



Title: USA Masters Age Group Policy

Section: High Performance

Code: #2

Status: Final

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Last revised: July 30, 2025

Purpose: The following policy addresses the determination of the age-group in which athletes are eligible to be considered for selection for USA Field Hockey-sanctioned squads and teams named to compete in World Masters Hockey (WMH) international events such as the WMH Masters World Cup (MWC), WMH Masters Indoor World Cup (MIWC), or Pan American Continental Cup (PACC).

This policy is designed to:

- Comply with the [World Masters Hockey Eligibility Policy](#)
- Maximize viable, competitive playing opportunities for teams representing the USA (including Spirit of Masters teams)
- Provide a consistent process for squad and team selection for all coaches
- Provide a consistent process for squad and team selection for athletes
- Accommodate athlete preference when possible and appropriate.

Definitions:

- **Age Group:** Masters age groups begin at 35 years and older and continue in 5 year increments, typically through 65 and older. Every Masters tournament does not offer competition brackets for each 5-year age group.
- **Squad:** A squad reflects a cohort of selected athletes in an age group deemed competitively eligible and interested to compete for final team selection.
- **Team:** A team reflects the final roster of athletes and alternates named to compete in a specific international tournament.

Policy:

1. Unless otherwise specified, athletes will be eligible to be selected in their chronological age group based upon their birth year in the year of the competition per [World Masters Hockey Eligibility Policy](#).
2. Exceptions to this standard include playing in a younger age group and can be considered for the following reasons:
 - a. Athletes may be considered for selection for a younger age group if there is not a tournament pool for their chronological age group or a USA team entered in the tournament in their chronological age group.
 - b. Athletes may request to compete in a younger age group, but the request must be made before squad selection begins. **Once they choose this option, they can only be considered for that younger group.** If they are not selected, they cannot return to their original age group. This rule ensures fairness and consistency for both coaches and athletes.

Note: If an athlete chooses to compete for selection or is selected to play on a younger team and then USA Masters does not send that younger team for unforeseen circumstances, the athlete can be considered for selection on their chronological age group squad/team.

- c. Special circumstances such as injuries or a need for a goalkeeper may arise and warrant age group shifts which should be evaluated by the coaches leading the impacted teams. Athletes must consent to the shift and the High Performance Committee must approve the shift. Coaches may identify roster gaps and request assistance from the High Performance (HP) Committee to explore possible athlete shifts. HP will help evaluate options and the impact on other teams. If the HP and both coaches agree and the athlete consents, the shift can be made.
 - d. The coaches will select which athletes should be named to any squads/teams based upon eligible athletes and selection criteria (see Selection Policy for the oversight and approval role of High Performance Committee and USA Field Hockey).
3. World Masters Hockey allows for athletes to participate on only one international team for outdoor MWC and one international team for indoor per calendar year. For example, if MWC age group competitions are hosted at different times and locations, athletes may only compete with one team.

Procedure:

- 1) In either scenario 2a or 2b, athletes must complete the Age Group Selection Exemption form by the deadline that is determined by the High Performance Committee for each selection cycle. The form will include at a minimum:
 - Name
 - DOB
 - Selection cycle year
 - Tournament
 - Indoor or Outdoor
 - Age group for which you wish to be considered
 - Acknowledgement that if not selected you will not be eligible for selection in your chronological age group unless the younger team to which you are named is not able to compete for unforeseen circumstances or special needs and circumstances arise.
- 2) Coaches will be informed of these declarations so they can consider these athletes in their selection evaluation and decisions.
- 3) Communication lists will be updated for the selection cycle to ensure athletes receive appropriate messages. (ie. include in age group WhatsApp chat)

References: [World Masters Hockey Eligibility Policy](#)