

Southern United Hockey Club Inc

Juniors

February 2019



Junior Section Selection Policy

Approved by SUHC Junior Committee – February 2019

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2. Overriding principles

- 2.1 Southern United Hockey Club ('SUHC') is the largest hockey club in the South Eastern Suburbs of Melbourne. We cater for hockey players of all skill levels, from social to elite players. SUHC's junior hockey program includes the SUHC Academy and McKenzie's Clinics and we pride ourselves on our commitment to develop our junior players.
- 2.2 SUHC is an inclusive club, which understands the value of diversity and aims to be anti-discriminatory.
- 2.3 Accordingly, our Selection Policy is designed to balance the needs of hockey players of all abilities and is to be applied equally and fairly to all players.
- 2.4 Selection is always a judgmental process, involving a number of considerations. In a team sport such as hockey, selection may also involve the balance of teams and not just factors about one player.
- 2.5 SUHC ask that all players and parents understand that the responsibility for selection falls to volunteers giving their time to administer and coach junior hockey at SUHC.

3. Code of behavior

- 3.1 SUHC has adopted Hockey Victoria's Code of Behavior concerning the behaviors we expect of SUHC players, parents and spectators.
- 3.2 SUHC reserves the right not to select any junior player who breaches the Code of Behavior.
- 3.3 SUHC reserves the right not to select any junior player with parents who breach the Code of Behavior.
- 3.4 Any decision not to select a junior player on the basis of a breach of the Code of Conduct by the player or a parent will be made by the SUHC Junior Committee.



4. Failure to pay club fees

- 4.1 SUHC is an organisation that is run by volunteers and is dependent upon fee revenue paid by players to cover operating expenses including construction and maintenance of our grounds and payments to umpires.
- 4.2 SUHC reserves the right not to select players who do not pay their fees prior to the published fee deadlines.
- 4.3 Fee deadlines will be published each season on the SUHC web-site and/or by newsletter.
- 4.4 Any decision not to select a junior player on the basis of a failure to pay fees by the published fee deadlines will be made by the SUHC Junior Committee.

5. Selection method

- 5.1 SUHC will normally enter a number of teams in each Hockey Victoria age group, with teams playing at different grades (levels of competition or difficulty) in each age group to accommodate the different abilities of players in that age group.
- 5.2 Therefore, at the beginning of the season and when new players join, SUHC operates a selection process to match those players to the grade in that age group which best suits the players' abilities but also allows SUHC to field balanced sides, with more than 11 players per side, in normal circumstances.
- 5.3 At the beginning of the season SUHC will form a process to 'stream' players into squads for each grade within each age group. The coaches for each age group will undertake this process collaboratively via training sessions, which may be arranged in the form of trials. The coaches may ask additional club players or members to assist in selection.
- 5.4 Training and trials are open to all registered players who are eligible to play in that age group. Eligible players unavailable for training/trials can ask the coaches to consider their previous performances in a request for selection.
- 5.5 In addition to performance at training and trials, coaches will have regard to prior season performance and hockey achievement in selection.
- 5.6 Goal keeper selection can also include input from specialist goal keeper coaches.
- 5.7 As a general principle, the highest graded sides in each age group will be selected first, with players not selected for the highest grade then considered for the next highest grade.
- 5.8 Selections are designed to create squads and attach players to teams so that teams can train together to build a team methodology and understanding. In most cases, players will play the majority of their games with one team during the season.
- 5.9 However, squads and teams are not 'cast in stone' and factors such as rapid improvement/development, injuries and unavailability and opportunities for players to try playing in different positions may mean that players move between squads during the season.
- 5.10 Selection will be based on the criteria set out below in the sections entitled "Shield/A Grade selection criteria" and "Pennant/District" selection criteria".



6. Shield/A grade selection criteria

- 6.1 Shield/A grades are designed to be the pinnacle of the competition grading and therefore SUHC's selection approach is designed to select the strongest teams.
- 6.2 Players and parents are asked to understand that these are very competitive grades, so typically Shield/A grade teams will have the strongest individual players in specific positions, consistent with achieving the best fit for the team.
- 6.3 Key criteria in the selection process include:
 - Skill levels, technique
 - Tactical awareness
 - Physicality, including whether the player is robust enough for the Shield/A level of a particular age group
 - Fitness, strength, speed, endurance, agility and flexibility
 - Willingness to learn, improve and be coached
 - Potential to improve
 - Attitude and behavior
 - Game availability
 - Effort, punctuality and willingness to train.
- 6.4 In some seasons, SUHC may not qualify under Hockey Victoria grading rules for a Shield/A grade side in some competitions. In such cases, SUHC will apply the criteria set out in section 6 above to the highest graded entry in that age group.
- 6.5 At the commencement of pre-season training, players wishing to be included in the selection process for the Shield/A grade team will be asked to indicate their desire to be included in the process. Only those that have indicated this will be included in the selection process.

7. Pennant and District grade selection criteria

- 7.1 Pennant/District grade teams can sometimes be of relatively even skill levels.
- 7.2 Some players selected in some Pennant/District grade teams may play hockey for social or fitness reasons and may therefore have other factors which they wish to be taken into consideration.
- 7.3 The selection process for these teams is designed to balance teams consistent with giving teams the best chance of selection during the season.
- 7.4 In addition to the key selection criteria listed in section 6.3 above, in these grades SUHC will also endeavor to have regard to factors such as player and parent requests regarding:
 - Social groups and trying to allow friends to play together
 - Transport considerations for players and families
 - Training availability and locations which best suit players
 - Requests to play in different positions to develop skills.



8. Playing in a higher age group

8.1 In most cases, players will be selected in the Hockey Victoria age group which matches their actual age. However, Hockey Victoria does permit players to play in a higher age group.

8.2 There are two circumstances in which a player may play games in a higher age group, sometimes known as “playing up”; as follows:

- On a temporary basis to help balance teams
- On a whole season basis or for a part of the season longer than 3 games.

8.3 Temporary basis

8.3.1 Hockey Victoria permits a player to ‘play up’ in a higher age group.

8.3.2 Hockey Victoria also permits a player to “double up”, i.e. play two games for different teams in a single round, in essence to help clubs avoid taking the pitch with less than 11 players.

8.3.3 Note that there are specific Hockey Victoria rules governing when a double up is permissible, and around whether these games will qualify a player for finals.

8.3.4 The decision to allow a player to play in a higher age group on a temporary basis will be made by the coach of that higher age group team, together with age co-ordinators and with the consent of the player and parents.

8.3.5 In making a decision to allow a player in a higher age group on this basis the coach will consider:

- Skills – whether the player has the requisite skills for the higher age group
- Physicality – whether the player is physically robust enough for the higher age group
- Hockey welfare – whether the player has enough confidence or whether their confidence might be adversely impacted by playing in the higher age group.

8.3.6 In normal circumstances the coach of the higher age group will consult with the age co-ordinators and coach of the lower age before selecting a player to play temporarily in the higher age group on a temporary basis, to ensure that other teams, and future game and finals eligibility is not compromised.

8.3.7 It is the responsibility of the manager of the higher age group to complete match reports documenting any double ups and working with the manager of the normal age groups to make sure appropriate opposition agreement is obtained for any double ups.

8.4 Whole season basis

8.4.1 In some cases, a player or parents may request to play in a higher age group on a whole season or extended basis for reasons such as:

- Hockey development where a player has reached a level of play where their development is limited whilst playing with age peers. This is particularly prevalent with under 10 players who have played and trained for several years, who may be best suited to playing under 12 competition.
- Logistical reasons, such as an under 12 player unable to play on Saturday mornings due to other sporting commitments, wishing to play under 14 hockey on Friday evenings.
- Players missing the year 'cut off' by a few weeks wishing to play with school class mates. This sometimes happens for players who may be young in the school year.

8.4.2 Any request for a player to play in a higher age group must be made in writing to the junior committee at the commencement of the pre-season training.

8.4.3 The decision to allow a player to play in a higher age group on an extended basis will be made by the SUHC Junior Committee, with the consent of the higher age group age co-ordinator, player requesting the change and parents of the player.

8.4.4 As a principle, SUHC wants to make hockey available to as many young players as possible and wants to allow players to both participate and develop their skills. Accordingly, SUHC will endeavor to accommodate requests to allow players to play in higher age groups.

8.4.5 In making a decision to allow a player in a higher age group on this basis, the SUHC Junior Committee and higher age group coach will consider:

- Skills – whether the player has the requisite skills for the higher age group
- Physicality – whether the player is physically robust enough for the higher age group
- Hockey welfare – whether the player has enough confidence or whether their confidence might be adversely impacted by playing in the higher age group.
- Player numbers in the higher age group and whether moving the player to a higher age group might limit or reduce opportunities of players in that higher age group.

In making a decision to allow a player in a higher age group on this basis, due to these factors a decision to allow to a player to play in a higher age group may not be made immediately on request.



8.4.6 The SUHC Junior Committee will also consider which grade in the higher age group the player wishes to play for and might be selected for in assessing the factors set out above. In practice, players playing in a higher age group may be better suited to a lower grading within the higher age group.

9. Selection of girls in mixed sides

9.1 Hockey Victoria operates competitions for junior players as either:

- “Mixed”, meaning both boys and girls play in the same competition;
- “Boys”, meaning just for boys, or
- “Girls”, meaning just for girls.

Accordingly, there is an opportunity for girls to play in either the girls or the mixed competitions.

9.2 SUHC is inclusive in its selection of teams and encourages girls to play to their full potential.

9.3 Hockey Victoria’s experience is that, especially in the under 16 age groups, particularly at Shield level, the physical development of boys versus girls, means that it can be quite challenging for many girls to remain competitive with boys of the same age. Accordingly, SUHC’s experience is that in these age groups most girls elect to play girls hockey and encourages girls to do so.

9.4 As part of the development of girls’ hockey, based on both Hockey Victoria rules, and girl’s development, SUHC encourages all girls to play in girls’ teams.

9.5 For 2019 and 2020, under 16 girls who wish to be selected in “mixed” teams must request to be included in the selection process for mixed teams at the start of pre-season via writing to the junior committee and if approved will be included as part of selection process and will be subject to the selection criteria for the teams set out in sections 6 and 7 above.

9.6 SUHC may seek to strongly encourage girls to elect to play girls hockey where, in the opinion of the coaches, it is in that player’s best interests.

9.7 In encouraging girls to play girls hockey, SUHC may also have regard to player numbers, to address situations such as:

- Where it is necessary to encourage girls to play in the girls’ squad to achieve enough numbers to field teams of 11.
- Where allowing a girl to play in the mixed squad might result in a boy being unable to play due to excessive numbers of mixed players.

9.8 Equally SUHC may seek to strongly encourage girls to elect to play mixed hockey where, in the opinion of the coaches, it is in that player’s best interests in terms of development.

9.9 The decision to allow a girl to play in a mixed side on a whole of season basis will be made by the SUHC Junior Committee, with the consent of the age co-ordinator, mixed team coach, the player requesting the change and parents of the player.

9.10 From time to time a girl may have an opportunity to play in a mixed side on a



temporary basis (defined as up to 3 games in a season). The decision to allow a girl to play in a mixed side on a temporary basis will be made by the mixed side coach, with the consent of the player and parents. Where possible the coach of the mixed side will consult in advance with age co-ordinator and the player's normal girls' coach before selecting a player in the mixed side on a temporary basis.

- 9.11 In deciding to allow a girl to play in a mixed team the SUHC junior committee and/or coach will consider from a player perspective:
- Skills – whether the player has the requisite skills for the higher age group
 - Physicality – whether the player is physically robust enough for the higher age group
 - Hockey welfare – whether the player has enough confidence or whether their confidence might be adversely impacted by playing in the higher age group

As well as club situation as per point 9.7

10. Players from other clubs playing for SUHC in Summer competitions

- 10.1 There are provisions in Hockey Victoria rules for some competitions, normally the Summer outdoor and indoor competitions, to allow players from a club who has not entered the competition to represent another club who has entered that competition. For example, if SUHC has entered a Summer indoor hockey competition and Frankston HC had not, a Frankston player could represent SUHC in this competition. The rules are designed to allow players from all clubs to access as many hockey opportunities as possible.
- 10.2 SUHC is inclusive in its selection of teams and seeks to maximise opportunities for children to participate in sport.
- 10.3 However, SUHC also seeks to give priority of opportunity to club members.
- 10.4 Accordingly, SUHC would normally not offer opportunities to players from other clubs unless all SUHC who wished to participate in that competition had been accommodated.
- 10.5 A potential exception to the rule in 10.4 applies whether the involvement of the player from the other club helps resolve coaching or managerial vacancies for these teams. For example, if the parent of the player from the other club acts as coach or manager.
- 10.6 A second potential exception to the rule in 10.4 applies where the player has declared an intention to play for SUHC in future seasons. Note that SUHC does not envisage that Summer competitions will be used as a process to deliberately attract and recruit players from other clubs.
- 10.7 The decision to allow a player from another club to play in a Summer competition will be made by the SUHC Junior Committee, with the consent of the team coach, the player requesting to play and parents of the player.



- 10.8 The decision can only be made where the other player is from a club who are not part of that competition and is predicated on SUHC following all Hockey Victoria rules to notify Hockey Victoria/the other club of these circumstances.

11. Playing positions

- 11.1 SUHC views junior hockey as a developmental process and is desirous, where possible whilst maintaining team balance and competitiveness, to allow players to experience and develop playing in different positions.
- 11.2 SUHC's intention is to allow all players to play in at least 3 different positions in their first season of hockey, unless the player does not wish to do this.
- 11.3 Where a side does not have a permanent goal keeper, SUHC may require each player in the side to take a rotation at goalkeeping.

12. Time on the interchange bench / rotation

- 12.1 SUHC's philosophy is that every player pays an annual membership fee so should expect equal game time and training attention over a season. SUHC also believes that teams win games, not individuals, so all team members should be given an equal opportunity to develop game and team skills.
- 12.2 Hockey Victoria rules allow 11 players on the field and up to 5 interchange substitutes for full field competitions.
- 12.3 SUHC's policies are that:
- All players should take their turn on the interchange bench
 - No player should be on the interchange bench to the extent that they are regularly playing substantially less than a full game in any lower graded teams
 - No player should start three consecutive matches on the interchange bench
 - The exceptions to these policies are:
 - Players who arrive late for warm up and games may start on the interchange bench when they arrive late
 - Players who are injured or unwell may spend more time on the interchange bench during a recovery period
 - Goalkeeper rotation is impractical unless there are two keepers with equipment at a match.
 - Players who are selected/promoted to play in a higher grade should be aware that there is a possibility that they will have less game time in the higher grade. If players wish to have more game time, they may request to be dropped to a lower grade to do so.

13. Appeals against selection decisions

- 13.1 The selection process always involves judgment. SUHC endeavors to be objective in selection of teams, but by the very nature of player assessment, selection always



involves some judgment.

- 13.2 Accordingly, the selection process can be confronting and difficult for players, parents and coaches alike.
- 13.3 If a player or a parent believes that they have not been treated fairly or objectively in the selection process, they should:
- First raise their concerns, in a respectful and calm way with the team coach and/or manager. Coaches are instructed to give honest and open feedback on selection decisions, and it is expected that players and parents will accept the feedback in the openness in which it is given.

Players and parents are strongly encouraged to, in the first instance, speak with the team coach and manager to discuss their concerns, but then to please put their concerns in writing (a short email to the coach and / or manager will suffice) as a record of the concerns and how they are addressed is helpful if the concern cannot be resolved and further escalation is required.

- Should the player or parent remain concerned after liaison with the coach and/or manager, they should raise the issue with the age group coordinator for the age group in which they are playing. The age group coordinator will act to mediate between the player/parents and coach/manager.
- Should the player or parent remain concerned, they should raise their concern with a member of the SUHC Junior Committee and the concern will be discussed at the SUHC Junior Committee. The SUHC Junior Committee may ask that the player/parent attend a SUHC Junior Committee meeting to discuss the matter.