responsibilities carried by each are outlined as appendix A

### 4 Evaluation Procedures

Depending on age category, The Cochrane Minor Hockey Association operates to a player evaluation model which can include technical sessions as well as gameplay skates. The details of each type of session, the mechanisms of sorting and group assignment as well as details on the scoring and ranking workflows for each type of session are presented below.

#### 4.1 Technical Evaluation

Technical evaluations are limited to U7, U9, and U11 players and all goaltenders (please reference goaltender evaluation policy). For technical player evaluation, timed skating drills are used to sort players into initial groups for gameplay skates. Groupings for U7, U9 and U11 technical evaluations are strictly alphabetical.

In 2025-26, the player U7, U9 and U11 technical evaluation will be run in a single ice time for each age category and group. The sessions are run by independent 3rd party on-ice instructors with time required to successfully executed a set of pre-determined and demonstrated skating courses with and without pucks as the primary measure returned.

Players will be given the opportunity to perform each drill **2** times with only the best score from each drill being retained for ranking.

#### 4.2 Game Play Evaluation

The gameplay evaluations are carried out across a minimum of **2** on ice sessions. Each session is supported by volunteer bench captains, during these sessions goaltenders will be evaluated by an independent 3rd party evaluator assessing each player against a series of objective measures described in Appendix B, C, and D.

Group designation for roster development for any specific gameplay session will be allocated to the top ranked players who are not yet placed on a team using technical session scores (U7/9) and



any prior gameplay skates. Groupings for the initial skate in U11, U13, U15, U16, U18 divisions will be based on player tier played during the 2024-25 season.

Invites will be generated to ensure a player count (defense and forward players) sufficient to support an appropriate cohort for comparison, in a gameplay setting. Typically, this will be **30** players or **3** complete lines for each of **2** teams.

In scenarios where there are more than or less than the ideal number of players for a session, the number of players per team, or the game length may be altered to ensure a fair opportunity for evaluation of each player on the ice.

### 4.3 Gameplay Activation Flow Chart

For the gameplay skates, the program aim is to have **30** skaters allocated to each team skate until the final skate for any team. The top players on any team may be rostered prior to the Final skate, the reason for this is to allow closer ranked skaters more time to compete by removing standout players on the session. Figure 1 shows an example flow diagram for a 6-team division.

Any specific divisions player count and remaining player pool balances may lead to deviations from these aims.

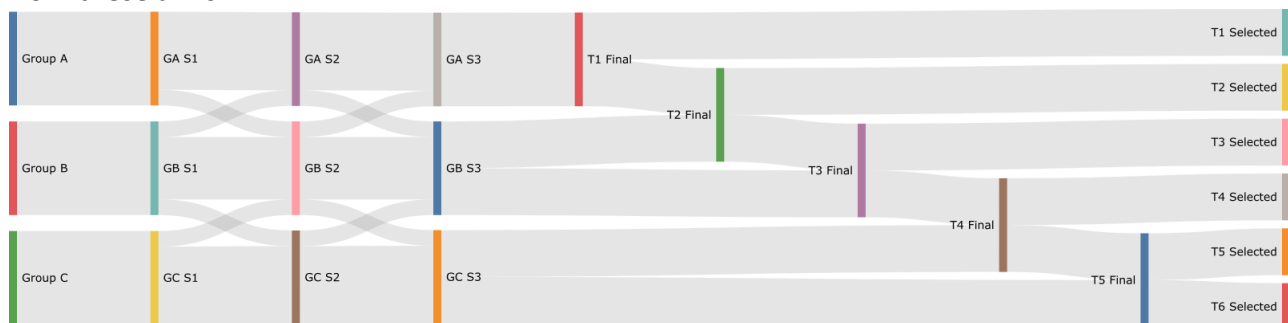


Figure 1: Example Player Group Flow for a 6 team division.

### 4.4 Gameplay Group Assignment

For the gameplay skates, the program aim is to have **3** full lines of players allocated to each of **2** teams. Typically, this means each age division will start out with **2** or **3** groups of **30** players (**18** forwards and **12** defensive players). At the end of gameplay session 1 and again after gameplay session 2, evaluation ranks and scores are used to ensure appropriate group membership. Players may be moved up or down a group to ensure that they are competing against players of a similar level. The gameplay group assignment process is structured so that all players, regardless of the group they start in, have the opportunity to make the highest-level team based on their own performance.

### 4.5 Third Party Evaluator

The Cochrane Minor Hockey Association engages an independent third-party evaluation services vendor to provide on and off ice evaluation services, including facilitation and direct evaluation of

player performance in technical and gameplay settings. For the 2025-26 season, the vendor providing this service for forward and defense players is Fuel Performance Testing<sup>2</sup>.

#### **4.6 Evaluation Software**

Cochrane Minor Hockey uses a software program called Team Genius<sup>3</sup> to support secure and real time evaluation data capture. Once evaluators enter a player's scores, that data is locked in. Third-party evaluators can enter their evaluation data into a phone, notebook or iPad for encrypted data storage.

#### **4.7 Evaluation Timelines**

Cochrane Minor Hockey player technical and gameplay evaluation schedules are available on the Cochrane Minor Hockey Website<sup>4</sup>. Times and groupings are subject to change ahead of and during the evaluation period.

#### **4.8 Data used for Ranking and Team Selection**

In all age and program combinations, player rankings will be compiled from the set of technical and gameplay sessions using the weights and ratios outlined in Appendix B, C, and D.

AAA/AA team selection will be performed using ranks from technical sessions as well as AAA/AA gameplay session ranks. AAA and AA programs include opportunities for head coach feedback in final roster assembly. Notes on this process are included in subsection 4.10.

REP/Female team selection will be performed using ranks from technical sessions as well as any REP gameplay session ranks.

RHL team selection will be performed using ranks from technical sessions as well as any RHL gameplay session ranks.

In the REP and across Co-Ed and Female programs, player selection will be informed by player aggregate ranks informed by the individual players body of work evaluated in technical and gameplay sessions.

With the exception of U13 AAA, CMHA does not always control the scheduling and timing of AAA evaluations. Occasionally, pre-season tournament or group skate sessions for regional AAA teams may overlap with CMHA AA tryouts.

To ensure opportunity for all players to play at the appropriate level, CMHA will maintain close contact with non CMHA AAA tryout managers to ensure that returning players released late in their respective AAA evaluation process have an opportunity to be considered for placement on Cochrane AA teams.

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<sup>2</sup> Fuel Performance Testing Website: <https://www.fuelperformancetesting.com>

<sup>3</sup> Team Genius <https://teamgenius.com/>

<sup>4</sup> Cochrane Minor Hockey Association Website: <https://www.cochraneminorhockey.com/>



Depending on a variety of factors such as player work load, relative rank in AAA skates, and relative rank against other returning players from the same AAA skate, the evaluation committee will determine on a case-by-case basis if it is appropriate to place late released AAA players into ongoing AA evaluations or to consider direct placement on the AA roster.

Similarly, players released after selection to a CMHA AA evaluation pre-season tournament roster may be invited to bypass the REP group skates, proceeding directly to the REP Team 1 first skate for consideration for advanced rostering as described in section 4.9.

## 4.9 REP Team Formation

After the first three group skate sessions, final skate gameplay sessions will be held for each team in any age divisions sequence of teams.

After the third group skate session, and subsequently after any team final skate, the highest-ranking group of players in the session may be selected for advance rostering to the team. This practice is designed to allow more ice time in the subsequent gameplay session for the tightly ranked main group of candidate skaters. The decision to exercise this option will only be activated when there is a statistically significant gap between the evaluation scores of the top group of skaters and the balance of the active pool vying for a roster position.

The active team selection roster for the next team in sequence will be formed using the players released from the preceding team formation skate and the highest ranked set skaters from the first three group skates not yet activated.

The remaining player count and group balances in any division at any time during the evaluation process may lead to deviations from the ideal of **30** skaters per session.

Data from all within division gameplay sessions attended including the group formation skates, and any team selection skates will be included in the calculation of each player's average rank, and team placement.

The activation/invite process aims to only activate players to rosters for team skates that they have a reasonable chance of being selected for. Occasionally in order to assemble a suitable cohort to support gameplay and appropriate evaluation, players may be activated early or be invited to attend multiple team selection skates before being rostered to a REP team or transitioned to RHL.

The AA program follows the same process and policy as the REP program for team formation, however opportunities to incorporate coaches feedback in addition to the independent evaluators feedback are incorporated. Details of these processes are outlined in section 4.10.

## 4.10 AAA/AA Team Formation

In any AAA or AA program ID, Summer Warrior, or Main Camp team formation, and once all 3rd party evaluation scores have been verified and validated, players may be signed or appointed to a team. The remaining slots are populated with the next ranked players after 3<sup>rd</sup> party evaluations in subsequent ID or Main camp skates but remain open for coaches feedback driven change requests.



Players proposed for rostering that are not the next sequential players from an evaluation rank and score perspective must be comparable to those occupying the slots when ranked solely by the independent evaluators.

These roster update requests may only be initiated by head coaches request and must be supported by discussion and debate during the team roster finalization meeting. If roster updates are proposed, the Evaluation committee will lead a discussion of the comparability of the player under consideration and those they are proposed to replace prior to a group consensus-based workflow to finalize the roster.

The AA team selection process will accommodate players cut from AAA programs during final AAA cuts. Players trying out for AAA who are cut are expected to participate in any remaining AA evaluations. If final AAA skates coincide with AA final skates, the Evaluation Committee may issue exemption from attending final AA skates to players being cut from AAA.

#### **4.11 Team Roster Finalization**

For any final team selection event, the VP of Operations will host a conference call/meeting with the President, VP High Performance, VP of RHL, VP of Player Development, VP of Female, Evaluation Director, and Goalie Director. This call will include a discussion and presentation of all rankings and data appropriate for consideration in the finalization of the roster under discussion. In the event of a tied evaluation rank, a tie break rubric will be executed and reviewed.

Ideally these meetings will occur quickly after a team final skate, but from time to time they will need to be held in the AM of the day after a skate. The program goal is to strive to release rosters within 24 hours of a team's final skate. Deviations from this aim for reasons of stakeholder availability, family request consideration, or the integration and debate of head coach feedback in the AAA/AA program streams, are all possible and permitted to ensure appropriate and careful analysis and consideration in our highly competitive divisions.

#### **4.12 Data Audit and Validation**

Independent verification and validation of Team Genius reported scores and ranks for each skate is used as the primary audit and score reconciliation process. Additional calculations of evaluator congruency, score variation, and data completeness are performed on each skate. Evaluation data from gameplay sessions are not considered official until these evaluations are performed and signed off by the Evaluation Director.

#### **4.13 RHL Transitions**

All players being transitioned will receive official notice before the last CAHL REP Team roster is announced for that division. All players exiting from the CAHL evaluations are required to participate in the RHL evaluation process.

#### **4.14 AAA/AA Transitions**

Simply trying out for an AAA or AA team does not guarantee any specific group placement for player(s) transitioning from AAA or AA tryouts to CAHL REP Team tryouts.



## **4.15 Circumstances Regarding Player Absence**

### **4.15.1 Injury**

Injuries that prevent participation in the evaluation process must be reported to the VP of Operations AND the Evaluation Director. A medical doctor's note and/or other documentation may be required as part of the notification. Prior to the player participating in the evaluation process, players on Injury exclusion will need a "Return to Play" clearance from their treatment team.

If a player is unable to continue for the remainder of the evaluation process, the situation will be reviewed by the Injury Committee (3 members of the Board). The committee will review existing data from this season, interview coaches from this year and previous years, review data from previous seasons, and make a placement decision based on all the information gathered.

### **4.15.2 Illness**

No accommodation will be made for illness.

### **4.15.3 Multi-sport/Vacation/Activities, etc.**

If a player chooses not to attend any portion of the gameplay sessions, they will receive no-score for that session.

### **4.15.4 Other Circumstances**

Other circumstances that prevent participation by a player must be brought to the attention of the VP of Operations and the Evaluation Director.

## **4.16 Grievance Process**

The grievance process is intended to be utilized when the outlined evaluation process is not followed and a decision rendered impacts the placement of a player or goaltender to a program, tier, and/or level of play as a result.

- Grievances concerning the improper conduct of CMHA personnel associated with the evaluation process will be dealt with in accordance with our Respect and Code of Conduct policy.
- Evaluation notes, scores, rankings, and any other material associated with the evaluation process will not be released unless deemed absolutely necessary by the individuals assigned to investigate the grievance.
- At no time shall a player or goaltender be re-assessed, re-evaluated, or re-ranked in response to an evaluation grievance.
- A response to the grievance will be provided in written form.

### **4.16.1 Grievance Submission Workflow**

1. Grievances are to be made in writing and submitted to [ombudsman@cochraneminorhockey.com](mailto:ombudsman@cochraneminorhockey.com).



2. A non-refundable fee of \$250 is required to be paid to access a review of your player's performance during evaluations.
3. The following must be included in the written grievance:
  - The Division(s) for which the grievance relates.
  - The exact aspect(s) of the Evaluation Process being grieved.
  - Any supporting documentation or information.
  - The contact information of the individual submitting the grievance.
  - Any resolution(s) being sought.
4. Once the ombudsman reviews the grievance, at their sole discretion, next steps will be taken with the committee.
5. The committee will review the grievance and communicate via the ombudsman for resolution.



# Appendices

## A Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

### A.1 Evaluation Committee

The evaluation committee is comprised of the Evaluation Director, the Evaluation Coordinator, the Goaltending Director, the VPs of Operations, Player Development, RHL, Female Programs, and High-Performance Programs.

#### A.1.1 Evaluation Director and Goalie Director

- Facilitate and oversee the successful execution of the evaluation process, including third-party vendors for technical skates (when applicable) and group skates.
- Provide guidance and support to third-party evaluators and parent auditors, including training on evaluation methods and criteria.
- Participate as active members of the auditing team. Required to keep all information confidential and support the process in front of the membership.
- Analyze collected data using statistical methods, qualitative analysis techniques, and review final standings with the evaluation committee.
- Ensure the quality and integrity of the evaluation process by adhering to established standards and best practices, including monitoring data collection procedures, conducting validity and reliability checks, and verifying the accuracy of analysis.

#### A.1.2 Evaluation Coordinator

- Collaborate with stakeholders to develop evaluation plans that align with CMHA's goals and objectives. This involves identifying key evaluation questions, determining data collection methods, and establishing evaluation timelines.
- Ensure the quality and integrity of the evaluation process by adhering to established standards and best practices.
- Document issues and opportunities for improving evaluation processes based on current season outcomes vs. previous seasons. Present suggested changes to enhance future evaluations to the Evaluation Committee for consideration.
- Provide training and support to volunteers involved in daily evaluations.
- Coordinate logistics of daily evaluation sessions, including the sign-in process, volunteer management, and equipment requirements.
- Communicate with the membership regarding volunteer requirements for successful completion of evaluations and ensure sufficient volunteers are scheduled.



### **A.1.3 VP Operations**

- Facilitate and oversee the successful execution of the evaluation process, including third-party vendors for technical skates (when applicable) and group skates.
- Oversee the evaluation committee and daily evaluation volunteers.
- Ensure that all documentation and data entry are received and audited.
- Ensure the confidentiality and integrity of the information collected during the evaluation process.
- General oversight of the team selection and evaluation processes.
- Uphold ethical principles and standards in all aspects of the evaluation process and those involved. In conjunction with the executives, issue any discipline or removal of individuals that conflict with the purpose and objectives of the evaluation process.

### **A.1.4 VP High Performance, VP of RHL, VP of Player Development, VP of Female**

- Uphold ethical principles and standards in all aspects of the evaluation process and those involved.
- Ensure predetermined evaluation criteria and performance metrics are consistently applied in the formation of each team before publication to the membership.
- Use open dialogue and consensus-building among VPs to address any discrepancies or contentious issues regarding player placement.
- Document and record decisions regarding team placements, including the rationale for any exceptional cases or adjustments made during the review process.

## **A.2 Evaluation Ombudsman**

- The Ombudsman is a non-board member with a centralized email for complaints and issues to be submitted for review. The purpose of this role is to minimize interruptions to the evaluation committee during a busy time.
- Ombudsmen are to determine if issues are time-sensitive or critical to decision-making. If not deemed critical, the 24-hour rule will apply.

## **A.3 Third-Party Evaluators**

- The technical and group skates are scored by a third-party vendor.
- Evaluators enter their player evaluations directly into the encrypted Team Genius program.
- Third-party evaluators can enter their evaluation data using a phone, notebook or iPad.



#### **A.4 High-Performance (AAA/AA) Coaches**

- Coaches will independently evaluate all AAA and AA skates away from the third-party evaluators. Coaches will review the evaluator's scores following each skate as part of the audit process.

#### **A.5 Daily Supporting Volunteers**

- Participate in any orientation sessions provided by CMHA prior to the volunteer shift.
- Adhere to CMHA guidelines and protocols as they relate to evaluations. Seek clarification from the Evaluations Coordinator if questions or concerns arise.
- Interact with members and players in a professional, respectful, and courteous manner at all times.
- Respect the confidentiality of sensitive information shared with them as a volunteer, including personal data and internal communications.

#### **A.6 Parents**

- Be aware of the expectations of the evaluation process and ensure that their child is prepared and aware of the same.
- Avoid having any contact with evaluators at any time during the evaluation process.
- Model positive behavior and attitudes for their child both on and off the ice. Demonstrate good sportsmanship, respect for others, and a commitment to fair play in their interactions with fellow parents, volunteers, and officials.
- Responsible for thoroughly reading and staying informed of all communication from CMHA through emails and the website regarding evaluations, including important dates, groupings, and schedule changes.



## B Gameplay Evaluation Scoring

Each player will receive a minimum of two gameplay evaluation sessions.

Gameplay sessions will be run as regular 5 vs. 5 games where player counts permit. Player assessment during gameplay sessions will be performed by at least 4 third party evaluators who specialize in player training and development.

These assessments will be used to calculate defence player rankings which will be used to place players on the appropriate teams.

Each player must attend the gameplay evaluation sessions. Players not attending their scheduled session will not receive a score for the missed session(s).

Scoring across all age categories and divisions will be performed using the rubric presented as Table 1, and additionally Table 2 (Forwards) and Table 3 (Defence) these weights and categories are directly encoded into the CMHA evaluation data collection platform<sup>5</sup>.

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Cochrane Minor Hockey Association uses the platform <https://teamgenius.com/> for evaluation data collection and management.



Table 1: Game Play Evaluation Weights and Descriptions for Defence

Criteria	Description
<b>35% - Impact on the Game - Skill</b>	
Playmaking	Moving the puck, advancing it to the lead man, avoiding turnovers, finding ways to keep the play alive, finding the soft areas, chipping pucks into open ice for teammates, create space for themselves and teammates - use cutbacks, deception, etc. to maintain possession.
Offensive Production	Goals, Assists, scoring opportunities created.
Skill	Shooting, passing, skating - are they able to translate their abilities into their game - do they continuously appear in the play for positive reasons.
Puck Possession	Body positioning, strength, avoid giving up possession unless absolutely necessary - create space for themselves and teammates - use cutbacks, deception, etc. to keep possession.
<b>30% - Impact on the Game - Compete</b>	
Puck Pursuit	Relentless in situations when closest to puck. Second effort. Tenacity. Stops and Starts. Good sticks - stick positioning to take away lanes or angling.
Backchecking/Forechecking	Going hard through the middle. Finishing Checks - no swooping.
Assertiveness/Competitiveness	Corner battles, net front battles, getting in shooting lanes, don't give up on the play once the puck is lost immediately try to get it back.
Stamina	Has the conditioning to outwork the opponent, hustles back to the bench at the end of shifts.

## C Gameplay Forward Evaluation Scoring

Gameplay sessions will be run as regular 5 vs. 5 games where player counts permit. Forward player assessment during gameplay sessions will be performed by at least one third party evaluator who specializes in player training and development.

These assessments will be used to calculate forward player rankings which will be used to place players on the appropriate teams.



Each player who declares as a forward must attend the gameplay evaluation sessions. Players not attending their scheduled session will not receive a score for the missed session(s).

In addition to the criteria and weights presented in Table 1, defensive player offensive and defensive gameplay scoring across all age categories and divisions will be performed using the rubric presented as Table 2. This rubric is directly encoded into the CMHA evaluation data collection platform<sup>6</sup>.

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Table 2: Game Play Evaluation Weights and Descriptions for Forwards

Criteria	Description
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Cochrane Minor Hockey Association uses the platform <https://teamgenius.com/> for evaluation data collection and management.



**20% - Offensive Gameplay**

Play with Puck	Utilizes open ice when carrying the puck. Finds or creates openings for skating and passing options.
Play Away from Puck	Finds lanes, gaps, and seams to skate to or be a passing option for puck carrying teammates.
Offensive Positioning	Drives the net in the offensive zone and maintains offensive position - does not swoop away from the net or the play.
Patience	Doesn't force the play, allows it to develop.
Zone Departures	Breaks out of defensive zone in good position, not too far ahead or behind the play.
Extending Play	Finds ways to keep the offensive play alive, finds the soft areas, and chips pucks into open ice for teammates to skate on to.

**15% - Defensive Gameplay**

Defensive Strategy	Protects the middle of the ice in defensive zone.
Two Way Play	Hard Backchecks - coming back to the middle of the ice.
Team Support	Supports teammates already engaged in a battle on the defensive side of the puck.
Defensive Support	Covers for defensemen when they rush or step up in the play.
Offensive Attack	Hard on the Forecheck. Forechecks with purpose angling or surfing opposing player to the outside does not give up the middle of the ice.

**D Gameplay Defense Evaluation Scoring**

Gameplay sessions will be run as regular 5 vs. 5 games where player counts permit. Defence player assessment during gameplay sessions will be performed by at least 4 third party evaluators who specialize in player training and development.

These assessments will be used to calculate defence player rankings which will be used to place players on the appropriate teams.

Each player who declares as a defence player must attend the gameplay evaluation sessions. Players not attending their scheduled session will not receive a score for the missed session(s).

In addition to the criteria and weights presented in Table 1, defensive player offensive and defensive gameplay scoring across all age categories and divisions will be performed using the rubric presented as Table 3. This rubric which is directly encoded into the CMHA evaluation data collection platform<sup>7</sup>.



Table 3: Game Play Evaluation Weights and Descriptions for Defence

Criteria	Description
<b>20% - Defensive Gameplay</b>	
Offensive Gap Control	Following play to be an offensive option, keeping plays alive.
Offensive Zone Hinge	Partner pinching on the wall, Defense partner hinges to neutral zone to cover.
Offensive Zone Puck Awareness	Knowing when to shoot, pass, or dump the puck back down deep to keep the play alive.
Shooting	Knowing when to shoot - open lane, not shooting into opposition player.
Passing	Knowing when to pass - finding an open teammate.
Dumping	Knowing when to dump the puck back down deep to keep the play alive when no shooting lane or teammate is available.
Defense to Defense <b>15% - Offensive Gameplay</b>	Knowing when to use the DtoD option and when not to.
Higher Level Vision	Jumping into soft spots to be an offensive option without compromising defensive positioning (ability to get back into defensive position).
Defensive Gap control	Controlling your pace and space to create good gap when defending the rush.
Angling	Pushes forwards outside, protects middle ice. Uses body/stick to angle attacking player.
Angling	Do they protect the mid lane and force opposing players inside out.
Puck Battles	Defensive side - keeps positioning between the attacking player and the goalie.
Net Front	Body positioning and/or elimination of attacker's stick.
Defensive Zone Hinge	Supports D-partner, staggering into the D-zone as a passing option, coverage in case partner is under attack.

Cochrane Minor Hockey Association uses the platform <https://teamgenius.com/> for evaluation data collection and management.



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Partner Work

Utilize D-partner for support – D to D passes.

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