

NOVICE PROGRAM

This is information about the format for the Novice Program for this season. The program falls in line with the Hockey Canada Development Model for Novice Hockey. Our goal is to raise the level of play in all of our players, not just a few, while ensuring a positive and enjoyable experience for everyone. We also want to see our players improve and develop overall. We don't want to see a leveling off or evening out of development for players. The plan has two components to it. One is the teaching component that takes place in stations at practices. Station work keeps players active and increases the opportunity to learn and develop as a player. The other is the playing of games. The program has a progression from practices early in the season to work on individual skill development along with cross-ice and half-ice scrimmages.

This progression is important for development as players will be challenged more and given more opportunities for success by working in small groups and practicing in smaller areas. When having scrimmages in a small area, more players are playing and less are sitting off, so again more development opportunities for players. These stations and scrimmages are grouped based on ability and designed with the development and enjoyment of all players in mind. As players are challenged in small areas they will have to utilize different skills in order to have success. In moving to a larger area, they take what they learned in the smaller area and transfer it to the larger area. The opportunities for success are greater in a smaller area than on a full ice surface. As players have more success, they develop confidence in their abilities and will have greater opportunities for success as they move along in the game. Players enjoy hockey more when they have fun and they experience an improvement in their overall skills. That's the goal of our program, for the players to have fun and develop. Below you will find a list of skills emphasis for the season.

In keeping with Hockey Canada's initiative around developing half-ice hockey for Novice, Kamloops Minor Hockey will be continuing the half-ice hockey program this season for both Blue and Orange. Half-ice hockey for Novice age players is happening in Associations across the province and the country.

This model has been used in many of the leading hockey nations and by the world's best players for a number of years and has stood the test of time. It has been shown that children who begin their hockey training in this environment have an outstanding hockey experience and develop a better base of skills as they progress through the sport. Europe has used the half-ice game at this age group for many years very successfully. More recently USA Hockey has also successfully adopted a half-ice program.

Half-ice hockey has many positive development features. Like other sports, the playing environment has been modified to fit the physical size of our kids. By doing this, kids get to play a version of the real hockey game that is actually more comparable in key areas than a full-ice game is for kids of this size. Repetition of the most important skating and puck control skills is increased and the environment is better suited to the cognitive development of the players.

Many of the benefits to half-ice hockey including the following:

- Increases the use of the core skating skills like agility, balance, coordination and quickness
- Number of puck battles is significantly increased.
- Being able to make plays and protect the puck in traffic is a huge difference maker on kids succeeding at higher levels.
- Fundamental skills are reinforced at a greater rate through this kind of game play. The geometry of the game is enhanced.
- When playing on the smaller surface, kids are put in similar situations as when professional players are playing on the big sheet. This promotes more effective passing, receiving and support.
- There is less time and space, which increases the frequency of making hockey decisions, provides a better environment for teaching ice awareness and increases hockey sense.
- Creation of more competitive scrimmages with a higher intensity level of competition, which will result in better development opportunities for players.
- Better ice utilization and more ice time for players as two teams playing two half-ice scrimmages will see all players spend far more time playing and less time sitting on the bench between shifts.
- The half-ice scrimmage will see more players involved and engaged in the game which will result in more opportunities for puck touches by players, again furthering the development of players.
- Increased enjoyment for all players creating a more positive experience for players which furthers retention of players in the game.

Skills Emphasis:

1. Skating - Forward and backward
 - Balance and Agility
 - Starts and stops
 - Pivots and turns
 - Cross-overs
2. Puck Control
 - Stationary
 - Open-ice carry
 - Attacking the triangle
 - Through pylons
 - Toe Drags, Using feet
3. Passing and Receiving - forehand and backhand
 - Stationary
 - Moving
 - One touch
 - Forwards and backwards
 - Weaving - (for more proficient players as challenge)
4. Shooting and Scoring
 - Stationary
 - Wrist Shots and backhands
 - Moving – (Weight transfer key)
 - One-timers, dekes, wrap-arounds
5. Checking
 - Angling and stick checks
 - Support