



## HOCKEY CANADA POLICY FOR U9 HOCKEY



The future of hockey lies with today's youth. Because of this, Hockey Canada has developed age-appropriate programming as a way to encourage the growth of foundational skills. Hockey associations and coaches lead the implementation of the U7 and U9 programs with the assistance of volunteers, parents and others associated with hockey. The programming must provide opportunities for a wide range of people to get involved in order to improve the quality of the hockey experience through sound instruction and enjoyable play.

The success of grassroots hockey programming is measured by the level of development young players achieve. To optimize these levels, dedicated adults must play a large role as leaders and teachers who will create a challenging and motivating environment for all young players.

The goals and objectives of U9 hockey programming are to:

- ❖ Teach all basic skills of hockey so players can enjoy the game.
- ❖ Assist in development and enhancement of physical literacy and basic motor patterns.
- ❖ Develop and encourage the concepts of being a team member through player participation in both on-ice and off-ice activities.
- ❖ Encourage aspects of fitness, fair play and cooperation while having fun.

### **POLICY OVERVIEW**

Eight-and-under games will be played half-ice (modified ice) from October to December and may transition to full ice from January to April.

- ❖ Use September as a development month – no games, just practices.
- ❖ Play a limited half-ice game schedule from October to December.
- ❖ Use January as a development month, helping transition kids to full ice.
- ❖ Play a full-ice game schedule from January to April.
- ❖ Development of a full curriculum for the eight-year-old and the transition to full-ice programming at Atom.

For mixed programming, there will be three options available to choose from:

- ❖ Deliver half-ice programming for the full year to players 7-8 years old;
- ❖ Deliver half-ice programming for the full year to players 7-8 years old and provide a six-week transition program to the players that are eight years old in February and March;
- ❖ Deliver programming above for players eight years old for the mixed age group with the understanding that the players seven years old will repeat the programming as an eight-year-old.

## **CONCLUSION**

- ❖ Hockey Canada plays an important role in ensuring minor hockey associations have the necessary resources, tools and supports for young players from 7-8 years old. Hockey Canada believes developing the fundamental skills and attitudes to play the game and recognizes this will foster an enjoyment of hockey as a lifetime participation sport.
- ❖ U9-level programming is intended to focus on children ages seven and eight years old and is age-appropriate for all young hockey players.
- ❖ Annually, the number of girls and boys between the ages of seven and eight registered with Hockey Canada is 75,000; these 75,000 players make up approximately 15% of all registered female and minor players in the grassroots Hockey Canada system.
- ❖ Approximately 8,000 coaches and instructors volunteer each season to teach and lead programming at the U7 and U9 levels of hockey.
- ❖ Hockey Canada has approximately 2,500 hockey associations that receive education, training and resources outlining the benefits of participating in all levels of hockey programming, and these associations are encouraged to deliver age-appropriate programming to their membership.
- ❖ This resource guide outlines the significant benefits of delivering age-appropriate programming across Canada. The future of hockey in Canada lies within the quality hockey development programs offered to young players.