



## **U7 (Initiation), U9 (Novice) and U11 (Atom) Player Pathway Implementation for 2020-2021**

Effective for the 2020-2021 season, the OWHA will be following the U7 (IP), U9 (Novice) and U11 (Atom) Player Pathways.

With the implementation of the U11 (Atom) Player Pathway in the 2020-2021 season, key changes have been made to the Player Pathways at U7 (Initiation) and U9 (Novice). This will create consistency in all programming across the country and a seamless transition for players from U7 (Initiation) through to U11 (Atom) based on the Long-Term Player Development model.

The Player Pathways provide local minor hockey associations a framework of age appropriate development guidelines which includes an optimal seasonal structure.

### **U11 (Atom) Player Pathway Policy (must be followed for the 2020-21 season):**

[http://pointstreaksites.com/files/uploaded\\_documents/3323/2020-02-23\\_U11\\_Player\\_Pathway\\_Policy\\_v8\\_UPDATED.pdf](http://pointstreaksites.com/files/uploaded_documents/3323/2020-02-23_U11_Player_Pathway_Policy_v8_UPDATED.pdf)

#### **1. Player Tryouts**

- No tryouts prior to or during the first week of school.
  - i. No tryouts during the off-season phase (previous season, including March through August).
  - ii. No tryouts during the first week of school where school starts the week after Labour Day.
  - iii. Where school starts prior to Labour Day, there must be four skates/practices starting the week following Labour Day before tryouts commence.
- Must offer a minimum of four practice/skill sessions prior to formal evaluation starting.
- Must have a minimum of three form evaluation sessions:
- Players should not tryout based on a specific position but should be encouraged to play both forward and defense in tryouts.
- Players should be selected for teams based on skill, not positional preference.

#### **2. Fair and Equal Ice Time**

- Positional Rotation:
  - i. All players play all positions
- Goaltender Rotation:
  - i. Full-time goaltender allowed.
  - ii. Goaltenders rotate for equal amount of playing time throughout the regular season and playoffs.

### **3. Seasonal Structure**

- Preparation Phase (up to 4 Weeks)
  - i. See Player Tryouts above.
- Development Phase (up to 4 weeks)
  - i. Teams must have a period of development time following tryouts prior to the start of the regular season.
- Development and Regular Season Phase (Up to 24 weeks)
  - i. Recommended maximum of 45 games per year (includes exhibition, league, tournament and playoff games).
  - ii. Seasonal Breaks
- Playoff Phase (up to 4 weeks)
  - i. Tournament style.
- Offseason Phase (end of season to August)

### **4. Position-Specific Training**

- Small-area games in practice/station-based practices/skill-focused drills
- Only 15% of practice time should be spent on team play and strategy/systems with 85% of practice time spent on skills and tactics.
- Limit position-specific specialization (except for goalies).

### **U11 (Atom) Pathway Recommendations (Members should encourage and support):**

1. Season should allow for two (2) seasonal breaks (not including Christmas/long weekends).
  - a. Seasonal break would be a minimum of five (5) days without a scheduled game or mandatory practice.

### **The key amendments to the U7 (Initiation) and U9 (Novice) Player Pathways are:**

#### **U7 (Initiation) Player Pathway:**

[http://pointstreaksites.com/files/uploaded\\_documents/3323/2020-02-23\\_U7\\_Player\\_Pathway\\_Policy\\_v8\\_UPDATED.pdf](http://pointstreaksites.com/files/uploaded_documents/3323/2020-02-23_U7_Player_Pathway_Policy_v8_UPDATED.pdf)

1. **Playing Surface**
  - a. All U7 (Initiation) will be played at cross-ice or a maximum size of 100x60.
2. **Player Evaluations/Tryouts**
  - a. No tiering or evaluations during the off-season phase (previous season, including March through August).
  - b. Must offer a minimum of four (4) practice/skill sessions prior to formal tiering or evaluations beginning.
  - c. Must have a minimum of three (3) formal evaluation sessions.
3. **Cross-Ice Game Play Rules**
4. **Fair and Equal Ice Time**
5. **Coach Education**
6. **Seasonal Structure**

## **U9 (Novice) Player Pathway:**

[http://pointstreaksites.com/files/uploaded\\_documents/3323/2020-02-23\\_U9\\_Player\\_Pathway\\_Policy\\_v8\\_UPDATED\\_2.pdf](http://pointstreaksites.com/files/uploaded_documents/3323/2020-02-23_U9_Player_Pathway_Policy_v8_UPDATED_2.pdf)

### **1. Playing Surface**

- a. All U9 (Novice) will be played at half-ice or a maximum size of 100x85.

### **2. Player Evaluations/Tryouts**

- a. No tiering or evaluations during the off-season phase (previous season, including March through August).
- b. Must offer a minimum of four (4) practice/skill sessions prior to formal tiering or evaluations beginning.
- c. Must have a minimum of three (3) formal evaluation sessions.

### **3. Half-Ice Game Play Rules**

### **4. Fair and Equal Ice Time**

### **5. Coach Education**

### **6. Seasonal Structure**

The Policy and Recommendations for the U7 (Initiation), U9 (Novice) and U11 (Atom) Pathways have been identified with the parent and player in mind; allowing families to have their summer break back while still providing on-ice opportunities ahead of evaluations, giving players key seasonal breaks to allow for holidays and the chance to play other sports throughout the year and establishing consistent age appropriate programming that is in line with the Long-Term Player Development model.

The transition from Spring to Fall evaluations at these age groups allows the Local Hockey Associations to provide sanctioned non-traditional hockey programming (i.e. 3-on-3, 4-on-4, or skills clinics) beginning any time after the conclusion of the OWHA Provincial Championships.

The OWHA will continue their support to Hockey Associations to ensure that the policy outlined are administered consistently across the OWHA to provide players with the best possible experience within hockey. The implementation of the U7 (Initiation), U9 (Novice) and U11 (Atom) and Player Pathways are a step towards creating a long-lasting love for the game for all players within Hockey Canada Programming.

More information on the full **U7 (Initiation)**, **U9 (Novice)** and **U11 (Atom)** Player Pathways policy and recommendations can be found at the OWHA Website