

# San Francisco Sabercats - Team Selection

## Overview

The Sabercats' development philosophy is to develop skills through the game of hockey that players will carry on for the rest of their lives. Our player development model and team selection process is designed to provide the best possible long term development to every player in our club.

The Sabercats will use a hybrid model of team selection based on two factors: player's age and player's skill.

## Player's Age

We believe that a team's overall strength is highly dependent on the cohesion and depth of it's players. We believe that players who develop together season after season will develop faster, retaining greater knowledge and chemistry between seasons, allowing faster team progressions and more focused skill development, and provide easier transitions between coaches and age divisions. Our program strives to keep players of the same birth year developing together as long as possible. Mixed birth year teams suffer from having a significant number of players leaving and joining the team every season which disrupts development progressions and stalls overall development and depth.

## Skill Assessment

Player's skill will also be a key factor in team formation to ensure that our teams are cohesive and provide the most appropriate development experience for players. Players will be evaluated relative to other players from that same age division to form rankings which will be used in the selection process. Skill evaluations will consider technical abilities, as well as, player's physical and mental maturity and a player's overall hockey sense, competition level, and enthusiasm for the game.

## Selection Overview

A selection committee of coaches will be responsible for team selection. The selection committee will use a combination of skill assessment and player's birth year to form teams based on a clear selection methodology which is outlined in detail in section, *Team Selection and Tryout Process*. When an age division has multiple teams, teams will be tiered by skill

level and from major (upper) birth year to minor (lower) birth year. For example, Team 1 would consist of the major birth year and highest skill players, which Team 2 would consist of the next set of birth year and skill. Note that “A” and “B” designations are entirely dependent on NorCal and the individual team and will not be known until after the pre-season. It is entirely possible for an age group to have all A teams or all B teams, but it is assured that these placements will be the most appropriate competition level for each team.

## Outliers and Exceptions

In order to provide the most appropriate level of development for all of our players, we have to recognize that all of our players are unique and some kids fall outside of the typical development cycle. The selection process allows for skill assessment to identify and promote exceptional minor birth year players to upper teams, and also ensures that less experienced major birth year players who do not yet have the requisite skill competency are not placed on upper teams.

## Prerogative of the Selection Committee

The selection committee will have the prerogative to override the selection process and make alternate selections for any child. To apply this prerogative, the selection committee will need consensus on the adjustment and will be required to document the rationale behind the adjustment.

## Team Selection and Tryout Process

The selection process will be as follows:

- 1) Pre-Tryout: Player Questionnaire & Club Paperwork
- 2) Tryout: Player Skill Assessment
- 3) Tryout: Player Competition Assessment
- 4) Tryout: Player Competition Assessment
- 5) Post-Tryout: Final Team Selection
- 6) Post-Tryout: Player/Parent Communication & Acceptance

## Tryout Documents

Player Questionnaire - contains player information to be used by coaches for the final assessment. Will include team acceptance agreements and other information which may be required to complete selection process. Coaches will not see these documents until the final selection process after tryouts.

Coach's Evaluation Roster - contains a row for each player and columns for name, birth year, technical skill group assessment, competition group assessment, overall group, assessment, player rank. These rosters will NOT be shared with anyone outside of the selection committee and SFYHA.

Combined Evaluation Roster - contains the combined player assessments based on the evaluation rosters of each member of the selection committee. Includes columns for name, birth year, final group assessment, and player ranking. This roster will be available to coaches, SFYHA, and parents. Each member of the selection committee will sign the combined evaluation roster.

Projected Team Rosters - the actual team rosters used to communicate placement to parents and determined by the player selection process. Any deviations from the selection process will be documented and signed off on by each member of the selection committee. These rosters will not be shared until they have been communicated and all players have accepted roster positions.

### **Tryout Practice Sessions**

The Selection Committee will define the format of tryouts that must be followed by on-ice coaches. The on-ice coaches will be responsible for managing the tryout process in order to facilitate evaluations by the selection committee. Each member of the committee will be required to fill out a separate evaluation roster.

### **Technical Skill Assessment**

Tryouts will begin with a series of warm-up and skill-based drills to allow players to get comfortable on the ice and to allow the selection committee to evaluate technical skills. Each member of the selection committee will grade players overall technical ability with a rating of "A" through "D" where "A" is the highest technical skill and "D" is the lowest. Coaches may also keep notes on players to explain rationale behind grading..

This technical assessment, along with player history, will be used to divide players into four skill groups for the purpose of competitive assessment. This initial grouping is just a starting point and expected to change.

### **Competition Assessment**

In order to effectively evaluate a player's potential in game situations, players will be divided into small groups (6-8 players) to compete in individual and team game simulations or

competitive drills. Players will be divided into four competition groups where group "A" represents the highest skill group and group "D" represents the lowest.

The committee will move players into and out of these competition groups based on the players performance relative to the group. Players who dominate their group will be moved up. Players who struggle in their group will be moved down. Players will be moved between groups until they are placed in a group of equal parity.

The goal of the competitive assessment process is to produce four distinct groups where each player within a group is comparable to the other players within that group.

### Final Assessment

Immediately following the conclusion of tryouts, the selection committee will convene privately to compare and discuss each evaluation for the purpose of producing a final assessment roster. This roster will then be used to form teams. This process should take no longer than 1 hour.

### Team Selection Methodology

Using the final assessment roster, players will be placed onto teams starting using the following order, as long as roster positions are available:

- 1) Major birth year players from group A and B
- 2) Minor birth year players from group A
- 3) Major birth year players from group C
- 4) Minor birth year players from group B and C and D
- 5) Major birth year players from group D

***The selection committee will use this selection process as a GUIDE and reserve the right to adjust the selection rules as necessary. Any deviation from the selection process will be documented with justification and initialed by each member of the selection committee.***

### Example:

Assumptions: 2 teams, 15 players on each roster

30 players are divided into 4 groups (A-D) and ranked within each group.

Through the evaluation process, a major birth year player is placed into group C while a minor birth year player is placed into group B. Only 2 minor birth year players are placed into group A.

The 1st team is composed of ALL 5 major birth year players from group A, ALL 5 major birth year players from group B, ALL 2 minor birth year player from group A, and ALL 3 major birth year players from group C. This gives a total of 15 skaters.

The 2nd team is comprised of ALL 3 minor birth year player from group B, REMAINING 3 major birth year players from group C, ALL 3 minor birth year players from group C, ALL 5 minor birth year players from group C, and 1 minor birth year player from group D. REMAINING minor birth year players from group D and ALL major birth year players from group D would be cut. This gives a total of 15 skaters.

The minor birth year player in group B would not be placed on the 1st team because they only rank ahead of major birth year players in group D using the exceptions rule which requires a minor birth year player to be in the top half of the roster, or more precisely, to evaluate 2 groups ahead of the next available major birth year player.

The minor birth year player from group A is on the 1st team based on evaluating 2 skill groups ahead of the major birth year players in group C.

If group C only had 2 major birth year players, then the minor birth year player from group B would make the roster (after the 2 major birth year players) IF they were the top ranked minor player in group B.

## **Team Roster Communication**

Roster selections will be communicated to parents through email beginning with major birth year team(s) and concluding with the minor birth year team(s). Roster selections will be communicated in order from highest to lowest. Parents will have 12 hours to accept roster offers or risk losing any claim on the roster position. Once all players have accepted positions on the 1st roster, the next roster will be communicated and so on.

## **Team Selection Adjustments**

It is possible for rosters to adjust during the communication process. If this happens, possibly due to players retracting commitments or declining a team placement, players will be moved up or down based on the roster selection process and best interest of teams.

## **Financial commitment**

A player's spot on a Sabercat team is only confirmed once a financial commitment is made. A financial commitment is required 24 hours after the offer is communicated to the player/player's family. The amount of the financial commitment will be communicated prior to tryouts.