



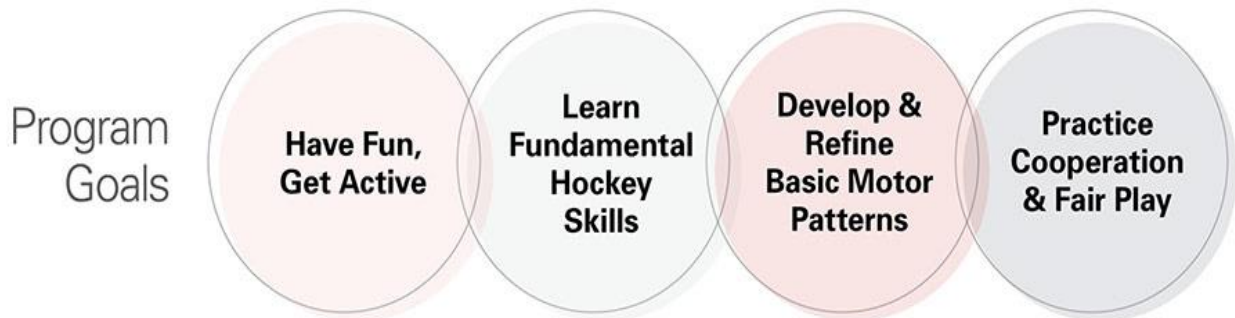
VIAHA CROSS ICE GUIDELINE POLICY

Commencing with the 2016-2017 season the BC Hockey Board of Directors mandated that all Minor Hockey Associations were required to operate the Hockey Canada Initiation Program and utilize cross-ice systems for participants U9 & below. This means that all games/practices for all players under 9 years of age must take place on a cross/modified ice surface.

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 U7 & U9 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.



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, increased game tempo, increased player creativity as well as an improved "hockey sense", or understanding of the principles of the game.

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. Modified Playing Surface

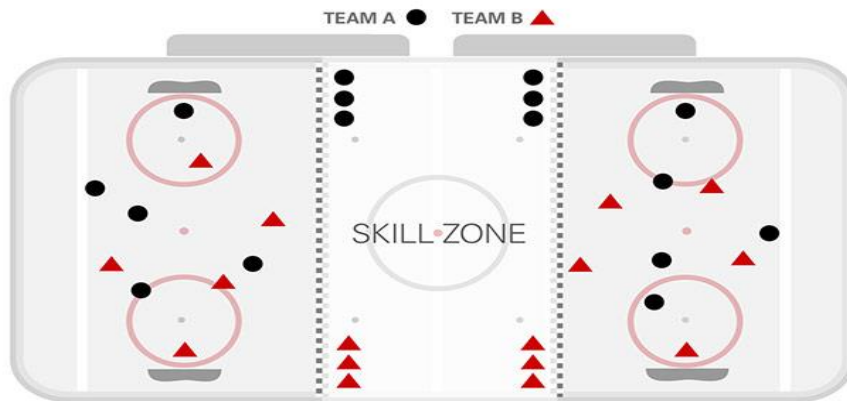
Hockey Canada recommends a cross ice alignment for U6/U7 games and a half ice alignment for U8/U9 games. Not all the MHAs in our District have the physical resources to provide for both options so for our purposes either option is acceptable for both Divisions. Cross ice games will be played 3 on 3 plus a goaltender for each team. Half ice games will be played 4 on 4 plus a goaltender for each team. All games will be played on a modified playing surface. Exceptions for U9 are outlined in Section 11.

2. Dividing the Rink

For the cross-ice games, the rink is divided into three sections, with the games being played across the ice from the blue lines to end boards. The section of the ice between the blue lines is used for skill development.



The rink may be divided through the use of movable boards, foam pads or cones, depending upon availability at each rink.

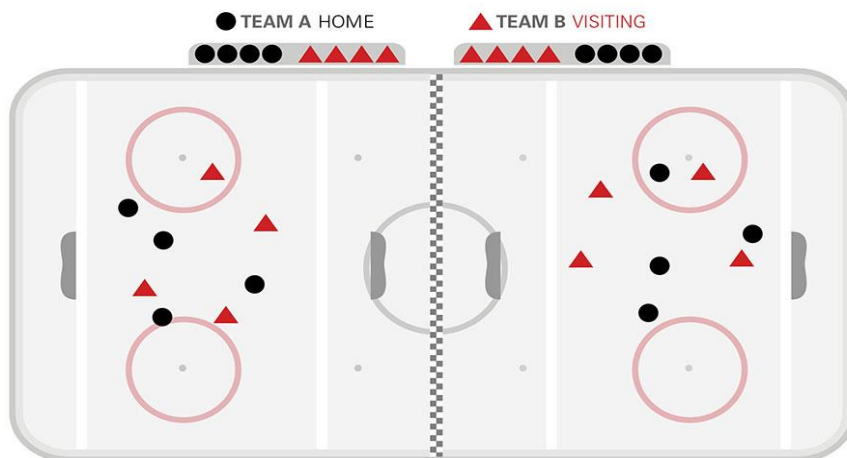


TWO TEAMS – Two Cross-Ice Games Model with Skill Zone

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

For the half-ice games, the ice is divided into two sections across the center line.

The rink may be divided through the use of movable boards, foam pads or cones, depending upon availability at each rink. Regular goal nets, small goal nets, devices limiting the size of the goal nets or cones defining the goal net area may be used.



TWO TEAMS – Two Half-Ice Games Model

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 form teams with players within their own age group, (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. The decision to place overage or underage players rests solely with the MHA taking into consideration player safety, skill level and team size. No player will progress to full ice hockey before age 9 so underage players may be in one Division for two years.

U7 teams are formed no earlier than November 1; **U8 & U9** teams are formed no earlier than October 15.

Registrars are encouraged to form single rosters for all players within a Division to facilitate movement of players between teams for purposes of games, tournaments or jamborees. Smaller MHAs may choose to combine their U6 and U7 players or their U8 and U9 players if they do not have sufficient numbers in each age group to form viable teams.

4. Team Composition

When Associations have multiple teams in a Division they should ensure their teams are balanced to ensure competitive game play both in intra-association games and in those against teams from other Associations, particularly against those Associations that have only one team in a Division.

In practices which consists of "station work" it is reasonable to group players according to calibre and skill set so that drills are being run at a consistent speed and complexity based on the ability and skill level of the players in that group. The formation of these groups should be flexible as players may not be of the same calibre in all skills.

In game situations it is assumed the coaches will arrange their line changes so that the strongest players on one team are competing against the strongest players on the opposing team, 2nd strongest against the second strongest and so on. This will require consultation between the two coaches prior to the game and an ability to adapt during the game, if appropriate...

5. 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.

If both teams have a 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.

6. Games and When

U6 & U7 may play cross-ice games within their Association until Christmas. Inter-Association exhibition games may be played starting January 1.

U8 & U9 may play cross-ice games within their Association until November 30. Inter-Association games may be played starting December 1.

For Associations registering only one team within a division, you can organize inter-association play prior to December 1 with the approval of your area VIAHA VP. This consent is not arbitrarily withheld so the process would be to arrange the game and send all pertinent details to them for approval.



The maximum number of games played by a team in a season is:

- U6:** is limited to play 25 games total - which includes games played within a maximum of 3 Jamborees/Tourneys per season
- U7:** is limited to play 25 games total - which includes games played
- U8:** is limited to play 40 games total - which includes games played within a maximum of 3 Jamborees/Tourneys per season
- U9:** is limited to play 40 games total - which includes games played within a maximum of 3 Jamborees/Tourneys per season

7. Game Sheets & Game Numbers

No scores are kept and there are no penalties recorded however a record of all players and team officials who participated in a game will be required for insurance purposes so a game sheet must be used for all games. MHAs have the option of using a VIAHA gamesheet or entering the game on Spordle Play. The latter is required if the MHA uses Referee assigning.

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.

Game numbers are required for any game played. As there are no Leagues in this age group the member of your Board who looks after Cross Ice will assign game numbers and can also be tasked with having game sheets sent to them at the end of the game. Since goals and penalties are not recorded the game sheet is basically a record of who was on the ice for any particular game in case it is needed at a later date.

For inter-association play both home and away teams should supply a game number and both should retain a copy of the game sheet.

Hosting a team from another District for an exhibition game or visiting team in another District for tournament or exhibition games will require an Interdistrict Travel Form. It should be completed in its entirety, including the endorsement of your President, and forwarded to the VIAHA Director of Hockey Operations a minimum of 10 days before the game date for pre-approval. The Interdistrict Travel Form can be found on our website (www.viaha.org) under Tournaments.

8. 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 two referees are present, then the two referees shall referee the game and no "game coach" will be on the playing surface.

For **U6 & U7** 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.

9. 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.

10. 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) No score is kept.

A one or a 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 one or 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

Hockey Canada and VIAHA rules to be followed except as follows:

- Incidental contact may happen but body-checking is not permitted
- No icing or off sides.
- Face-offs to start each half only
- For line changes players will relinquish control of the puck and the following shift will take over where play left off.
- When whistles lead to a change in possession the attacking team will back off 3 meters and play will resume as soon as the defending team gets possession.
- For minor penalties the Official will indicate a penalty will be assessed but play continues until the end of the shift at which time the Officials notifies the team of the infraction and the number of the offending player. If the offending team controls the puck the Official blows the whistle and call for a change in possession. The offending player will sit out the next shift but the team will not play shorthanded.
- For infractions which would normally a player to be ejected from the game (Match, Game Misconduct, Gross Misconduct) the player will be removed from the remainder of the game but no game incident report will be required.

11. Transition to Full Ice:

Hockey Canada player pathway provides for two options for the transition to full ice play. MHAs within VIAHA may use either option at their discretion.

Option 1 allows for a full season of half-ice play. Under this option transition to full ice is accomplished through a combination of full ice practices and scrimmages after February 1 for eight (8) year old players only. Up to three (3) Full Ice practices and three (3) full ice scrimmages are used to familiarize the graduating players on off sides, etc. All games are still to be held on Cross Ice size surfaces.

Option 2 permits full ice games after January 15, depending on the programming structure of your MHA. For those that offer single-year age divisions seven (7) year old games will be played on half/cross ice all season and eight (8) year old games will be played on half/cross ice until January 15 and may transition after that date to full ice games. For mixed programming, where the two age groups are not easily separated, half/cross ice programming will be used up to January 15 with a transition to full ice after that date. This is based on the understanding that a seven (7) year old will repeat the same programming as an eight (8) year old the following season.

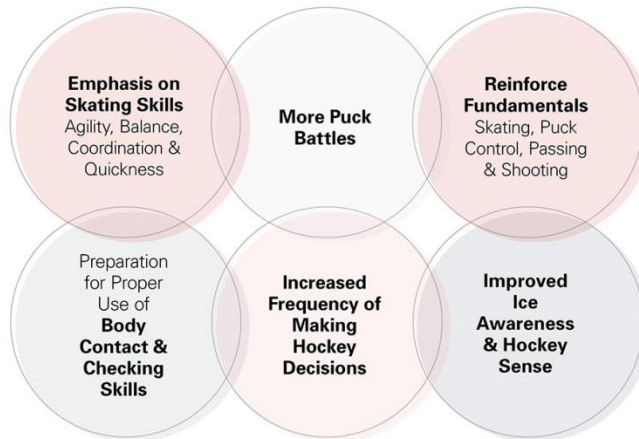


PHASE	Prep/Evaluation Phase & Development Phase	Regular Season Phase	End-of-Season Phase
DURATION	Up to 12 WEEKS prior to the start of the Regular Season phase	Up to 14 WEEKS after the completion of the Development phase	Up to 6 WEEKS after the conclusion of the Regular Season phase
ICE SET-UP	HALF-ICE GAMES	HALF-ICE GAMES	MAY PROGRESS TO FULL-ICE
BALANCE	45% OF THE SEASON	45% OF THE SEASON	10% OF THE SEASON
VOLUME	UP TO 12 WEEKS	UP TO 14 WEEKS	UP TO 6 WEEKS
PRACTICES	14 PRACTICE SESSIONS	34 PRACTICE SESSIONS	7 PRACTICE SESSIONS
GAMES	UP TO 6 GAMES	UP TO 22 GAMES	UP TO 12 GAMES
JAMBOREE/TOURNAMENTS	1 JAMBOREE	1 JAMBOREE/TOURNAMENT	1 JAMBOREE/TOURNAMENT

12. Benefits of the Program:

Putting young players into a competitive environment too early will compromise their development; they need to be placed into competitive situations that suit their age-specific abilities. This is why Hockey Canada's Long-Term Player Development Model is so important.

Dividing the playing surface is a decision that has been made in consultation with experts in athlete development. It is important to understand the benefits of half-ice hockey and why Hockey Canada has a national policy ensuring U9 hockey is played in smaller, modified spaces.



What the player will experience in cross ice hockey:



2X

Puck Touches

Players are close to the play and can touch the puck more often, meaning opportunities to be engaged offensively are doubled.

6X

Shot Attempts

Players are closer to the puck at all times and the puck is put towards the net much more often.

3X

Shots on Goal

Players are much closer to the net, skate shorter distances and have increased opportunities to create offence.

2X

Pass Attempts

Players pass and attempt to pass the puck more often – with and without the puck, they are closer to the game.

5X

Passes Received

When passes are shorter (5 to 10 feet), accuracy improves and players have more success receiving the pass.

13. Links:

Coaches are encouraged to visit the Hockey Canada and BC Hockey Websites for practice plans, drills and FAQ's.

<https://www.bchockey.net/players/player-pathway#u7>

<https://www.bchockey.net/players/player-pathway#u9>

<https://www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/hockey-programs/coaching/under-7/parents/introduction>

<https://www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/hockey-programs/coaching/under-9/parents/introduction>

**Adopted as a VIAHA Policy by the VIAHA Executive on August 30th, 2023*