



**HOCKEY CANADA
INITIATION PROGRAM**

HOCKEY CANADA MANDATE

March 27, 2017

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HOCKEY CANADA PUTS AGE-APPROPRIATE PROGRAMMING AT FOREFRONT FOR 2017-18 SEASON

New policy mandates cross-ice and half-ice hockey for Initiation-aged players

CALGARY, Alta. – Hockey Canada wants all of Canada on the same page when it comes to the delivery of its Initiation Program – traditionally a player’s first brush with organized hockey at the ages of five and six.

Although the Initiation Program – originally developed more than 35 years ago – always recommended cross-ice or half-ice small-area games, its delivery has varied from community to community. ***Beginning in the upcoming 2017-18 season, a new Hockey Canada policy now mandates that Initiation-aged players receive age-appropriate programming on cross-ice or half-ice surfaces.***

“You would never put a five- or six-year-old child on a full-size soccer pitch, or expect them to play basketball without any adjustments made for their size. Hockey is no different,” said Paul Carson, vice president of membership development for Hockey Canada, who notes that while some provinces and communities already deliver cross-ice programming at the Initiation level, others have always utilized full ice for practices and games.

“The Initiation Program was developed to allow kids to have fun, learn skills, and develop confidence,” said Carson. “Re-sizing the playing surface to cross-ice or half-ice means more puck-touches, which result in more chances to practice puck-control and shooting, as well as overall more movement and motor skill-development – twisting, turning, balance, coordination, agility. Their field-of-play matches their size, and these players hone in on their skill-development in a way that larger ice surfaces just aren’t conducive to.”

The differences in skill-development opportunities with cross-ice or half-ice hockey are significant: players receive five times more passes and take six times more shots. They’re called on to have to make more decisions more quickly, and are overall more engaged in the game.

Special boards and bumpers have been developed that allow for quick and easy division of a regular-sized rink into two half-ice surfaces or three cross-ice rinks, with options to create different small-area configurations. Not only does re-sizing the playing surface allow for Initiation-aged players to develop their hockey skills more effectively, it also allows communities to maximize their ice time by safely putting more teams and games on the ice at one time.

Hockey Canada and its 13 members across the country are coordinating on a communication plan to ensure hockey administrators and coaches receive the resources required to align with the new mandate.

Resources such as the Hockey Canada Network – a best-in-class skill-development resource geared to coaches – features information on the purpose of cross-ice hockey and how to run effective on-ice sessions for the five- and six-year-old Initiation age group.

Instruction on delivering age-appropriate programming will also be available to coaches trained in the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) Coach 1 – Intro Coach. This clinic, delivered by Hockey Canada’s 13 members, is geared towards coaches of entry-level players to provide resources that will aid in the implementation of skill-development and game play.

Hockey Canada has also produced a video that features renowned sport scientist Dr. Steve Norris; Olympic, World Cup, world, and Stanley Cup champion Sidney Crosby (Cole Harbour, N.S./Pittsburgh, NHL); Memorial Cup, World Cup, and IIHF World Championship-winning coach Bill Peters (Three Hills, Alta./Carolina, NHL); and Olympic gold-medallist and two-time IIHF Women’s World Championship silvermedallist Brianne Jenner (Oakville, Ont./Calgary, CWHL) describing the importance of small area games and cross-ice/half-ice hockey.

For more information on Hockey Canada and the Initiation Program, please visit HockeyCanada.ca, or follow along through social media on Facebook and Twitter.

PHILOSOPHIES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE INITIATION PROGRAM

1. Create a safe and fun environment for players to experience the sport.
2. Incorporate physical literacy, fair play, cooperation and FUN into the sport.
3. Teach basic hockey skills so players can enjoy the sport.

An Initiation Program's success will be measured by the levels of enjoyment and development achieved by the players. To optimize those goals it is necessary to have a dedicated team of adults who will play a large role as effective leaders and teachers who create a safe, fun, learning, challenging and motivating environment for the player.



IMPACT ON THE MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATIONS

There are some Minor Hockey Associations within the NOHA who have been operating their Initiation Program in a cross-ice structure for several years, while some others have started recently. For them, the Hockey Canada mandate will have little to no impact.

For the Associations who have been operating the Initiation Program at full ice in recent years, communication and sharing of information with parents and families will be extremely important. There is significant evidence and information about the benefits of cross-ice hockey, and it is crucial that we share this information with everyone in the Program.

Given the mandate from Hockey Canada, all Initiation teams within the NOHA (and all of Canada) will only play in cross-ice or half ice effective this season.

This mandate will apply to ALL Initiation games – including exhibition games and jamborees.

Associations who do not follow the Hockey Canada mandate of half-ice or cross-ice play shall be subject to sanctions in accordance with the OHF Board of Directors decision of June, 2017.

Over the long term, Minor Hockey Associations who were previously limited in their registration numbers will have the ability to actively promote their Association and to promote the game as they will have more ice available to use. As well, the Initiation Program should actively be promoted as a learn-to-play program.



KEYS TO SUCCESS FOR MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATIONS

The Initiation Program is designed for five and six-year-old players, but it is suitable for any entry level hockey player. The program clearly lays out the specific guidelines based on human growth and development to ensure a youngster's start in hockey consists of having fun, learning skills while developing confidence.

There is nothing realistic about having young children learning to play the game on a full ice surface the same way adults play the game. The most ideal representation of "real hockey" for young players is playing cross ice or on a modified playing surface regardless if the arena ice surface is large or small.

Minor Hockey Associations must commit to the Initiation program and be prepared to support it. The commitment involves creating an implementation plan and maintaining that plan as the way of operating Initiation hockey in your association.

The structure of the Initiation Program is different from those normally offered, because it does not focus on playing "standard" games. Thus, there will be critics who will challenge the Minor Hockey Association and advocate for a more traditional approach. However, it is important to remind all "doubters" that the Initiation Program has been designed by subject matter experts who specialize in child development; therefore, the format will be different than that utilized for older players and adults. An effective Initiation program must be designed with the best interest of the players and should not be used as a form of adult entertainment.

Support must come in several sources and from a variety of people. For the Minor Hockey Associations, it is essential that support is provided:

- Identify and recruit volunteers to manage and run the program. A ratio of one volunteer per five participants is ideal.
- Appoint an experienced administrator, and hold information/update sessions within the association.
- Provide additional training and support for coaches beyond the minimum requirement. This can be achieved by having additional coaches complete the Coach 1 Intro to Coach Clinic or purchasing the Hockey Canada Network App for coaches to access the proper teaching material.
- Identify an experienced individual or committee to act as mentors in the program to assist throughout the season.
- Ensure communication exists between the Initiation Program and other areas of the association. The players, coaches and parents in the Initiation Program are the future of your association.

- **Develop a plan to sell the program to the parents. Get them on your side. Options include information sessions, e-newsletters, and player surveys. The NOHA will also provide support materials that can be shared.**
- **Reach out for support. The NOHA has people who are willing to assist and support Minor Hockey Associations and Coaches who need assistance.**

WHY CROSS-ICE HOCKEY?

Cross/half-ice hockey is an important part of age appropriate training for Initiation and even Novice players. Using a smaller surface offers several benefits including increased puck touches for players, increased puck battles; puck carries will learn to avoid more players in a smaller area. All of these benefits are extremely important to the long-term development of players. Other sports have used modified surfaces for years: baseball with smaller diamonds and closer pitcher's mounds, small soccer fields and nets, shorter nets in basketball, closer tees in golf, cross court tennis.

Cross/half-ice hockey is based on a model of practicing and playing across the 85-foot width of the ice surface compared to the full 200 feet length of the ice surface that older players or professionals would use.

The cross/half- ice hockey model has been used by several other countries in hockey for several years. It has been tested that children who begin their training in this environment have an outstanding hockey experience. Parents may ask the questions why should my child play cross ice or I want my child to play "real hockey".

To help address this question, let's think about a child trying to skate with a puck while performing a drill the entire 200 feet from one end to another. How long will this take? How much energy will this require? Or think about the puck getting dumped down the ice to have the "fastest" skater be the one to touch it. Do these situations cause more children to be involved in the action? Touch the puck? Or have to make decisions?

To demonstrate how a full sheet of ice looks to a child, USA Hockey put adult players on an extra-large rink with giant nets to simulate what a child sees. The players found the games tiring, difficult and said they would lose interest quickly in the sport if that was what they faced. See how adult players opened their eyes to what is being taught by the American Development Model of cross-ice hockey and small-area games.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXhxNq59pWg>

BENEFITS OF CROSS ICE/HALF ICE HOCKEY

- More efficient use of ice time; more children can get the chance to play the game
- Size of the rink is proportional with the size of the players
- Small size nets can make the nets proportional to the players
- More children playing at once
- Increased number of puck touches, more children will experience touching the puck more often
- Creates excitement similar to a “real” game played by adults
- Both less and more skilled players will benefit from the smaller space
- More repetition/ frequency in drills
- Children remain active in between shifts in neutral zone with various activities
- Children have more energy, compared with chasing the puck 200 feet
- Creates a feeling of being an important part of the action because of the small size
- Decision making skills are enhanced and must be made more frequently
- Individual techniques are developed more quickly
- More opportunities for shooting the puck; child sized goals (not mandatory) force the players to shoot more accurately
- Increased speed of the game; requires quicker reactions by players
- Smaller group sizes which makes teaching and learning more effective

Cross-Ice vs. Full Ice Hockey

- 6x more shots on goal/player
- 5x more passes received/player
- 2x more puck battles/player
- 2x more puck touches/player
- 2x more pass attempts/player
- 2x more change of directors/pivots
- 1.75 shots/minute vs. 0.45 playing full ice

See the USA Hockey Analytics video located here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CB_Ygapyl7c

ON-ICE STUDY: SMALLER ICE SURFACES AND SKATING DEVELOPMENT

In August 2016, Hockey Alberta partnered with Powerscout Hockey and St. Albert Minor Hockey to conduct a study on the effectiveness of smaller ice surfaces in skill development. The study featured 40 Initiation-aged players (five- and six-year-olds) who participated in a series of tests to collect data on a number of game and practice scenarios.

Hockey Alberta has worked with Minor Hockey Association Development Directors over the past couple of years to implement the Initiation guidelines. As part of that process, Hockey Alberta has received feedback that asks whether the smaller surface limits skating development, rather than enhancing it.

With regard to skating development, specific data for skating speed and acceleration was collected from the following scenarios:

- 200-foot sprints
- cross-ice games
- half-ice games, and
- a full ice game.

Overall, an analysis of the data and observation of the on-ice sessions reinforce that using a smaller ice surface at the Initiation level helps in the overall positive development of skating skills and skating acceleration for our youngest players, thereby better preparing them for when they are old enough to move to higher levels of hockey.

To read more about the findings from this study, [click here](#).

MYTHS ABOUT CROSS ICE HOCKEY

Myth #1: Long Term Player Development (LTPD) fails in youth goalie development. Kids need to be identified as goaltenders and taught goaltending specific skills at young ages.

Truth:

- Almost none of the NHL's top goaltenders began playing between the pipes until they were at least 9 years old. Finland, which is viewed as a model for producing great goaltenders, doesn't let kids play full-time in goal until age 10. Goaltending experts worldwide state that, at 8U, it's far more important to develop overall athleticism and skating ability than goaltending technique.
- As Kevin Woodley recently wrote in InGoal Magazine, "Most NHL goaltending coaches will tell you they'd rather add some structure to a skilled athletic goalie than try to add athleticism to a technician." Thus, the LTPD emphasis on development of athleticism at young ages is ideal for skaters and future goalies alike.

Myth #2: Cross Ice practices don't provide enough skating, especially long skates.

Truth:

- Forty to fifty percent of every practice plan is skating-focused.
- The Cross Ice environment requires children to take an equivalent number of strides to what an adult takes when covering a full ice sheet. It's simply scaled for a child's leg length.
- Skating form deteriorates over long distances. Age-appropriate skill development emphasizes development of proper skating form and an increase in quality strides. But most importantly, what separates players at advancing levels of hockey is their ability to turn, stop, start and change direction. These are the skating skills that are vital to becoming a successful hockey player – and these are the skating skills emphasized with small-area games and Cross Ice hockey.

AGE APPROPRIATE PROGRAMMING

Definition: Designing hockey programming that is suitable to the age, size and skill level of the participant.

- Children are not miniature adults.
- Child development is a marathon, not a sprint.
- Children should be built into: People first → Athletes second → Hockey Players last.

You don't put five- and six-year-olds on a full-size soccer pitch, or expect them to play basketball on a full-sized court with no height adjustments – hockey is no different.

Half-ice/cross-ice hockey allows young players the opportunity for more puck-touches, which promotes greater opportunity for skill development (puck-handling, shooting, skating, coordination) and decision-making.

- Players on half-ice/cross-ice have been shown to receive five times more passes and take six times more shots than when they are on a full-sized rink.
- Small-area games are used at all levels of the game – including senior national teams and the NHL.

Age Appropriate Ice Session Progression and Purpose

STATIONS	→	SMALL AREA GAMES	→	CROSS-ICE / HALF-ICE
Fun		Fun		Fun
Skill Acquisition		Decision Making Skills		Application of Skills
Maximize Activity		Transition		Play in Traffic
Confidence		Support		Battle / Compete
Error Detection / Correction		Puck Protection		Tactics

There are four main tenets to age-appropriate, age-specific hockey:

- 1. More Puck Time**
Smaller spaces mean more opportunity for a player to touch the puck – and ultimately improve their skills.
- 2. Age-Appropriate Training**
By scaling the ice to their level, children are more involved, more engaged and developing their skills more efficiently.
- 3. Cost Savings**
Because multiple teams share the ice, parents save on ice time costs.
- 4. Increased Competition**
A smaller ice surface makes players of all skill levels think and act quicker, resulting in more frequent battles for the puck and hockey decision-making.

LONG TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT/SEASONAL STRUCTURE

General

Sport Canada's Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) Resource Paper "Canadian Sport for Life" sets out a framework for sport development in Canada. Hockey Canada's Long Term Player Development (LTPD) is a nine stage model based on the physical, mental, emotional and cognitive development of children and adolescents. Each stage reflects a different point in developing the player. The first four stages emphasize physical literacy and a broad range of sport experiences. The next five stages focus on development and competitive excellence. Active for Life encourages life-long physical activity and informed healthy lifestyle choices with participation in hockey long after the competitive years.

LTPD SUMMARY

- Is a philosophy and a vehicle for change.
- Is athlete-centred from a child's first involvement in sport to the transition to lifelong physical activity or other sport related activities.
- Integrates the needs of athletes with a disability into the design and delivery of sport programs.
- Provides a framework for reviewing current practices, developing new initiatives, and standardizing programs.
- Establishes a clear development pathway from playground to podium and on to being active for life.
- Identifies the shortcomings in Canada's sport system and provides guidelines for problem solving.
- Provides guidelines for planning for optimal performance for all stages of athlete development.
- Provides key partners with a coordinated structure and plan for change.
- Identifies and engages key stakeholders in delivering change.
- Provides an aligned and integrated model for delivering systems including
 - Long-term athlete development — technical, physical, tactical, and behavioral.
 - Long-term coaching development.
 - Sport and physical activity programs and services in NSO's, PSO's, recreational organizations, clubs, and schools.

What is LTPD – Specific to Hockey

PHYSICAL LITERACY, HOCKEY SPECIFIC BASICS & BROAD RANGE OF SPORT ACTIVITIES

Discovery – Male and Female 0-4 COMMUNITY This is an important period for acquiring fundamental movement skills (running, gliding, jumping, kicking, catching...)

that lay the foundation for more complex movements, thereby preparing children for a physically active lifestyle. Hockey Canada encourages children to begin skating at an early age through Discovery Hockey programs.

Fundamentals 1– Male and Female 5-6 COMMUNITY/LOCAL The focus is on the development of physical literacy. Fundamental movement skills should be mastered and motor development emphasized, and participation in many sports/activities is encouraged. For optimal skill acquisition, the basic hockey skills of skating and puck control are introduced through the Initiation Program. FUN competitions are also introduced in a team environment.

Fundamentals 2– Male and Female 7-8 LOCAL During this period players continue to develop motor skills and coordination. Practices sessions should be held twice a week during the season. Ongoing participation in compatible sports is strongly encouraged. The Novice Skills Program is designed to promote the continued development of physical literacy, fitness, and the basic skills required to play hockey.

Mission 10/10,000

Research has concluded that it takes a minimum of 10 years and 10,000 hours of deliberate training for a talented player to reach elite levels (Starkes and Ericsson, 2003).

This means before the 10 year or 10,000-hour rule comes into play:

- A player must have developed the fundamental skills
- Be physically literate

For a player and coach this translates into slightly more than 3 hours of training or competition daily for 10 years.

But where do youngsters develop the skills of the game?

- Evidence would suggest that the number of games played by youngsters in Canada slows the development of players.

Seasonal Structure

FUNDamental Hockey Skills 1

The focus is on the development of physical literacy. Fundamental movement skills should be mastered, motor development emphasized, and participation in many sports/activities is encouraged. For optimal skill acquisition, the basic hockey skills of skating and puck control are introduced through the Initiation Program. FUN competitions are also introduced in a team environment. Learn all fundamental movement skills and build overall motor skills. Skill development in the FUNDamentals stage should be well-structured, positive, and FUN!

The skill of skating speed can be developed quickly with players this age. Coaching should focus on developing skating speed in repetitions of less than 5 seconds. The ABC's of agility, balance and coordination should be emphasized through the teaching of skills and small games to emphasize the ABC's. Ensure that the skills the player acquires during the FUNDamentals stage will benefit them when they engage in recreational activities, enhancing their quality of life and health. Hockey Canada recommends in the early stages of FUNDamentals that players spend 85% of their time on the introduction and development of technical skills.

Proposed Long Term Player Development (LTPD) Seasonal Chart – Initiation

Initiation	Number of Practices	Start date for Practices	Development Season	Start date for Games	Development & regular Season	Playoff Season	Tournaments	# of Games total
Ideal	35 - 40	Sept 15	12 weeks 20 practices (Limited and modified games)	Dec 15	10 weeks 20 practices 10 games	N / A	2 tournaments 8 games	15 - 20

Kids who have fun playing a sport are more likely to stay active and healthy for their entire lifetime. They also have a better chance of becoming a top athlete. So make it fun, and make it quality!

For further information on Hockey Canada's Long Term Player Development philosophy, [click here](#).



NOHA POLICIES

Game Cap Policy

Initiation age teams are only to play between 15 to 25 games throughout the course of the season. A game is considered 20 minutes of consistent play. Teams that are attending “Jamborees” or who are playing exhibition games must have their requests approved via the NOHA Portal. No “games” can be played without approval.

Rationale:

- The Hockey Canada principles of Long Term Player Development recommend that teams play 15 to 25 games at the Initiation age group.
- This shifts the focus from games to practices, where technical skill development is the focus.

No Assigned Goaltenders

No team shall designate a player as a full-time goaltender.

Rationale:

- At the age of 5 and 6, players need to be introduced to all skills of Hockey (Skating, Shooting, Passing, Puck Handling, and Checking).
- By preventing teams to have full time goaltenders, we are allowing players at the Initiation age group to develop all these fundamental skills to be successful in the sport and have fun!
- If Associations are using the smaller nets (36”x24”), players will have enough of a challenge shooting on the nets without a goaltender.

Statistics

No statistics or league standings are to be recorded by any association or league that operates Initiation age group games.

Rationale:

- Keeping League Standings promotes competitiveness amongst coaches, parents, and administrators.
- The focus needs to be shifted away from wins and losses, to fun/skill development.

6-Year-Olds Must Play Initiation

We recognize that some Minor Hockey Associations have been using full ice and playing games on full ice at the Initiation Program and for some it is going to be a dramatic transition in going to cross ice this coming season. This change has led to some families requesting that their child move up to Novice.

While we need to communicate the benefits of cross ice hockey and age appropriate programming to all families, it is particularly important for these families who played a season using full ice.

- Hockey is a late specialization sport; it takes 10,000 hours or 10,000 repetitions to master a skill. An early-developing athlete will benefit greatly from participation in the Initiation Program.
- In a cross-ice environment, players are more exposed to the various technical skills of the game;
 - 2x more body contact and puck battles
 - 6x more shots
 - 2x more individual player puck touches
 - 1.75 shots per minute vs. 0.45 shots per minute
 - 2x more pass attempts
- As described in the overview of the Initiation Program, it is meant to **FUN!** Per a study conducted by Michigan State University the number one reason kids play sport is **to have fun**. Players who are having fun will stay in the game, as proven by a recent USA Hockey press release:
http://www.usahockey.com/news_article/show/787598?referrer_id=752796
- There is a misconception that because of the cross-ice mandate that players will no longer be playing games; the Initiation Program recommends 15-25 modified games.
- Hockey Canada has mandated that Novice hockey be played in a half ice environment by 2019/2020 at the latest; this may be implemented sooner by the OHF and/or NOHA, which will otherwise result in another transition for those players whose parents wish for them to move up to Novice this season.

EQUIPMENT

General

For children to enjoy the sport, they should use equipment that is suited to their size. Hockey has modified equipment that allows players to excel.

Four (4) ounce Puck – Mandatory

All Initiation Practices and Games must use the 4-Ounce Puck (usually blue in colour).

Rationale:

- The NOHA distributed these pucks to all minor hockey associations in the 2015 Season.
- Other sports downsize their equipment to be age and skill appropriate.
- The lighter puck is easier to shoot, pass and stickhandle for players in the earlier stages of physical development, leading to more success and in turn leading to more confidence and fun!

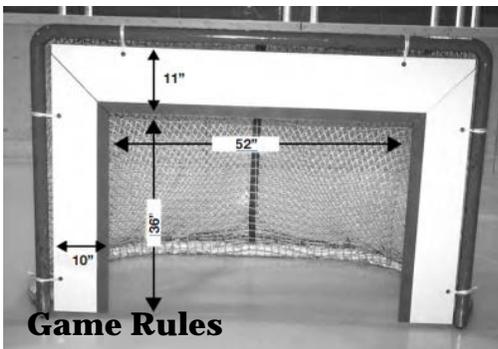
Cross-Ice Hockey Dividers – Recommended

It is recommended that all Minor Hockey Association purchase rink dividers for the Initiation age group to be used during games and practices. If, due to financial constraints or other reasons, dividers cannot be purchased, the rink can be divided using wooden dividers, a fire hose, or the bluelines.

The NOHA has provided a subsidy of up to \$1000.00 to each Minor Hockey Association to assist in the purchase of dividers.

Small Nets – Recommended

It is recommended that all Minor Hockey Association purchase small nets for the Initiation age group to be used during games and practices. The recommended dimensions for these nets are 36" by 24" by 12". If, due to financial constraints or other reasons, small nets cannot be purchased, regular sized nets can be used, or regular sized nets can be modified to a smaller size.



These lightweight goal inserts could be constructed using wood or plastic. The inserts should be made to fit inside the posts of a normal goal net. The insert should have an opening 36 inches high and 52 inches wide. The insert can be fastened to the goal posts and cross bar using straps or hooks.

All games in the 2017-2018 season (exhibition games and jamborees) will be played preferably on one-third of the normal size rink; half-ice may be used depending on the numbers of participants. Full ice games will not be permitted. The nets will be placed across the ice in the end zones.

Length of Games

One game shall last twenty (20) minutes of playing time.

On-Ice Officials

There should be at least one coach, or on-ice helper that should act as an on-ice guide for the players during modified ice games. There shall not be any NOHA Officials officiating any Initiation Games or Jamborees.

There shall be no blue lines or red lines in a cross-ice/half-ice game, and therefore no icings or offsides.

Face-offs shall only be conducted at the start of a game; no face-offs after goals are scored, the puck will be shot into a corner to resume play.

There shall be no penalty infractions called at the Initiation age group. In cases where a perceived rule violation has occurred, the coach or on-ice helper may intervene to notify the player on how the rule was violated. If a player needs to be removed for consistently violating rules, the player should be replaced immediately.

There shall be no timeouts called at any time throughout a modified ice game.

Off-Ice Officials

The Home team shall be responsible for designating an off-ice official to keep time for the game. They are only to manage the clock and not track statistics.

Player Personnel

It is recommended that teams play three on three during all games. Four on four can be played if the teams playing beforehand agree to it. This is excluding a goaltender.

No Full-Time Goaltender

No team shall designate a player as a full-time goaltender.

Rationale:

- At the age of 5 and 6, players need to be introduced to all skills of Hockey (Skating, Shooting, Passing, Puck Handling, and Checking).

- By preventing teams to have full time goaltenders, we are allowing players at the Initiation age group to develop all these fundamental skills to be successful in the sport and have fun!
- If Associations are using the smaller nets (36”x24”), players will have enough of a challenge shooting on the nets without a goaltender.

Team Composition

Initiation Teams are defined as a group of registered participants who are qualified to be registered onto a team. During a modified ice game, it is critical for the Initiation Coach, Coordinator, Convener, or Organizer to separate teams into sub-teams. Preferably, these sub-teams should have one spare player. For instance, if you are playing 3-on-3, sub-teams should be made up of 4 players, if you are playing 4-on-4, sub-teams should be made up of 5 players. The maximum number of players per sub-team should be 6 (two spares during a 4-on-4 game). These sub-teams should be divided by talent (high, medium, and low). This way, players will be engaged in an atmosphere where they are comfortable, and are receiving enough playing time so that they are receiving the benefits of cross-ice.

Even Playing Time

All players must play as evenly as possible throughout a game.

Shift Changes

All games shall be played with a two-minute running clock, after the two-minute running clock, the timekeeper will buzz the players off and a new set of players shall go on. It is recommended that, when multiple games are being played at the same time that the two-minute running clock be the same for both games.

Player Resting Area

It is recommended that all players that are not currently playing in a game should be either resting in the neutral zone or working on technical skills in the neutral zone. Benches can be used as player resting areas as well, given the layout of the rink.

Other Ways to Modify the Game

We have to remember that the Initiation Program is FUN! Below are some ways that Associations can further modify the game.

Modify the Equipment

- Use pylons for goals
- Use smaller nets
- Devise boards and benches to be used while dividing the ice
- Use target, artificial goalies or no goalies

Modify the Basic Rules

- Players must make a certain number of passes
- Players may only score a limited number of goals

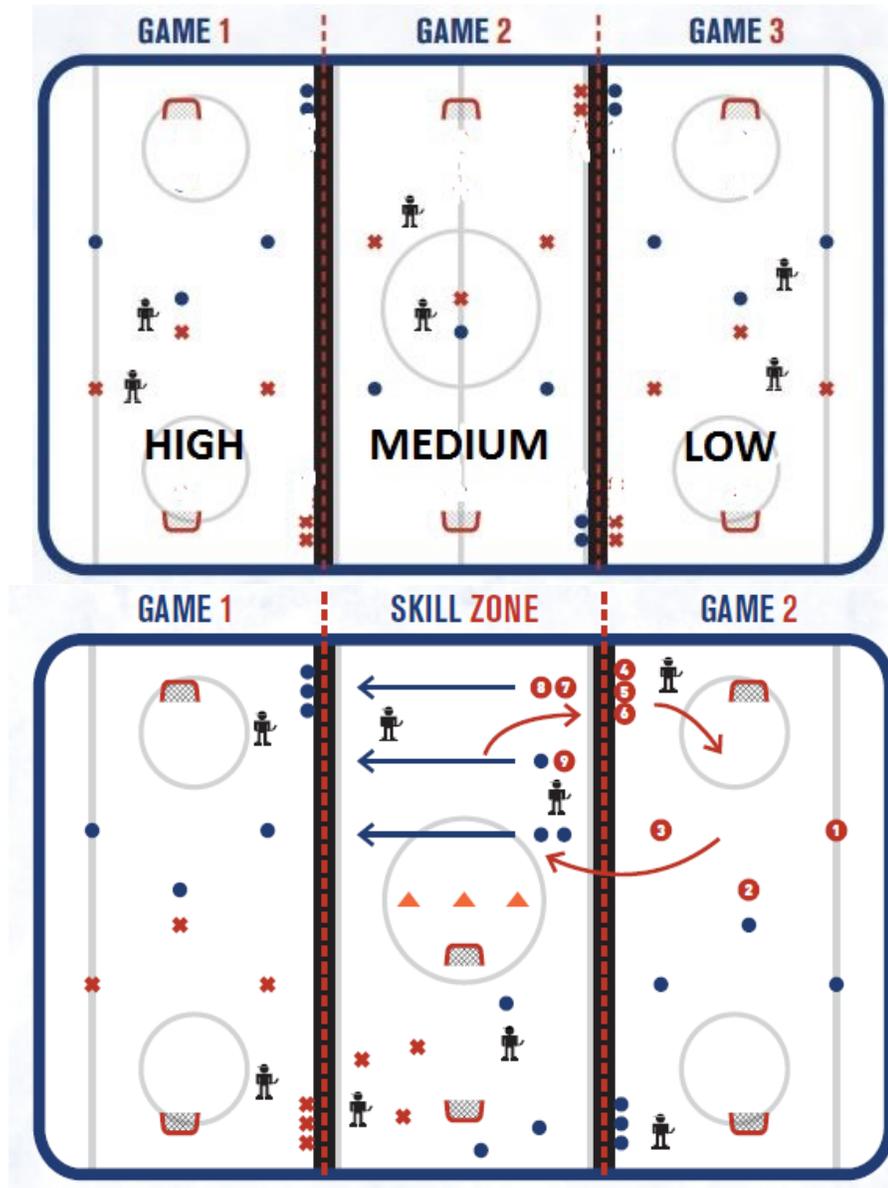
Emphasize Skill

- Players can only skate backwards
- Players must only pass on the backhand
- All players rotate all positions including goal



ICE SETUPS

The structure of the ice for games will depend on the number of participating teams, but below we have provided two examples of how the ice can be set up for Jamborees; one is for two games taking place on the ice at the same time and the other is for three games taking place simultaneously.



GAME RULES FOR THE INITIATION AGE GROUP

2017-2018 SEASON

1. The Playing Surface

1.1. Cross-Ice Hockey

All games in the 2017-2018 season (exhibition, regular season, and jamborees) will be played preferably on one-third of the normal size rink; half-ice may be used depending on the numbers of participants. Full ice games will not be permitted. The nets will be placed across the ice in the end zones. See diagram below:

For examples of different game setups, please see Appendix A – Modified Rink Setups.

1.2. Cross-Ice Hockey Dividers

It is recommended that all Minor Hockey Association purchase rink dividers for the Initiation age group to be used during games and practices. If, due to financial constraints or other reasons, dividers cannot be purchased, the rink can be divided using wooden dividers, a fire hose, or the bluelines.

1.3. Small Nets

It is recommended that all Minor Hockey Association purchase small nets for the Initiation age group to be used during games and practices. If, due to financial constraints or other reasons, small nets cannot be purchased, regular sized nets can be used, or regular sized nets can be modified to a smaller size.

2. Seasonal Structure

2.1. Game Cap Policy

Initiation age teams are only to play between 15 to 25 games throughout the course of the season. A game is considered 20 minutes of consistent play. Teams that are attending “Jamborees” or who are playing exhibition games must have their requests approved via the NOHA Portal. Approval may also be requested for “Leagues”; submissions of game schedules must be made to the District Council Director(s) whose teams are involved for approval. No “games” can be played without approval.

Rationale:

- The Hockey Canada principles of Long Term Player Development recommend that teams play 15 to 25 games at the Initiation age group.

- This shifts the focus from games to practices, where technical skill development is the focus.

3. Equipment

For children to enjoy the sport, they should use equipment that is suited to their size. Hockey has modified equipment that allows players to excel.

3.1.4-Ounce Puck Policy

All Initiation Practices and Games must use the 4-Ounce Puck (usually blue in colour).

4. Game Organization

4.1.Statistics

No statistics or league standings are to be recorded by any association or league that operates Initiation age group games.

4.2. Game Officials

NO Officials are to be used for Initiation Games. There should be at least one coach, or on-ice helper that should act as an on-ice guide for the players during modified ice games.

4.3. Off-Ice Officials

The Home team shall be responsible for designating an off-ice official to keep time for the game. They are only to manage the clock and not track statistics.

4.4. Length of Games

One game shall last twenty (20) minutes of playing time.

4.5. Playing Time

4.5.1. Player Personnel

It is recommended that teams play three on three during all games. Four on four can be played if the teams playing beforehand agree to it. This is excluding a goaltender.

4.5.2. No Full-Time Goaltender Policy

No team shall designate a player as a full-time goaltender.

4.5.3. Team Composition

Initiation Teams are defined as a group of registered participants who are qualified to be registered onto a team. During a modified ice game, it is critical for the Initiation Coach, Coordinator, Convener, or Organizer to separate teams into sub-teams. Preferably, these sub-teams should have one spare player. For instance, if you are playing 3-on-3, sub-teams should be made up of 4 players, if you are playing 4-on-4, sub-teams should be made up of 5 players. The maximum number of players per sub-team should be 6 (two spares during a 4-on-4 game). These sub-teams should be divided by talent (high, medium, and low). This way, players will be engaged in an atmosphere where they are comfortable, and are receiving enough playing time so that they are receiving the benefits of cross-ice.

4.5.4. Even Playing Time

All players must play as evenly as possible throughout a game.

4.5.5. Shift Changes

All games shall be played with a two-minute running clock, after the two-minute running clock, the timekeeper will buzz the players off and a new set of players shall go on. It is recommended that, when two games are being played at the same time (two separate end zones), that the two-minute running clock be the same for both games.

4.5.6. Player Resting Area

It is recommended that all players that are not currently playing in a game should be either resting in the neutral zone or working on technical skills in the neutral zone. Benches can be used as player resting areas as well, given the layout of the rink. Please refer to Appendix A – Modified Rink Setups.

5. Game Flow

5.1. Icings/Offsides

There shall be no blue lines or red lines in a cross-ice game, and therefore, no icings or offsides.

5.2. Face-offs

There shall be face-offs at the beginning of the game.

5.3. Penalty Infractions

There shall be no penalty infractions called at the Initiation age group. In cases where a perceived rule violation has occurred, the coach or on-ice helper may intervene to notify the player on how the rule was violated. If a player needs to be removed for consistently violating rules, the player should be replaced immediately.

5.4. Timeouts

There shall be no timeouts called at any time throughout a modified ice game.

JAMBOREES

Games are still played at the Initiation level but they are to be done in a cross-ice environment. To ensure consistency across Northern Ontario, the NOHA Board of Directors has supported that all “tournaments” hosted in the NOHA are to be in a jamboree-style.

Introduction

Jamborees are an excellent way to get many games in a short amount of time. They are also an excellent way for players to develop their technical skills, make new friends, and have fun!

Hosting a Jamboree

Application is to be made to the NOHA Office in the same manner that all other tournaments are requested. A separate application form has been developed for Jamborees, and has been enclosed.

Attending a Jamboree

All requests to attend Jamborees are to be done via the NOHA Tournament Portal. Requests are submitted to your Minor Hockey Association and then entered on to the Portal by the designated person within the Association.

Jamboree Rules

- Jamborees can be hosted after December 1.
 - Hockey Canada’s LTPD plan recommends 3-4 weeks of practice and skill development before playing any games.
- All Jamborees shall be one day events.
- All games shall be 20 minutes in length.
- Teams shall play a maximum of three (3) games per day; there shall be no playoff rounds.
- Schedules should be created so teams are only at the rink for half of the day.
- Games shall be played at 3 on 3 or 4 on 4, plus goaltender (if desired). The number of players is to be outlined in the jamboree rules in advance.
- Games and zones should be scheduled based on abilities to allow every player a chance to succeed.
- Clock buzzes every 2 minutes to change players.
- Faceoff to start the game only; No face-offs after goals are scored, the puck will be shot into a corner to resume play.
- There shall be no icings or offsides.
- No keeping score and no winners shall be declared.
- There should be at least one coach, or on-ice helper that should act as an on-ice guide for the players during modified ice games.

Team Structure for Jamborees

Initiation Teams are defined as a group of registered participants who are qualified to be registered onto a team. During a modified ice game, it is critical for the Initiation Coach, Coordinator, Convener, or Organizer to separate teams into sub-teams. Preferably, these sub-teams should have one spare player. For instance, if you are playing 3-on-3, sub-teams should be made up of 4 players, if you are playing 4-on-4, sub-teams should be made up of 5 players. The maximum number of players per sub-team should be 6 (two spares during a 4-on-4 game). These sub-teams should be divided by talent (high, medium, and low). This way, players will be engaged in an atmosphere where they are comfortable, and are receiving enough playing time so that they are receiving the benefits of cross-ice.

Proposed Jamboree Schedule

Although your Jamboree schedule will be determined based on the number of participating teams, below is a template that can be used:

JR Tykes

Time	Ice 1	Ice 2	Ice 3	Division
8:45-9:05	TS – Wild vs KL Wings	TS Flames vs ENG – Bears	TS Devils vs KL Rangers	JR
9:10-9:30	TS – Stars vs ENG Lightning	TS – Panthers vs VM Coyotes	ENG – Eagles vs VM Kings	JR
9:35-9:55	TS – Wild vs ENG Bears	TS Flames vs KL Rangers	TS Devils vs KL Wings	JR
10:00-10:20	TS – Stars vs VM Kings	TS Panther vs ENG Lightning	ENG – Eagles vs VM Coyotes	JR
10:25-10:45	TS – Wild vs KL Rangers	TS Flames vs KL Wings	TS Devils vs ENG Bears	JR
10:50-11:10	TS – Stars vs ENG - Eagles	TS Panthers vs VM Kings	ENG – Lightning vs VM Coyote	JR

11:15 – 11:35 *** Flood and Set up for SR Tykes
Lunch will be served 11am – 1:00pm

SR Tykes

Time	Ice 1	Ice 2	Ice 3	Division
11:40-12:00	TS- Rangers vs ENG-Canada	TS- Leafs vs ENG- Sens	TS- Jets vs ENG-Habs	SR
12:05-12:25	TS- Canucks vs KL- Capitals	TS-Predators vs VM Nordiques	TS – Penguins vs VM Canadiens	SR
12:30-12:50	TS- Kings vs ENG- Sens	ENG- Canada vs TS- Wild	TS – Leafs vs KL- Canucks	SR
12:55-1:15	KL- Capitals vs VM Nordiques	VM Canadiens vs TS- Canucks	ENG- Habs vs KL - Flames	SR
1:20-1:40	KL-Canadiens vs TS- Rangers	TS-Kings vs KL- Wings	TS- Jets vs ENG- Canada	SR
1:45-2:05	TS – Penguins vs ENG- Habs	ENG- Sens vs KL- Canucks	TS- Rangers vs KL- Flames	SR
2:10-2:30	TS- Canucks vs VM- Nordiques	TS- Leafs vs KL- Wings	TS-Predators vs KL- Capitals	SR
2:35-2:55	TS- Wild vs VM Canadiens	TS- Jets vs KL-Canadiens	TS – Penguins vs KL- Flames	SR
3:00-3:25	TS-Predators vs KL-Canadiens	TS- Kings vs KL - KL- Canucks	TS- Wild vs KL- Wings	SR

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

Because the Initiation Program deals with children who may not have yet entered the school system, the need for quality leadership is critical. For some children, the Initiation Program may be the first time they have attended an organized event outside the home. Therefore, the coach may be the first authority figure, other than a parent, the child has encountered.

Coaches and other volunteers must be positive, energetic, creative, fun-loving and patient. The Coach 1 Clinic will emphasize many of the attributes necessary to conduct the program successfully. It is not necessary that the potential coaches have previous experience in teaching hockey skills, although that would be an asset. At the beginning level, on-ice coaches may range from an interested parent who offers to come out to offer encouragement to a seasoned coach who can demonstrate the skills covered in the Hockey Canada Network App.

Associations must be innovative in their recruitment of Initiation Program volunteers. It can be a grooming area for the association's future administrators, coaches as well as players. A strong nucleus of volunteers is essential, as a number of roles must be filled to effectively operate the program and deliver the curriculum. However, a single individual may be able to fill one or more roles. The basic framework or structure of the personnel required to implement the Initiation Program is: Program Administrator, Head Instructor (Coach), Support Instructors (Coaches), and Coach Mentor.

Program Administrator

This position is directly responsible for planning, organizing and administering the implementation and delivery for the Initiation Program. The program administrator may be an executive member of the local minor hockey association or may simply be the liaison to the association's executive.

The administrator has a number of responsibilities to fulfil which require a number of administrative skills, including: budgeting, liaising with the minor hockey association's executive, recruitment and placement of instructors, coordinating the evaluation of the program, undertaking special events and recommending changes to the program and its delivery. The administrator must work closely with the Head Instructor, and thus it is wise to select people for these two roles who complement one another and are capable of working together.

The qualifications within a typical recruitment advertisement for a Program Administrator may contain the following requirements:

- Understand the fundamental elements of the Initiation Program
- Possess a commitment to the established goals of the Initiation Program
- Possess strong organizational, interpersonal and communication skills

- Have the ability to conduct group presentations
- Have the ability to liaise with volunteers, board members, administrators, instructors and parents
- Have demonstrated the ability to provide adequate time to the delivery of the Initiation Program

POTENTIAL JOB DESCRIPTION

A typical job description for the program administrator may contain these responsibilities (some may be shared with the Initiation Program Mentor if there is one):

Pre-Season

- Prepare operating budget for review and adoption by the minor hockey association's board. This budget may contain estimates for expenditures and revenues for:
 - Ice Rental
 - Equipment (Pucks, Pylons, Instructor Warm-Up Suits, Whistles, etc.)
 - Supplies (Paper, Pens, Envelopes, Binders, Lesson Manuals, etc.)
 - Training Fees (for Instructor training sessions)
 - Room Rentals (for meetings)
 - Promotion Supplies (posters, photocopying, pamphlets,)
 - Advertising (local media)
 - First Aid supplies/kits
 - Instructor recognition
 - Sponsorship
- Secure ice time in conjunction with the minor hockey association for practices and modified games.
- Prepare and implement recruitment procedures for participants, instructors and head instructors.
- Coordinate the registration of participants.
- Assist in the selection and training of head instructor(s).
- Promotion of Coach 1 Clinics to instructors.
- Conduct a parent orientation meeting to familiarize parents of prospective participants with the objectives of the Initiation Program, and how it is to be implemented.
- Host a Long Term Player Development Parent Presentation for the parent group.

On-Ice Delivery

- Coordinate the initial evaluation of participants for the purpose of grouping in the appropriate skill level if desired by the association.
- Confirm arena facilities/schedule and provide copies to all parties.

- Liaise with the local minor hockey association's board, the Initiation Program Mentor and/or Head Instructor and on-ice instructors, the parents of the participants.
- Coordinate special events (photo sessions, mini-games, festivals, jamborees etc.)

Post Season

- Submit recommendations to the board of the local minor hockey association with respect to any changes that could be made to improve the Initiation Program.

On-Ice Instructors/Coach

On-ice instructors are generally recruited from the Initiation Program's parent group. In some situations, the on-ice instructors may also be volunteers, including students (a minimum of 16 years of age), post-secondary students, or other adult volunteers. (See the section on recruiting). Instructors deliver the Initiation Program curriculum on the ice to the participants as scheduled by the Administrator.

The qualifications within a typical recruitment advertisement may contain the following requirements:

- Possess a coaching and/or hockey background OR a strong desire to begin to learn instructional techniques in the delivery of fundamental ice hockey skills
- Possess an enthusiastic attitude and desire to work with beginning hockey players
- Possess strong communication skills
- Possess a commitment to the goals and philosophy of the Initiation Program

POTENTIAL JOB DESCRIPTION

A typical job description for On-ice Instructors may contain these responsibilities:

Pre-Season

- Successfully complete the Coach Clinic requirements for Initiation (refer to certification and coaching resources)
- Successfully participate in the supplementary training sessions as coordinated by the minor hockey association.

On-Ice Delivery

- Deliver the program's curriculum to the assigned groups.
- Exemplify fair play and cooperation.
- Provide instruction in a manner that motivates and challenges the participants while respecting where each player is developmentally.
- Demonstrate effective leadership on and off the ice (for example, providing effective feedback to the participants).
- Provide feedback to parents of the participants when required.
- Assist in the evaluation of the participants and the Initiation Program in general.

- Demonstrate necessary risk management skills at all times with the arena safety checklist.
- Assist in assigning players to their respective groups.
- Effectively explain and demonstrate drills and games to the participants.
- Coordinate the orderly entrance and exit to/from the ice surface by the participants.

Certification and Coaching Resources

The Initiation Program recommends an Instructor to Player ratio of 1:5. All Initiation Teams must have a minimum of two (2) certified Coaches, and require a certified Coach for each eight (8) registered players on a team.

Below are the certification requirements for each of the positions available:

Coach/Assistant Coach

- Respect in Sport Activity Leader
- Gender Identity & Expression
- Hockey University Coach 1/2 (pre-requisite to face-to-face clinic)
- Coach 1 – Intro to Coach
- Cleared Vulnerable Sector Check or Criminal Record Check

Trainers

- Respect in Sport Activity Leader
- Gender Identity & Expression
- Level 1 Trainers (minimum)

Managers

- Respect in Sport Activity Leader
- Gender Identity & Expression

On-Ice Volunteer

At the 2017 NOHA Annual General Meeting, the membership approved to allow on-ice volunteers at the Initiation Program. On-Ice volunteers are not coaches but they will assist in setting up stations, moving pucks and pylons, etc.

- Respect in Sport Activity Leader
- Gender Identity & Expression

COACHING RESOURCES

Hockey Canada Network

Beginning the 2017/2018 season, all Coaches who attend an Intro to Coach Clinic will receive an access code to the Hockey Canada Network. As well, Coaches and Associations will have the ability to purchase individual codes for \$23.00 per year by using the promo code below.

The Hockey Canada Network is a mobile application available on Android and IOS devices. It is the ultimate drill resource for coaches, including all drills that Hockey Canada has produced all in one spot. Premium access gives coaches, even more, resources with weekly articles on fitness, nutrition, off-ice training, etc.

The application to date has been accessed by 3,050 teams, and 17,900 Coaches, reaching over 100,000 Players. It includes:

- 3,250+ Articles
- 1,400+ Drills
- 430+ Series
- 200+ Game Clips
- 100+ Practice Plans

Minor Hockey Associations that would like to purchase the Hockey Canada Network Application Premium content for their coaches may do so by using the Promo Code below:

OHFCERT2017

Additional Coaching Resources

Both Hockey Canada and the NOHA websites have additional Initiation Program information and resources available for Coaches. Visit www.hockeycanada.ca or www.noha-hockey.com for additional information.

Mentors

To assist in the transition for Associations going to cross-ice/half-ice at Initiation, Hockey Canada offered the opportunity to train messengers and key facilitators across the country.

The NOHA is very fortunate to have had three (3) representatives at the Hockey Canada sessions who are here to support the NOHA and its members with the implementation of the Initiation Program and to support Coaches delivering the Program.

We encourage Minor Hockey Associations, Coaches, Parents to reach out to ask for help or advice; questions may range from how to set up a Jamboree, how to set up stations, how to develop a practice plan, among others.

Submit your question(s) to initiation@noha.on.ca and we will do our best to provide you with an answer to your question(s) within 48 hours.

ONTARIO HOCKEY FEDERATION

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Memo

To: Alliance Hockey, GTHL, NOHA, OMHA
From: Phillip McKee - OHF Executive Director
Date: 7/13/2017
Re: Initiation Program Implementation

The Ontario Hockey Federation Board of Directors has been made aware some Minor Hockey Associations (MHAs) have not yet taken the appropriate steps to prepare for the mandatory introduction of cross-ice/half-ice for the Initiation Program (all hockey 6 years and under). This role-out is being mandated by Hockey Canada across all Branches.

The OHF and its Members are happy to act as support for MHAs still working toward the 2017-18 implementation. Please review the information provided on our website and contact either your Member or the OHF with any questions:

<http://www.ohf.on.ca/view/ohfmainsite/initiation-program>

The Initiation Program, and cross-ice/half-ice hockey specifically, is designed to introduce players to the game in a fun, safe, and positive way by creating an environment more suited to their physical capabilities at six-years-old and younger. The differences in skill-development opportunities with cross-ice or half-ice hockey are significant: players receive five times more passes and take six times more shots. They're called on to have to make more decisions more quickly, and are overall more engaged in the game.

If a MHA is not compliant with the mandatory introduction of cross-ice/half-ice hockey for Initiation Programs, all Teams from that MHA, regardless of the age group, will be prohibited from participating in tournaments and the MHA will not be provided sanctioning to host tournaments at any age group. This was approved by the OHF Board of Directors, on June 24, 2017.

The OHF and its Members believe this sanction will not be required, as there are many support options out there to help MHAs transition into successful implementation. Additional resources are also available at: <http://www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/Hockey-Programs/Coaching/Initiation>

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Memo

To: Alliance Hockey, GTHL, NOHA, OMHA
From: Phillip McKee - OHF Executive Director
Date: 9/13/2017
Re: CLARIFICATION Initiation Program Implementation

Below is the requested clarification to the OHF Memo "Initiation Program Implementation" dated July 13, 2017.

To be clear **all** programming, regardless of skill, for players aged five-years-old and six-years-old must be provided in cross-ice/half-ice format. This includes practices and games. If a Minor Hockey Association fails to provide cross-ice/half-ice programming, it will not be provided sanctioning to attend or host tournaments for **all** age groups in the MHA.

Secondly, if players five-and-six-years-old are registered to play in programming designed for seven-year-olds, it must also be cross-ice/half-ice hockey. The only exception, is if the seven-year-old programming with players six-years-old and under, has been approved by the Member. This is to avoid MHA's from circumventing the implementation of cross-ice/half-ice hockey for players five-and-six-years-old.

If an MHA allows players six-and-under to participate in programming for seven-year-old players **without the approval of their Member**, that MHA will not be provided sanctioning to attend or host tournaments for all age groups in the MHA.

The Member approval set out above is based on the following scenario: OHF Members have the ability, upon request, to provide written approval from the Member to that Team to participate for this season only as a seven-year-old program, in those instances where players six-and-under are required to form a Team predominantly made up of seven-year-old players. The key criteria being that without the six-year-old players, those seven-year-old players would have no opportunity to play the game of hockey in their community.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. We've never focused on half-ice/cross-ice hockey, and the kids are learning and having fun; why should we change?

A. Rationale –

- Half-ice/cross-ice hockey has always been part of the Initiation Program, but has not been implemented in the same way in every community – beginning this fall (2017-18 season), cross-ice/half-ice is mandatory at the Initiation level because we want to make sure all kids are learning the basic skills in an age-appropriate manner, and following the same steps based on our long-term player development model.
- Half-ice/cross-ice hockey at the Initiation age effectively right-sizes the playing surface for young players:
 - You don't put five- and six-year-olds on a full-size soccer pitch, or expect them to play basketball on a full-sized court with no height adjustments – hockey is no different.
 - Half-ice/cross-ice hockey allows young players the opportunity for more puck-touches, which promotes greater opportunity for skill development (puck-handling, shooting, skating, coordination) and decision-making.
 - Players on half-ice/cross-ice have been shown to receive five times more passes and take six times more shots than when they are on a full-sized rink.
 - Small-area games are used at all levels of the game – including senior national teams and the NHL.
- The benefits of half-ice/cross-ice hockey go beyond player development; the special boards and bumpers allow minor hockey associations to alleviate pressure around scheduling and ice-time availability by safely allowing multiple practices and games to take place on one rink at the same time.

Q. What changes does this mean for coaching and the logistics of running the Initiation Program in our community?

A. Changes you can expect –

- Special bumpers and boards have been developed to reconfigure rinks to half-ice, cross-ice or small areas.
- The National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) Coach 1 – Intro Coach program has been updated to deliver instruction on age-appropriate programming.
- Resources such as the Hockey Canada Network – a best-in-class skill-development resource geared to coaches – features information on the purpose of cross-ice hockey and how to run effective on-ice sessions for the five- and six-year-old Initiation age group.
- The special boards and bumpers allow minor hockey associations to safely put multiple practices and games on one rink at the same time, allowing MHAs to alleviate pressure around scheduling and ice-time availability.

Q. Does half-ice/cross-ice really make a big difference?

A. Absolutely –

- Players on half-ice/cross-ice have been shown to receive five times more passes and take six times more shots than when they are on a full-sized rink.
- Small-area games are used at all levels of the game – including senior national teams and the NHL.
- You don't put five- and six-year-olds on a full-sized soccer pitch, or have them play basketball on a full-sized court with no adjustments made for the net height – hockey is no different.

Q. Is this just a money-grab that allows MHAs to put more kids on the ice at the same time? Will IP registration costs be lowered now that more teams can be on the ice at the same time, reducing ice time costs?

A. No –

- Half-ice/cross-ice hockey at the Initiation age is not new – it has always been part of the program, which was built more than 35 years ago.
- This isn't about revenue – it's about delivering age-appropriate programming and skill development.
- One of the benefits of half-ice/cross-ice hockey is that it will allow MHAs who have not been delivering half-ice/cross-ice hockey at the Initiation level to make more effective use of their ice time and availability in a safe manner.

Q. Can a 6-year-old move up and play Novice Hockey?

A. No –

- It is a disservice to the 6-year-old player to place them on full ice with 7/8 year olds. Cross-ice/half-ice hockey ensures that young players are learning the basic skills in an age-appropriate manner. It allows them the opportunity for more puc-touches, which promotes greater opportunity for skill development (puck control, shooting, skating, coordination) and decision-making.

Q. May a 7-year-old participate in an IP Program (of 6-year-olds)?

A. Yes –

- An Association may determine this on an individual basis considering what is best for the player.
- The Association would follow the procedures outlined in the NOHA Regulation on Overage Players.

Q. What are the options if we don't have bumpers/ice dividers?

A.

- Be creative ... use a fire hose or 2x4.

- Have coaches/on-ice volunteers on skates along the blue lines/red line chipping pucks back into play.

Q. What have been told that Hockey Canada will be implementing mandatory half-ice at Novice in 2019/20; how will this be introduced within the NOHA?

A.

- The NOHA, along with the OHF, are in ongoing discussions as to how and when to implement half ice at Novice. Hockey Canada has recommended that Novice programs use half ice now, but it will be mandatory in 2019/20.
- When it is determined how and when the NOHA will introduce this mandate, we will ensure that it is communicated immediately and often to our members so that they can prepare and we can assist with the communication.

