

Memo: Youth Guidance

As the winter season trial process begins it is timely to provide you with an outline of how the Somerville Hockey club manages Youth player transitions to adult open grades and to highlight Auckland Hockey rules that **ALL** clubs are bound by.

(AHA Ruling) Age of eligibility:

- All players must be over 15 years of age on 1st January to qualify for Premier Grades hockey.

- Any player turning 15 during the season, that has been selected by the club to play Premier/Reserve grade hockey must apply for dispensation (this is done by the club).

Any player that is playing in a grade where they are not eligible run the risk of penalties for that team (e.g. loss of points with the score being recorded 0-5).

Somerville Process:

Somerville encourages previous seasons Youth grade players who are interested in trials for the open grades from year 10 onwards, to talk to their coach from the previous year and, or the Club Coaching Director, to seek guidance.

Somerville is in a fortunate position of providing many Blacksticks, NHL and Auckland age group reps (82 representatives 2019). At times their absence means there is opportunity to have games for the Premier and Premier Reserve teams when these players are away on representative duty/training etc. As one of the strongest clubs in Auckland we have two Division 1 teams (in both men's and women's competitions) which allows even more playing opportunities for our Youth players. Both as full-time team members in those grades or by filling in whilst playing in the Youth grade.

Open Grade Divisional Teams:

The Divisional teams are seen as an excellent development pathway for youth as it provides an opportunity to “toughen up”, understand the different speed and tempo of the game, learn how to be more aggressive on the field and be a team member with adults without the added pressure of Premier hockey. As mentioned previously our Divisional teams are also the “go to” teams when our Premier/Reserves require substitutes to cover for injury or representative absence.

Premier/ Premier Reserve Teams:

When you are selected in the Premier/Reserve teams there is an expectation that you turn up to every practice regardless of other commitments and are available for all games (see Player Pathway).

Premier/Reserves and all Open grades play a full season with no breaks for school holidays.

Occasionally the decision is made to select young players in the reserve team so they get more “field time” as opposed to sitting on the bench for the Premier team. Youth players registered in Premier Reserve grade may NOT play down in Youth grades.

We appreciate being approached by other clubs, although highly unethical, can be an exciting and possibly harrowing experience for some.

Summary:

Above all else: playing with adults means communicating like adults. Your first port of call should be with your coach or club officials here at Somerville. They are the ones who have dedicated their voluntary time to improving you as a player. You may be pleasantly surprised to know SOMERVILLE DOES CARE about all of its members. We will stoutly defend our young talent from other clubs however at the same time we recognise when an individual needs may best be met whilst not playing in the blue and white of Somerville. Over 100 years of hockey history ... for the most part, we get it right.