

GAME PLAY RULES



2

SECTION

GAME PLAY RULES

Effective for the 2019-20 season, all Minor Hockey Associations are required to operate in compliance with the Hockey Canada Policy on U7 and U9 hockey. In Alberta, that means ensuring that programs utilize the following rules for Intro to Hockey.

NON-NEGOTIABLES

PLAYING SURFACE FOR GAMES:

- Maximum 8,500 sq./ft (100' x 85')
- For the full season (U7 and U9)

HOCKEY CANADA PLAYING RULES:

- Must be followed

GOALTENDERS:

- U7: no goalie equipment except for a goalie stick
- U9: full goalie equipment

GAME PLAY RULES:

- 4 on 4 with a goalie
- Continuous play (line changes and stoppages in play)
- Use buzzer for line changes
- Faceoff only to start halves
- No position specialization
- Blue puck is required for Initiation game play

GAME ADMINISTRATION RULES:

- No score is kept
- No standings or stats kept
- Game summary or game sheet is required for Novice

ON-ICE OFFICIALS:

- One (3) official for U9 Ice Slot
- Official game fee \$20 per official
- Officials Report required for major penalties

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION RULES:

- Travel Permits are required
- No Jamborees or Festivals prior to November 1
- Coach requirements (see Pg 16-19) need to be adhered to
- Players and team officials can be registered as a program or a team
- No affiliation required

PLEASE NOTE: NOT ADHERING TO NON-NEGOTIABLE ITEMS WILL PLACE AN MHA IN VIOLATION OF HOCKEY CANADA POLICY, AND SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION.



THERE ARE ALSO AREAS THAT ARE NEGOTIABLE, WHERE AN MHA HAS FLEXIBILITY TO ADOPT CERTAIN STANDARDS OF PLAY OR NOT.

IN MAKING DECISIONS ON THESE ITEMS, MHAS ARE REMINDED TO KEEP THE CONCEPTS OF AGE APPROPRIATE AND MEANINGFUL COMPETITION AT THE FOREFRONT.

NEGOTIABLES

GAME PLAY GUIDELINES:

- **Shift Length:**
recommend 3 minutes or less for U7
recommend 1.5 minutes or less for U9
- **Blue Puck:** recommended for U9 game play
- **Game Length:** recommend no longer than an hour with two halves
- **Net size:**
recommend 3' x 4' for U7
recommend either 3' x 4' or regulation size (4' x 6') for U9

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION GUIDELINES:

- **Age groups:** one- or two-year age groups are acceptable
- **Grouping of players for games** (see Pg 28)
- **Seasonal Structure:** recommend 2:1 practice to game ratio, ideal season outlined
- **Practice Format:** recommend station work
- **Player Acceleration:** determined by MHA policy
- **Player Movement:** determined by the MHA

TEAM STRUCTURE

HOCKEY CANADA GAME PLAY FORMAT

01

Each team consists of up to a maximum of 18 players divided in to two units of 9. Each team unit of 9 players will have 1 goaltender and 8 skaters. Smaller numbers allow for players to double shift to ensure there are always 4 players on the ice. Coaches must make sure all players take turns double shifting.

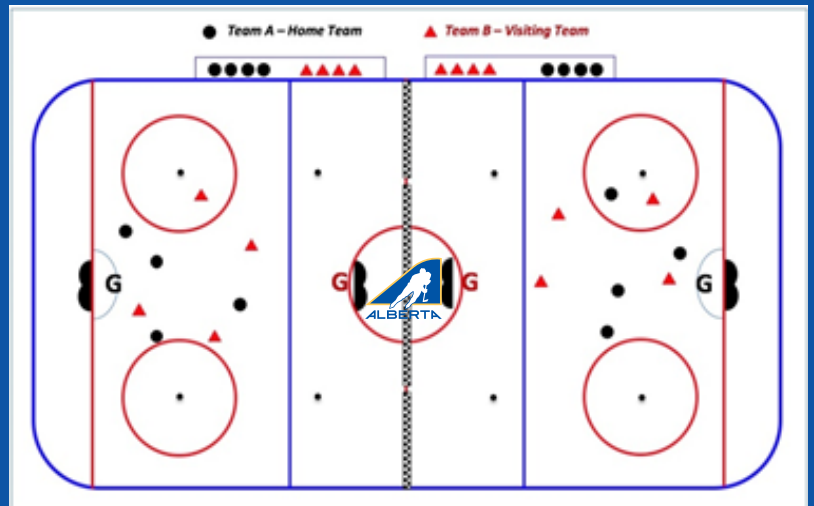


FIGURE 1: LARGE TEAM- TWO HALF ICE GAME MODEL

02

In the large team game model, each team is required to have two goaltenders, one for each half of the ice. This is referred to as the Two or Four Team Game Play Model (see Figure 1), allowing up to four teams playing one another or two larger teams playing one another in two halves. For larger teams divided in two units, each team is required to have two goaltenders, one for each half-ice game.

03

In communities where team composition is smaller, the ice is still divided in halves, but only one half will be used for game play. The other half can be used as a practice surface (see Figure 2).

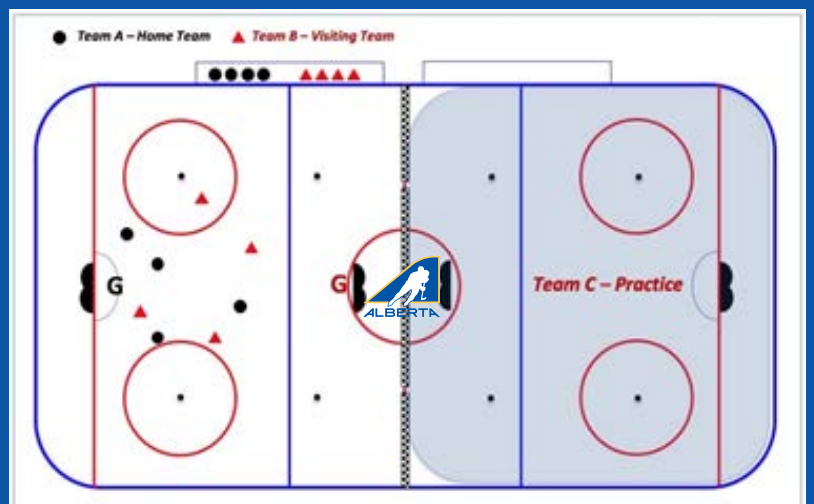


FIGURE 2: SMALL TEAM - ONE HALF ICE GAME MODEL - WITH PRACTICE SHEET OR TWO GAMES



GAME FORMAT

01

Teams will share the respective player benches with each team using the gate closest to the net they are defending.

02

The warm up – 3 minutes.

03

The rink set-up: One (1) set of barriers. It is recommended that in each half of the ice, the centre spot should be marked to indicate where the face off will take place. This mark is to be established at the midpoint between both nets.

04

Game length: 60 minutes total recommended; two (2) 24-27-minute halves recommended.

05

There will be two (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.

06

No score is kept. Game summary or game sheet is required for U9.





SHIFTS

1. Shift length – recommended to be 3 minutes for U7 and 1.5 minutes for U9 with an automatic buzzer or whistle sounding to indicate players change. The clock is run time.
2. Officials or coaches work together to keep the games synchronized. The main score clock can be used as the time keeping device for both games
3. A buzzer or whistle will sound to signal line changes.
4. Players change on the fly.
 - I. If there are fewer than four (4) players on the bench, the active player designated to stay out for the following shift must tag up at the bench prior to playing the loose puck.
 - II. For U7 the first player to enter the ice on a line change is the new goalie.

FROZEN PUCKS, STOPPAGES, GAME FLOW, CHANGE OF POSSESSION

1. The line change procedure does not require a stoppage of play. Associations have the choice of shift length with running time and players changing on the fly.
2. The referee blows the whistle to indicate a change of possession when:
 - a. Goaltender freezes the puck: Attacking players back off at least 3 metres or to a designated marking on the ice. Once the attackers have moved back, the players may resume play as soon as the possession team has the puck.
 - b. Puck shot out of play (over divider or glass): The offending team backs off three metres and the official or coach gives the non-offending team a new puck.
3. When the buzzer/whistle sounds, players must relinquish control of the puck immediately and skate over to their bench gate waiting along the boards until the new players enter onto the ice surface and then they can exit the ice.
4. Failure to immediately relinquish control of the puck at the buzzer or new players entering the ice surface prematurely will result in a change of possession.

When the puck enters the goal, the official 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.

GOALS



FACEOFFS

There is one (1) face-off location, located approximately half way between the goals (see Figure 3). Coaches may mark the centre face-off location with a temporary marking for game play purposes but is not necessary.

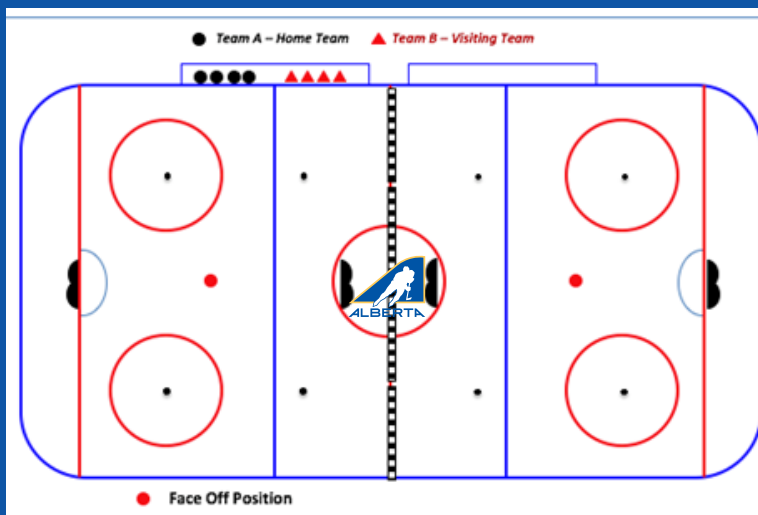


FIGURE 3: LOCATION OF FACEOFF DOT

PENALTIES (U9 ONLY)



PENALTIES SHALL BE CALLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE HOCKEY CANADA OFFICIATING PROGRAM (HCOP) STANDARD OF PLAY, WITHIN A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT WHERE NEW OFFICIALS ARE LEARNING THE APPLICATION OF THE RULES.

Please note:

- Incidental contact may happen, but body checking is not permitted.
- There is no centre ice (red) line, and therefore no icing.
- There are no blue lines in play, therefore there are no offsides.



PENALTIES (U9 ONLY) CONT.

Minor penalties are noted by the official raising their arm to indicate a penalty will be assessed and the penalty signal will be made. At the end of the shift, the official notifies the coach about the infraction and the number of the offending player.

- If the offending team controls the puck after the infraction, the official blows the whistle and calls for a change of possession and the non-offending team is given room to play the puck (3-metre cushion).
- If the non-offending team has the puck, the penalty is placed on delay with the official raising their arm and when the offending team touches the puck the official will blow the whistle and make the penalty signal.
- The offending player who received the penalty is required to sit out their next shift, but the team will play even strength (4 on 4).

Should an infraction occur that would normally require a player to be ejected from the game (e.g. Game Misconduct, Match Penalty or Gross Misconduct), then the player will be removed from the remainder of that game and the official will be required to fill out an official's report documenting the incident.

FAQ

01

ARE TEAMS PERMITTED TO IDENTIFY A FULL-TIME GOALTENDER?

All players should have an opportunity to play goal and all players should rotate through the goalie position throughout the season. The Hockey Canada Long Term Player Development philosophy encourages a wide range of skill development at a young age and focusing on a single position will limit a child's opportunity to practice skills in all areas.

02

IS THERE A NEED TO DRAW A CREASE IN FOR THE NET SITUATED IN THE NEUTRAL ZONE?

No. Each net should be placed just inside the centre circle which will provide a small marking to aid the goaltender with positioning in front of the net. The centre circle line will be used as the goal line for the neutral zone net.

03

WHAT ARE THE DIMENSIONS OF A HALF-ICE HOCKEY GAME?

The average dimensions of a regular ice surface in Canada are 200 feet by 85 feet. The half-ice playing surface can be a maximum of 100' by 85' if the dividers are placed at the centre red line. In a study conducted by Hockey Alberta, the half-ice playing surface illustrated the same stride distance for a child as relative to the full sheet of ice for an adult.

04

IS IT A REQUIREMENT TO USE A BLUE PUCK AND WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES?

It is a recommendation to use a Blue Puck for all Intro to Hockey programming. The regulation Black Puck weighs 6 ounces. The Blue Puck weighs 4 ounces. Scaling down all aspects of practice and game play for players 8 and under is very beneficial. The blue puck is an appropriate weight in relation to the height and weight of these young players. Use of the Blue puck will promote proper mechanics in shooting, passing, and carrying the puck.

05

HOW DOES THE OFFICIAL OR COACH KEEP THE GAME GOING WHEN A PUCK GOES OUT OF PLAY?

Officials and Coaches are encouraged to keep additional pucks in their pockets for when a puck is shot out of play. The official will provide a new puck to the non-offending team and play will resume.



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