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## INFORMATION BULLETIN

**Issue # 2017-026-I**

September 6, 2017 (*Revised July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021*)

**TO:** Member MHA's  
**FROM:** Jim Humphrey, VIAHA President  
**COPY:** VIAHA Officers & Managing Directors  
**SUBJECT:** VIAHA Cross Ice Guidelines

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"The BC Hockey Board of Directors mandated the following: that All Minor Hockey Associations are required to operate the Hockey Canada Initiation Program and utilize cross- ice systems *for participants U9 & below*. This means that all games/practices for below U11 players must take place on a cross/modified ice surface."  
(Reference: BC Hockey FAQs 2016-08-05)

A standard NHL rink is 200 feet by 85 feet. Olympic ice is approx. 200 feet by 98 feet. Cross-Ice hockey is defined as playing hockey across the 85 (or 98) foot width of the ice surface, as compared to playing lengthways 100 x 85 ft. length of the ice surface. This smaller ice area has been deemed a developmental tool which is in use by many of the leading hockey nations in the world. It has been demonstrated to provide a more positive hockey experience by increasing puck possession time for each player, resulting in quicker development of individual technical skills, increased ice time, increasing the tempo of the game for all players, increased player creativity and improved "hockey sense", or understanding of the principles of the game.

9.04 Hockey Canada Initiation and Cross-Ice Program Delivery: All games involving any team at the U6 & U7 division shall be played utilizing a cross-ice setup. All Games in the U9 & U8 Divisions shall be played utilizing a cross or half-ice set up. The standard gameplay area for cross ice hockey is 85' x 78'. The standard gameplay area for half-ice hockey is 100' x 85'.

The goal is to improve player development while ensuring an exciting, challenging, learned, fun environment for the players.

This document provides the framework for U6 to U9 development and the Cross-Ice Hockey game for VIAHA teams and supersedes the VIAHA Rules and Regulations, at the direction from BC Hockey, received on July 21, 2016.

### **1. Cross-Ice Playing Surface**

Cross-ice hockey is used for U6-U9 games (exhibition, jamboree and tournament) when a full size hockey rink is used for the game. **U6** follows the Introduction to Hockey Program and no teams are formed or games played, with the exception of one jamboree (at the option of the Association). Players are limited to play in one (1) home Jamboree and one (1) away jamboree a season (for a total of 2)

### **2. Dividing the Rink**

For the cross-ice game, the rink is divided into two halves, with the game being played across the ice in the end zones. The rink may be divided through the use of movable boards, foam pads or cones, depending upon availability at each rink.

The rink may be divided into either 2 or 3 zones, depending upon the above set up. This will result in two smaller game surfaces.



Regular goal nets, small goal nets, devices limiting the size of the goal nets or cones defining the goal net area may be used.

Half-ice games and other variances on a smaller ice surface are also an option.

### **3. Team Formation**

**Players are to be rostered to a Division based on age. The suggested Divisions are:**

- U6:** All players age 5 or under as of December 31 of the current season.  
**U7:** All players age 6 as of December 31 of the current season.  
**U8:** All players age 7 as of December 31 of the current season  
**U9:** All players age 8 as of December 31 of the current season

Associations should do their best to stick to the age of the players, i.e.: players **age 7** on one roster, **age 8** altogether on another etc. Younger players can only be placed on an older roster if MHA's do not have enough players to form a team which could be the result in our smaller MHAs.

**U7** teams are formed not earlier than Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>; **U8 & U9** teams are formed no earlier than Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **4. On-Ice Team Size**

When a regular ice surface is divided into two smaller playing areas for either cross-ice or half-ice games, if roster sizes permit, each team should be divided into two groups to allow for playing two games at the same time.

The ratio should be, **U6 & U7** 3 on 3 plus a goalie and **U8 & U9** will be 4 on 4 plus a goalie for each shift. However, some flexibility is allowed to account for variability in roster sizes and attendance at any particular game. All levels can vary from 3 on 3, 4 on 4 or 5 on 5 but this is dependent on team size and in the agreement of both teams and Jamboree/Tournament organizers.

If both teams have small roster and there are not enough players for 2 cross-ice games, then one cross-ice game may be played.

If one team has a large roster and the other team has a small roster, players can be mixed jamboree style in order to facilitate the playing of the game.

Teams should consider the roster size of their opponent when scheduling games as it will be preferable to match with a team of a similar roster size.



## 5. Games

**U7** may play cross-ice games within their Association until Christmas. Inter-Association exhibition games may be organized starting January 1st.

**U8 & U9** may play cross-ice games within their Association until December 1<sup>st</sup>. For Associations registering only one **U6** or **U7** team in a division, inter- Association exhibition games may be arranged with another Association only registering one team in that division prior to December 1st, with the approval of the applicable VIAHA Vice President.

- U6:** Are limited to play 20 games total - which includes games played within the one (1) home Jamboree and one (1) away jamboree per season
- U7:** Are limited to play 25 games total - which includes games played within a maximum of 3 Jamborees/Tourneys per season
- U8:** Are limited to play 30 games total - which includes games played within a maximum of 3 Jamborees/Tourneys per season
- U9:** Are limited to play 35 games total - which includes games played within a maximum of 3 Jamborees/Tourneys per season

## 6. Game Sheets

VIAHA game sheets are to be used. The full roster for each team including team officials is to be listed on the game sheet. It is not necessary to indicate where the players played on each cross-ice surface only that they have been accounted as playing within the game time.

Scores are not kept.

## 7. Referees

For **U8 & U9** only one coach ("game coach") will be permitted on the ice of each of the cross-ice games. One referee per each cross-ice game is to be utilized to allow the on-ice officials to use the game(s) as a referee development tool. New referees, **like players**, would **receive** a gradual introduction to game situations.

If only one cross ice game is played, due to numbers of players present or for any other reason, and two referees are present, then the two referees shall referee the game and no "game coach" will be on the playing surface.

For **U6** two coaches (one from each team) will be the "game coach" on the playing surface. No referees are to be assigned.

When a player violates the rules, the "game coach" or "referee" can stop the game by blowing the whistle and clarifying the reason for the stoppage in play with the player in question. No penalties are to be given. Based on the severity of the infraction, if necessary, the "game coach" or "referee" can remove a player from the game for a specified period with an emphasis to reintroduce the player after a short "time out" from playing.

If a player continuously violates the rules, the coach from the player's team or the referee may remove him or her for the remainder of the game and allow for a substitute player in his or her place.

For information use this link to access the BC Hockey Cross ice Officiating Manual:

<https://www.bchockey.net/Files/8.0%20Novice%20Half%20Ice%20Officiating%20Module%20FINAL.pdf>



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## **8. Coaches**

At least one coach for each team is required. If the set-up requires the coaches to be on the ice in the neutral zone, the coaches on the ice must wear their skates and helmet as a safety precaution. Coaches are encouraged to not participate in the games other than in a teaching capacity.

## **9. Time Clock**

Running time will be used for a 1 hour game as follows:

5 minute warm-up

25 minute running time period

2 minute break

25 minute running time period (or time remaining in ice time less 2 minutes) No score is kept.

For a 1 hour 20 minute or 1 hour 30 minute game, running time will be used as follows:

5 minute warm-up

35 minute running time period

2 minute break

30 minute running time period (or time remaining in ice time less 2 minutes)

The two minute buzzer is to be used. The clock should start at the same time for both cross-ice surfaces and run for the full two minutes, for ease of timekeeping.

No score is kept and changes to players should be made if one side dominates the game.

Timings may be adjusted slightly to allow for set-up of the playing surface(s) with equipment.

## **10. Playing Rules**

All other VIAHA playing rules are to be followed.

## **11. Transition to U11:**

**Up to Six (6) Full Ice practices to familiarize the graduating players on off sides, etc. will be permitted after Feb 1<sup>st</sup>, U9 players only. \*All games are still to be held on Cross Ice size surfaces**

**Note:** Coaches are encouraged to go to the BC Hockey Website and look under Programs → Player Pathway → U7- U9 program Delivery for Practice plan ideas, Drills and FAQ's. Here is the link... <https://www.bchockey.net/Content.aspx?id=259>

Respectfully,

Jim Humphrey  
VIAHA President