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## Ringette FAQ’s - From Ringette Alberta’s Website

### What’s changing in Children’s Ringette?

Players will learn the fundamentals of the sport on a smaller surface that reflects their size (cross-ice or half-ice). Active Start are playing cross-ice games, while U10 Step 1 and Step 2 is playing half-ice games. U10 Step 3 are unchanged for the 2020/21 season.

This change will allow each player more ring time and opportunities to hone ring control, passing and shooting skills, as well as fundamental skating skills, before layering on more complex elements of the game. Players are able to develop at their own pace in a safe environment where the focus is on fun and maximum participation.

Active Start, U10, and U12 are included in Children’s Ringette. The U12 participants play on full ice and conclude their season with a regional/league championship. View a detailed description of Children’s ringette [here](#).

## Will players in Children's Ringette still get to play games?

Yes! Competition is why people participate in sport. The design of the competition (modified playing surface, modified rules) has changed, but the competition is staying.

How did you decide which children will play on which size of ice surface?

The proper time to progress to a larger ice surface is actually unique for each person however, for practical reasons, and until we have a more flexible system of athlete placement, we have to pick a time to make the change and apply that to an entire group.

We have introduced a smaller ice surface for the youngest participants—starting with Active Start (cross-ice) and U10 Step 1 (half-ice)—in the 2019-20 season.

We have observed a very successful progression of cross ice to half ice to full ice in use in Finland where they have been using this approach for 25 years. Finland's closest equivalent to our Active Start plays play cross-ice and their closest equivalent to our U10s play on half ice.

What do we do if a player is further ahead or behind the rest of the kids their age? Aren't we using age to group participants?

Ultimately, the plan is to eliminate age groups below U12 and only rely on the Athlete Development Matrix (which looks at more than just ringette skill) to group like with like. Realistically, this is 4-5 years away. In the mean time, everyone should be willing to allow a player to participate in a group that is the best fit for her which includes ringette skills but other non-ringette factors as well, regardless of her birthdate. Remember: the U10 'Step' program was designed to consider age as *one* factor in grouping children; it does not mean *all* 6-7 year olds need to play Step 1. If a 7 year old is ready for Step 2, they should be grouped with similarly skilled peers.

## Will children who have played full ice games before this change have to play on smaller ice surfaces?

Ideally, no, but...

### ***In Active Start:***

Due to inconsistency in the format for Active Start across the province (some Active Start players have never played games while others have played a regular schedule of full ice games) there will be some who have played on full ice in the 2018-19 season who will play on a smaller ice surface in 2019-20. Based on registration data, this is expected to impact approximately 90 athletes (who have played on full ice in 2018-19) or approximately 17% this season's Active Start players.

### ***In U10:***

Generally speaking, most athletes who were properly placed in Step 2 in 2019-20 should progress to Step 3 in 2020-21, although in some cases there may be a few that are not ready for Step 3. These individuals would play half-ice games in 2020-21 rather than the full ice games they experienced in 2019-20. However, if they haven't progressed to Step 3, the small area game may be exactly what they need to accelerate their development.

## Is Ringette Alberta doing this because hockey is implementing similar changes?

No. Hockey *is* implementing small area games but this has been the plan since Ringette Canada released its Long-Term Athlete Development model in May 2009.

Hockey isn't likely the best comparison to ringette anyway. Instead, the better comparison is ringette in Finland where they have been using smaller nets and smaller ice surfaces for 25 years with great results.

## **Should the local associations be purchasing rink dividers?**

This is up to your local association. If associations already own dividers, have access to them through a partnership with their hockey counterparts, or their municipality provides them, they should use them. However, rink dividers are not mandatory. Games can be safely played without them.

## **With game being played on a smaller ice surface, will fees be reduced?**

A fee change based solely on a shift to smaller area games is not warranted.

The small area game is superior for development at this stage, with more quality time on the things that matter most (skating, passing, receiving, shooting).

In many associations, fees for Active Start and U10 are subsidized to make the transition into ringette easier. A deeper subsidy should not be expected.

## **There are guidelines and specifics produced by Ringette Canada that differ from these Ringette Alberta guidelines. Which ones should we be following?**

Please follow the Ringette Alberta information.

## **What is the ideal team size?**

10 is the ideal number of players for three reasons:

- The game is 3 vs 3 plus goalies. A roster of 10 is ideal as three lines of 3 is really easy to manage.
- With 3 lines of three and 90 second shifts, it is just the right balance between sufficient playing time and time to rest.
- 10 per team is also ideal as it helps keep the number of people in a dressing room.

## **Do we have to share dressing rooms with the other teams?**

In some cases, yes. There could be 4 teams playing on the ice surface at once. We know sharing dressing rooms is not ideal, however we are at the mercy of the physical space the arenas can provide. We will not abandon doing the right thing on the ice to make dressing rooms more comfortable.

One of the reasons that Ringette Alberta recommended 10 as the ideal team size, in addition to it being the sweet spot for ice time per player, is to help limit the number of people in the dressing room at the same time.

Some ideas to consider to make the dressing rooms more functional:

- Limiting the number of parents in the dressing room at one time
- Doing "pre-game talks" on the bench or on the ice
- Getting most of your child's equipment on at home
- 

But we need our own dressing room for team bonding and pre-game talks!

Teams at this stage do not need private pre-game strategy talks in the dressing room.

Making friends and bonding as a team can happen in the dressing room during practice, in off ice team activities, between smaller groups of 1-3 in the dressing room prior to and after games and so on.

We're also not going to forgo doing the right thing on the ice to support the notion that team bonding can only take place in dressing rooms in advance of games.

If associations feel that they must have only their own team in one dressing room with no others, Ringette Alberta suggests the option of forming a team of 20 and playing two games at the same time; half the team at one end of the ice playing an opponent and the other half playing at the other end of the ice.

## **Who sets up the markings on the ice?**

Coaches are to set up the ice and add any necessary markings. These may be made with paint or markers, depending on what is available and permitted at a given facility. Coaches are expected to have the appropriate materials.

## **We've started playing small area games and I think \_\_\_\_\_ should change.**

We fully anticipate making some adjustments. We will do a review and make appropriate changes across the province at the same time. We do not want to see unilateral changes midway through the process. We need consistency in what is happening on the ice so we can obtain consistent feedback in the analysis process.

## **How long is a game supposed to be?**

Game times are flexible within the one-hour ice slot. I.e your ice time may be an hour, but actual game time may vary slightly. Contact your local league for specifics in your area.

## **How long are shifts?**

There is a buzzer every 90 seconds to indicate a shift change. The game clock does not stop (run time).

Why 90 seconds?

If teams have the ideal number of player (10), 90 second shifts create a good balance of play time and rest time.

## **What are the ice markings we're supposed to use?**

*For cross-ice:*

- creases
- "starting dot"
- *For half-ice:*

- creases
- "starting dot"
- the free play line from full ice games; this is used to mimic the blue line and players must pass to a teammate over this line.

## **Do we keep score?**

Yes and no. The score is tracked by a minor official (parent volunteer) at the bench, but there is no recording of individual goals and assists. The score is then only used by the league organizers to set up future games and make sure teams are evenly matched.

## **Can you explain what happens with this "starting dot"?**

After a goal or a violation (change of possession), the ring will be placed on the "starting dot" or "starting point". These serve the same function as a free pass from the circles in a full-ice game. Once the ref blows the whistle to re-start play, the player with the ring has 5 seconds to pass it from the dot. The other players on their team are free to move around wherever they want. The opposing team has to "back off" to their half to allow play to start.

The location of the "starting dots" can be found on the ice marking diagram.

## **Do we use the "starting dot" after the buzzer for a shift change?**

No, play should be continuous.

## **Are there officials/referees for these games?**

Yes. At U10 Step 1 and Step 2 using Level 1 (or higher) officials is mandatory, however using first year officials is not recommended. The officials assignor will determine when a newer official is ready to be scheduled for U10 Step 1 and Step 2 games.

At Active Start, using officials is optional.

## **Do the officials call penalties, violations, or both?**

Officiating in the cross-ice and half-ice game is more about introducing the structure of the game and what the rules are rather than it is about enforcing the rules.

Officials at U10 Step 1 and Step 2 do call penalties. They are not reporting penalties to the minor officials or putting players in the penalty box, but they are signalling penalties and are expected to communicate to the player what happened.

Officials will also call goals and restart the game from the “starting dot” for the team that was just scored on. The opposing team must back off to their half of the ice after a goal. For Active Start, use some discretion so valuable playing time isn’t wasted with a hard and fast application of “backing off to your half.”

A change of possession and a free pass from the “starting dot” will happen in the event of a line violation, a crease violation, or if the ring goes out of play.

## **Why would Ringette Alberta recommend that first year officials are not used for these small area games when these are our newest players? Doesn't it make sense for the newest officials to work the games of our newest players?**

Brand new officials are taught a full ice game and need to consolidate their basic knowledge first. Once they have gained these skills, they can adapt to the small area game.

## **How will this affect officials' development?**

Many of the skills that newer (and particularly younger) officials need to develop can still be developed in a small area game. Skills such as communication, positioning (to a point), placing the ring, recognizing and calling penalties, signals, gaining confidence, etc., are still present in the small area game.

## **How many officials do we need if there are two games going on at the same time on the same sheet of ice?**

Two, one official per game.