

Moving from IP/Fundamentals – What can You Expect?



Welcome to the next stage of your daughter's hockey career! Graduating from the U7 (FUNdamentals or IP) program into the U9 House League program, will bring some exciting new opportunities for your daughter and your family.

Because change can be troubling when you don't know what to expect, the FGHA wants to take this opportunity to let you know some of the changes that you'll encounter this season. We hope that offering visibility to some of the changes associated with your daughter's transition into the next level of hockey will make the transition easier for both you and your daughter. The most important part of hockey is that your daughter has fun.

Since the 2019-20 season, both Hockey Canada and the Ontario Women's Hockey Association have been working with an updated U9 pathway. Full details on the U9 program can be found here. U9 players will be focusing on practices for the first part of the season and then moving to 1/2 ice games until mid to late January. Come February, the games can become full ice. This format applies to both House League and Rep and is designed to provide more touch time for players, which will in turn help develop their hockey skills. This change to the season is in line with Hockey Canada's player development guidelines which have been rolled out across the country which applies to both boys and girls hockey.

Costs:

There are two costs associated with house league hockey for players.

- 1) The first cost to consider is the registration fees payable to the league. Those fees are the ones you pay when you register each year and they go toward things including ice time, referees, insurance and training sessions to name a few. These fees are set by the FGHA board annually and collected through the registration process. The cost for the season is around \$625 however there is an early bird rate which allows for a \$50 savings provided registration is paid in full by a certain date.
- 2) The second cost is the team fees, which are set by the coaching staff and the team manager. These fees go toward any number of items that go a long way toward enhancing your daughter's hockey experience. It's difficult to categorize these fees as they vary by team and by season but some examples of the costs that contribute to these fees are things like tournament registration fees, seasonal get togethers (Christmas or end of year party), extra training, extra jerseys, hockey socks and the like. In most cases, the team will take the total projected costs for the season and divide those costs by the number of players. This helps to ensure that everyone gets a fixed cost for the season.

Ice Times:

While the U7 program is set up to happen weekly, at a fixed time and place each week, that changes as players graduate to U9. Once you move into the House League stream, that changes due to several factors including ice availability along with games and tournament play. Once the season starts, teams will begin the season with practices and then after a time the teams will begin to participate in games with practice times continuing. These ice times will vary weekly and are published in a shared calendar available on the FGHA website specific to each team.

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You'll have lots of visibility to the regularly scheduled practices and games at the beginning of the season, so you can plan your time!

Travel:

With the Greater Hamilton Girls Hockey League (GHGHL) teams are spread across the area. While the GHGHL schedulers work to keep travel distances and frequency down, you should be aware that games could be played anywhere in the loop. The GHGHL encompasses the area between Waterdown to Brantford and all the way out to Port Colborne. While the loop that your child's team participates in will depend on how many teams are in each age group in each association, you should expect that you'll be travelling to away games in this region, throughout the winter. In general, your schedule will have one game a week which alternates between home and away games. Many families find that while the travel adds some complexity to their schedules, it creates a lot of great memories and experiences for all.

Tournament play:

House League Teams can participate in tournaments and some of these may require travel. Early in January, the FGHA hosts our home tournament and all house league teams are encouraged to participate in that weekend. For the 2021-22 season, the FGHA will not be hosting a tournament, but it is expected to resume starting in 2022-23. This is a fun time and it's local! Additionally, many teams elect to travel to tournaments that are hosted by other associations. This often results in travel to other centres where an overnight stay is preferred versus travelling back and forth during the winter. The tournament fee will be included in your team fees, but additional costs like hotel and food would be the responsibility of the family. Many families have told us that the "away" tournaments are the highlight of the year for the kids and the parents. Typically, the team tries to find hotels that offer a group rate, with amenities like a pool and hospitality rooms. This time away allows the players to bond outside of the hockey setting, and it offers the chance for parents to get to know one another as well, and in many cases, lifelong friendships are created for all!

Opportunities to get involved:

Associations like the FGHA cannot function without direct involvement from the families involved. Each team needs the support of many people to succeed, with On Ice roles like Head Coach and Assistant Coach and other key roles like Team Trainer and Manager. Off the ice, the Association also needs strong volunteers to exist and continue to improve the experience for the girls. These volunteer roles on the board can allow parents and care-givers to contribute to the development of the entire association and impact the future of Girls Hockey throughout the association. Watch the website and your email for opportunities to get involved and remember, we can't do it without you!

We hope that you and your daughter are excited to take this next step in her hockey journey and if you have any questions, please reach out to Kelly Sullivan (president@fga.ca) or any member of the board! See you at the rink.