LACOUVÉE GOALTENDING · 83 LLC

THE GOALIE DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

What it actually takes to play college hockey as a goalie. Counted from every roster in the CHL, the USHL and NCAA Division I.

2026–27 Edition
Benchmarks by Ryan Minkoff, 83 LLC

Written for parents
Of goalies aged 13 to 20

START HERE

THE LADDER, COUNTED

In October 2026 we counted every roster ourselves: 61 CHL teams, 16 USHL teams, and 62 of 63 NCAA Division I programs.

Age 17	Age 18	Age 19	Age 20.6
Barely playing in junior. Most are still in AAA or prep.	On a junior roster. Often behind an older goalie.	Starting. The age a junior team hands you the net.	Average age of an NCAA Division I freshman goaltender.

Our count, October 2026: 147 CHL goaltenders, 37 USHL goaltenders, 204 NCAA D1 goaltenders. Division I ages verified independently against Elite Prospects.

CONNOR, WHY I COUNTED ALL THIS

It's becoming tougher and tougher to play NCAA Division I hockey. With the CHL changes, the path is more selective than it's ever been, and that puts even greater emphasis on your goalie's 16 and 17 year old seasons.

TWO IMPORTANT FACTORS

The lower the league, the more you have to dominate it. A goalie posting a .900 in the USHL and a goalie posting a .900 in a Junior B league are not having the same season, and recruiters price that difference exactly. The benchmarks on page 15 move together: step down a league, and the number you have to put up goes up.

The second half of that rule is games played. A great save percentage over five games proves nothing. Coaches need to see the number hold across a season, which is why every benchmark in this guide has a games figure attached to it.

> **"You've got to get games. Go play on a team that will actually play you, compete your butt off in practice, and earn your starts."**

CONNOR LACOUVÉE

> **"The CHL rule has not changed anything other than making the goalie pool bigger. It doesn't matter where the goalie is playing. It matters more about them actually playing, and playing well, no matter what the league is. If you play well, the hockey world is so small, you will be noticed."**

BRENNAN PODERZAY · UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Read the league pages that follow against that.

BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

HOW OLD YOUR GOALIE ACTUALLY IS

Age in this sport is fixed on 31 December. The division is a birth year, not an age, and that one fact changes how every page after this one reads.

Every player born in the same calendar year moves through the sport together, whatever month his birthday falls in. So in one dressing room, on one night in March, a January-born and a November-born are a full year apart, same team, same division, same label on the jersey.

BORN	2026–27 SEASON	AGE ON 31 DEC 2026	AGE BY APRIL 2027
2012	U15	**14**	**14 or 15**
2011	U16	**15**	**15 or 16**
2010	U17	**16**	**16 or 17**
2009	U18	**17**	**17 or 18**
2008	Junior, first year	**18**	**18 or 19**
2007	Junior, second year	**19**	**19 or 20**
THE LAST JUNIOR SEASON A GOALIE GETS			
2006	Overage year	**20**	**20 or 21**

The higher age in the last column is reached by anyone whose birthday falls between January and the end of the season. Divisions vary by province and association, where U17 does not exist as its own division, U18 carries two birth years and the compression is wider, not narrower.

THIS IS WHERE IT CATCHES PEOPLE

The 2006s are this season's overage group, and every one of them is 20 on 31 December. The ones born in January, February, March or April turn **21** before the playoffs and finish their last junior season as 21-year-olds.

"The 20-year-old year" is the name of a birth year. It is not a description of anybody's age. A goalie who reads it as his age will either think he has a season he does not have, or give up one he still does.

SO READ EVERY AGE PAGE THIS WAY

Your U18 season is your 17-year-old season, and you will likely finish it at 18. When a page here says "19," it means the birth year that is 19 on 31 December. When a benchmark says "by 19," it means by the end of that season, playoffs included.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Pages 4 to 8 are one page per age, find your goalie's, then read the next one so you know what is coming. Pages 9 to 11 are what we counted. Page 12 is the benchmarks table.

AGE PAGE

U15 • AGES 14–15

Born 2012, 14 on 31 December, 15 by the playoffs.

TWO THINGS ARE TRUE THIS YEAR

Scouts are watching 14 and 15 year olds, and nothing about this season decides anything. Both are true. The second one is the one families forget.

WHAT A 14-YEAR-OLD GOALIE SHOULD ACTUALLY BE DOING

- Having fun, enjoying the position, and sharing in the camaraderie of the sport.
- Playing on a team that actually gets him games.
- Working with a goalie coach weekly, or every second week, on the technical side.
- Starting some basic off-ice work.
- Playing other sports.

SOMEBODY IS ALREADY WATCHING, THIS IS WHAT HE SEES

> **"We scout goalies at age 14/15 leading up to their WHL draft year."**

> **"The first thing I notice with goalies is always their skating ability: edge work, weight distribution, skating decisions. I also notice body language after goals or bad plays."**

AUSTIN RODEN · GOALIE COACH, VICTORIA ROYALS (WHL)

Not his save percentage. Not his size. How he moves, and how he handles a bad goal.

THE WHL BANTAM DRAFT THIS YEAR

IT HAPPENS IN THE U15 SEASON

The OHL and the QMJHL draft a year later, in the U16 season, so a BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan or Manitoba family meets this a full twelve months before an Ontario family does, in early May.

A drafted goalie does not then play: 16-year-olds take **2.8%** of CHL goaltending games and **0.7%** of USHL games, and no team in either league starts one. Being drafted changes who owns your rights, not what this season is about.

Our count of every CHL and USHL roster, October 2026. Quote: Austin Roden, goalie coach, Victoria Royals, October 2026.

OUR VIEW, THE WHL BANTAM DRAFT COMES TOO EARLY FOR A GOALIE

A goalie taken in the U15 draft will not play a meaningful CHL game for another three or four years. The league is calling it on a fourteen-year-old's body, habits and head, none of which are finished. Being drafted costs the kid nothing. What it costs is the two seasons afterward, when a family starts behaving as though it is decided.

WHAT PARENTS GET WRONG AT THIS AGE

Early specialization. Five, six, seven days a week on the ice with extra goalie ice on top, instead of developing the athlete. Cancelling the other sports he plays. Taking away being a kid and having a social life.

It is not about the stats at this age.

ACADEMIC CHECKPOINT **Grade 9.** Get your course list checked against your high school's NCAA-approved course list, before you pick next year's timetable. A course that isn't on the list doesn't count.

AGE PAGE

U16 • AGES 15–16

Born 2011, 15 on 31 December, 16 by the playoffs.

This is where it turns. Up to now the job was to play a lot and get better. From here, people are watching and writing things down.

BEING DRAFTED IS NOT THE SAME AS PLAYING

Both the CHL and the USHL draft goaltenders out of this season. Neither plays them in it.

> **"Goalies start to become on the radar at age 15. But goaltending is a long road."**
>
> BRENNAN PODERZAY · UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

He is not allowed to play junior at this age, and no goaltender does. Junior's age floor rules it out, and our count confirms there is no exception anywhere: zero of 147 goaltenders in the CHL, zero of 38 in the USHL. The youngest in either league were born a year before him, ten of them in total. So a draft this spring is a claim on a later season, not this one.

BENCHMARKS FOR THIS SEASON

- 25+ games at .920 or better on a top-50 AAA team (MyHockeyRankings) puts you in the conversation for the CHL, USHL or BCHL.
- 25+ games at .900 on a top-75 AAA team (MyHockeyRankings) puts you in the conversation for the NAHL, CCHL, OJHL and that tier.
- If you are not on a ranked team, the number has to be louder.

THE DECISIONS LANDING ON YOU THIS YEAR

- OHL Priority Selection and QMJHL Entry Draft, both in June.
- USHL Phase I Draft, early May, for 16-year-olds.
- Tenders circulate from late winter. Read the games obligation before signing anything.

IF YOU GET DRAFTED

Congratulations, that's awesome. But now the real work starts. Being drafted is only a small, small portion of it. You have a club that's interested in you, which is exciting, and you should be very proud. Now you need to earn that spot by competing each and every day.

IF YOU DON'T

Congratulations, now you have the opportunity to go to any one of those teams available. You're going to have more options, and it's actually going to be better for you down the road. Don't lose sight. Keep going towards your goals. The draft is only a small indicator of success.

WHAT A DRAFT PICK IS ACTUALLY WORTH

We followed every goaltender drafted into the OHL across four years and every goalie taken in the USHL's 16-year-old draft. **Thirty-nine per cent became CHL regulars**, and where you are taken matters far more than whether you are taken. The whole count is on page 14.

ACADEMIC CHECKPOINT

January 1 of Grade 10 is the first day an NCAA Division I coach may contact you. Before it, a coach may not even reply to a message you send. Silence before January isn't rejection.

AGE PAGE

U17 • AGES 16–17

Born 2010, 16 on 31 December, 17 by the playoffs.

Sixteen is an evaluation year, not a junior year. At this age a goalie is being watched and written about, and he is almost certainly still in minor hockey or prep. Both of those are normal.

2.8%
Share of CHL goaltending games played by 16-year-olds

0.7%
Share of USHL goaltending games played by 16-year-olds

0
Of the 71 CHL and USHL teams start a 16-year-old

Our count of every CHL and USHL roster, October 2026: 9 of 147 CHL goaltenders and 1 of 38 in the USHL were born in 2010.

If he was drafted last spring, this is the season that proves the draft was a bet on later, not now. **Being somewhere he plays beats being somewhere with a logo on it.**

BENCHMARKS FOR THIS SEASON

- A starter's workload with a save percentage at the top of your league, ideally AAA.
- 25+ games at .920 or better on a top-50 AAA team (MyHockeyRankings) keeps you in the CHL, USHL or BCHL conversation.
- 25+ games at .900 on a top-75 AAA team (MyHockeyRankings) keeps you in the NAHL, CCHL, OJHL conversation.
- Film. Not a save reel, see page 17.

THE DECISIONS LANDING ON YOU THIS YEAR

- Prep school: email schools September to November, apply by January 15, decisions around March 10.
- USHL Phase II Draft (ages 17–20) and the NAHL drafts, May and June.
- August 1 before Grade 11: official visits, verbal offers and off-campus contact all open.

CONNOR, WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING AT NOW

At 16 nobody is judging his numbers. They're watching how he moves: skating, athleticism, how he recovers and finds the puck. A save percentage on a U17 team tells them almost nothing. Build the base this year, because it's the part you can't add later.

ACADEMIC CHECKPOINT

Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. Ten of your sixteen core courses must be finished before senior year starts, seven in English, math or science, and those ten grades lock. Brennan Poderzay, Minnesota, raised this unprompted: *"You have to have good grades to get into school. It doesn't take any skill to work hard and be a good person."*

AGE PAGE

U18 • AGES 17–18

Born 2009, 17 on 31 December, 18 by the playoffs.

THE LAST YEAR BEFORE JUNIOR DECIDES

Seventeen is an evaluation year, not a junior year. Goalies his exact age are on junior rosters, thirty of them in the CHL, but they are not the ones playing. Taken with the sixteens, **16- and 17-year-olds account for 18% of all CHL goaltending games and 13% of USHL games.** The other four-fifths belong to 18-, 19- and 20-year-olds. Being somewhere else at seventeen is the path, not a detour from it.

15%
Share of CHL goaltending games played by 17-year-olds

12%
Share of USHL goaltending games played by 17-year-olds

5
Of 55 CHL teams have a 17-year-old as their busiest goaltender

Our count of every CHL and USHL roster, October 2026: 30 of 147 CHL goaltenders and 4 of 38 in the USHL were born in 2009.

BENCHMARKS FOR THIS SEASON

- 25+ games at .920 or better on a top-50 AAA or prep team, the CHL, USHL and BCHL conversation.
- 25+ games at .900 on a top-75 team, the NAHL, CCHL, OJHL and Canadian Junior A conversation.
- A full season as a starter somewhere beats a half-season backing up anywhere better.

WHAT NEXT SEASON ASKS OF HIM

Eighteen is when the volume arrives, 18-year-olds play a third of all CHL goaltending games. A goalie who finishes this season without a junior roster spot has not missed the window, but he has one year less to use it. The next page is what that year looks like.

AGE PAGE, FIRST JUNIOR YEAR

JUNIOR • AGES 18–19

Born 2008, 18 on 31 December, 19 by the playoffs.

THIS IS THE YEAR YOU GET ON A JUNIOR ROSTER

18-year-olds are the largest single block of goaltenders in the CHL, 52 of 147, more than a third of the position, and they play a third of its games. In the USHL the door opens a year later.

34%
Share of CHL goaltending games played by 18-year-olds

29%
Share of USHL goaltending games played by 18-year-olds

16
Of 55 CHL teams have an 18-year-old as their busiest goaltender

Our count of every CHL and USHL roster, October 2026.

BENCHMARKS FOR THIS SEASON

- 25+ games at .900 in the CHL or USHL by 19, the Division I conversation.
- 35+ games at .920 in the BCHL, also Division I, and see page 15 first.
- 25+ games at .900 in the NAHL, CCHL, OJHL, MJHL, AJHL or SJHL by 19, the Division III conversation.

THE RULE THAT CHANGED IN AUGUST

AGE-BASED ELIGIBILITY

NCAA Division I now gives you five years of eligibility, and the clock starts the fall after your 19th birthday, whether you are enrolled in college or not. Every junior season you play after nineteen burns one of those five years. A goalie who graduates high school on time can play one junior season and keep all five.

NCAA Division I age-based eligibility model, approved June 2026, effective 1 August 2026. Source: College Hockey Inc.

AGE PAGE

JUNIOR • AGES 19–20

Born 2007, 19 on 31 December, 20 by the playoffs. The last uncontested year.

NINETEEN IS WHEN A JUNIOR TEAM HANDS YOU THE NET

Nineteen-year-olds play **37% of all CHL goaltending games and 45% of USHL games**, the largest share of any age in both leagues, and are the busiest goaltender on 27 of 55 CHL teams.

Our count of every CHL and USHL roster, October 2026.

THE DOOR MOST CANADIAN FAMILIES DON'T KNOW IS OPEN

When the NCAA opened to CHL players, CHL graduates went south instead. Their share of U Sports recruits fell from 44% to 16% in one year, while Canadian Junior A and BCHL graduates rose from 50% to 62.6%. Five years of eligibility, no eligibility centre, no contact calendar, recruited directly at 19, 20 and 21.

CBC, 2025, covering 27 of 35 U Sports programs. Awards are capped at tuition and fees nationally; conferences may cap lower, OUA publishes $5,000 a year.

AND THE HONEST FALLBACK

ACHA is club college hockey: roughly 450 teams, and the top Division I programs are genuinely good. It costs $3,000–$4,000 a year, at the university you actually want to attend.

WHY THIS IS THE YEAR HE GETS THE NET

The year after this one is rationed, a CHL club gets three overage spots in total and usually wants them for skaters. Nineteen is the last season a goalie competes only against other goalies. The next page is what happens when that stops being true.

AND THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT CLOCK

> **"Age doesn't make as big a difference now. If our goalies can leave at any point to go to college, we need the best goalie available to us at the time, regardless of if they're 16 or 20."**

AUSTIN RODEN · GOALIE COACH, VICTORIA ROYALS (WHL)

That cuts both ways, and it is the most important sentence a sixteen-year-old's family can read. A junior club that can lose a 20-year-old to college in March has less reason to hold a spot for him and more reason to play whoever is best right now. The ladder in this guide is what has happened. It is not a queue, and nobody is holding your place in it.

> **"Goaltending is a marathon, not a sprint. The one thing you can't teach a goalie is experience, going through success as well as failure. Coaches want the comfort of knowing a goalie has gone through trials and tribulations, so they know what they are going to get on a nightly basis."**

BRENNAN PODERZAY · UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

CONNOR, U SPORTS AND ACHA ARE NOT CONSOLATION PRIZES

U Sports is real hockey. Five years of eligibility and a degree that gets paid for. ACHA means he keeps playing at the school he actually wants. The disappointment isn't in the hockey, it's in a ranking he's carrying around in his head.

AGE PAGE, THE LAST ONE

OVERAGE • AGES 20–21

Born 2006, 20 on 31 December, 21 by the playoffs. The last one junior gives you.

WHAT OVERAGE ACTUALLY MEANS

OA is a birth year, not an age. Everyone born in 2006 is 20 on 31 December 2026 and plays this season as an overage. A goalie born in January, February, March or April turns **21** before the playoffs and finishes his last junior season as a 21-year-old. Both are the same OA class. The table on page 3 lays the whole ladder out this way.

After this season, junior is over. There is no second overage year and no appeal.

EVERY LEAGUE RATIONS IT, AND NOBODY GETS A GOALIE EXEMPTION

LEAGUE	OVERAGE PLAYERS ALLOWED PER TEAM
CHL	3
USHL	4
Canadian Junior A	8
BCHL	9
NAHL	No limit

There is no goaltender exemption. The BCHL carried one in past seasons and no longer does, a 20-year-old goalie counts against the same number as a 20-year-old winger, in every league here. Figures confirmed by Ryan Minkoff, 83 LLC, October 2026, against the leagues' published rules. Leagues differ on whether the cap counts rostered or dressed players, ask the club which.

THREE SPOTS, AND HE IS COMPETING AGAINST FORWARDS FOR THEM

This is the year a goaltender stops being judged against other goaltenders. A CHL club has three overage spots for the whole roster, and a 20-year-old goalie is asking for one of them instead of a 40-goal winger or a top-pair defenceman. **Being the third-best overage goalie in the league is not a job. Being the third-best overage player on your team is.**

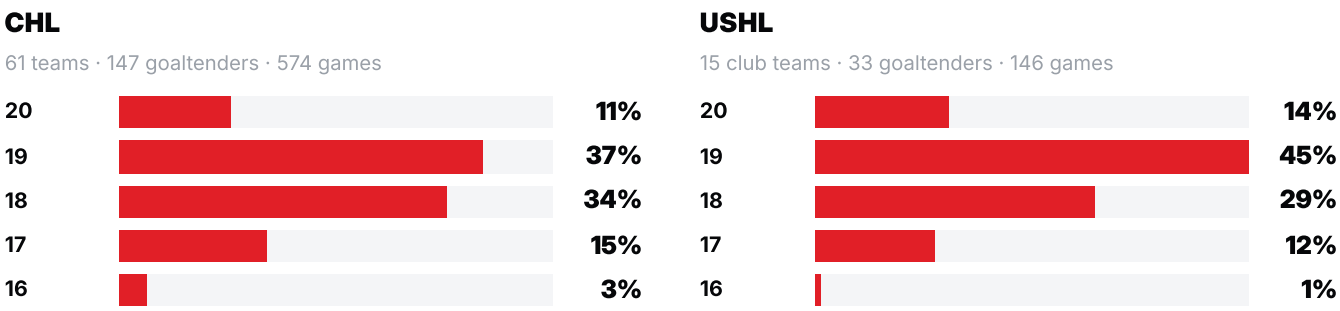
AND IT COLLIDES WITH THE COLLEGE CLOCK

NCAA Division I gives five years of eligibility starting **the fall after you turn 19, whether you are enrolled or not.** Play the OA year in junior and you have spent one of those five before you register for a class. Junior's last year and college's first year are the same year, a goalie has to choose which one gets it.

NCAA Division I age-based eligibility model, approved June 2026. College Hockey Inc.

WHERE A GOALIE ACTUALLY IS

Percentage of games played by age.



Both panels share one scale. Games played means appearances; starts are not published. Counted 20 October 2026, roughly ten games into a 62-game season. The NTDP is excluded from the USHL figures, its age structure is programme design, not selection.

JUNIOR MAKES ROOM FOR A 16-YEAR-OLD SKATER, NOT A 16-YEAR-OLD GOALIE

In the USHL this season there are **27 sixteen-year-old skaters and one sixteen-year-old goaltender.** Sixteen-year-olds hold 7.4% of skater spots and 3.0% of goalie spots. In the OHL it is 8.2% against 4.0%.

Two leagues, counted separately, same answer. A team will carry a young skater and develop him in games. It will not do that with a goalie, because there is only one net.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOUR FAMILY

If your 16-year-old goalie is not in junior hockey, he is not behind. He is where virtually every goalie his age is. The question for these two seasons is not which junior team wants him, it is how many games he is playing, and how good he is in them.

Our count: USHL 15 club teams, 366 skaters and 33 goaltenders. OHL 18 of 20 teams, 478 players. Elite Prospects rosters, October 2026.

WHAT WE COUNTED

DOES SIZE ACTUALLY GATE A GOALIE

In October 2026 we recorded the published height of every goaltender in the CHL, the USHL and NCAA Division I. Nobody publishes this. So we counted it.

89.3%
of NCAA Division I goaltenders are 6'0" or taller

68.5%
are 6'1" or taller

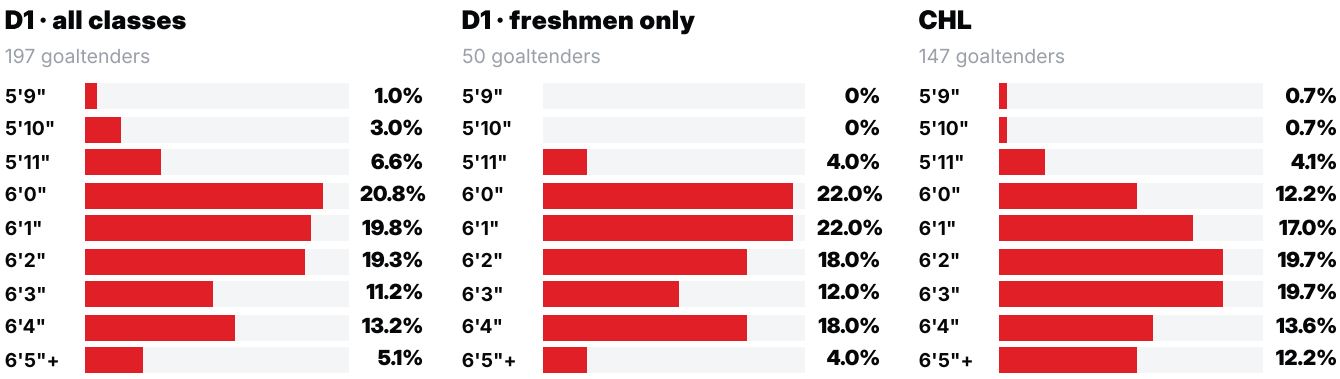
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Division I freshmen this season are under 5'11"

THE DOOR THAT WAS OPEN IS CLOSING

Division I does carry short goalies, 10.7% under six feet against 5.4% in the CHL, but look at where they came from. **23.1% of BCHL-developed Division I goaltenders are under six feet**, against 12.9% from the NAHL, 11.8% from the OHL and 5.3% from the USHL. Junior A was the forgiving lane, and it is narrowing: BCHL-produced Division I freshmen have fallen **126 to 89 to 59** in two years while the CHL's share of incoming goaltenders went from nothing to four in ten.

It already shows in the first class recruited with the CHL open. **Not one Division I freshman this season is under 5'11".** Every goalie in the league below that height was recruited before the rule changed.

BY HEIGHT, AND WHERE IT IS HEADING



All three panels share one scale, 2026–27 rosters. The freshman class is the first recruited with the CHL eligible, and it sits between the Division I roster it joined and the junior league increasingly feeding it. Freshman n=50, so read the shape, not the decimals.

THE GOALIES DOING IT ANYWAY

Division I, 5'9": Aaron Matthews, Providence · Chase Hamm, Arizona State. **5'10":** six more, including Michigan's Julian Molinaro. Every one of them is a sophomore or older, recruited before the rule changed. **CHL, 5'9":** Kyan Labbé, Sherbrooke.

> **"Not for me, no. There are certain qualities you have to have if you want to play at a high level as a smaller goalie. It's not something I consider heavily when scouting goalies for the WHL at 15."**
>
> AUSTIN RODEN · GOALIE COACH, VICTORIA ROYALS, ASKED WHETHER SIZE GATES A GOALIE

Our count, 23 October 2026: 197 of 204 Division I goaltenders, all 147 in the CHL, 33 in the USHL. Heights are published by the school or club, not measured, and junior clubs may round up harder than universities, which cuts against the gap we found, not for it.

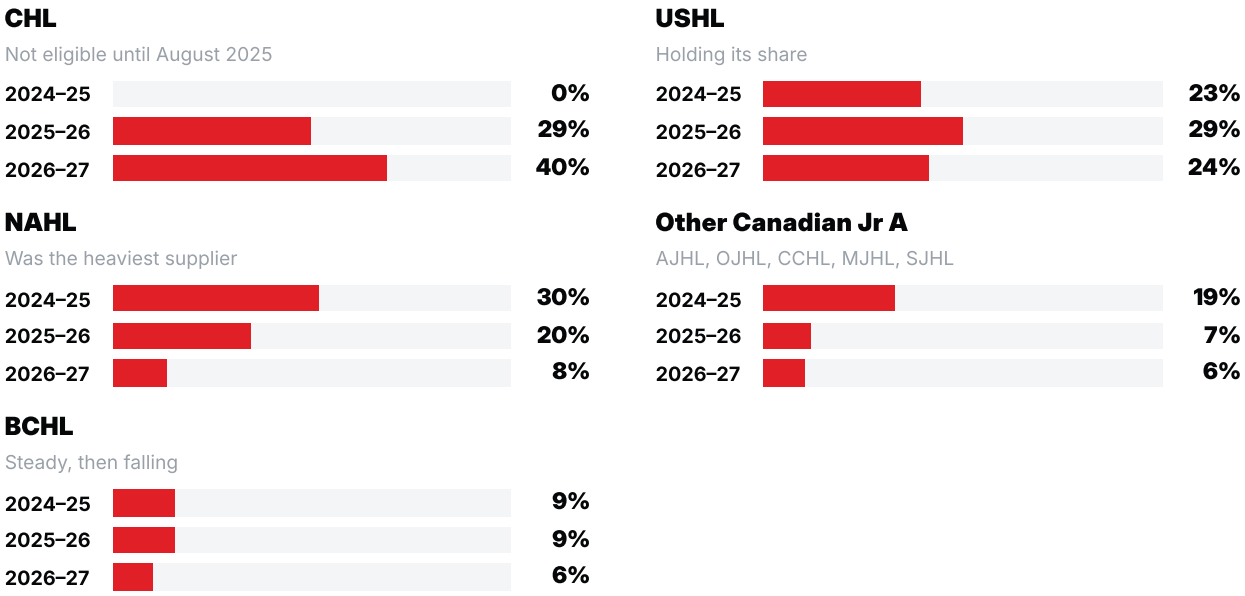
CONNOR, THERE'S NO TRICK FOR A SMALLER GOALIE

No special style, no system that hides it. Skating, tracking and depth have to be genuinely good, not good for his size. Both coaches in this guide named skating first and neither one brought up height.

WHAT WE COUNTED

WHERE DIVISION I GOALIES COME FROM

The league each incoming NCAA Division I freshman goaltender played in before he arrived. Three seasons, spanning the CHL eligibility change.



Every panel shares one scale. The remaining share each season, prep school, 18U AAA, NCDC and EHL, Europe and professional, runs between 5% and 19%.

THE CHL TOOK THAT SHARE FROM SOMEWHERE

In 2024–25 the CHL supplied none of it, because its players were not allowed to go. Two seasons later it supplies four in ten. The USHL held steady, so everything that moved came out of the Junior A leagues, and the NAHL carried most of it: **13 incoming Division I freshman goaltenders in 2024–25, four this season.**

OUR VIEW, THE CHL SHARE KEEPS CLIMBING

Every CHL-developed goaltender in Division I today is a freshman or a sophomore, because nobody older was ever allowed in. As those classes move up with new ones behind them, this number has one direction left. A goalie choosing a league at 17 or 18 should be choosing against where this is heading, not where it has been.

AND THERE ARE FEWER DOORS

The freshman goaltending class across all of Division I went **65, then 67, then 50.** Teams still carry three goalies each, the spots that used to go to a first-year goalie now go to returning sophomores and transfers.

HOW CONFIDENT WE ARE IN THIS

The 2026–27 column is clean, every freshman's previous league was identified. The two earlier seasons are directional: 18% and 34% of origins could not be recovered, because a goalie who has since changed schools shows his old college. As a check, our 2024–25 NAHL figure of 30.2% matches College Hockey Inc.'s 2023–24 figure of 30.3%, counted a different way.

Our count of every NCAA Division I roster, 62 of 63 programs, October 2026. Freshman goaltenders only, 65, 67 and 50 across the three seasons. The benchmarks on page 15 are what each of these leagues asks of a goaltender.

WHAT WE COUNTED

WHAT A DRAFT PICK IS ACTUALLY WORTH

Every goaltender taken in the OHL Priority Selection from 2017 to 2020, all fifteen rounds, 118 goalies, followed to the end of his junior eligibility.

DRAFTED IN	GOALIES TAKEN	BECAME A CHL REGULAR	NEVER PLAYED A CHL GAME
Rounds 1–3	11	11 (100%)	0 (0%)
Rounds 4–6	33	22 (67%)	8 (24%)
Rounds 7–9	27	5 (19%)	18 (67%)
Rounds 10–15	47	8 (17%)	36 (77%)
All rounds	118	46 (39%)	62 (53%)

"Became a CHL regular" means 20 or more career CHL regular-season games, about a third of a season, enough to show he was genuinely in a tandem rather than a call-up. Our count, from complete per-team draft lists and Elite Prospects career records. Only 11 goalies were taken in the first three rounds across four entire drafts, so that 100% rests on a very small number.

THE CLIFF IS BETWEEN ROUND SIX AND ROUND SEVEN

Two-thirds of goalies taken in the first six rounds became CHL regulars. Fewer than one in five taken after that did. Rounds 1 to 6 produced 33 CHL goaltenders from 44 picks; rounds 7 to 15 produced 13 from 74.

It is not quite zero late. Michael Simpson went in round 10 and played 144 CHL games. Tristan Malboeuf went in the fifteenth and final round and played 55.

READ THIS BEFORE YOU READ THAT 53%

More than half of drafted goalies never played a CHL game, but that is not 53% failure. **Twenty-one of those 62 went to NCAA Division I instead**, and thirteen of them had substantial college careers. Until August 2025, dressing for a single CHL game would have ended their NCAA eligibility, so never reporting was the correct decision rather than a failed one. The honest "did not play anywhere" figure is **37 of 118, 31%.**

AND THE SAME QUESTION, USHL SIDE

Of 26 goalies taken in the USHL's 16-year-old draft between 2018 and 2021: **35% never played a USHL game**, nearly half never played for the team that drafted them, and **37% ever played an NCAA Division I game.**

WHAT REACHES THE TOP

Of the 118 OHL-drafted goaltenders, **26 played a professional game** anywhere in the world, and **two have played in the NHL.**

OHL Priority Selection 2017–2020, every round verified against per-team draft lists (300, 300, 302 and 300 selections). Goaltenders were 118 of 1,202 total picks. The WHL and QMJHL drafts were not counted. The 2020 class has exhausted junior eligibility but its college and professional totals will still grow.

KEEP THIS PAGE

THE BENCHMARKS TABLE



Benchmarks by Ryan Minkoff, 83 LLC. Read across: where you play, what you have to produce there, and by when.

TARGET	LEAGUE YOU'RE PLAYING IN	WHAT YOU NEED	BY AGE
NCAA D1	CHL or USHL	**25+ games · .900+**	**19**
NCAA D1	BCHL	**35+ games · .920+**	**19**
NCAA D1	NAHL	**35+ games · .920+**	**19**
NCAA D3	NAHL, CCHL, OJHL, MJHL, AJHL, SJHL	**25+ games · .900+**	**19**
NCAA D3	NCDC, EHL, GOHL, SIJHL, VIJHL and below	**35+ games · .920+**	**19**
ACHA	U18 AAA, NCDC, EHL or Junior B	A starter's season	**,**
CHL · USHL · BCHL	Top-50 AAA team, Canada or USA	**25+ games · .920+**	**18**
NAHL · CCHL · OJHL	Top-75 AAA team, Canada or USA	**25+ games · .900+**	**18**
NCDC · EHL · GOHL · VIJHL	Any AAA team, Canada or USA	**20+ games · .900+**	**18**

Ages here are actual ages, not U-divisions. Your U18 season is your 17-year-old season, and "by 19" means by the end of your 19-year-old year, which is also the last junior season before overage. The NAHL appears twice on purpose. It is a Division III route at .900 over 25 games and a Division I route at .920 over 35, and it still supplies more Division I freshman goaltenders than the BCHL does (page 13). "Top 50" and "top 75" come from MyHockeyRankings, which rates teams, opponent strength plus goal differential, entered by volunteers. It is not a player ranking and MyHockeyRankings states it is not predictive. A goalie should not cite his team's ranking in an email to a coach.

JUNIOR ENDS WITH THE OVERAGE YEAR

"By 19" above means by the end of your 19-year-old season. After that comes one overage year and nothing else, three spots per CHL club, no goaltender exemption anywhere, and a collision with the NCAA eligibility clock. The full picture is on page 10.

BEFORE YOU BANK ON THE BCHL NUMBER

Division I freshmen arriving from the BCHL have fallen from **126 to 89 to 59** in two years. The benchmark still holds; the door behind it is narrowing.

Hockey Think Tank, October 2026, all positions. For goaltenders the BCHL was never a major supplier, 17% of all D1 players but 8% of D1 goaltenders. Our count.

THE ONE-WAY DOOR

The 2024 NCAA vote opened **Division I only.** Playing in the CHL still ends your Division III eligibility, and for most goalies D3 is the realistic landing spot. That decision cannot be walked back.

College Hockey Inc., November 2024 and current FAQ.

MONEY

WHAT EACH RUNG ACTUALLY COSTS

Per season, out of your pocket, 2026–27. Canadian leagues in CAD, American in USD.

LEVEL	YOU PAY	NOTES
COLLEGE, THE DESTINATION		
NCAA Division I	**$0–$60,000 USD**	Equivalency aid, partial scholarships are the norm, so most goalies sit mid-range
NCAA Division III	**$0–$60,000 USD**	**No athletic scholarships at D3.** Aid is academic and need-based, grades move this number, not save percentage
U Sports	**Tuition + fees (max)**	The award caps at tuition and fees, never rent or food. **Academic and government awards stack on top and don't count against that cap**; a CHL package pays tuition outright. Conferences may cap lower
ACHA	**$3,000–$4,000**	Pay to play, at the university of your choosing
JUNIOR, AGES 17 TO 20		
CHL	**Free + stipend**	Plus an education package, the three leagues' packages are not the same, see below
USHL	**Free**	Billet, equipment and travel covered. You pay a camp fee and your own travel
USA Hockey NTDP	**Free**	Invitation only
NAHL	**$3,200–$4,050**	Free to play. That figure is billet at $400–$450 a month
BCHL	**Team fee capped $800**	The league states billets cost the player nothing, but that page is dated 2016 and club pages differ. Confirm with the club
OJHL	**$1,695 + team fees**	League fee exactly. Team fees are not published centrally
CCHL · AJHL · MJHL · SJHL	**Not published**	**None of these four publishes a fee schedule.** Real club figures run $400–$2,800 a season, and one SJHL club pays the billet family itself
NCDC · EHL · NA3HL	**≈$10,000 USD**	No club publishes a figure. **Ryan Minkoff, 83 LLC: tuition runs $0 to $15,000 depending on the player, plus billet at about $500 a month, and most goalies end up paying around $10,000.** 390 tuition-free NCDC spots exist for 2026–27, but tuition-paying teams do too, and EHL and Tier III clubs publish deposits only ($500–$1,000). Ask per team
BEFORE JUNIOR, AGES 13 TO 18		
US prep school	**$25,000–$80,000**	Top of the range is published 2026–27 boarding at the best-known hockey schools: Cushing $79,980 · Salisbury $80,500 · Lawrence $80,900 · Avon $83,816. Smaller and day programs start far lower; need-based aid is real everywhere
Canadian academy · CSSHL	**$40,000–$60,000 CAD**	Published boarding: CIHA $49,900 · Delta ≈$57,350 international · OHA $60,700. Day and non-boarding from about $23,000. Confused with US prep and AAA. It is neither
Tier 1 AAA · USA	**$12,000–$20,000 USD**	All in. **Published club fees are only $3,000–$8,500**; travel is the rest and nobody publishes it. All-in from family cost reports
AAA minor · Canada	**$7,000–$25,000 CAD**	All in. **The league fee alone is about $1,000**. Family reports: Ontario $7,000–$20,000+, Alberta $10,000–$20,000+, BC $13,000–$25,000+. Ask for the team budget in writing

Compiled from each league's, club's or school's own published page, October 2026; the NCAA range from Ryan Minkoff, 83 LLC, the prep school floor from Connor. "Not published" means we checked the league site and multiple member clubs and found none. Where no page publishes an all-in figure — the two AAA rows — the range comes from family cost reports and is labelled as such.

GOALIE GEAR, AT THE LEVEL HE WILL WANT IT

Pro spec, Canadian retail: pads **$2,200–$2,500** · chest and arm **$890** · glove **$680** · blocker **$600** · pants **$600** · mask **$1,050–$1,150** · skates **$1,100**. That is **$7,100 to $7,500 before a stick**.

Majer Hockey published pricing, October 2026, CAD, Pro Spec and flagship lines. Pads get replaced every year or two. Bauer's entry level GSX line runs about a third of this, the honest answer at 12 and 13. US tariffs on Canadian-made gear took effect September 2026.

THE THREE CHL PACKAGES DIFFER

WHL: tuition, fees and textbooks, one year banked per season, valued on your home province's public university and usable in the US.
OHL: tuition and compulsory fees, paid to the school.
QMJHL: $720 per course passed, capped at $7,200 a year, and requires availability through your 20-year-old season.

EXPOSURE

HOW GOALIES ACTUALLY GET SEEN

There is no goalie showcase. No event dedicated to goaltenders draws college or junior decision-makers in any number, everything marketed as one is a goalie camp. Camps are where you get better; team events are where you get seen.

WORTH YOUR MONEY

- **USA Hockey Player Development Camps**, $375, plus $150 for the goalie camp. District-selected; it cannot be bought.
- **USHL Fall Classic**, 400+ scouts and every USHL general manager. You get there by being on an invited team.
- **NAHL combines**, $500–$600, run by the league itself.
- **A verified Elite Prospects profile**, free. Never pay for placement anywhere.

READ THE ROOM

- A junior main camp fee runs about $400–$500, plus travel and a hotel. Thirty-five players attend for what is often two to five genuinely open spots.
- At a typical showcase about half the listed coaches actually attend.
- Walk away from vague "exposure" language, eighty-plus players, and pressure to commit on the spot.
- Ask one question before you pay: how many players from last year's camp made opening night?

Camp and combine fees from each organiser's published 2026 pricing; main camp fee range from Connor. Attendance and open-spot figures: The Hockey Review, June 2026.

WHAT A DIVISION I COACH IS WATCHING FOR

> **"A blend of a technical and tactical skill set and athleticism. Skating, tracking, awareness of potential threats. I really pay attention to body language and how a goalie responds after a goal they want to have back, or after a big save. Can they stay the course, or do they ride an emotional roller coaster? And how do they communicate with their teammates?"**

BRENNAN PODERZAY · UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

TWO COACHES, ASKED SEPARATELY, SAID THE SAME THING

Different questions, different days. Both led with **skating**, then **how he carries himself after a goal.** Neither mentioned a save percentage, a reel or a camp.

WHAT A WHL GOALIE COACH IS ACTUALLY DOING

> **"I usually watch five or six games of a goalie I'm scouting, all from different points in the season, start, middle, end, playoffs, in order to see what tendencies are maintained throughout the season."**

> **"I hardly ever check a goalie's save percentage. If I do, it's always after I've watched all the video on them I need to in order to form my own opinion."**

AUSTIN RODEN · GOALIE COACH, VICTORIA ROYALS (WHL)

A save percentage is how a goalie gets onto the list, not how he gets chosen, and one hot month cannot rescue a year, or one bad month end it. The benchmarks on page 15 open the door; these two pages are what happens once you are through it.

CONNOR, WHERE THE MONEY SHOULD GO

Put it into weekly goalie coaching and into getting him on a team that plays him. That's it. Showcases, rankings and anything selling exposure: stop paying for those.

WHERE THIS CAME FROM

SOURCES

Every number in this guide has one. The counts are ours.

Our own counts, October 2026. We read every published roster in three leagues and recorded each goaltender's age and games played. CHL: 61 of 61 teams, 147 goaltenders. USHL: 16 of 16 teams, 37 goaltenders, with the NTDP reported separately. NCAA Division I: 62 of 63 programs across three seasons, 205, 202 and 204 goaltenders. Mercyhurst is the one program missing; its roster is not published by either source we used. Rosters from Elite Prospects and College Hockey News; games played from Elite Prospects and StatsCrew. The Division I ages were computed twice from two independent sources, which agreed to within five days.

Benchmarks, overage limits and the NCAA cost range. Ryan Minkoff, 83 LLC, October 2026.

Scouting and evaluation. Austin Roden, goalie coach, Victoria Royals (WHL), and Brennan Poderzay, University of Minnesota, October 2026, each answering our questions directly.

NCAA rules and eligibility. College Hockey Inc., CHL eligibility decision, November 2024; age-based eligibility model, June 2026; recruiting calendar and academic requirements. NCAA Eligibility Center.

Division I origins and the BCHL trend. Hockey Think Tank, October 2026.

U Sports. CBC, 2025.

Costs. Each league's, club's or school's own published fee page: GTHL, Jr Kraken, Rochester Jr. Americans, Cushing, Lawrence, Salisbury, Avon Old Farms, USHL, NAHL, BCHL, OJHL, USPHL, Boston Junior Terriers, University of Delaware, San Diego State. Equipment pricing from Majer Hockey's published listings, October 2026.

Exposure. USA Hockey, USHL, NAHL published 2026 pricing. The Hockey Review, June 2026.

What we could not find. No one publishes goaltender counts by age for any junior league, average commitment age for goalies, or fee schedules for the CCHL, AJHL, MJHL or SJHL. NCDC, EHL and Tier III tuition is not published either, so that figure and the overage limits both come from someone who places goalies in these leagues, not from a rulebook page. Where this guide says "not published," we checked and it isn't.

Counted 20 October 2026, roughly ten games into a 62-game junior season. Rules in this sport moved twice in two years and are still moving. Check anything you are about to make a decision on.

CONNOR, ASK HIM BEFORE YOU PLAN IT

Before you map out the next two years, ask your goalie what he wants out of this. Not what he thinks you want to hear: what he actually wants. Most of the families who get this wrong never asked. You either build the plan together or you build it at him.