

Sabres Evaluation Procedures – Team Building

Sabres Program

The Knights of Columbus Sabres program is a community BB hockey program offering Bantam and Midget hockey within the Federation model of Hockey Edmonton. Sabres Hockey is made up of players that come from the Knights of Columbus clubs across Edmonton. The Knights of Columbus clubs that feed the Sabres program are: Annunciation (West), Good Sheppard (West), Knights Southside (South), St. Charles (Northwest) and St. Matthews (Northeast). Sabres players can also come from the Knights of Columbus Peewee AA program.

Because of unlimited Bantam and Midget BB movement within Federation some players come from other Peewee clubs to play in the Sabres with their friends.

Sabres Hockey welcomes hockey players from all over the city! We have players from every quadrant and every community league playing with the Sabres program.

Evaluation Groupings

Sabres players all go through a pre-grouping process before tiering begins. This consists of the following:

- a. Grouping players based upon their playing tier from the previous hockey season.
- b. Coach evaluations of players to determine if players were under-tiered, over-tiered or tiered correctly at the end of the previous hockey season.
- c. New players to Sabres hockey are placed as follows:
 - a. Players from other hockey organizations are placed into groups based upon their previous year tiering, the same as existing Knights of Columbus players
 - b. Players that are new to hockey are placed into the appropriate groups with players closest to their skill levels.

Note that players that participate in the AA tryouts are placed in their pre-grouped spots if they are released from the AA program. After we have completed 2 evaluations AA releases are automatically placed into the top groups in Bantam and Midget for the final evaluation skates. ***AA releases are not automatically guaranteed a spot on the top Sabres Bantam and Midget teams. Only the final release from each team is generally offered that spot.***

Once the groupings are completed tiering begins.

Evaluations

**** Sabres Hockey uses paid, independent evaluators to perform our evaluations. ****

Note: Although it has not yet been adopted for the 2010-2011 season, we will most likely follow the same evaluation procedure as the past!

Generally each player is given four (4) evaluation skates and goaltenders are given two (2) separate goaltender evaluation skates.

In each evaluation skate there is at least one (1) drill that all skaters must perform followed by scrimmage. Scrimmage can consist of 3-on-3, 4-on-4 or 5-on-5. The number of players used in scrimmage is generally determined by the number of players available in a given evaluation skate as well as which evaluation skate number is being run. That is, for the first couple of skates there may be more 3-on-3 and 4-on-4 and when you get to later skates it is generally only 5-on-5.

At each evaluation skate a player is scored during the drills and scrimmage portions. In the past our evaluators have used the following criteria for evaluations:

- a. Offensive play
- b. Defensive play
- c. Skating
- d. Puck Handling
- e. Work Ethic

Players are scored on a 10–point scale for all of these categories and scores are tabulated. Evaluators may come to us and tell us that a player must be moved up or down in a grouping directly after a skate otherwise during the tabulation of scores players can also be moved if their cumulative scores are showing them to stand out in their grouping. Occasionally a player is moved in the groupings and ends up skating more than 4 (four) times, we make every effort to ensure that a players evaluations always include a minimum of 4 (four) skates.

Goaltenders are not evaluated in the player skates however note that evaluators may notice and recommend that a goaltender skate with another group. If this is the case, and there is room, a goaltender will be asked to go out with another group.

Goaltender evaluations are run separately on nights that we have no other player evaluations in that age category going on. As mentioned previously, there are 2 (two) separate skates for goaltenders and their scores are kept cumulatively. These evaluations have been run by a group that includes post–minor hockey goaltenders and we hope to continue to work with them.

Several skaters are provided for shooting on the goaltenders and a number of goaltender specific drills are run. Goaltenders will face high quality shooters that will challenge their skills and determine their respective rankings.

Evaluation Advice

There are many common misconceptions regarding evaluations, chief amongst them that players who go AA tryouts get an advantage when they come back to the BB program. This is both true and untrue at the same time as players that participate in AA tryouts do not get an advantage from the Sabres; both programs stand on their own, however these players can develop an advantage because they come to the BB evaluations in better physical shape and more prepared to play hockey.

It is strongly recommended that players skate before evaluations begin. Whether players go to summer camps, AA Tryouts or BB Conditioning Camp they will be a lot more prepared for the intensity of evaluations. Players that come to their first skate

not having been on the ice since the previous season may find themselves behind the curve from other players and it can take a few skates for them to catch up.

Often players have new equipment that they wear for the very first time at their first evaluation skate. Heading out in these situations puts players behind their peers and can severely effect there evaluation scores. In these situations our evaluators cannot be aware of the reasons for a skaters possible discomfort and there is no way to adjust the scores in order to compensate. These are some of the reasons that we strongly recommend that players have an opportunity to skate ahead of the start of evaluations.

Team Building

Once all of the evaluation numbers are in and the AA program is completed with their tryouts we will begin to build teams.

As in the past, Sabres Hockey has a responsibility to Hockey Edmonton to provide Provincial Eligible teams in Midget Tiers 1 and 2 as well as Bantam Tiers 1 and 2. From there we evaluate the talent that we have a place our other teams in tiers that we feel are relative for their respective skill levels.

During the team building process every effort is made to place as many first year Bantam players with kids from their respective areas of town. In the past we have created teams with players combined from the North (St. Charles and St. Matthews) and the South and West (Annunciation, Good Sheppard and the Knights). Easier commutes for parents as well as familiarity with some of their past teammates can help to make the transition to a city-wide program much easier. Note that every effort is made to accommodate first-year players being with their friends however we must still be true to the evaluation process. **These accommodations are only done for what we consider the “parish teams” which consist of players in the tiers 6 and below.** Players that are more accomplished and are playing at tiers 5 and higher cannot necessarily be accommodated in these requests as this is a much more competitive level of hockey and requires the most accomplished players in order to ensure player and team success.

In the Midget program the same grouping, tiering and team building process except that we will continue to build a team with the best BB 15-year old players. Generally this team will compete somewhere in the mid-tiers and is a nice transition for AA and top tier Bantam players coming into Midget.

Non-Parent coaches in Midget Tier 1 and Bantam Tier 1 are given their first 10 players and 1 goaltender from the top players in evaluations. After that they are able to select the remainder of the players to fill their team for the next 20 players in the evaluation schedule.

Coaching

Through the program we accept coaching applications at any time of the year. All applications are seriously considered as we are trying to get the best possible coaches for all of our children at all levels.

Whenever possible we attempt to get coaches that do not have kids in the program. Whether this be assistant coaches or head coaches we feel that this is an excellent way to ensure fairness and possibly develop coaches that believe in the Sabres philosophies of coaching.

Parent Head-coaches are not selected or even considered until tiering and team building is complete. To eliminate a common misconception; players are NOT assigned teams based upon who will be the coach. In the past we have ended up with situations where there are multiple people who were head-coaches on the same team, but if we start engineering who will coach teams before the process is complete we are not being true to the evaluation process.

We do need head and assistant coaches so please get your application in as soon as possible!