

## Laramie Amateur Hockey Club Player Movement Policy

It is the policy of the LAHC Board that each registered player will play in his/her age group as set forth by USA Hockey rules. This is in keeping with USA Hockey guidance and youth sports policies in general, which hold that youth players benefit most and develop best as players when they participate in their own age group. As a result, the LAHC Board generally discourages players from attempting to play outside of their own age groups.

However, the Board also understands that youth players develop at different rates during their childhoods, and in some cases playing and/or practicing at a level above a player's age-appropriate group may be more beneficial to the player's development than remaining in their own age group. In recognition of this, the LAHC Board has developed guidelines that outline the process by which a parent or legal guardian of a youth player may request an exemption to Board Policy on age-group assignments in order to participate with the next age group. These guidelines also provide an overview of how the Board will evaluate requests for Player Movement.

In general, these guidelines are intended for players that have reached the age at which full-ice games are played (10U). The LAHC Board differentiates between 8U and other age groups with regard to Player Movement for the following reasons.

- Unlike most other youth age-classifications in USA Hockey, the 8U group contains a wide breadth of youth player ages and experience levels. Thus, a player who ages into 8U for a season may be in his/her 4th season of hockey, or may be brand new to the sport. This can result in a large disparity in body sizes among players as well as in differences in skill and development. In such cases, it may be beneficial for all the skaters for the bigger and/or more developed player to move up to 10U (assuming the player's skill and development are sufficiently advanced).
- USA Hockey stipulates that the 8U game is played cross-ice, with no icing or offsides, to allow new/young players more opportunities to touch the puck and to increase players awareness of spatial positioning on the ice. A more skilled/experienced player can dominate these cross-ice games. This runs counter to USA Hockey's and LAHC's objectives, and can be developmentally detrimental to the skaters involved and to our program if, for example, the more developed players' development stagnates while the newer players' development suffers as a result of the skill disparity.

For these reasons, requests to move a player from 8U to 10U will be evaluated in the context of player age, experience, skill and size. When appropriate, the 8U Coordinator may make recommendations to the LAHC Board and parents/guardians of specific 8U players that are encouraged to advance to 10U to continue a smooth progression of skill development for all skaters in these groups.

For players at the 10U level and above, the LAHC Board recognizes several options for a player who may be ready for advanced participation:

**PRACTICE-UP:** The player is allowed to practice with the next age-level up, but their priority lies with their age-level team. When time conflicts arise, the player would participate in age-level activities. For example, a Squirt (10U) approved to Practice-Up would practice with his/her team, and with the PeeWee (12U) team. The player would play only 10U games (i.e., would *not* play any games with the 12U team).

**PLAY-UP:** Player is allowed to register with the next age classification and practices and plays all games with this team. The player does not play or practice with their age-related group. Example: a Squirt (10U) approved to Play-Up to the PeeWee (12U) level would register with the PeeWees (12U) and then only practice and play games with the 12U team.

**DUAL-ROSTERING (formerly advanced play):** The player is allowed to practice and play with both their age-level and next age-level up teams. The player's priority lies with the age-appropriate team, so if conflicts for practice or play exist, the player would participate in age-level activities. For example, a Squirt (10U) approved for dual rostering would practice with the 10U team, and with the 12U team. The player would play all 10U games, but where the schedule allows, the player would also play in the 12U games.

**Female players** are encouraged to participate on all teams where they meet the USA Hockey age requirements. In order to be approved to play on multiple teams, a Player Movement request must be submitted in which a request is made indicating (a) that they would prefer to practice and/or play on both their age-level coed team and the 19U girls team, and if so (b) which are their primary and secondary teams.

Female players at the 10U and 12U age levels who wish to practice and/or play on both their age-level coed team and the 19U girls team should register with their age-level teams first, and then submit a Player Movement request for approval to be dual-rostered with the Girls 19U team.

Female players at the 14U and 19U age levels who wish to practice and/or play on both the 19U girls team, and their age-level coed team should register with the 19U girls team first, and then submit a Player Movement request for approval to be dual-rostered with their age-level coed team.

The Player Movement policy allows female players to identify which team they would prefer to be their primary team, with approval required by affected coaches and the LAHC board.

**Goaltenders** shall be permitted to be rostered on more than one team within the same USA Hockey age classification to ensure each team has a back-up goaltender. Goaltenders may only "Play-Up" to the next age group classification. Goaltenders may not "Play-Down" to the next USA Hockey age classification.

Requests for Player Movement (PRACTICE-UP, PLAY-UP, or DUAL-ROSTERING) must be made prior to the player changing their practice times by completing the online form that includes the LAHC Risk Acknowledgment and Liability Waiver For Players Requesting Player Movement. Only requests submitted to the LAHC Board of Directors by the participant's parents or legal guardians will be considered.

Individual requests for Player Movement shall be considered by the Coach's Representative, who will consult with both age-level coaching staffs that would be involved. Requests for Player Movement will be evaluated by, among other factors, the player's level of skill development and their ability to play at the desired level, particularly those age levels that allow body checking. The final decision MUST be agreed upon by both coaches involved, as well as being ratified by the LAHC Board. Final decisions will be CONFIDENTIAL and the player involved will be notified by the LAHC Board. All requests will be reviewed on a case by case basis, but all requests will be considered from the perspective of whether the move would be beneficial and proper for the individual player, the teams involved and the overall hockey program. With these factors in mind, the following guidelines can be expected to govern outcomes of requests for Player Movement

- LAHC will deny Player Movement requests when it is deemed that either move would be less beneficial to the player's development than remaining with his/her age-appropriate team, and/or when it is deemed that approving the request will lead to player safety concerns. An example of the latter would be request to move a player from a non-checking division to a checking division.
- When evaluating requests, the LAHC Board must also consider other skaters on the teams involved. Thus, even if a player may benefit from Player Movement, the request may be denied if it is deemed that development of other players will be negatively impacted by allowing the move. For example, if allowing a player to move up would negatively impact ice time for existing players (or the player making the request), then the request may be denied.

#### Player Movement Request Procedure

- A parent or guardian should fill out the online Player Movement request form located on the LAHC website.
- The online form must be submitted by no later than mid-October, but can be submitted at any time prior.
- After the form has been submitted, the coach of the affected team may allow the player to practice with their team to evaluate their skills and potential fit. However, this choice is at the discretion of the coaching staff and is not required.
- The Coaches Representative will make a recommendation to the LAHC Board. The Board will review the request by consulting coaches of both teams, considering the skill level of the participant, and reviewing the number of participants on both affected teams.
- LAHC Board will then make a determination to allow or deny the Player Movement request in a timely manner.

If the LAHC Board approves a PRACTICE-UP request, the participant will register for their age-

appropriate team, but then practice with the next age group as long as it doesn't conflict with their age-appropriate team's schedule. If a PRACTICE-UP request is denied, the player would remain registered with their age-appropriate team and continue to practice and contribute their skills to that team. Note: There is an additional \$100.00 fee associated with an approved PRACTICE-UP request.

If the LAHC Board approves a DUAL-ROSTERING request, the participant will register for their age-appropriate team, but then practice and play games with the next age group as long as it doesn't conflict with their age-appropriate team's schedule. If a DUAL-ROSTERING request is denied, the player would remain registered with their age-appropriate team and contribute their skills to that team. PLAY-UP or PRACTICE-UP might be an option depending on the reasons that the DUAL-ROSTERING was denied. Note: There is an additional \$200 fee associated with an approved DUAL-ROSTERING request.

If the LAHC Board approves a PLAY-UP request, the participant will be allowed to register for the next age classification. The participant would be allowed to practice and participate in games with that team. If a PLAY-UP request is denied, the player would then register with their age-appropriate team and contribute their skills to that team. DUAL-ROSTERING or PRACTICE-UP might be an option depending on the reasons that the PLAY-UP was denied. Note: Player pays registration rate for the higher age classification.

If the LAHC Board approves a DUAL-ROSTERING request, the participant will be allowed to practice and play with both teams. If a DUAL-ROSTERING request is denied, the player would then register only with their original team (co-ed for 10U and 12U girls, and 19U for older girls).

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