



2023-24 USAH Player Development Youth Pilot Programs

YOUTH PROPOSAL #1: USA Hockey Pilot Project – 18U Tier I Roster Exception

The 18U Tier I Roster Exception allows the Youth Council to authorize a pilot program which would allow for a limit of twenty-two (22) players, in which not more than 20 shall be skaters, at any one time to be rostered per team at the 18U Tier I age category starting with the 2023-24 season through the 2024-25 season. Teams in the 18U Tier I category player may roster and may dress up to 22 players. All other USA Hockey Rules and Regulations applicable to Youth Tier I shall remain applicable.

Frequently Asked Questions re: 18U Tier I Roster Exception:

Q. Can a team dress 21 skaters and 1 goalie?

A. No. You are allowed to dress a maximum of 20 skaters in a game.

Q. Must a team roster 22 players?

A. No. The purpose of this program is to allow Club Coaches and Hockey Directors to manage the players' development within their Club. Holding on to roster spots to evaluate future inter-club player movement, anticipating club players returning from Junior Hockey tryouts or player injury cases will help Clubs manage their rosters and overall individual player development experience.

Q. What happens to 'player development' if my child is the 21st or 22nd player on the roster?

A. The specific Club is responsible for their player development program. Clubs are being entrusted with greater flexibility to manage individual player development on a more personal level. It will be encouraged and expected for Clubs to understand and execute 18U Player Development programming for all players throughout the entire season. Having quality practices, quality off-ice training and quality communication with coaches will be pivotal in creating acceptable expectations between Club and player/family. All players on a roster should have an expectation of development over the course of a season.

Q. Must player "21 and 22" sit in the stands during a game?

A. No. This is a 22 person "Playing Roster" and up to 20 skaters and up to 2 goalies may dress.

Q. Must Player "21 and 22" pay the same seasonal Club Dues:

A. That is between the Club and Player/family. Again, having a player development plan for all players is a wise conversation to have between the customer and Club leaders.



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YOUTH PROPOSAL #2: USA Hockey Pilot Project – Tier I Youth Vertical Roster Integration Program

The Youth Council hereby authorizes a pilot program known as “Tier I Youth Vertical Roster Integration” starting with the 2023-24 season through the 2024-25 season. The purpose of this pilot program is to allow vertical roster movement at the Tier I Youth 15O, 16U and 18U levels within the same Association through February 1st. Only those players otherwise eligible for a different age category within their Organization and currently appearing on a Tier I roster in the Organization shall be eligible to play on a different Tier I team from that Organization without being added to the official roster, subject to the following conditions:

- *Each Player is limited to a total of 8 games played outside of their official roster between September 1st and February 1st.*
- *Players may only compete at one age level per day.*
- *The Youth Council and Registrar’s Section shall establish a means of requiring notice and record keeping of all instances under this pilot program where players play in a game without being added to the official roster.*
- *All other current National Championship rules, including the 20/10 rule and the 12/31 roster deadline will stay in effect. Games played shall not count toward the 20/10 rule until added to the official roster.*
- *Any suspension incurred by a player under this rule must be served with the team in which the player is officially rostered.*
- *Players under suspension are not eligible for vertical integration movement until the suspension is served with the team in which the player is officially rostered.*

By the January 2025 Winter meeting, the Youth Council shall determine its final recommendation on this Pilot Project, and final legislation shall be timely submitted to Congress for final adoption.

Teams record vertical roster movement online at <https://forms.office.com/r/XYpzRSpY70>

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. Is a player allowed to vertically integrate on a Tier II team or between a Tier I and Tier II team?

A. No, Vertical integration is a Tier I rule only and only between teams in the same organization at the 15O, 16U and 18U age classification.

Q. Is a player allowed to play for two different age classification teams on the same day?

A. No, Players may only compete at one age classification per day.

Q. How do I know which is my players official roster?

A. A players official roster (Form 1-T) is the roster of the team that the player has committed to for that season and has been approved by the registrar. Player changes to the official team roster for Youth Tier I National Championship Bound teams will not be accepted after December 31.

Q. What is the purpose of Vertical Rostering?

A. Vertical rostering is Player Development tool to allow Clubs greater flexibility with player management and playing experience. With vertical rostering, Clubs can move their players around based on the players development needs and clubs needs in terms of competition. Allowing Clubs to move their players will be less disruptive to other clubs, save time on adding or dropping players from roster, provide a larger window for player movement and development.

Q. What if my players Coach does not want to let my player move vertically?

A. Vertical movement will be executed on an individual Club basis. Players and families should have a clear understanding on Vertical movement within the Club that you are playing with.

Q. Can a player who is serving a suspension with the official rostered team use the vertical Integration rule to play in a different age classification?

A. No, players are not allowed to vertically participate with other teams while serving a suspension. Once the suspension is over, the player is free to participate in vertical integration.

Q. If a player receives a suspension while playing with a different age classification than the officially rostered team, may they play games with the officially rostered team?

A. No, players are not allowed to play games with any teams while suspended.

Q. How is the game count for suspensions served?

A. Suspensions are served by using the game count for a player's officially rostered team only. A player must serve the full suspension before returning to competition with any team.

Q. My player is bored on the 14U team. Can they vertically move to the 15O or 16U team within my club?

A. No, the vertical integration rule does not encompass 14U teams.

Q. Can my player vertically roster outside of our club that they are originally rostered?

A. No.

Q. Are players allowed to play in a younger age division under the Vertical Integration Rule?

A. Yes. However, there are restrictions based on the age of the player. Players can move vertically down to younger age groups if they are currently of the age permitted in the lower age group in which they are moving. Players who have aged out of a younger age group are not allowed to vertically move to a lower age group as they are too old.

Please see the allowable situations below.

Note: 14U players and 14U teams cannot participate in any way into the Vertical Integration Rule.

1. A 15-year-old playing on a 15O team could play 16U
2. A 15-year-old playing on a 15O team could play 18U
3. A 15-year-old playing on a 16U team could play 15O
4. A 15-year-old playing on an 16U team could play 18U
5. A 15-year-old playing on an 18U team could play 15O
6. A 15-year-old playing on an 18U team could play 16U
7. A 16-year-old playing on a 18U team could play 16U



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YOUTH PROPOSAL #3: USA Hockey Pilot Project – 13 Only Tier I National Championship

The 13 Only Tier I Pilot proposal allows the Youth Council to authorize a pilot program to create a “Thirteen (13) (Tier I National Bound Teams Only) (13O) classification. This new level of classification shall go into effect for 2023-24 season through the 2024-25 season. In conjunction with the Tier I National Championships, USA Hockey shall conduct a twelve team National Championship event (one team from each District) in 2024 for this classification. All other USA Hockey Rules and Regulations applicable to the Youth Tier I levels shall be applicable to the “Tier I Youth 13 Only” classification. Furthermore, the Playing Rules for “Tier I Youth 13 Only” shall be consistent with the Tier I Youth 14U classification and any other playing rule modifications recommended by the Player Development Committee and approved by the Youth Council. Tier I Youth 13 Only eligibility shall be limited to only those players who’s birthyear is 2010 for the 2023-24 season. For the 2024-25 season, Tier I Youth 13 Only eligibility shall be limited to only those players who’s birthyear is 2011.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. Can a 12U player be rostered on a 13O team?

A. No. This tournament is set for 13 Only players.

Q. Why did USA Hockey add a National Tournament at 13O?

A. USA Hockey wanted to stay consistent with our Tier II tournament and complete the 14U Tier I age group. We noticed the number of 13U players who were participating in the 14U Tier II tournament and wanted to offer opportunities for the 13 year old player at the Tier I level.

Q. Will USA Hockey add a 12U National Tournament?

A. No

Q. What season will this start?

A. 2023-24.

Q. I noticed that there will only be 12 teams at the 13O National Tournament, why does this tournament have less teams?

A. USAH wants to take the ‘rankings’ out of the mix at the 13O age classification. This tournament will only include the 12 District Champions. The 12 District Champions will participate in the National Tournament. There will be no At-Large Participants at this tournament. This will allow Clubs and Coaches the freedom to play a more ‘desirable’, effective, local schedule without being consumed with fear of rankings. Strength of schedule, winning margins and empty net goals will not come into play at this age level and National Tournament. Teams that win the District tournament will earn their way to nationals.

Q. My player’s team is ranked first in the World, but we lost at the District Tournament. Will we be considered to play in the National Tournament?

A. No. See the answer above.

Q. Does my player need to move away from home to play Tier I and gain exposure at the 130 National Tournament?

A. The downside of adding younger tournaments is ultimately recruiting. Aggregating players for championships is nothing new in our country. Hopefully, your family and player have good conversations regarding what it takes to move away from home at an early age. Hopefully, you have local clubs that can offer high performance training for 130 players. If players are thinking about leaving home, training opportunity, quality of program, academics and lifestyle should be thoroughly considered. USA Hockey promotes Long Term Athletic Development and before making any decision to leave home, it is important to consider the long road in front of a young hockey player.