

CMHA

'A' Hockey Information Session

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What is 'A' hockey?



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Rep (Representative) or 'A' hockey is the highest calibre of hockey available in any given association. Rep teams are intended to 'represent' the more skilled and talented players in the age group.

Rep hockey is a fast-paced, highly-competitive level of hockey that offers exceptional players a challenge.

There are multiple levels of rep – A1 being the top, and going down from there. A1 is also referred to as AAA, A2 as AA, and so on. CMHA usually fields A1 through A3 teams at all levels. This varies based on numbers, however.



Is your player ready?



If my child wants to play rep, how will I know if they are ready to try out?

This question may have already come up with your 'C' coach from last year, but mostly we ask that you trust your instincts in this, as well as your child's. If your child looks like they are competitive with the top players in their division, then it is worth being open to try out – especially if your child wants to.

However, your evaluation of your child's competitiveness does not mean that they will make a team. Your evaluation of their competitiveness and any feedback from coaches past that have encouraged it will only give you an idea if your child will get a positive experience out of rep tryouts.



If my child wants to play rep, how will I know if they are ready to try out?

The experience of the additional ice time and competing against skilled players can be a very good experience, regardless of the outcome of the tryout process.

Many 'C' players who have tried out for rep for the experience, have reported back that even if they didn't make a team, they felt it better prepared for the 'C' evaluation skates. That being said, the rep try out process should not be considered as a 'C' league prep camp. Players should try out only if they intend to play on an 'A' team.



If my child wants to play rep, how will I know if they are ready to try out?

A tryouts are competitive and have a fast pace with assertive play. For example, if your child is not a strong skater, it may be a difficult experience, and your child may not be permitted to continue in the tryouts if the Rep Evaluation Committee for your division assesses that your child is in danger of being hurt.



I've heard that if you don't get "on the rep track" early, you'll never get on and you'll play catch up forever. Is that true?

No – this is False.

The development for each child is as different as any other type of development. Reading, math, science - all players learn and develop at their own pace.

There are some players who in U9 have been ranked or looked at as top players, who then make rep in U11 and U13, but then in U15 (when body-checking starts and kids grow at different rates), may not fare as well, due to size or other factors, as all players mature differently.



I've heard that if you don't get "on the rep track" early, you'll never get on and you'll play catch up forever. Is that true?

There are other players who just click in to some drills and development early on, yet their desire to continue fades.

Other players may develop later and go farther in their personal hockey pursuits. Each player is different.

The rep option will still be there if you decide that it is not the right fit for your child right now.



Is your family ready for
the costs?



I've heard rep is expensive?

Parents with players on a top team in CMHA pay more than just for registration.

The **Rep Try-Out Fee** is an additional fee, which fully funds the tryout ice and evaluators for the tryout process, as well as the coaching, equipment and other administrative costs that are additional to the normal 'C' program costs. We no longer charge an additional 'carding fee'.

As well, the Association does require A players to wear a royal blue helmet, coordinating gloves, and Colts pant shells.



What about team fees?

Rep team fees usually start at \$1000 per season

These team fees usually include: team gear (dryland, tracksuits, sweaters, jackets, whatever your team decides to purchase), tournaments, dryland gym fees, and referee fees.

They also include the extra game and referee fee costs associated to Rep hockey, and the second practice each week. Rep teams have a home game every week and two practices a week, where C teams have one game every second week, and one practice per week, so 50% of Rep ice times are team fee funded.



Is that all?

Some coaches also pick up extra ice, and if the ice is not free, those costs are also paid by the team.

All of these team budget items should be decided as a team.

If your team decides to do an out of town tournament, your travel expenses will be in addition to your team fees, and usually teams will also cover some travel costs for Independent Coaches.

Very few teams fund-raise enough money to cover all these team costs. Each team's costs are different depending on your team level and desire to travel and compete in tournaments.



Is your family ready for
the commitment?



What is the time commitment?

Rep tryouts start in the third or fourth week of August, and ramp up from there.

CMHA hosts our own Rep Prep camps the week prior to tryouts.

During the season, expect two games and two practices a week on average. Some weeks will have a much heavier schedule, especially when you factor in tournaments, dryland, and extra ice.

Our scheduling for practices, and games will be as cohesive as possible within our ice constraints.



What is the time commitment?

Rep teams in Cloverdale will be assigned two weekly ice times for practices. Most rep teams continually pick up additional ice. Some teams can be upwards of an additional 80 ice sheets over a season, others 20-none. This depends on your coach and the wants of your team. If your child is making A1, be prepared to skate a lot.

For games, each week on average there will be one home game and one away game. But due to conflicts with the schedule you may have 3 or 4 games per week.



What is the time commitment?

You will be expected to be at the rink at least an hour before the game. The games can be anywhere from Chilliwack to Whistler, to down in the Seattle area (depending on your division, and also depending on what Tier you are in).

Do not panic- many players car pool or parents drop off and come back later. Juggling your obligations for your rep player is able to be done. It takes a village!



Keeping hockey in
perspective



How can parents help out the process?

It has to be fun for the players. If it's not fun, nothing good will come of it. The most important thing you can tell your child is to work hard and have fun. If it is a job ALL the time, there will be no enjoyment for your child.

During the process, you as parents may be filled with all sorts of different opinions by chatting amongst your fellow parents. However, sitting in the stands debating which team each player will make only stokes the fires of rumour mills.



How can parents help out the process?

For parents, BE KIND. You may feel that your Johnny Sunshine is the next coming of Syd the Kid but keep that to yourself.

NO ONE wants to hear you beat down other children to make your own child's 'short comings' more bearable in your own eyes.

Parents can make or break the experience for your child. Remember, they listen and hear EVERYTHING you say, including how you talk smack about teammates!

Keep it fun, this is not "The Show".



What if I decide Rep is not right for my player?

As part of our policies, players have until **July 15th** to declare and register for Rep tryouts.

July 15th is also the deadline to withdraw from tryouts. The only extension to this date may be for medical injuries, and will need to be approved by the Executive.

Lastly, if for some reason the Executive determines that the pools are not sufficiently full to support the original number of planned teams, players will be notified and given a timeframe where they can opt to withdraw from tryouts.



What if my player decides to change the declared position?

Players have until the lists are posted of how many players are trying out for each spot to change their position declaration. This will occur mid-August.

Mistakes happen, so an email will be sent out shortly after the close of Rep Tryout registration on July 15th, which will be your warning to double check your player's position is correct.



Is U11 different?

Yes! U11 is not technically 'Rep' as there are not provincial or national championships associated to that level. U11 is therefore termed as 'Developmental' hockey.

However – the A stream for U11 is still a higher level of hockey, and is intended to prepare players in that level for the next levels of A hockey, as well as to provide them the competition level to continue their development relative to their skills.

Note that for U11 we also do not request a position to be declared, which is as per Hockey Canada recommendation.



Coaches



Who are the Coaches?

In the A1 and A2 levels , it is common to have Independent Coaches in place.

Independent Coaches are paid as contractors to fill these roles.

We use Independents to provide a higher level of development and game instruction, as well as to remove any possibility of bias.

In other levels, parent Coaches may be used if they have the skills and background to coach at this level. Parents are not assigned any team until their player has clearly 'made' that team.



Preparation for tryouts



How should my player prepare?

A coach needs players for a variety of roles, aggressive D, quick forwards, a sharp shooter, a shot blocker, a rebounder, rushing D, stay at home D, positional players and so forth. Each coach has a style of hockey they like to play, as does each player.

Know what type of player YOU are and showcase that. No one can be everything. NO ONE!

Coaches are searching for players that will fit into the systems with the skills to be successful. Show YOUR skills!



How should my player prepare?

First and foremost, GET ON THE ICE BEFORE TRY OUTS. There are many players who hang their skates up after the previous season and strap on a new pair the night before tryouts. This is not ideal for your child to show his or her best abilities.

BE PREPARED! If you are not skating until the day of tryouts, you are setting yourself up for failure.

We host our own summer camps and preseason camps as a great way to prepare for the tryouts, utilizing professional development coaches, past rep tryout drills, and 1-on-1 coaching for players, to be ready to compete at the highest level for the tryouts.

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How should my player prepare?

Be mentally prepared to do what you do best. As a player you need to be comfortable playing your game, and not try to be something or somebody you are not.

If you have great hockey sense and passing skills, be a play maker; make others around you better players. If you have great hands and have an ability to score and snipe the puck, then be a goal-scorer. If you are big and physical, then go out there and play tough, grind in the corners, win battles, and let your compete shine.



How should my player prepare?

Coaches understand that not everyone is a goal scorer, and coaches need to fill many roles on a team. Having a team full of goal scorers might seem like a nice idea, but the reality is teams require role players to be truly successful.

Your child needs to know what their hockey identity is so that you showcase their abilities, not their limitations.



Some tips:

Compete hard in every single drill and every second of every shift.

It is okay to make aggressive mistakes.

Pay attention and listen to instructions.

Do the little things -- block shots, screen the goalie, be the first to a loose puck.

Communicate with your teammates. Coaches love players who talk on the ice.



Some tips:

Be polite.

Don't be a 4 minute shifter during games. You look like a selfish player and eventually you look tired and not at your best. Short quick shifts giving 110% will yield better results!

Don't quit, don't slam your stick on the ice, don't come to the bench sulking, don't yell at teammates. Coaches want character players.

Don't be a drill buster.



Some tips:

Don't assume you are already on the team.

Don't try and do too much.

Don't turn the puck over (blind passes, stickhandling in traffic).

Don't let parents ruin your chances 😊



How can you help your child succeed?

Unrealistic expectations and unnecessary pressure have the biggest impacts on players during tryouts. Most of this pressure comes from us as parents.

The most beneficial thing you can do for your child is support them. This may include supporting them to play at a level lower than you feel they should play in order to give them the best opportunity to develop.

Not all players can make the team, so be prepared to support them in a positive manner if they don't



How can you help your child succeed?

As parents, being prepared and having your child be prepared is the greatest thing you can do for them in this process. Know what the process is, make sure they know what the process is.

Help out if help is needed. Run a bench (not your own player's) during the scrimmages. Being involved in the process makes the process run smoother for all involved.

Be a good parent. No one wants to hear the negative, mostly your child. If there is an issue, solve it in a professional and respectful manner.



How can you help your child succeed?

Your attitude reflects your child's attitude. Not everyone ends up being happy with the decisions made at try outs. Learn the process, that way you trust the process.

There should be no communication with Coaches or Evaluators by parents during the process.

If you have questions, ask your Division Director. However, no one should be asking "how is my player doing" or "what does my player need to improve on" during the process. Feedback can be made available after the process is completed.



How can you help your child succeed?

Hockey tryouts can be both mentally and physically challenging for young athletes.

Players may feel nervous, unsettled, or feel more pressure to play their best. Young athletes may experience excitement or nervous jitters before and during tryouts. Athletes who feel jitters are the players who may underperform in tryouts.

If your child has a bad skate, keep your cool. Your pressure will only make them more nervous! Remember this is not about YOU; rather it is about your child.



Below are seven mental game tips to help sports players perform their best in competition:

1. Let Go of Fear
2. Play Freely instead of Holding Back
3. Focus on Self not Others – Make No Comparisons.
4. Play for Yourself, not Others.
5. Play Functionally – Don't try to be Perfect.
6. Be Confident.
7. Focus on the Process, not Results.

