

Children's Ringette Guide



General Setup

Please refer to this diagram put together by Ringette Alberta and Hockey Alberta that identifies ice markings and measurements.

<https://ringettealberta.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/RAB-and-HA-Marking-sheet.pdf>

Game Play

1. Cross and Half Ice Ringette is played with 3 skaters and 1 goalie per team on the ice at all times.
2. Shift length: 90 seconds. When the buzzer sounds, the ring-carrier should leave the ring where it was, and all players should go to the bench.
 - a. Recommend not putting the next line on the ice until the first is at the gate. This will minimize collisions.
 - b. The Coach/Official will remember which team had possession and give the ring back to that team once everyone is ready after the change.
3. Starting play when there's been a whistle (or at the beginning of the game): the ring is placed on the free pass dot.
 - a. One player will be standing with the ring and the other players will be spread out a reasonable distance. When they move to full ice, all other players will need to stay the distance of one of the circles away, so try to use this as a guideline.
 - b. Use good judgment based on readiness/understanding of athletes for when to introduce the 5-second count to pass the ring. Precise execution is not necessary – focus on the concept.
4. Restarting play after the buzzer for a line change: the Coach/Official will call over a player from the team that last had possession and give them the ring. When most players are set, they can start the play.
 - a. Play will be re-started by a free pass OR goalie ring given to the team that last had possession (goalie ring is a good choice if the goalie hasn't gotten to do very many)
 - b. It MUST NOT BE A RING RACE between players from both teams.
5. Restarting play after a violation or "penalty": the ring will go to the team that did not commit the infraction either as a free pass from their dot or a goalie ring. The ring would never be placed on the opposite team's free pass dot, so sometimes this type of restart will require the team to move back to their own side of the passing line.
6. Goalie play: goalies are learning about the rules for them.
 - a. Encourage them to pass the ring out in 5 seconds, but be prepared to make reasonable extensions as athletes learn.
 - b. Goalies should not throw the ring over the passing line, but keep it on their half of the ice. When they are older, goalies are not permitted to pass over the blue line. This simulates that. This type of violation doesn't need to be whistled down, but rather remind the goalie to pass on their own side of half next time.
 - c. Goaltenders can switch every shift, though it's recommended that they get at least a half of a game to truly experience goaltending. Coaches must teach and reasonably enforce proper goaltender stance. This means goalies are not allowed to simply lie down on the goal line, or lay their goalie stick down flat along the crease.

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7. Some basic rules to start applying:
 - a. Nobody in the goal crease except the goalie.
 - b. 5 seconds to pass the ring from the free pass or goalie ring
 - c. Passing over the passing line that's either the ringette line or a line drawn on the ice. Sometimes the intent to pass is more important than whether or not they get the pass away before going over the line. Example: a player skates "end to end" without even noticing or remembering about the passing line – blow the whistle and remind them about the rule. But if a player slows down and looks for a pass over the line but they glide across while looking, that shows awareness and understanding of the rule. As they get older and demonstrate readiness, enforce more strictly.
 - d. While no penalties will be recorded on the game sheet and nobody will sit in the penalty box, obvious things including tripping, slashing, and body contact aren't allowed and should be whistled down for a change of possession. Players are encouraged to keep their feet moving, be in control of their bodies, and play the ring as best they can!
 - e. After a violation or a stoppage for a "penalty" or crease/line violation, ring possession will be given to the team that did not cause the stoppage. This will either be a free pass from their dot or a goalie ring.

Intent vs. Execution

As athletes are beginning the sport and the season, think about the difference between **intent vs. execution** as it relates to the basic rules of the game. Did the athlete make an effort to avoid going into the goal crease? Did they try to pass over the passing line?

Logistics

1. 10 is the ideal number of athletes on a team: 3 lines plus a goalie make things easy to manage, the shift length and rest time are appropriate, and it makes sharing a dressing room relatively easy.
2. Coaches/teams are responsible for marking any additional lines on the ice as required. Goal crease, free pass dot, and passing lines for example. Refer to the markings and measurements guide linked at the top of this document.
3. Gamesheets are needed, and while the score will never show up on the scoreboard, it will be kept by a minor official on the bench. Athletes who score or get penalties will not be recorded on the gamesheet. The scores may be used by the league to ensure parity. Communicate with your league to determine where/how to submit gamesheets.

Coach Responsibilities

Keep in mind all the information these young players are processing; how to perform the fundamental skills, where the ring is, where they are on the ice, where the net is, where the boards are, what the other players are doing, distractions from parents in the stands, and information from coaches on the ice.

Resist the urge to over-coach by constantly giving detailed instructions on what to do, how to do, where to do it. Give them space to learn to make decisions, succeed, fail, try again etc.

1. Bench Coaches
 - a. Get players organized and ready for their next shift.
 - b. Point out things happening on the ice during play.
 - c. Talk to athletes about what happened on their recent shift, if they need a reminder about a specific rule.
 - d. Talk about/remind about various rules.
 - e. Celebrate positive play on the ice – include some team cheers!
 - f. Check/adjust equipment.
 - g. Fix hair.
 - h. Draw attention to the game clock if athletes start anticipating when they'll get to go out onto the ice.
 - i. Don't let athletes off the bench too soon – help avoid collisions between players coming off and those going on the ice.
2. Coach-Referee (could be a junior coach)
 - a. Your role is to assist with the flow of the game. You could provide minimal information to the players to assist with their learning and success.
 - b. Have a whistle, be ready to start and stop play.
 - c. Reasonably enforce rules: focus on seeing if players are trying to adhere to the rules; intention over execution.
 - d. When there is a violation or penalty, you can stop the play and try to explain to the players what happened. If a single athlete needs an explanation of what they did wrong, consider doing that during the shift change at the bench.
3. On-Ice Coaches/Leaders (this can be a great role for your junior coaches!) Aside from the Coach-Referee, each team may have up to 2 on-ice coaches providing assistance to players.
 - a. One should be assigned SOLELY to assist the goalie. Keeping them company, and encouraging them, spending some quality time. This will improve their confidence and interest in playing goalie. Issue small periodic reminders about keeping their stick on the ice, and the 5-second (ish) count for distribution.
 - i. Consider asking the goalie which coach they'd like to hang out with them.
 - ii. Stay out of the way as much as possible!
 - b. The other is floating to occasionally issue reminders about rules/game flow. It's helpful to have one coach on the ice who knows player names and can quickly get their attention! But this coach should stay out of the way as much as possible.