



FEMALE HOCKEY

DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

U7 PROGRAM - ADMIN WORKSHOP

DEVELOPING SKILLS FIRST

The U7 program is part of the Hockey Canada Skill Development Series - The official Hockey instructional Curriculum of Hockey Canada





AN OPENING WORD...

How a player gets that first taste of hockey is crucial.

If the beginner has fun, developing some basic skills and building confidence, there is a good chance that player will go on to enjoy hockey for many years.

But if a beginner has an unhappy, unrewarding experience, the chances are that he, or she, will quit at an early age and never discover the real joy of Canada's great game.

Every hockey beginner should have access to the Initiation Program!

Almost all local hockey associations organize house leagues and/or rep teams. But more and more are also providing U7 Programs, because it is obvious that unprepared beginners who are put directly into playing the game are at a distinct disadvantage to youngsters who have had the benefits of coming through an Initiation Program.

Our goal is to see the day when every youngster across Canada who wants to get started in hockey will have available to him/her the opportunity to participate in and benefit from the U7 Program.

If your hockey association does not have an U7 Program, your players and teams will be at a disadvantage when competing with other hockey associations, which offer this benefit. To be fair to your beginners, their parents, and your association, you should be providing the Initiation Program.

It comes down to this! A hockey association's U7 Program is its very foundation - the base upon which it builds its house leagues, and rep teams.



“Hockey Canada believes it is important for every player to have access to the best program in the world for developing skills while having fun.”

In the summer of 1995, Hockey Canada passed a motion requiring the U7 Program to be implemented by every Female Hockey Association across the country and to change their constitution/bylaws to reflect the creation of a new division in hockey.

Hockey Canada developed the U7 Program to make children’s first contact with hockey a safe and positive experience. It’s a structured, learn to play hockey program designed to introduce beginners to the game’s basic skills. It enables participants to become contributing members of a team effort, develop self-confidence, and experience a sense of personal achievement. These goals are achieved in an atmosphere of fun and fair play.

Learning the basic skills at young age will set the foundation for everything a player will accomplish in the game of hockey. These skills are learned in practice through the U7 Program.





THE U7 PROGRAM

The future of the sport of hockey lies with our youth. In recognition of this, Hockey Canada developed the U7 Program, which encourages the growth of foundational skills for the young player in the sport. The U7 Program is implemented by Female Hockey Associations and coaches, with the assistance of young volunteers, parents and others associated with hockey. This provides opportunities for a wide range of people to improve the quality of hockey in Canada through both play and instruction.

The success of the U7 Program is measured by the level of development young players achieve. To optimize those levels of development, it is necessary for dedicated adults to play a large role as effective leaders and teachers who will create a challenging and motivating environment for the player.

The goals, philosophy and objectives of the program are:

- 1. Teaching basic hockey skills so players can enjoy the game.**
- 2. Assisting in development and enhancement of basic motor patterns.**
- 3. Developing and encouraging the concept of team, through player participation in on and off-ice activities.**
- 4. To implement fitness, fair play and co-operation aspects within the fun of the game.**



About Hockey Canada's U7 Program

What Is It ?

- The U7 Program is a progressive, learn to play teaching curriculum. Children learn through participating in practice drills and informal and modified games (such as shinny, freezetag, and obstacle courses).
- It consists of 4 Phases of instruction, designed for the beginning hockey players. Each phase consists of 8 lesson plans that follow a defined path of progressions.
- The skills of skating, puck control, passing and shooting are introduced and refined in a progressive one step at a time manner.
- Although the emphasis is on fun and fundamental skill development, the U7 Program also allows the youngsters to experience fitness, fair play and cooperation.
- To ensure a positive experience for the children, a 4 hour instructional clinic has been designed for the on-ice instructors (coaches), that focuses on communication, teaching skills, leadership, skill analysis, lesson organization and safety and risk management.

Program Philosophy

- The U7 Program is Canada's premiere "Learn to Play" program for beginning hockey players.
- The Canadian Hockey Association developed the program to ensure that the child's first contact with hockey is a safe and positive experience.
- It enables participants to become contributing members of a team effort, develop self-confidence, and experience a sense of personal achievement.

Program Goals

- To have fun while playing hockey and engaging in physical activity.
- To learn the fundamental skills required to play the game of hockey.
- To create and refine basic motor patterns.
- To be introduced to the concepts of cooperation and fair play.





COMPONENTS

1) Administrators Guide

The purpose of the Administrators Guide is to acquaint local hockey organizers with the Hockey Canada U7 Program, and how to put the program to good use in your association.

This guide includes an overview of the Hockey Canada model programs, information on setting up the initiation program, getting your parents onside, and the importance of instructor training.

2) Instructors Manual

The Instructors manual was designed to give coaches all of the necessary information needed to teach hockey skills to beginners.

Some of the areas discussed are leadership, communication, teaching skills and lesson organization. Each of these components contain valuable information when it comes time to implement each of the Lesson Manuals.

3) Lesson Manuals

The U7 Program manuals are a compilation of ideas from many top hockey people across the country. Prior to printing, the lesson plans were tested in several provinces in communities with widely differing circumstances and found to be very effective.

The Lesson Manuals consist of 4 phases, each with 8 on-ice sessions. These lessons map out easy to follow planned lesson plans. Beginners progress throughout these ice-sessions to the point where they can start playing hockey and enjoying it.

These manuals are designed to serve as models. Your association is not expected to follow everything to the letter. Your association should use them to your situation, i.e. numbers, available ice, etc.

The objective is that the instructors in your association will use these lesson plans as a framework to give your beginners the benefit of a very good start in what we in Canada consider to be the greatest game in the world.



4) The Initiation Clinic – Intro to Coach

The Clinic for instructors that is given as part of the U7 Program is available from coast to coast that the instructors need to consider in terms of their approach to children; as well as giving instruction in the delivery of the program itself.

The Intro to Coach Clinic is part of the New on-line NCCP Coaching Clinic available through Hockey University

Recognizing the necessity to provide a positive experience for the beginning hockey player, the U7 Program builds upon a number of values providing a qualitative experience, which include:

- a. Providing a safe environment in which to be introduced to ice hockey's fundamental skills.
- b. Developing an understanding of basic teamwork through participation in structured activities and adapted game like situations.
- c. Introducing participants to the concepts of fair and co-operative play.
- d. Refining basic motor patterns and building self-confidence.
- e. Providing an environment that challenges individuals positively and rewards the participants for their efforts.
- f. Provides opportunities to experience a number of activities related in the building of a lifestyle of fitness and activity.

Target Audience

- Leadership is a key component to the U7 Program. Parents volunteer their time as instructors and administrators, providing a positive, non-competitive experience for all children.
- As instructors they are responsible to be effective leaders and teachers, acting as role models for cooperation and fair play.
- As administrators, parents are responsible to organize the details that lead to the on-ice sessions, such as promotion of the program, registration, booking ice times and communicating with parents regarding schedules.



Participant Numbers

- The primary users of the program consists of children aged 5 and 6, but is useful for any entry level hockey player. The number of registered players, at that those ages, with Hockey Canada is 75,000.
- The 75,000 players make up a total of approximately 5,000 teams.
- Approximately 20,000 instructors are used each season to teach at the Initiation level.
- In Canada there are approximately 3000 minor hockey Associations, who are all educated about the benefits of participating in the U7 Program, and encouraged to deliver it in their community. Every Association that delivers the U7 Program recognizes the benefits of the program, and continues their involvement year after year.
- The benefits of delivering the U7 Program across Canada are many. The future of hockey lies with our youth development programs. Hockey Canada understands the important role it plays in helping beginning hockey players to develop playing attitudes and foster and enjoyment of hockey as a lifetime sport and hobby.