Novice Half-Ice
Development Manual
Welcome Message to Novice Hockey Coaches

This Manual has been primarily put together in order to be a resource for you, the Coach, to rely upon during the upcoming season. Hockey Manitoba has brought significant rule changes to the Novice age group that will help enhance player development and the overall experience of playing hockey. In order to make the transition to the new format as smooth as possible, this Manual will serve as a guide to the Novice half-ice program.

Hockey Winnipeg has worked with Hockey Manitoba and Hockey Canada, as well as with local coaches, to bring to you a comprehensive coaching resource. By familiarizing yourself with the contents of this Manual, and by keeping it on hand for team activities, you will be prepared to lead your team into the upcoming season.

Hockey Winnipeg would like to thank you for the time and dedication that you will be spending this season and for being directly involved with the implementation of this brand new program. Within this booklet, you will find information on the rationale for the recent changes, game guidelines and procedures, rules, and information on officiating. You will also find resources that will help you plan practices and deliver fun and competitive activities in the Development Zone.

At the core of the Novice program, we would like to remind all coaches, parents, administrators, and everyone else involved in the game that the goal at this stage is for the young players to have fun, be active, be involved, and develop their hockey skills. Remember: Novice Hockey should serve as an avenue for children to be surrounded by positive experiences that will result in long-term involvement in sport and physical activity.

Hockey Winnipeg is committed to the success of our Novice Hockey Program. To help make this season the best it can be, every Novice team will be given a one year subscription to the Hockey Canada Network App. Please go to page 49 to see information on the app.

Look for the Hockey Canada logo and KEYWORD throughout this manual that will allow you to search the app for helpful articles, videos and information!
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Introduction to the Novice Half-Ice Program

From Hockey Manitoba’s Novice Half-Ice Guidelines:

Beginning in 2018-2019, players in the Novice age category (7-8 yrs) will play on a half-ice surface for the duration of the season. This builds on the introduction to the Novice half-ice program developed in 2017-2018, with modifications to factor Hockey Canada Novice guidelines and core requirements, and improve the overall experience for participants.

Hockey is amongst one of the last sports to consider “area of play” modifications. With Sport Canada’s focus on the long term development of athletes, we have been exposed to the modification of many of the major sports in Canada. Picture this: A 7 year old soccer player playing on a World Cup field. Or an 8 year old baseball player standing at home plate with a pitcher 60 feet, 6 inches away at Winnipeg Goldeyes Field. (Children playing on a) basketball court with 10 foot baskets. A 7 year old on the goal line looking to the other end at Investor’s Group Field. Putting our 7 and 8 year old players on an ice surface similar or equivalent to what players in the National Hockey League play on is a disadvantage to our athletes. It is our responsibility and our mandate to provide our athletes with a positive hockey experience. Developing skills, having success and fun as they grow in hockey is our main goal.

Hockey Manitoba continues to be on the leading edge of this change! We believe these modifications will benefit every participant as they grow in our game and we will do everything we can to support players, coaches, officials and administrators with a well structured program. We ask everyone to approach this continued change with an open mind and support our direction in a positive manner to allow our players to learn the game in this exciting progressive direction.

Hockey Winnipeg understands that transitioning to new rules and on-ice structures is an ongoing process. We would like to support the Novice players, coaches, parents, and Area Associations every step of the way. It will be a collaborative effort between all parties involved to ensure the successful delivery of this program and that our next generation of hockey players will be getting the most out of these development opportunities.

A key factor in delivering a successful program is remembering that at Novice level, the goal should be to encourage and emphasize fun and the enjoyment of the game while also maximizing the skill development of all players involved.
**Rationale for Change**

**Novice Hockey 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 develop and refine basic motor patterns.
- To be introduced to the concepts of cooperation and fair play.

Players at the Novice level require a continued focus on physical literacy while also beginning to develop some of the more advanced individual skills inherent in the game. By moving from cross-ice at Initiation to half-ice at Novice, we increase the size of the ice surface in accordance with the increase in the size of player. Also, by increasing the size of playing area from cross-ice at the Initiation level, the move to half-ice is consistent with the principles of Long-Term Athlete Development and Hockey Canada’s Player Development model. This modified ice will continue to provide players with an environment that is more inclusive, competitive, and conducive to skill development through puck touches and puck control, shots, passes completed, transitions, decision making, puck support, overall involvement…and FUN!

Information on Hockey Canada’s Novice Guidelines can be found at the link below, however please note **HOCKEY MANITOBA HAS MADE MODIFICATIONS** which are outlined in this document.

[https://www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/hockey-programs/coaching/novice](https://www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/hockey-programs/coaching/novice)

**Hockey Canada has announced that as of the 2019-2020 hockey season, all Novice games will be played on half ice for the entire season. In Manitoba, we are getting ahead of the curve so that our players and programs will be set up for success for years to come.**

Hockey Winnipeg and all ten Area Associations share the same philosophy as Hockey Manitoba when it comes to the value of skill development and the responsibility that we have to our young hockey players. We feel that by making the change to the size appropriate playing area and by properly utilizing the Development Zone, we can simultaneously make Novice hockey more fun and improve the development of our players.

**Keyword: Half-ice Philosophy**
Half-Ice Benefits

“You have to be able to make plays in pretty small areas. The more you practice in small spaces the better off you are.” – Sidney Crosby, Canada’s National Men’s Team

“You need to be able to make quick passes and have quick communication. Small area games are important.” – Brianne Jenner, Canada’s National Women’s Team

“Kids can have a riot and there’s more goal scoring and there’s more touches. When you think about the National Hockey League, at the best league, some of the guys hardly touch the puck. They don’t have it on their stick forever. That’s why you need all these games and touches so you can advance your skill. I think it’s the greatest thing going.” – Mike Babcock, Canada’s National Men’s Team

Research has proven that putting young athletes into unsuitable environments too early will compromise their development. Children should only be placed into competitive situations that reflect their age, physical maturity, skill level, and abilities. It is important to fully understand and appreciate the benefits of cross-ice and half-ice hockey and why Hockey Canada has a national policy ensuring all Initiation and Novice hockey is played in smaller, modified spaces.

Various Benefits Using a Smaller Ice Surface:

1. More efficient use of ice time and, as a result, more ice time for young players.
2. Allows more kids to be on the ice at the same time.
3. Increases the use of the core skating skills (ABCs – agility, balance, coordination).
4. Focuses on lateral movements, stops and starts, changes of direction.
5. Increases the number of puck touches per player.
6. Provides a better environment for teaching ice awareness and hockey sense.
7. Puts players in a position where they need to read the play and react to pressure quickly.
8. Improves abilities to avoid checks and puck protection skills.
9. Promotes stronger passing, pass receiving, and puck support skills.
10. Allows young goaltenders, when introduced, to experience more game-like action.
11. Builds confidence of lesser-skilled players because they are more involved in play.
12. Creates a stronger challenge for the more advanced players by having them face more opposition on a smaller playing surface.
13. The best players are challenged simply by the fact that others get in their way in a smaller area, forcing them to change direction, protect the puck and play in traffic instead of avoiding it.
Check the Statistics:

In 2014, the National Hockey League (NHL) data-analytics division brought their professional expertise and technology to Detroit and gathered data from children 8 years of age and younger who had experienced playing on both a full-ice and a small ice sheet. They found:

1. **6x more shots on goal per player** - *A very large difference between full-ice and small areas:* With players being closer to the puck at all times, the puck naturally finds its way to the net more often. This is beneficial to both players and goalies for a variety of reasons.

2. **5x more passes received per player** - *Short, quick passes find their mark:* In smaller spaces, more passes are attempted – most of which are 5 to 10 feet in length. When passes are shorter, accuracy improves and players have more success receiving the pass. Players also start to understand the importance of team puck possession.

3. **2x more pass attempts per player** - *More of a team game is apparent:* Smaller areas are conducive to passing and attempting to pass the puck more often. This is for two reasons: a) All players are close enough to pressure the puck more frequently, and b) Teammates are in close support of the puck carrier at all times.

4. **2x more puck touches per player** - *Small spaces equate to more engagement in the play:* All players are close to the play at all times and have much more opportunity for puck touches. Regardless of the skill level or the ability of each player, their opportunities to be engaged in the play are doubled when the playing area is smaller.

5. **2x more shot attempts per player** - * Shrinking the playing surface increases offence:* Players are much closer to the net, skate shorter distance from goal to goal and have increased opportunities for offensive play, experimentation, and skill development.

6. **2x more puck battles per player** - * More involvement and challenges:* Players of all skill level are faced with greater opportunities and difficulties due to smaller playing areas. With more players involved, more puck battles occur. This forces players to be aware and react to pressure as well as develop body-contact confidence.

7. **2x more change of direction pivots** - * Tight spaces means more transitions:* Players have to change direction more often in a smaller area. Players therefore work on their lateral movements, stops and starts, and pivots with and without the puck. This in turn increases on-ice awareness, balance, agility, and coordination.

8. **1.75 shots/minute vs 0.45 shots/minute playing full ice** - *Benefits the goalies:* The smaller ice allows players to shoot more often and forces goalies to be aware at all times. Goalies face more shots and must read/react quicker in the small area games.

*See Infographic on the following page*
CONCLUSION:
Cross-Ice training is better at supporting kids to reach their hockey potential and more fun!

On December 7th, 2014, USA Hockey and Little Caesars BU Mite Team met at the Joe Loius Arena for study with an NHL Analytics Team. They got the kids to demonstrate an exercise of playing Hockey on Cross-ice, Half-Ice and Full-Ice.
The infographic on the previous page was created by Sport for Life and is a visual representation of the data captured by the NHL data-analytics team.

A common misconception about half-ice hockey is that it will only serve to develop the players of the lowest skill level on the ice, while the players of the highest skill level will flat-line in their development. The infographic shows that this is NOT the case. All players benefit from the increased amount of puck touches, the need to make decisions faster, and the added ice time.

The statistics that this study captured reveals a clear story: Kids who played on the smaller ice surface touched the puck more often, attempted more passes, and took twice the number of shots as kids who played on a full ice. Simply put, the numbers show that it works for all players on the ice and that it is beneficial for development.

The conclusion to take away is this: ALL kids who played on the smaller ice surface had a better opportunity to improve their skills and, more importantly, they had more FUN.

There’s more:

Also, by adding the Development Zone to the Novice game experience, skaters will be able to stay on the ice to participate in skill development opportunities instead of waiting for multiple shifts in a row on the team bench. More ice-time and more repetitions mean increased development. It allows young players the opportunity to participate in small area competitive games and drills which promote greater opportunity for skill-development (puck-handling, shooting, skating, passing, and coordination) and decision-making. Inevitably, this also improves every player’s physical conditioning.

For players, time on the team bench observing their teammates in the Game Zone and receiving feedback from the coaches is a very important part of the game. Although this will still occur, the Development Zone will eliminate the times that players will have to spend consecutive shifts on the bench waiting to re-enter the play.
Hockey Canada has developed the Player Development Pyramid to help coaches lead players through the season. The emphasis in this model is the development of fundamental/technical skills which are the foundation of every player’s success. As we move along the pyramid, emphasis is then placed on individual tactics; this is where “hockey sense” comes into play. Moving along the pyramid again, emphasis is placed upon learning team tactics. The team tactics are the basic systems that groups of players use to effectively play the game of hockey.

The Hockey Canada Skills Development Program recommends that Novice Hockey teams should spend %75 of their time practicing technical skills, %15 practicing individual tactics, and %10 practicing team tactics.

*Technical Skills* – the fundamental skills that are required to play the game (ex. skating, passing, shooting, stick handling, and checking).

*Individual Tactics* – actions by a player using one or a combination of technical skills in order to create an advantage or to take away the advantage of an opponent. A tactic may be classified as offensive or defensive (ex. 1-on-1 offensive fake and driving to the net).

*Team Tactics* – a collective action of two or more players using technical skills and/or individual tactics in order to create an advantage or take away the advantage of an opponent (ex. 3 vs. 2).
It is important to remember that this stage is simply an introduction to team tactics. The vast majority of time needs to be spent on practicing individual skills in order for players to get maximum development.

What is Long Term Player Development?

Specific to Hockey

Sport Canada’s Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) Resource Paper “Canadian Sport for Life” sets out a framework for sport development in Canada. Hockey Canada’s Long Term Player Development (LTPD) is an eight-stage model based on the physical, mental, emotional and cognitive development of children and adolescents. Each stage reflects a different point in developing the player. The first three stages emphasize physical literacy and a broad range of sport experiences. The next five stages focus on development and competitive excellence. Active for Life encourages life-long physical activity and informed healthy lifestyle choices with participation in hockey long after the competitive years.

LTPD Stage for Novice Players: Fundamentals

During this period players continue to develop motor skills and coordination. Practices sessions should be held twice a week during the season. Ongoing participation in compatible sports is strongly encouraged. The Novice Skills Program is designed to promote the continued development of physical literacy, fitness, and the basic skills required to play hockey.
Physical Literacy

As a hockey coach you are playing an important role in the growth and development of young athletes. In order to set these individuals up for a lifetime of healthy activities, the concept of physical literacy is vital. You have the opportunity to help these children build physical literacy and help them form the skills that they will use for life.

What is Physical Literacy?

By definition, Individuals who are physically literate move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole person (PHE Canada, 2010).

Physically literate individuals consistently develop the motivation and ability to understand, communicate, apply, and analyze different forms of movement. They are able to demonstrate a variety of movements confidently, competently, creatively, and strategically across a wide range of health related physical activities. These skills enable individuals to make healthy, active choices that are both beneficial to and respectful of their whole self, others, and their environment.

Why is Physical Literacy Important?

Research has shown that being physically active later in life depends on an individual’s ability to feel confident and competent in an activity setting. That confidence most often comes from having learned fundamental movement and sport skills, or physical literacy, as a child. Research has also shown that without the development of physical literacy, many children and youth withdraw from physical activity and sport and turn to more inactive and/or unhealthy choices during their leisure time (CS4Life).

If an individual is able to obtain successful experiences in a variety of movements across a variety of playing environments, they are more likely to choose to participate in those activities and areas in the future. Without obtaining the competence and confidence, they will be more likely to choose to not participate.

You can see by looking at the physical literacy diagram (next page) that if an individual lacks confidence and competence in one particular skill that will limit their ability to participate in many different activities.
As coaches, the goal should be to help develop physically literate individuals. By encouraging and leading your team to be more physically literate you can make a lasting difference in the lives of young athletes. At the Novice age, children should be encouraged to participate in many different sports because specializing in one sport at an early age is not conducive to becoming a well-rounded athlete and can lead to burn out, overuse injuries, as well as limited options for a healthy lifestyle.

Just because a young person has advanced hockey skills does not mean they are physically literate. While they are both confident and competent on the ice, they may not have the skills and experience in the water for example, to choose to participate in swimming activities.

**How can we Encourage Physical Literacy?**

The main way that hockey coaches can encourage physical literacy is by NOT discouraging young hockey players from being involved in other sports. It is important to promote a variety of year-round activities so that when these individuals mature they will have a wide range of physical activity options that they are able to confidently choose to participate in. Coaches can also support the physical literacy initiative by including various sport experiences and skill based games to their team’s off-ice activities and team wind-ups.

**Keyword: Physical Literacy**
Novice Program Summary

Below is the general summary of the Novice half-ice program from with regards to ice format, practices, roster size, and equipment set up.

**Scheduling:** Minor Hockey Associations and leagues are strongly encouraged to schedule Novice half-ice games in succession whenever possible to allow for fluid transition between games. Ideally this group of Novice half-ice games would also follow a group of Initiation cross-ice games to limit the movement of rink dividers.

**Practices:** To maintain the concepts of long term player development and modified ice, practices at the Novice level should be on half-ice whenever possible. This allows for the focus to be on skill development and competitive games in small, modified spaces rather than full-ice flow drills or team tactics. In addition, this will save your team/association money!

**Roster Size:** Although Hockey Manitoba understands there are challenges in consistent roster sizes across the branch, it is recommended that when possible team rosters should consist of 10-12 skaters plus one (1) goalie. This provides the opportunity to increase ice time while utilizing the Development Zone and ensuring equal and adequate rest time for all players.

**Ice Surface:**

![Ice Surface Diagram]
Equipment & Set-up:
- One rink divider across the centre red line
- Two full size nets in Game Zone
- Two mini nets utilized in Development Zone (can be full size)

The Zones: As indicated above, the rink will be divided into two zones for Novice half-ice games (1 Game Zone and 1 Development Zone). Each zone is important and plays a vital role in the game experience – The Game Zone will likely be the focal point for players and coaches on the benches as well as spectators. This zone will also be the only zone of responsibility for the Officials and Timekeeper.

Warm up: A two to three-minute warm up will take place prior to each game, and will begin once set up for the half-ice game is complete. The home team will utilize the Game Zone for its warm-up, and the visiting team will utilize the Development Zone.

Rules: Format and structure for Novice half-ice games in the Game Zone are:
- Teams use their own bench for the duration of the half-ice game.
- The half-ice game will be played 4 vs. 4 (skaters) and 1 goalie from each team.
- Games are 2 x 24-minute periods (teams switch ends after 1st period).
- The visiting team defends the net on the centre red line in the 1st period.
- Officials will draw a dot in the middle of the Game Zone for all face-offs.
- Each team has 8 players in the Game Zone at all times (4 on the ice, 4 on the bench).
- The remaining players are in the Development Zone.
- Shifts are two minutes running time; continuous play within each shift.
- After each shift, the clock continues to run but the buzzer is sounded to signify a shift change.
- A face-off will take place at the start of every shift.
- After 4 shift segments (8 minutes), the clock is stopped and buzzer is sounded twice to signify player rotations.
- Each team rotates new players into the Development Zone for the next segment.
- There are NO icing or offside calls.
- Score will be kept, however goals and assists will not be recorded.
- Goalies may only be pulled in the last shift of any game.
- Players and coaches shake hands after the game.

Continuous Play & Change of Possession: As identified by Hockey Canada as a core element at the Novice category, one of the keys to improving the flow of the each game and reducing stoppages is to create continuous play, particularly on change of possession. These basic rules apply:
- There will be no face-offs or stoppages in play during shifts; continuous play will be used (exception; injury).
- Puck shot out of play: Official blows whistle, offending team backs off and non-offending team gets possession
- Goalie freezes puck: Official blows whistle, attacking team backs off and defending team gets possession
- Goal scored: Official blows whistle, attacking team backs off and defending team gets possession

**Penalties:** The following guidelines apply to minor penalties during Novice half-ice games:

- Standard delayed penalty procedures are followed (note: goalie can’t be pulled during delay)
- The official calling the penalty blows whistle, identifies offending player and penalty
- Offending player is escorted to player bench by the official who called the penalty
- The 2nd official gives possession to the non-offending team (offending team must back off)
- The offending player is eligible to return during the same shift if a goal is scored by the non-offending team

**Player Rotations:** Players will rotate between the Game Zone and Development Zone after each 8-minute segment. The timekeeper will sound the buzzer twice at the end of each 8-minute segment to identify rotations. There are 8 players in the Game Zone at all times (4 on the ice, 4 on the bench), and the additional players will be in the Development Zone. Coaches simply rotate new players into the Development Zone after each 8-minute segment. This rotation **MUST** be done fairly to ensure all players receive as equal time in the Game Zone and Development Zone as possible for every game. Example:

- Team with 10 skaters = 2 players in Development Zone
- Team with 11 skaters = 3 players in Development Zone
- Team with 12 skaters = 4 players in Development Zone

**NOTE:** Teams that have less than 10 or more than 12 skaters at any game can determine the appropriate method of utilizing the Development Zone in accordance with their Minor Hockey Association.

Coaches should meet before each game to discuss equal ability line combinations. For example, both teams could ensure their more developed players are on the ice for the 1st and 3rd shift, and the less developed players are on the ice for the 2nd and 4th shift for each segment (or vice versa).
**Game Outline:** The following is an outline of a standard half-ice game:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Period 1</strong></th>
<th><strong>Period 2</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td><strong>Shift #</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:00</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:00</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:00</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:00</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rotation at 16:00**

| 16:00       | 5           |
| 14:00       | 6           |
| 12:00       | 7           |
| 10:00       | 8           |

**Rotation at 8:00**

| 8:00        | 9           |
| 6:00        | 10          |
| 4:00        | 11          |
| 2:00        | 12          |

**Rotation at 0:00**

| **GAME OVER** |

**Note** – Players and coaches shake hands after final buzzer

**Officials:** The half-ice game will be run by 2 officials who will be responsible for face-offs, goal determination, penalties, etc. while working on their fundamentals such as skating, positioning and communication. This will assist young officials in building confidence and experience, reacting “with” the play rather than “to” it, while creating a foundation to take with them into full-ice games at the Atom level and beyond. Hockey Manitoba includes officials’ half-ice procedures at all Level 1 officiating clinics, which will also be circulated to all Minor Hockey Associations. Officials will continue to learn about offside, icing and other full-ice rules at their clinics.
Based on Hockey Manitoba's trials of the program, our officials are extremely supportive of the half-ice concept. Half-ice benefits for the Level I Officials include:

- A modified ice surface will provide new Level I officials the opportunity to work on basic fundamental and communication skills
- As no off-sides or icing will be called, the official will be able to use the season to focus on correct positioning
- The smaller ice surface will require the official to develop the skating methods required of a referee: backwards, pivots and transitions
- Half-ice games provide first year officials an opportunity to build confidence and gain experience

It is important that coaches remember that half ice hockey is a development stage for officials as well. By being respectful and patient we can help to develop our young officials and keep them involved in our game.

**Development Zone:** The purpose of the Development Zone is to maximize ice usage, while providing additional age appropriate skill development and competitive game opportunities for players. It also provides on-ice coaches (1 from each team) teaching, instructional, and mentorship opportunities. Use of the Development Zone will create approx. 30-40% more ice time for players compared to traditional formats.

Basic rules for the Development Zone are:

- Use of the Development Zone is MANDATORY during all exhibition and regular season games
- With 8 skaters in the Game Zone at all times, the remaining skaters will be in the Development Zone
- Development Zone will focus on both competition (small area games) and skill development (drills)
- For the exception of Novice A, one coach from each team is required to be on the ice (coaches should be rotated from game to game)
- For Novice A, the Development Zone activities will be run by local AA and AAA hockey players (although 1 coach from each team is encouraged to be on the ice as well)
- Each Development Zone “segment” will be 8 minutes in length
- Mini nets are recommended for use, however full sized nets can be used
- The number of players in the Development Zone will vary, depending on each team’s numbers
Hockey Manitoba will create a DEVELOPMENT ZONE SEASONAL PLAN for all Novice coaches in Manitoba. This will include a game to game outline of specific drills and small area games to be utilized. Progressions and key teaching points will also be included. The plan will include transitional drills at the end of the season to introduce concepts such as off-sides and icings. This information will be posted on Hockey Manitoba’s website and available for download prior to the start of the season.

**Tournament Play:** Hockey Manitoba will allow certain modifications to its Novice half-ice program for sanctioned tournaments, at the discretion of the tournament organizer. All half-ice game rules will apply, however the Development Zone will be optional. Options for Novice tournament play are as follows:

- Standard half-ice game, use of Development Zone (2 teams)
- Standard half-ice game, no use of Development Zone (2 teams)
- 2 half-ice games simultaneously (4 teams)

**NOTE:** Teams will be required to share benches, and 4 full sized nets are required if running 2 half-ice games simultaneously.

**Transition Season:** Hockey Manitoba recognizes that it is beneficial for graduating Novice players (8 year olds) to be introduced to the full-ice game prior to their first year of Atom hockey. The Transition Season will provide this opportunity and the ability for players to learn some basic rules such as off-sides and icing, along with introductory positional play and face-offs.

Basic rules for the Transition Season are as follows:

- Games will be played on full-ice with standard Hockey Canada rules in affect
- All players must be 8 years old as of December 31, 2018
- All players must have been registered and participated in the regular season Novice program
- The program is inclusive, therefore no “cuts” are allowed
- Teams must be rostered in accordance with Hockey Manitoba regulations (including coaches certification)
- There can be no on-ice activity until the regular season (including playoffs) is completed
- The Transition Season can operate until April 30th
- Fees, schedules, ice times, etc. are at the discretion of the Association and/or Region

**The Transition Season is an OPTIONAL program; Regions and/or Associations will make this decision.**
Coach Responsibilities

The role of a coach is one that comes with a lot of responsibility. Generally, coaches need to keep the following at the top of mind:

- Creating a safe, positive and fun environment
- Focusing on development rather than winning
- Making a point of communicating with all players
- Being a role model
- Showing respect to players, parents and officials

When it comes to novice practices and the development zone, coaches should consider these two main principles:

1. Keep Them Moving - Ice sessions should be designed to engage every participant consistently. Kids don’t want to stand still and watch others play. Kids enjoy hockey when they are active and experience an improvement in their overall skills.

2. Emphasize The Fundamentals - Build a foundation that will never crack by properly teaching the basics. Learning the fundamentals and perfecting the same basics at every level of play is essential to having any chance of success. If one player does not execute the fundamentals of the game correctly, drills or plays will not work. Novice practices that focus on Team Play over executing fundamentals are cheating every participant out of the chance to learn the game properly.

NOTE: Do not attempt to replicate plays you see in NHL and junior hockey games. Every scheme that is attempted in a junior or NHL game is supported by years of training and practicing the fundamentals of the game.

When it comes to the half-ice game, coaches are responsible for:

- Having the team ready on time
- Helping arena staff and officials with rink dividers
- Ensuring fair and equal ice time (Game Zone and Development Zone)
- Full utilization of Development Zone
- Being positive and encouraging to all players
It is very important that coaches are strong leaders for their team. By working with your fellow coaches, both on your team and on opposing teams, we can build a positive program.

**Keyword: Coach Responsibility**

**Keyword: Coach Pathways**

**Keyword: Developing Team Rules**

**Hockey Canada’s Fair Play Code for Coaches:**

1. I will be reasonable when scheduling games and practices, remembering that players have other interests and obligations.

2. I will teach my players to play fairly and to respect the rules, officials, and opponents.

3. I will ensure that all players get equal instruction, support, and playing time.

4. I will not ridicule or yell at my players for making mistakes or performing poorly.

5. I will remember that players play to have fun and must be encouraged to have confidence in themselves.

6. I will make sure that equipment and facilities are safe and match the players’ ages and abilities.

7. I will remember that participants need a coach they can respect. I will be generous with praise and set a good example.

8. I will obtain proper training and continue to upgrade my coaching skills.

9. I will work in cooperation with officials for the benefit of the game.
Developing All Positions

At the Novice level of hockey, it is important that players are able to develop at all positions. **Early specialization is not conducive to long term player development.** The coach should play an active role in making sure that both in games and in practices, Novice hockey players are trying all positions, including goalie.

At the Novice level, every player should get at least have the option of having one opportunity to play in Goal. Goaltender is not for everyone, but it is important for young individuals to experiment and see if they enjoy it. Again, specialization at this age is not recommended as picking a single position now will not benefit long term athletic development.

Exposure to all positions at this age is critical to the development of the overall hockey player. There are different skills used more and less frequently at each position and it is critical that all skills are developed equally. For example, if a Novice player never plays defence, they will not be honing their backwards skating skills. Therefore, Novice hockey players should refrain from specific positional or role specialization as playing forward, defence, and goalie allows all players the opportunity to develop physical and cognitive skills that they can eventually apply into their primary position. As a result, they will increase their overall athletic skills, understand the game from multiple perspectives, and become better players.

**NOTE:** Skill development is important for all players. Skating, puck control, passing and shooting are necessary pillars for all positions, including Goaltender.
Development Zone Resource for Coaches

The Development Zone is a space on the ice that should be utilized as much as possible. 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 development with added puck touches, passes, and shots.

**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.

Hockey Winnipeg supports Hockey Manitoba and recognizes the numerous advantages of incorporating and utilizing the Development Zone. Therefore, Hockey Winnipeg has included 21 half-ice plans to be used for Development Zone during Novice games. These Development Zone games and drills are here as a resource for coaches to supplement Hockey Manitoba’s Development Zone Seasonal Plan.

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.
Reflecting hockey Canada’s player development pyramid and player development model, we have included these age appropriate Development Zone activities to assist Novice players in continuing to develop physical literacy, fitness, and the five fundamentals of the game – 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.

**NOTE:** Please modify/alter these drills based on the number of players/goalies and type of equipment you have. Remember, these games/drills are here as a resource to provide additional support to your own creative ideas.

**11 Tips for Development Zone Coaches/Coordinators to Consider:**

- At the beginning of each development zone session, take approximately 30 seconds - 1 minute to explain the game/drill so there is no confusion among the players.
- Take a knee and speak softly while explaining the game or drill. Encourage the players to lean right in close to you.
- Don’t speak too long. The development zone is meant to provide all players an opportunity to keep moving, be involved, and have fun. However, demonstrate the game/drill quickly if you feel it is necessary.
- Don’t worry too much about technique at this point, give them 1 to 2 teaching points MAXIMUM if you would like – this is not a practice. This is an opportunity for kids to be creative, experiment, and continue to develop the fundamentals of hockey through playing.
- Do not teach these kids systems or specific positional play. Remember, these are 7 and 8 year old children. They should be learning the fundamentals of hockey through having fun and playing games. They should not be learning how to run a reverse breakout.
- Don’t expect too much. Try to be patient, encouraging, and energetic.
- Make sure all players are following the rules and have an equal amount of time participating in the various positions in each of the development zone games.
- Make adaptations/changes to the drills and games frequently. They are in the development zone for 8 minutes at a time and kids can get bored quickly. However, when you make changes, stop the game and briefly explain the new game/drill.
- **Ensure player safety as much as possible.** It is also very important to be aware of the players in the Game Zone who are changing from the ice to their benches.
- Make sure players are keeping their heads up at all times (especially when they are close to the boards and when jumping, sliding, backward skating activities are involved).
- If goalies are unavailable, make players hit posts or place objects/targets in the nets.
21 Development Zone Games/Drills:

1. 4 on 4 “Jump / Drop the Lines” Cross-Ice Scrimmage (using half ice)
   - **Goal:** Improve balance, agility, coordination, and promote fun. **NOTE** – opposing nets should be in between blue line and ringette line (not exactly like they are shown below).

   - 2 nets (mini or regular sized) are placed on opposite sides. All players from each team enter the zone and compete in a cross ice game. Coach dumps puck in to begin play.
   - **For the first 2 minute segment** - a regular cross ice game occurs, but all players must jump (while they are either skating forward, backward, or side to side) with or without the puck, over the blue line every time they skate over it.
   - **For the second 2 minute segment** - new rule - all players must drop to their knees, with or without the puck, and get up quickly every time they skate over the blue line (safety – make sure children don’t slide into each other, the boards, or zone dividers).
   - **For the third 2 minute segment** - new rule - all players must jump over the ringette line, with or without the puck, every time they skate over it.
   - **For the last 2 minute segment** - new rule - all players must drop to their knees, with or without the puck, and get up quickly every time they skate over the ringette line.
2. 4 on 4 “Hop / Plop the Lines” Cross-Ice Scrimmage (using half ice)
   - **Goal:** Improve balance, agility, coordination, and promote fun. **NOTE** – opposing nets should be in between blue line and ringette line (not exactly like they are shown below).

   - 2 nets (mini or regular sized) are placed on opposite sides. All players from each team enter the zone and compete in a cross ice game. Coach dumps puck in to begin play.
   - **For the first 2 minute segment** - a regular cross ice game occurs, but all players must jump (while they are either skating forward, backward, or side to side) with or without the puck, over the blue line AND ringette line every time they skate over them.
   - **For the second 2 minute segment** - all players must jump (while they are either skating forward, backward, or side to side) with or without the puck, over the blue line AND ringette line with their LEFT SKATE ONLY every time they skate over them.
   - **For the third 2 minute segment** - all players must jump (while they are either skating forward, backward, or side to side) with or without the puck, over the blue line AND ringette line with their RIGHT SKATE ONLY every time they skate over them.
   - **For the final 2 minute segment** - all players must drop (“plop”) to their bellies, with or without the puck, and get up quickly every time they skate over the blue line.
   - Make sure you are watching players carefully. This is an excellent drill to increase balance, coordination, and stamina. Not only should players be having fun, but they should be skating fast and participating correctly so they are not cheating themselves.
3. 4 on 4 “Glide / Stride” Cross-Ice Scrimmage (using half ice)

- **Goal:** To simulate a game-like environment in which players are working on their skating fundamentals that primarily focuses on balance and edge work. **NOTE** – opposing nets should be in between blue line and ringette line (not exactly like they are shown below).

- 2 nets (mini or regular sized) are placed on opposite sides. All players from each team enter the zone and compete in a cross ice game. Coach dumps puck in to begin play.
- For the first 2 minute segment - all players compete in a cross-ice game but must keep both skates on the ice AT ALL TIMES (encourage players to take short strides, have wide stances, use both skates equally – don’t drag, and use their edges to dig into the ice).
- For the second 2 minute segment - all players must keep their LEFT SKATE on the ice at all times. Encourage players to push off with their right skate only while their left skate – their ‘support leg’ - remains on the ice (especially when gliding). Keep eyes up!
- For the third 2 minute segment - switch - all players must keep their RIGHT SKATE on the ice at all times (players can only push off with their left skate). Keep eyes up!
- For the final 2 minute segment - all players can use both skates normally and play a regular cross ice game using half of the ice (encourage full strides, ‘toe snap’).
- Encourage players that falling over is okay - it means they are trying. Remind them to FULLY EXTEND their leg (toe snap) and recover back to the middle (to their support leg) when they are skating with one leg only (and for last 2 minutes as well).
4. 4 on 4 “Backwards / Between” Cross-Ice Scrimmage (using half ice)

- **Goal**: To simulate a game-like environment in which players are working on transition skating fundamentals either going forwards to backwards or backwards to forwards with and without the puck. **NOTE** – opposing nets should be in between blue line and ringette line (not exactly like they are shown below).

- 2 nets (mini or regular sized) are placed on opposite sides. All players from each team enter the zone and compete in a cross ice game. Coach dumps puck in to begin play.
- For the first 2 minute segment - all players must skate backwards (with or without the puck) only when they are between the red line and blue line.
- For the second 2 minute segment - all players pivot using their LEFT skate only (with or without the puck) when they cross the blue line either going forwards to backwards or backwards to forwards. Still only skating backwards between red and blue line.
- For the third 2 minute segment - all players pivot using their RIGHT skate only (with or without the puck) when they cross the blue line either going forwards to backwards or backwards to forwards. Still only skating backwards between red and blue line.
- For the final 2 minute segment - all players must skate backwards at ALL TIMES while playing the cross ice game. Make sure players keep their eyes up (“head on a swivel”).
- Tell players that it is okay to fall down. This is an excellent time to develop backward skating/pivoting fundamentals while increasing on-ice awareness.
5. 4 on 4 “Excess / No Passing” Cross-Ice Scrimmage (using half ice)

- **Goal:** To simulate a game-like environment in which players acquire skill passing, receiving, carrying the puck, as well as begin to experiment on how to skillfully stick check and support the puck carrier. **NOTE** – opposing nets should be in between blue line and ringette line (not exactly like they are shown below).

- 2 nets (mini or regular sized) are placed on opposite sides. All players from each team enter the zone and compete in a cross ice game. Coach dumps puck in to begin play.
- **For the first 2 minute segment** - all players on a team must touch the puck once before they can shoot the puck. Encourage players to make good passes and communicate.
- **For the second 2 minute segment** - only one touch passes are allowed (“hot puck”). Encourage players to keep their eyes up and get open so passes are easy to make.
- **For the third 2 minute segment** - all players on a team must touch the puck once before they can shoot the puck. But, passes must be made with BACKHANDS only.
- **For the final 2 minute segment** - players are NOT allowed to pass the puck. The puck must be carried until it is lost or a shot is attempted (offensive teammates must support the puck and get into position to pick up a loose puck. Puck carrier will be forced to constantly change direction and protect the puck. Use the full space available, including the area behind the net. Defensive players will work to close gaps and create turnovers).
6. **4 on 4 “Multi-Puck / Score Anywhere” Cross-Ice Scrimmage (using half ice)**

- **Goal:** To simulate transition and offensive attack situations that allow players to think creatively and will teach them to “see the ice” better. **NOTE** – opposing nets should be in between blue line and ringette line (not exactly like they are shown below).

- 2 nets (mini or regular sized) are placed on opposite sides. All players from each team enter the zone and compete in a cross ice game. Coach dumps puck in to begin play.

- **For the first 2 minute segment** - begin with a regular cross ice game but also include a second puck in the playing area. One player is allowed to control 2 pucks at once if they are capable. Encourage players to keep their eyes up and be aware of multiple pucks.

- **For the second 2 minute segment** - cross-ice game with 2 pucks continue, but passes must now be made with backhands only.

- **For the third 2 minute segment** - remove one puck so it is a regular cross-ice game with one puck, but teams can score on EITHER NET. Attack should frequently change directions, with players looking to create odd-man situations and potential breakaways.

- **For the final 2 minute segment** - continue the cross-ice game where teams can choose to attack either net, but passes must be made with backhands only.

- An excellent drill for youngsters to learn and experiment while having to transition from offense to defense quickly as they may be defending the net they were just attacking.
7. 4 on 4 “Backdoor” Cross-Ice Scrimmage (using half ice)

- **Goal:** To simulate game situations that force skaters to get comfortable spreading the ice and creating unfamiliar scoring opportunities. A great drill for developing offensive creativity. This is also an excellent drill if you have goaltenders available - helps with position play, quickness, and recovery.

  - Nets are placed back-to-back between the face-off circles. One goaltender covers both nets (if there is no goalie, players must hit posts or place objects/targets in the nets).
  - Coach shoots puck in to start play and players from each team enter play. Players attack the nets opposite of their line. Players should take advantage of the entire half-ice surface (spread the ice, communicate, and move the puck around).
  - For the first 2 minute segment - begin with a regular game in this format. Make sure players know what net they are attacking (encourage players to spread the ice - get open and communicate).
  - For the second 2 minute segment - same rule as above, but add a second puck (encourage players to keep their eyes up - be careful with shots).
  - For the third 2 minute segment - remove one puck so it is back to regular game in this format, but passes must be backhands only.
  - For the final 2 minute segment - all players on a team must touch the puck once before they can shoot the puck (encourage lots of passing and players to get open).
8. 3 on 3 “With a Safe Zone” Cross-Ice Scrimmage (using half ice)

- **Goal:** To simulate a game situation in which players are communicating and working various passing / give and go plays from the offensive corner leading to a shot on net.

- 2 nets (mini or regular sized) are placed on opposite sides. 3 players from each team enter the zone and compete in a cross ice game. 1 player from each team enters the “safe zone” in opposite corners. Coach dumps puck in to begin play.
- “Safe zone” player cannot be pressured and cannot leave the corner.
- Before attempting a shot on net, players must make a pass to their “safe zone” and have the “safe zone” player make a return pass.
- Players must work to always keep their feet moving and find open space on the ice so their “safe zone” player can make a clear pass to them.
- Encourage players to use the area behind the net as well as other open areas on the ice and to communicate.
- A turnover will result in the new offensive team making a pass to their “safe zone” player and moving into position to receive a return pass.
- **For each of the 2 minute segments** - have one new player from each team take a turn in the “safe zone” (each player should have 2 minutes in the “safe zone”).
9. 4 on 4 “Shooting and Scoring” Cross-Ice Scrimmage (using half ice)

- **Goal:** To simulate a game situation in which players are forced to work on various forms of shooting methods from both comfortable and awkward situations. **NOTE** – opposing nets should be in between blue line and ringette line (not exactly like they are shown below).

- 2 nets (mini or regular sized) are placed on opposite sides. All players from each team enter the zone and compete in a cross ice game. Coach dumps puck in to begin play.
- **For the first 2 minute segment** - all players are only allowed to shoot the puck using a wrist shot for the entire segment.
- **For the second 2 minute segment** - all players are only allowed to shoot the puck using a backhand for the entire segment.
- **For the third 2 minute segment** - all players are only allowed to shoot the puck using a slap shot for the entire segment.
- **For the final 2 minute segment** - players are allowed to shoot the puck using any of the three previous shots mentioned, but they must LOOK AT THE NET while they shoot. Encourage players to keep their “eyes on the target” and look where they are shooting when they release. They probably won’t, but make sure you are encouraging them to do so.
10. 3 on 3 “Support to Score” Cross-Ice Scrimmage (using half ice)

- **Goal:** To simulate a game situation in which players are working various passing plays with a mobile support target leading to a shot on net. **NOTE** – opposing nets should be in between blue line and ringette line (not exactly like they are shown below).

- 2 nets (mini or regular sized) are placed on opposite sides. 3 players from each team enter the zone and compete in a cross ice game. 1 player from team X is in a “support zone” (behind the goal line) and 1 player from team O is in a “support zone” (between the red line and blue line). Coach dumps puck in to begin play.

- “Support zone” players cannot be pressured and cannot leave their zone (but they can skate throughout their entire zone to get open and create better passing plays/opportunities for both offensive and defensive support).

- Before a team can attempt a shot on net, players must make a pass to their “support zone” and have the “support zone” player make a return pass.

- Players must work to always keep their feet moving and find open space on the ice.

- Encourage players to use the area behind the net as well as other open areas on the ice.

- A turnover will result in the new offensive team having to make a pass to their “support zone” and moving into position to receive a return pass.

- **For each of the 2 minute segments** – have one new player from each team enter the “support zone” (each player should have 2 minutes in a “support zone”).
11. 2 on 2 “Compete to Support” Cross-Ice Scrimmage (using half ice)

- **Goal:** To simulate a game situation where players are competing to get open while making difficult passes to players that are attempting to score. **NOTE** – opposing nets should be in between blue line and ringette line (not exactly like they are shown below).

- 2 nets (mini or regular sized) are placed on opposite sides. 2 players from each team enter the zone and compete in a cross ice game. 1 player from both teams is in the “support zone” behind the goal line. 1 player from both teams is in the “support zone” between the red line and blue line. Coach dumps puck in to begin play.

- “Support zone” players cannot be pressured from players in the game zone and cannot leave their zone. But they are competing with their opponent in the same zone as them and must skate throughout their entire support zone to get open.

- Before attempting a shot on net, players must make a pass to both “support zone” players and have the “support zone” players make return passes.

- A turnover will result in the new offensive team making a pass to their “support zone” players and moving into position to receive a return pass.

- **For the first 4 minute segment** - each player gets 2 minutes in a “support zone” and 2 minutes in the cross-ice game zone (switch after 2 minutes).

- **For the final 4 minute segment** - each player gets 2 minutes in a “support zone” and 2 minutes in the game zone but all passes must be backhand only.
12. 4 on 4 “Quick Hands / Stick Check” Drill (using half ice)

- **Goal:** To encourage and promote stick handling creativity and awareness for offensive players and introductory stick checking opportunities for defensive players. **NOTE** – extra objects are encouraged to be placed throughout the development zone.

- 2 nets (mini or regular sized) are placed on opposite sides. 4 cones are placed in zone (2 cones are a pair and should be placed close together as a “gate”). All players from each team enter the zone. 2 coaches are involved in this drill as defenders/stick checkers at all times. 4 pucks are needed. Make sure defenders/stick checkers are SPREAD OUT.

- **For the first 1 minute segment** - all 4 O’s each carry a puck and stick handle while the 6 defenders (4 X’s and 2 C’s) stand still with their sticks out but do NOT move their sticks. 4 O’s are stick handling around the nets, between the defenders sticks, skates, keeping their eyes up, and must skate BACKWARDS when they go through “gates.”

- **For the second 1 minute segment** - switch - same rules but 4 X’s are puck carriers.

- **For the third 1 minute segment** - switch - 4 O’s are now puck carriers but the 6 stationary defenders move their sticks in a predictable way (forwards and backwards).

- **For the fourth 1 minute segment** - switch - same rules but 4 X’s are puck carriers.

- **For the fifth 1 minute segment** - switch - 4 O’s are now puck carriers but the 6 stationary defenders move their sticks in a predictable way (across their bodies – side to side).

- **For the sixth 1 minute segment** - switch - same rules but 4 X’s are puck carriers.

- **For the seventh 1 minute segment** - switch - 4 O’s are now puck carriers but the 6 stationary defenders now try to stick check/poke pucks away from puck carriers.

- **For the final 1 minute segment** - switch - same rules but 4 X’s are now puck carriers. Encourage players to skate close to stick checkers, keep their eyes up and be creative.
13. 4 on 4 “Checking and Defending” Cross-Ice Scrimmage (using half ice)
- **Goal**: To simulate a game situation in which offensive players are working on their stick handling and passing while defensive players are working on proper body positioning, stick checking, and developing “contact confidence.” **NOTE** – opposing nets should be in between blue line and ringette line (not exactly like they are shown below).

- 2 nets (mini or regular sized) are placed on opposite sides. All players from each team enter the zone and compete in a cross-ice game. Coach dumps puck in to begin play.
- **For the first 2 minute segment** - all 4 X’s are the offensive team trying to score on the opposing net. All 4 O’s are playing WITHOUT STICKS trying to defend (NO sliding or body checking). All 4 X players must touch the puck once before a shot can be made
- **For the second 2 minute segment** - switch - 4 O’s are the offensive team trying to score, must touch the puck once each before shooting, and 4 X’s are playing WITHOUT STICKS.
- **For the third 2 minute segment** - all 4 X’s are the offensive team trying to score and must touch the puck once each before a shot can be made. The 4 O’s are strictly trying to defend and are playing with their sticks UPSIDE DOWN.
- **For the final 2 minute segment** - switch - 4 O’s are trying to score, must touch the puck once each before shooting, and 4 X’s are defending with their sticks UPSIDE DOWN.
- Encourage defensive players to WATCH their opponents (not the puck) when they don’t have sticks, and lift sticks/stick check properly when sticks are upside down.
14. 4 on 4 “Quick Feet / Highs and Lows” Cross-Ice Scrimmage (using half ice)
- **Goal:** To simulate a game situation in which players are working on coordination and puck handling abilities with added difficulty when shooting. **NOTE** – opposing nets should be in between blue line and ringette line (not exactly like they are shown below).

- 2 nets (mini or regular sized) are placed on opposite sides. All players from each team enter the zone and compete in a cross ice game. Coach dumps puck in to begin play.
- **For the first 2 minute segment** - before any shot can be made in the game, the shooter must lightly pass the puck to his/her own RIGHT foot, and kick the puck up back to their blade before they can shoot the puck.
- **For the second 2 minute segment** - switch - the shooter must lightly pass the puck to his/her own LEFT foot, and kick the puck up back to their blade before they can shoot.
- **For the third 2 minute segment** - before any shot can be made in the game, the shooter must lightly pass the puck to either his/her left or right foot, but must shoot the puck LOW/ALONG THE ICE (tell players to follow through low on their shots).
- **For the final 2 minute segment** - same rules as the third segment apply, but the shooter must shoot the puck HIGH/OFF THE ICE (tell players to follow through high on their shots).
- Encourage players to use both their forehand and backhands when lightly passing the puck to their own feet and to keep their eyes up as much as possible.
15. 4 on 3 “Continuous Attack & Defend” Cross-Ice Scrimmage (using half ice)

- **Goal:** To simulate a game situation in which players are given the opportunity to execute and defend a 4 on 3 in a small area. **NOTE** – opposing nets should be in between blue line and ringette line AND there should be an additional skater for each team (not exactly like the image shown below).

- 2 nets (mini or regular sized) are placed on opposite sides. All players from each team enter the zone and compete in a cross ice game. An imaginary line crosses the middle of the playing surface. Coach dumps puck in to begin play.
- One player from each team is always on offense and cannot cross the dividing line.
- Teams will always have a 4 on 3 advantage when they are in the offensive zone.
- After the defensive team forces a turnover, they can move the puck up the ice to the full-time offensive player or skate the puck.
- The offensive player may have the opportunity for a breakaway.
- The offensive player may need to stall while waiting for teammates to enter the play.
- For each of the 2 minute segments – have one new player from each team be the player always on offense (each player should have 2 minutes as the strictly offensive player).
- Encourage the offensive player to call for the puck, other players to support the puck carrier to create passing options, and the 3 defenders to block passing lanes when they are defending 4 on 3 situations.
16. 2 on 2 “Opposite Corner Support” Drill

- **Goal:** To simulate a game situation in which players make a pass to the offensive corner or point and receive a return pass, leading to a shot on net. An excellent drill for introductory offensive and defensive positional play. **NOTE** – coaches stand in between blue line and red line, every time puck leaves the zone you shoot another one in.

- One net is placed in the traditional position. Four support players are placed in the zone as shown in the diagram. Two players from each team are playing (2 on 2).
- Coach dumps the puck in to begin play. Support players are *somewhat* stationary – they can move around slightly in their designated areas.
- **Rotate players positions every 2 minutes** - players should each have 2 minutes as a support player in the corner, 2 minutes as a support player at the point, and 4 minutes competing in the 2 on 2 format (make sure players don’t play 4 minutes in a row in the 2 on 2 format). Encourage 2 on 2 players to spread the ice (get open).
- Players play a 2 on 2 game and must pass the puck to a support player on their team before they can shoot. If there is a turnover, the new offensive team must make a pass to one of their support players.
- Support players are not allowed to pass to one another. They must pass the puck to one of their teammates competing in the 2 on 2 game before they can shoot.
- Make players pass to BOTH support players before a shooting in 2nd D-Zone session.
17. 3 on 3 “Puck to Partner” Drill

- **Goal:** To simulate a game situation in which players must play both offense and defense low in the zone and are introduced to making breakout passes. **NOTE** – one player from each team is standing on a blue line dot (not exactly like the image shown below).

- One net is placed in the traditional position. 3 players from each team enter the zone.
- One player from each team is standing (stationary) on a dot outside of the blue line and acts as a “partner player” for their team.
- Game begins with the coach passing the puck to one team. That team is on offense.
- Offensive team should move throughout the zone looking to create scoring opportunities.
- Upon forcing a turnover, the defensive team must get the puck to their “partner player” over the blue line. They are now the offensive team.
- Their “partner player” must make a return pass to the new offensive team.
- 3 on 3 players never leave the game zone (they are always below the blue line). They should react quickly to create scoring opportunities off of the transition.
- For each of the 2 minute segments - have one new player from each team as the “partner player” (each player should have 2 minutes as a “partner player”).
- Encourage players to keep their eyes up and make good passes to their “partner player” waiting outside of the zone.
18. 4 on 4 “Fore-check / Breakout” Drill

- **Goal:** To simulate a game situation in which one team must make quick breakout decisions while another team works on fore-checking strategies. An excellent practice drill to emphasize fore-checking, breakouts, and communication fundamentals in small areas. **NOTE** – there should be an additional skater for each team (not exactly like the image shown below). Move nets around if ice gets chewed up.

- 2 nets (mini or regular sized) are placed on opposite sides. Coach starts the drill by dumping the puck into either corner. Four players from each team circle the opposite net and play 4 on 4. One team is trying to score, the other is trying to defend.

- The defensive team (team breaking out) should always reach the puck first.

- Their (defensive team) goal is to make a complete pass to the coach standing outside of the blue line. The fore-checking team must angle and taking away passing lanes.

- Their (fore-checking team) goal is to intercept passes and score a goal on either net.

- If goalies are unavailable, make players hit posts or place objects/targets in the nets.

- Every time a goal is scored or the defensive team makes a pass to coach, make players line up again, switch positions, and start drill over (rotate corners when dumping puck).

- For the first 2 minute segment - play as outlined above.

- For the second 2 minute segment - all defensive players must touch the puck once before passing to coach. Encourage players to get open before passing puck to coach.

- For the third 2 minute segment - all offensive players must shoot with backhands only.

- For the final 2 minute segment - all players must start the drill on their knees.
19. 4 on 4 “Regroup to Shoot” Drill (using half ice)

- **Goal:** To simulate a game situation in which players must play both offense and defense, break the puck out of the zone, and regroup in the neutral zone. Excellent drill to help introduce the concept of off-side. **NOTE** – there should be an additional skater for each team (not exactly like the image shown below).

- One net placed in the traditional position. Four players from each team enter play. The game begins with the coach passing the puck to one team. That team is on offense and is trying to score on the one net.
- The defensive team must create a turnover and get the puck over the blue line.
- Encourage the defensive players controlling the puck to treat the situation as a breakout, either skating or passing the puck out of the zone.
- Once over the blue line, the original defensive team will be on offense. They must now regroup in the neutral zone and enter the zone “onside” (puck enters first).
- Defensive players are NEVER allowed to cross the blue line in pursuit of the puck.
- **For the first 4 minute segment** - play as outlined above.
- **For the third 2 minute segment** - all offensive players must now touch the puck once before their team can shoot the puck. Encourage players to get open and communicate.
- **For the final 2 minute segment** - offensive players can pass as many times as they want, but now can only shoot with their backhands.
20. 2 on 2 “Continuous Change Up” Drill (using half ice)

- **Goal:** To simulate a game situation in which players play both offense and defense in a 2 on 2 format while learn breakout passes and how to enter the zone onside. An excellent drill for learning positional play, breakouts, and off-side.

- One net is placed in the traditional position. All 8 players are placed in the zone as shown in the diagram. To begin, the coach passes the puck to two offensive players (X).
- Two X’s players attack two O’s and try to score.
- Two O’s are strictly defending and trying to get the puck to the two O’s along the wall.
- Once O passes to their teammates along the wall, the first pair of O’s get out of the way (go stand on the wall where their teammates were) and the new pair of O’s skate out of the zone past the blue line, and then enter the zone (onside) to attack the net against the first pair of X’s.
- The two other X’s on the wall wait for the first pair of X’s (who are now defending) to get the puck to them.
- If a goal is scored (if no goalie, make them hit post or cross bar), line players up in original formation (as shown in image) and the pair that scored the goal get to start the next sequence.
- **For the first 4 minute segment** - play as outlined above.
- **For the third 2 minute segment** - all offensive players must shoot with backhands only.
- **For the final 2 minute segment** - all defensive players can only pass to their teammates along the wall with a backhand.
21. 4 on 4 “Scrimmage Central” (using half ice)

- **Goal:** To simulate competitive game situations with numerous variations that promote teamwork, creativity, awareness, and fun. **NOTE** – opposing nets should be in between blue line and ringette line (not exactly like they are shown below).

2 nets (mini or regular sized) are placed on opposite sides. All players from each team enter the zone and compete in a cross ice game. Coach dumps puck in to begin play.

- **For the first 1 minute segment** - regular 4 on 4 cross-ice game.
- **For the second 1 minute segment** - include another puck in the game so there are 2 pucks. Encourage all players to keep their eyes up.
- **For the third 1 minute segment** - remove 1 puck; tell all players they can now only make backhand passes.
- **For the fourth 1 minute segment** - tell one team to play with their sticks upside down.
- **For the fifth 1 minute segment** - switch - the team that had their sticks upside down now use their sticks normally. Tell the other team to play with their sticks upside down.
- **For the sixth 1 minute segment** - both teams play with sticks normally, but players must jump over the blue line AND ringette line every time they skate over them.
- **For the seventh 1 minute segment** - make players use their sticks the “wrong way” (left handed players use their own stick as if they were right handed and vice versa).
- **For the eighth 1 minute segment** - regular cross ice game but next goal wins! (Crossbar)
Practice Planning Resource for Coaches

The greatest opportunity for coaches to impact development is in practice. By effectively using the space and time available, a practice can be used to teach new skills, reinforce skills that have already been taught and give players the maximum amount of puck touches and meaningful interaction with their teammates.

Practice Planning may be new and overwhelming for some coaches. Hockey Canada has a series of ready to use practice plans that are not only easy to use, but an ideal program structure for your team.

HC – The Hockey Canada Network App is filled with practice plans, drills, skills videos and tips. There are also tutorials on how you can build training plans. You can share plans with your team and coaching staff, and print right from the app!

To prepare your team for the game experience, it will be important to familiarize the players with the entire game process. The following aspects of half ice hockey should be demonstrated or “rehearsed” before you get into a regular game situation:

- Ice Surface Layout
- Pre-Game Warmup
- Transitions Between Zones

By also having your team scrimmage or play an exhibition game using the proper format, players will become much more confident and comfortable with the game experience making for a positive and fun environment.

Keyword: How to Plan a Practice
Keyword: Utilizing Your Coaching Staff
Keyword: Half-ice Practice Plan
Keyword: Fun & Games
Hockey Canada is committed to supporting you, the Novice Coach by connecting you to resources that will allow you to have maximized success. As a result, each Novice team will be getting access to a one year subscription to the Hockey Canada Network App.

The Hockey Canada Network gives coaches and players the tools to succeed with drills, skills, videos, practice plans and articles on your tablet or phone. The App is very user friendly and even has tutorials that will help you to make the best use of the resource. Coaches will have the ability to access plans, videos and articles that will help them navigate the hockey season. Plans are easily emailed to assistants and drill sheets can be printed right from the app.

As you will read below, the Hockey Canada Network App has everything you need.

**Skills:** Over 300 videos to help players develop their skills, covering hockey fundamentals for all ages.

Skating and agility, stickhandling and shooting—no player is too advanced or too old to work on hockey basics. The Hockey Canada Network offers a library of videos and articles to help players properly develop and improve their skills on and off the ice.

**Drills:** Over 1,000 drill videos, diagrams and descriptions, helping coaches get the most out of practice time.

Practice makes perfect. The Hockey Canada Network is loaded with drills to help coaches run more effective practices. Whether your goal is to develop individual skills, improve conditioning or build on team tactics, there are drills for teams at any level to improve their game.

**Plans:** Short- and long-term practice plans designed by some of Canada’s best coaches.

In addition to hundreds of drills, the Hockey Canada Network offers comprehensive practice plans. Each plan gives you a series of drills and training advice to use within a single practice, or over several weeks. These plans were created by our most experienced and knowledgeable coaches and trainers.

**Coaching:** Essentials for anyone looking to get involved or advance their own coaching careers.

Every season, thousands of coaches across Canada volunteer their time to step behind the bench. The Hockey Canada Network is the perfect assistant for new and experienced coaches, giving you information on player development, certification and other valuable resources.
**Experts:** Over a century of experience and the largest network of hockey professionals in the world.

We’ve dedicated the last 100 years to growing this sport and developing young players. The videos and articles in the Hockey Canada Network were created by experienced coaches and top players, as well as trainers, nutritionists, sports psychologists and other leading experts.
Frequently Asked Questions

Below are some of the most commonly asked questions (and applicable answers) about the Novice half-ice program:

**Why are there so many changes this year to the Novice Program?**

Hockey Manitoba has extensively reviewed its Novice half-ice program from 2017 - 2018 and also considered the Hockey Canada Novice guidelines to develop our current model for 2018 - 2019. We believe our model utilizes the best components of each - with a focus on development and engagement at its core - while also ensuring we recognize Hockey Canada's core elements at this age level.

**Does my player regress by having to play half-ice at 7 or 8 years old?**

No, research shows that players benefit more (and have more fun) by playing in an age appropriate environment (half-ice). All players benefit from increased puck touches, scoring chances, quick transitions, read & react situations, puck support and passing plays in half-ice hockey. Physical literacy and skill acquisition are the cornerstones of development at this age. Learning game rules (offside, icing) will come in time.

**Some 8 year old players are very big; what about incidental contact and collisions?**

Incidental contact and collisions will always be part of the game and are unavoidable any time you have players around the puck, however the reduction in the playing area from full-ice to half-ice will force players to accelerate their thought process and reaction times. It should also be noted that Junior/NHL players, all of whom are much larger than Novice players, spend the majority of their time in either the defensive or offensive zones (smaller areas than that of our half-ice zone), so to think 7 & 8 year old development is going to be stunted rather than accelerated by playing on a reduced ice surface is inaccurate.

**With a reduced ice surface, won't this have a negative impact on skating development?**

Quite the opposite. Hockey is no longer a linear game and skating is much more that simply moving in a straight line. The reduction of the ice surface will again help to develop players complete skating skills which include stops and starts, transitions, turning, pivots, agility, edge work and balance. Good skaters will always be good skaters but playing in a half-ice concept will assist in the development of every player’s skating acumen rather than primarily relying or limiting their skating arsenal to full acceleration. In addition, a study conducted by Hockey Alberta found that young players can reach top speeds in a distance less than half of the ice,
therefore we are confident that half-ice games will improve rather than handicap players' skating skills. Hockey Canada studies support this research.

**Won't there be increased whistles with the reduction of the ice surface, and pucks shot over the divider(s)?**

With the removal of off-sides and icings, and the modification to continuous play within shifts, there will essentially be no stoppages of play during games. The result is continuous, competitive play and engagement. Trials have shown that the amount of pucks shot over the divider(s) is very limited.

**Why has a 4 vs. 4 model been implemented, don't players need to learn positions?**

The 4 vs. 4 model follows Hockey Canada's core requirements for the Novice program, and was designed to maximize the opportunity to engage all players in the game. Age appropriate training at the Novice level includes fundamental skill development and competition. Introductory concepts to positional play such as puck support are key in a 4 vs. 4 half-ice game, however learning specific positions, team tactics etc. are better introduced at older age levels.

For more information on Hockey Manitoba's Novice Guidelines, please visit their website at [http://www.hockeymanitoba.ca](http://www.hockeymanitoba.ca)
Hockey Canada’s Fair Play Code for Players

1. I will play hockey because I want to, not just because others or coaches want me to.

2. I will play by the rules of hockey, and in the spirit of the game.

3. I will respect my opponents.

4. I will control my temper – fighting and mouthing off can spoil the activity for everyone.

5. I will do my best to be a true team player.

6. I will remember that winning isn’t everything – that having fun, improving skills, making friends, and doing my best are also important.

7. I will acknowledge all good plays/performances – those of my team and of my opponents.

8. I will remember that coaches and officials are there to help me. I will accept their decisions and show them respect.
Important Rules for Novice Hockey Parents

The following 10 rules for hockey parents reflect literature by fitness expert Lloyd Percival. Although his rules were initially publicized at a hockey tournament in New Hope, Minnesota in 1987, the information below still applies to the contemporary minor hockey system:

1. Make sure your child knows that win or lose, you love them. Let them know that you appreciate their efforts and you won’t be disappointed in them if they fail. Be the person in their life that they can always look to for support.

2. Try to be completely honest with yourself about your child’s athletic capability, competitive attitude, and level of skill. Although parents should always encourage and support their child, it is crucial to be aware and realistic of their abilities and desires.

3. Be helpful, but don’t coach your child on the way to the game or at the breakfast table. Think how tough it must be on them to be continually inundated with advice, pep talks, and criticism.

4. Teach your child to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be “out there trying,” and to be constantly working to improve their skills. Don’t tell them that winning doesn’t count, because it does and they know that. Instead, help them to develop a healthy competitive attitude, a “feel” for competing, for trying hard, and for having fun while doing so.

5. Try not to live your life through your child. Yes, your children are an extension of you. But, don’t assume they feel the same way you did, or have the same desires or attitudes. Don’t push them in the direction that will give you the most satisfaction.

6. Don’t compete with your child’s coach. A coach may become a hero to them for a while, someone who can do no wrong, and you may find that hard to take. Or, if your child may become disenchanted with the coach, don’t side with them against the coach. Talk to your child about the importance of learning how to handle problems and how to react to criticism. Try to help them understand the necessity for discipline, rules, and regulations.
7. Don’t compare your child to other players on their team. If they have a tendency to resent the treatment they get from the coach or if they are jealous of the approval other players get, encourage them to work harder and work on their weaknesses so they can develop into a better player. Remember, if you are over protective, you will perpetuate the problem.

8. Get to know your child’s coach. Make sure you approve of their attitude and ethics. A coach can be very influential, and you should know what their values are so you can decide whether or not you want them passed on to your child.

9. Remember that children tend to exaggerate when they are praised and when they are criticized. Temper your reactions to the stories your child brings home from the rink. Don’t criticize them for exaggerating, but don’t over-react to the stories they tell you.

10. Teach your child that making mistakes while they are trying their best is common and will only help them in the future. In order to succeed, you cannot be afraid to fail.

**Key note:** Remember to enjoy your children as much as possible. They are young for such a short time. Do not rush them through childhood – it is a very small but very important period of time in their lives.
Conclusion

Hockey Winnipeg is committed to supporting our coaches, young hockey players and officials every step of the way. New initiatives like the Novice half ice program are designed and implemented with one major goal in mind: to grow the game of hockey. This move is beneficial for players, coaches, and officials. By working as a team and remembering that it is about development and fun, we can all make this transition a positive one.

We want to hear how the program is working, and what we can do to support Novice hockey.

Visit [www.hockeywinnipeg.ca](http://www.hockeywinnipeg.ca), or email development@hockeywinnipeg.ca

Visit [www.hockeymanitoba.ca](http://www.hockeymanitoba.ca)

Visit [www.hockeycanada.ca](http://www.hockeycanada.ca)

Hockey Winnipeg wishes you all the best for this upcoming season, and as always, HAVE FUN!