



Initiation Program Motion & FAQ's

While many other sport organizations have modified their games to focus on guaranteeing that all young players are having fun and developing basic skills, hockey is one of the last sports to follow suit. It is important for the Long Term Athlete Development Framework that our sport joins the motion of developing fundamental skills and physical literacy before gearing towards competition. Though competition is neither good nor bad, it is important for the players to learn athleticism and sportsmanship before being rushed beyond their maturation and skill set. In an effort to embrace these concepts Hockey Manitoba has moved forward with the following motion applicable to the Initiation Program for the 2015-16 season.

Motion

All games and practices at the initiation level shall use modified ice surfaces consisting of cross-ice sections as of the 2015-16 season.

Rationale for Change

Long term player development research shows us that reducing the size of the playing surface offers more opportunity for skill development and greater participation from all players. More decisions, quicker reactions, finding open space, reading pressure, offensive/defensive body position, puck pressure, containment, etc.... all of which equals an improved hockey sense. More puck touches, more passes, more shots, and more fun...all of which equals player retention.

Initiation Program FAQ's

1) How does playing cross-ice benefit my child as opposed to full-ice format? What skills will be focused on by making the game surface smaller?

- Introducing a smaller game surface meets the needs of young players and increases the opportunity for all players to touch and handle the puck; by doing this, we create a positive environment for learning the fundamental skills of hockey such as skating, puck handling, passing and shooting.
- *More puck contact results in improved puck skills, while more shooting opportunities enhance scoring skills.*
- *A smaller playing surface increases the tempo of the game, forcing players to make quicker decisions and quicker reactions.*

2) Are cross-ice games played 5-on-5 or 3-on-3?

- Cross-ice games can be played in any variation of lines based on the modified space; teams can play 3-on-3, 4-on-4 or 5-on-5.

- Ideally with such a small space, 3-on-3 is beneficial to allow for more puck contact for all players.

3) Are time and scores recorded during cross-ice games?

- Score and game time, along with offsides and icings, will not be implemented during game play to focus on skill development rather than an emphasis on winning.
- Timing for shifts and rotation through stations is tracked by the lead coach for the ice session and can be done either using a stopwatch or using the score clock.

4) When are face-offs used during a cross ice game?

- Face-offs should be conducted in the middle of the modified ice surface at the start of each game, and at the start of each timed shift.

5) How long should timed shifts be?

- A timed shift should be no longer than 90 seconds from the opening shift faceoff to the end of the shift. At the end of each 90 second interval, lines will be swapped out and a face-off will begin play again.

6) Are penalties given? If so, who is officiating?

- Cross ice games will not have penalties or officials, which is no different than previous years in the Initiation Program.

7) If there is no recorded game time, what is the structure of a cross-ice game and session?

- The structure of cross-ice games is at the discretion of the minor hockey association and how they choose to format it during allotted ice times, however the Hockey Manitoba recommended structure can be seen in the link below:

8) Are there different ways that the rink can be divided to create more efficient usage of the entire ice surface for both cross-ice games and skill development?

- The ice can be divided in numerous ways ranging from 3 game zones, to 6 skill zones, or a mixture of both skill and game zones. Please refer to the links below for examples:

9) Will my child's team be opposing other teams or fellow teammates during cross-ice games?

- This is at the discretion of the minor hockey association however the recommended format is to have two teams participating in cross-ice games as opposed to inter-squad.

10) Will other hockey teams be sharing rented ice with my child's team?

- This is dependent on the minor hockey association however there could be up to 4 teams sharing a one hour ice session to reduce ice costs per team in areas where ice is very expensive or availability is limited.

11) Our association cannot afford to buy equipment such as rink dividers, small nets, blue pucks, etc., how can we implement the cross-ice games motion?

- For associations that cannot afford to purchase equipment, cross-ice games may be implemented using standard arena equipment and additional on-ice support.
- All additional on-ice support must have completed the Respect In Sport coaching course and the required Hockey Canada coach training.

12) We are interested in purchasing equipment for our cross-ice sessions, where is the best place to purchase what we need?

- Hockey Manitoba has entered into a partnership with Athletica Sport Systems for the purchase of rink dividers and mini nets. Please contact your regional representative, which can be found in the attached list, for more information on purchasing equipment with these promotions.

13) How long is the season during the Initiation Program?

- As per the Hockey Canada Initiation Program LTPD Plan, the IP season is 28-32 weeks, approximately once or twice per week broken down into:
 - o 3-4 weeks of practice and skill development
 - o 20-24 weeks of practice and game play
 - o 4 weeks of tournaments and games
- For more information on IP seasonal structure please refer to the Hockey Canada IP Program LTPD Plan via the link below:
- [Click Here For Hockey Canada IP LTPD Plan](#)

14) Are tournaments required to adhere to the cross-ice games motion?

- Yes, all tournaments are required to follow cross-ice game layouts as provided by Hockey Manitoba.