

	Title	U7(Initiation)
	Policy #	Divisional – 9.1
	Draft Date	December 1, 2019
	Approved Date	March 31, 2020
	Revised Date	
	Owned By	Executive Committee

1.0 OVERVIEW

This document will give guidance for the U7 (Initiation) division and how it will operate throughout the season.

Airdrie Major Hockey's Introduction to Hockey encourages an environment in which all children can learn hockey through "FUNdamental" skill development, while developing a passion for Canada's Game.

The main goal of this division is to make the beginner's first impression of hockey a good one.

2.0 POLICY

- 2.1 At the U7 division no scores are kept, and no winners are announced as the emphasis is on fun and development.
- 2.2 U7 teams will play against other Airdrie U7 teams.
- 2.3 Teams will be coached by volunteer/parent coaches.
- 2.4 Ice sessions are 45 minutes in length with 3 teams on the ice at once.
- 2.5 All practices are shared ice with 3 teams on the ice at once.
- 2.6 Games will be played cross ice using 1/3 of the ice surface, with bumpers in between.
- 2.7 After Evaluations in October the U7 players will be divided up into parity teams where the majority of second year players (6-year olds) will play in the Blue division and the first-year players (5-year olds) will play in the Red division. There are exceptions to this based on the players evaluations. A first year, 6-year-old player may be placed in Red and a 5-year-old that has advanced skills may be placed in Blue.

- 2.8 Based on Hockey Canada and Hockey Alberta recommendations, the Intro to Hockey season will consist of:

INTRO TO HOCKEY SEASONAL STRUCTURE		
Months	September – October	November – March
Phase	Development	Regular Season
Ice Sessions (Maximum)	Development Season	Regular Season
26 Weeks	6 Weeks	20 Weeks
50 Practices	12 Practices	38 Practices
25-30 games including Jamborees	2 Games	23-28 Games
3 Jamborees/Festivals	0 Jamborees/Festivals	3 Jamborees/Festivals
Seasonal Practice to Games Ratio		2:1

3.0 INTRO TO HOCKEY PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 Teach the basic skills of hockey so players can enjoy the game.
- 3.2 Assist in the development and enhancement of physical literacy and basic motor patterns.
- 3.3 Deliver a program that is age appropriate for the size, skill and age of the players.
- 3.4 Encourage the aspects of fitness, fair play and cooperation while having fun playing the game.

4.0 ABOUT THE PROGRAM

- 4.1 The program will typically begin around the middle of October and continue until late March.
- 4.2 Full hockey player equipment is required for all sessions.
- 4.3 There are two sessions per week which are normally held on both Saturday and Sunday, usually mornings. Players are expected to attend all sessions in order to benefit from the program.

Practices may consist of:

- 4.3.1 5 minutes of power skating, this might be allowed on full ice before station-based practice begins.
 - 4.3.2 Practices will be station based (3-6 depending on # of coaches)
 - 4.3.3 1 skating station, 2-4 skill development stations, 1-3 small area game stations.
- 4.4 Team Format:
- 4.4.1 Ideally 18 players per team
 - 4.4.2 1 Head Coach and 2 to 6 Assistant Coaches on the ice for practices that must have met the Hockey Alberta Coach requirements
 - 4.4.3 Teams are formed after Evaluations, see Policy Intro to Hockey Evaluations (U7 & U9) Policy #8.2 and Team Creation Policy #8.4.

5.0 JERSEYS

Tim Hortons supplies each U7 player in Airdrie with a Timbits jersey that they get to wear for the season. The jersey's must be worn during each practice, game and tournament that the team takes part in and will be collected back at the end of the season.

6.0 RULES

We will follow the Hockey Alberta and/or Hockey Canada Game Rules for Intro to Hockey.

6.1 Non-Negotiable:

- 6.1.1 Playing Surface for games maximum 8500 sq ft (100' x 85')
- 6.1.2 Rules – Hockey Canada Playing rules must be followed
- 6.1.3 Goaltenders – no goalie equipment except for a goalie stick
- 6.1.4 Game Play Rules
 - 4 on 4 with a goalie
 - Continuous play
 - Use buzzer for line changes
 - Faceoff only to start halves
 - No position specialization
 - Blue puck is required for U7 game play
- 6.1.5 Game Administration Rules
 - No score is kept
 - No standing or stats kept
- 6.1.6 On-Ice Officials not required for U7
- 6.1.7 General Administration Rules
 - Travel and Exhibition Permits are required
 - No Jamboree or Festivals prior to November 1st
 - Hockey Alberta Coach requirements need to be adhered to
 - No affiliations required

NOTE: not adhering to these Non-negotiable items will place AMHA in violation of Hockey Canada Policy and will be subject to disciplinary action.

6.2 Negotiable:

- 6.2.1 Game Play Guidelines
 - Shift length – recommend 3 minutes or less for U7
 - Blue Puck
 - Game Length – recommended no longer than 1 hr
 - Net Size – recommend 3' x 4' for U7
- 6.2.2 General Administration Guidelines
 - Age groups – one-year or two-year age groups are acceptable
 - Grouping players for games
 - Seasonal Structure – recommend 2:1 practice to game ratio
 - Practice format – recommend station work
 - Player Acceleration – determined by AMHA (not allowed)

* Please refer to the Hockey Alberta or Hockey Canada websites for the complete listing of information on Intro to Hockey guidelines.

7.0 GAME FORMAT

- 7.1 Teams will share the respective player benches with each team using the gate closest to the net they are defending.
- 7.2 The warmup is 3 minutes
- 7.3 The rink set up: Two sets of barriers divide the ice into 3 equal parts.
- 7.4 Game length: 45 minutes total recommended; 2 - 20 minute halves recommended.
- 7.5 There will be 2 face-offs during the game: to start the game, and to start the second half. When the buzzer sounds to end the first half, the visiting team will switch ends and switch benches, so players can play against the other half of the opposing team.
- 7.6 No score is kept.
- 7.7 No penalties, however a coach may pull a player aside if they notice reckless behaviour.
- 7.8 When the goaltender freezes the puck, the attacking players will back off at least 3 metres. Once the attackers have moved back, the players may resume play as soon as the possession team has the puck.
- 7.9 When the buzzer sounds, players must relinquish control of the puck immediately and skate over to their bench or wait along the boards.
- 7.10 When the puck enters the goal, the Coach will blow the whistle and signal a goal, retrieve the puck from the net and allow the team that was scored on to take possession of the puck. The team that scored backs off 3 metres and gives the player with the puck room to start the play.
- 7.11 Goalies will change every shift, unless the Coach and players have decided to have dedicated goalie every game. Every child must get a chance in net, with no one child spending more than 50% in net.

8.0 CONSEQUENCES OF NOT FOLLOWING THESE POLICIES

In the event these rules are not being followed, it will result in the following disciplinary action.

- 1st Offence
 - o Written warning from AMHA office
- 2nd Offence
 - o 3-week (21 day) suspension of the Head Coach
- 3rd Offence
 - o Head Coach being automatically suspended indefinitely until the matter is ruled on by the AMHA Executive Committee