

Graduation Policy

for the Novice Adult Coed Hockey League (NACHL)

One of the primary goals of the NACHL is to prepare players to gain the skills, ability, knowledge and confidence to play in an adult recreational competitive ice hockey league.

Graduation is an achievement that should be recognized as the sum of a player's work to develop these skills, ability and knowledge. The Player Rating System (PRS) is used as a guide to differentiate players by ability level. The PRS can be found on the Guidelines & Rule page (<https://www.underhillhockeygroup.com/nachl-guidelines-rules>)

The process for graduation is as follows:

- 1) Identification: Players are identified as having the skills and abilities to play in an adult competitive ice hockey league. In our case this is on a D-league team. Players are primarily identified by coaches during the camps, team coordinators during the games phase, or by the League Commissioner (LC) at any phase of a session. Players may also identify players as potential graduates.
- 2) Informing: The player identified as a potential graduate then needs to be shared with the LC. At this point, they are considered a "candidate for graduation" or "graduation candidate".
- 3) Validation: The LC will discuss the candidate with the coaches or TC to get their input and feedback. Player's feedback may be sought as well, especially the player who nominated the graduation candidate.

It is important to understand that being proposed for graduation does not automatically lead to a player's graduation. Rather it is the start of a conversation between the player and the League Commissioner.

- 4) Notification: The candidate for graduation is then contacted by the Commissioner and informed that they have been proposed for graduation. The notification may occur through e-mail or by use of the whiteboard.

This is where the conversation starts.

- 5) Conversation: The LC will ask if the player feels like they are ready to graduate. If they say yes, then they will graduate at the end of the session.

If the candidate does not agree, they are asked, "What more do you think that you can learn by remaining in the NACHL?", and "What skills do you think you still need to develop by playing in the NACHL?"

- 6) Follow-up: If a candidate does not have a response, they are asked to think about their answer and to then to be prepared to discuss their answer the next week.

If the answers to the questions reveal a compelling reason for players to stay, then they are allowed to stay another session to develop those abilities and skills. A sporting agreement is made between the player and the LC, that the player will focus on developing those skills in the next session.

If the player is not able to come up with answers which are compelling reasons for them to stay in the NACHL, then graduation is awarded.

One factor that is a sometimes a key factor in whether or not a player is ready for graduation is an increased level of competitiveness. Especially when the competitiveness is not regulated well. For example, if a player plays to aggressively against a player at a noticeably lower skill level. This competitiveness usually comes from a level of confidence in their ability and a desire to play harder, which means that they are ready to move above a novice, developmental league.

The final decision about a graduation candidate's status lies with the League Commissioner.

Answers to some anticipated questions

What is the timeline for this process?

That's a hard question to answer. Some players look really good during the camps but when games start, their skill level may also drop. So, players identified in camps may need to be re-evaluated. Some players look "okay" during camps and the first game, and then really start to build in their confidence and their playing ability jumps in the later games. So when the identification occurs cannot be precisely set.

The steps after the identification have typically followed this pattern: after the player has been identified to the LC, the LC will try to watch that week's LiveBarn videos, the next week the LC watches the player with greater attention and tries to talk with the TC (or multiple TCs) about the player, the 3rd week the player is informed and the conversation is started, if needed the conversation continues the next week. If a player is not present at a game, does not check the board, or does not meet with the LC, then the process is extended.

Is there an appeal process?

The opportunity to discuss the proposed graduation status with the LC is that appeal process.

Who can propose someone for graduation?

Technically anyone in the league. Though the primary nominations come from coaches, TCs and the LC. The LC does ask the TC's on a semi-regular basis if they have identified someone for graduation.

What happens after graduation?

If you would like help finding a team to play with the LC is willing to reach out to captains in the WCHL D-league to see if they are looking for players. Players can also reach out to the LC's of the WCHL and at the Pettit, and they can post their interest in joining a team on the MilHockey Adult Community page on Facebook.

If a player is interested in becoming a TC, they can express that to the LC. If there is a need for a TC, players on that list will be contacted.

I graduated and I received an invitation to register for the next session?

Sometimes this is an oversight. However, sometimes a player graduates after they have registered for the next session. If this happens, then the player will may be deregistered from that session.

To date graduates have not been purposefully invited to register for a session (unless they expressed an interest in being a TC). If there is a low enrollment in a session and a graduate has expressed interest in continuing to play, they MAY be allowed to register but there will be stipulations/ conditions put on them to ensure that they do not dominate the game. These stipulations/ conditions will be discussed in advance of the upcoming session.

If a graduate has paid for a session and then been deregistered, they will be issued a full refund.

If you have other questions or something is not clear, you are asked to come and discuss your questions with the League Commissioner in person as in-person conversations typically lead to a better understanding of the issue and a faster resolution. This does not mean that you cannot e-mail your questions or issues to nachl-commish@underhillhockeygroup.com.