

Under-age Athlete Policy

Applicability

This policy applies to all CORA athletes and teams in U12 and up.

Definitions

An “under-age athlete” is any athlete who wishes to play in an age group while still being age eligible to play in a younger age group. For example, an athlete still eligible to play at the U12 level but playing at the U14 level is an under-age athlete.

Preamble

CORA believes that athletes develop best from both a skill and social perspective in their age-appropriate division as determined by their year of birth. In general, CORA athletes should play in their age-appropriate division.

There may be times when playing up may be beneficial to the overall program, for example due to team forming needs. Occasionally there may be situations where an athlete’s skills are exceptional and where they have the physical and psychological attributes to compete at a higher level and where maturity, safety and other factors do not place them at a disadvantage. Any other requests for placement outside of a player’s age-appropriate category will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the appropriate VPs and convenors.

In developing this policy, the policies and experiences of other local associations were reviewed and considered. A similar policy has been adopted for the sake of consistency and to avoid triggering disruptive movement of players between associations. CORA’s out of association player policy and that of other associations were also reviewed. While the under-age and out of association policies do not serve the same purposes, they are complementary and achieve the goal of providing appropriate opportunities to under-age players and out of association players while providing reasonable protection for CORA of age players.

In addition, Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) principles as set by Ringette Canada have been respected and incorporated into the policy decision process. Details of those LTAD principles can be found here: <http://ltrd.ringette.ca/athlete/>

Policy

Athletes may register and try out for the age division that is older than the athlete’s designated age division. Exceptional athletes are players who assess at the top of the AA player group. Out of association underage athletes are not eligible to try out in higher age divisions in CORA.

Procedure

An athlete who is registered to try out for a team above their age eligible division shall provide in writing, notification to the CORA President with rationale supporting their desire to play up. This must be received by the President no later than 10 days prior to the first tryout.

Evaluation of Athletes

1. If there are under-age athletes registered for tryouts, a subcommittee will be formed in advance of the tryout commencing. The committee will consist of the relevant Vice President(s) and both division convenors and will be responsible for determining if an athlete will be offered a position on a team not aligned with their age. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis and in addition to tryout results will consider factors such as:
 - LTAD principles including maturity, physical strength, emotional health, and social development of the under-age player
 - The number of players of similar skill level in the higher age group
 - The impact on the higher age group team
 - The impact on the same age group team
 - Level of play available in outside Associations for both age groups
 - Impact on the city of Ottawa Ringette Association
 - Any other factors relevant to the situation
2. The athlete must attend tryouts for their age-appropriate team in addition to the upper level. This requirement may be waived at the discretion of the responsible VP. Any applicable fees will be paid for each tryout session.
3. Skaters must assess in the top 4. Goalies must assess as the #1 goalie and the assessors must agree that they are significantly better than the #2 goalie. If a second goalie is to be added to a team and there is not a second goalie trying out, an under-age goalie may be added to the team if they are assessed as of calibre. If this criterion is not achieved the athlete will return to their age-appropriate division.
4. As is true for all athletes participating in tryouts, under-age athletes are required to attend every assessment session. Failure to do so may jeopardize their ability to make the team. The Convenor must be notified in advance if an athlete is unable to attend any of the sessions. CORA's "Tryout Policy for Injured, Ill or Absent Players" as found in CORA's Player Assessment Guideline document does not apply to under-age athletes. Under-age athletes must be available for tryout sessions and will not be assessed at an alternate time.

In addition to this policy, player movements must be compliant with all Ontario Ringette Association and Eastern Region Ringette Association policies. The CORA board of directors may make exceptions to this policy for the overall good of the program. Players currently playing up are grandfathered regarding this policy.

Ringette Ontario Age Divisions	Clarification for CORA Under-Age Policy purposes
U12	turning 10 or 11 by Dec 31 of playing year
U14	turning 12 or 13 by Dec 31 of playing year
U16	turning 14 or 15 by Dec 31 of playing year
U19	turning 16, 17 or 18 by Dec 31 of playing year