

Novice Development Zone

The purpose of the Development Zone is to maximize ice usage, while providing additional skill development and competitive game opportunities for Novice hockey players. Use of the Development Zone will create approximately 30-40% more ice time for players compared to traditional formats. It is a great way to keep players active during the game, an ideal opportunity for players to reinforce the skills being learned in practice, and will serve to increase skill development with added puck touches, passes, and shots.

Hockey Winnipeg recognizes the numerous advantages of incorporating and utilizing the Development Zone. Therefore, we have included 21 Half-Ice Plans in our Novice Half-Ice Development Manual that can be used in the Development Zone during Novice hockey games. By utilizing these plans, Hockey Winnipeg feels the Development Zone can:

1. Foster love and enjoyment for hockey and physical activity.
2. Provide an opportunity for novice players to develop motor skills, balance, coordination, confidence, and the basic skills required to play hockey and become better athletes.
3. Provide age appropriate skill development opportunities as players will learn through playing various games and having fun.
4. Create a unique environment that promotes creativity and experimentation.
5. Create an inclusive and competitive environment that will accelerate skill development in small areas and tight situations.
6. Eliminate the need for traditional “conditioning” drills.
7. Stimulate technical and individual skill development for players of all positions.

These 21 age appropriate games and drills have been included in our Manual as a resource for Novice coaches to provide additional support to their own creative ideas. We feel that by utilizing the Development Zone correctly, we can assist Novice players in continuing to develop physical literacy, fitness, and the five fundamentals of hockey – skating, passing, shooting, stick handling, and checking – in a fun and competitive environment. We are hopeful that these games and drills will help local players acquire the knowledge, confidence, and skills that will translate to maintaining an active lifestyle and experiencing athletic success in the future.

Remember: The Development Zone is not linked to the game on the other side of the ice and is there to serve as a positive environment where all players can have fun, be involved, stay active, and continue to work on and further develop their athletic skills. It should not be viewed as a practice. Rather, it is a chance for children to be creative, experiment, and enjoy developing the fundamentals of hockey through playing.