



U9 HOCKEY PROGRAM COMPONENTS



The following resources are available to support hockey associations and coaches in the design and delivery of programming that meets the needs of young players between the ages of five and eight years old.

Administrator's Guide

The purpose of the Administrator's Guide is to acquaint local organizers with the half-ice program, and how to put the program to good use in the hockey association.

This guide includes an overview of Hockey Canada rules for half-ice hockey, model programs, information on setting up the Initiation program, supporting parent information presentations, the importance of instructor training and an outline of the programming resources to support proper hockey instructional methodology.

Instructor's Manual

The Instructor's Manual was designed to give coaches all of the necessary information needed to teach hockey skills to players between the ages of five and eight years old.

Some of the areas discussed are leadership, communication, teaching skills and lesson organization. Each of these components contains valuable information when it comes time to implement each of the ice-session plans from the Hockey Canada Skills Manuals.

Ice-Session Plans (Lesson Plans)

The U9 Program Practice Plan Manual is a compilation of ideas from top hockey people across Canada. These plans are available through the Hockey Canada Network or the Hockey Canada Skill Development Program Manual series. These plans map out easy-to-follow ice sessions. U9 hockey players need to progress throughout these ice sessions to ensure they are exposed to age-appropriate drills and activities that will develop their confidence. The goal is to support the development of a sound skill base so young players will experience success playing the game.

The plans are designed to serve as a model for on-ice delivery. Hockey associations are not required to follow each ice session exactly as planned, but the development of these resources takes into account the needs of young players who are new to hockey and on the road to building a sound set of hockey skills. Each hockey association should encourage their coaches to use these ice session plans so players will be guided through a skill-development program that has been specifically designed for Novice players.

The [Hockey Canada Network](#) is an iOS and Android app that contains a wealth of information for coaches and instructors. The entire series of Hockey Canada Skills Manuals and the Skills of Gold DVD series are available on the Hockey Canada Network. This includes the entire series of lesson plans designed specifically for the U7 Program.

All lesson plans at the U7 and U9 level are available to coaches and instructors at no cost. While there is a fee to access all the resources in the Hockey Canada Network, downloading the free version of the app will permit the user to create an account and log in to access all the resources that support the Initiation and Novice level of programming.

[Hockey Canada Drill Hub](#) is a coach resource tool also provides coaches of U7 and U9 players with access to all of the program ice-session plans for free.

Coaches can sign up to have free access to Hockey Canada's growing library of drills.

- ❖ Coaches can create a practice plan with a set of drills or use suggested practice plans.
- ❖ Plans are easy to print or view on most devices.
- ❖ Hockey associations must encourage coaches to access both resource platforms to ensure they have up-to-date resources to support the program implementation.

Cross-Ice and Half-Ice Hockey

At times, there can be concerns from parents about how small-area games may impact their child's hockey development. But we ask parents to trust the development experts and not worry about their child being the best player on the ice. It is also important to remind parents that putting young players into a competitive environment too early will compromise their development. Children need to be placed into competitive situations that suit their age-appropriate abilities. And parents need to be realistic about what children should be able to do all age levels. This is why Hockey Canada's Long-Term Player Development strategy is so important.

It is important to fully understand and appreciate the benefits of cross-ice and half-ice hockey. The configuration of dividing the playing surface into cross-ice or half-ice is a decision that has been made in consultation with experts in athlete development. An overview of very simple statistics illustrates a number of advantages to the smaller surface games model.

- ❖ Increases the emphasis on skating skills, including elements like agility, balance, coordination and quickness.
- ❖ Number of puck battles increases.
- ❖ Puck control and puck protection skills are enhanced, which will help players succeed at higher levels.
- ❖ Fundamentals of skating, puck control, passing and shooting are reinforced at a greater rate.
- ❖ Increase in incidental body contact requires players to play with their head up, preparing players for proper use of body contact and checking skills in the future.
- ❖ Less time and space increase the frequency of making hockey decisions.
- ❖ Better environment for teaching ice awareness and boosts hockey sense.
- ❖ Over time, the intensity level of competition increases with the progressive skill development of players.

NCCP Community Coach Stream – Coach 1 Clinic

The NCCP Coach 1 – Intro to Coach clinic supports Novice coaches across Canada and provides coaches with the proper content for working with children at this level, as well as providing instruction in the delivery of the program itself.

Please be sure to visit the [list of clinics](#) offered by the OWHHA for the various coaching levels. New clinics are posted as they become available.

The Community Coach Stream clinic is part of the new NCCP Coaching Program and is available through Hockey Canada's online Hockey University.

Recognizing the necessity to provide a positive experience for young hockey players, the Novice Program builds upon a number of values that provide quality experiences, including:

- ❖ Providing a safe environment in which to be introduced to fundamental skills.
- ❖ Developing an understanding of basic teamwork through participation in structured activities and adapted game-like situations.
- ❖ Introducing participants to the concepts of fair and cooperative play.
- ❖ Refining basic motor patterns and building self-confidence.
- ❖ Providing an environment that challenges individuals positively and rewards the participants for their efforts.
- ❖ Providing opportunities to experience a number of related activities in the building of a lifestyle of fitness and activity.

Community Coach Stream Clinic Target Audience

- ❖ Leadership is a key component to both the U7 and U9 programs. Parents volunteer their time as coaches, instructors and administrators, providing a positive, non-competitive learning and playing experience for all children.
- ❖ As coaches and instructors, they are responsible to be effective leaders and teachers, acting as role models for cooperation and fair play.
- ❖ As administrators, parents are responsible for organizing 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.

Scaling down is important and the research shows that when children are more actively engaged, they touch the puck more often, have the puck on their stick longer, and are interacting with one another to a greater extent.”

*– Dr. Stephen Norris,
Consultant to Hockey Canada*