

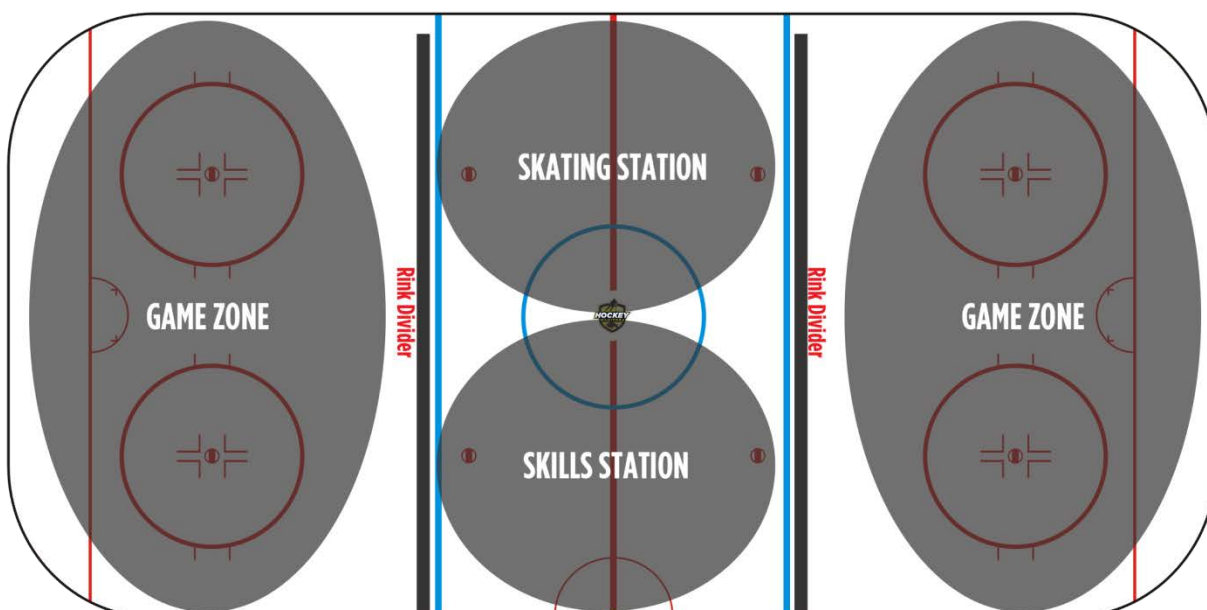


INITIATION GUIDELINES



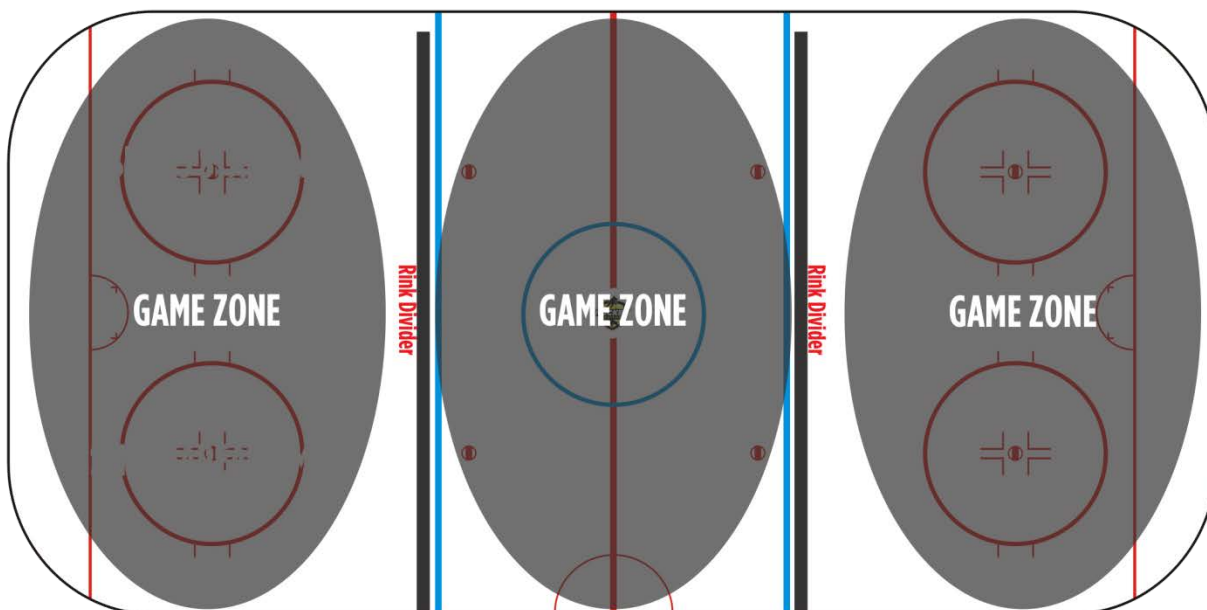
DEVELOPMENT FOR FUN, DEVELOPMENT FOR EXCELLENCE

HOCKEY MANITOBA



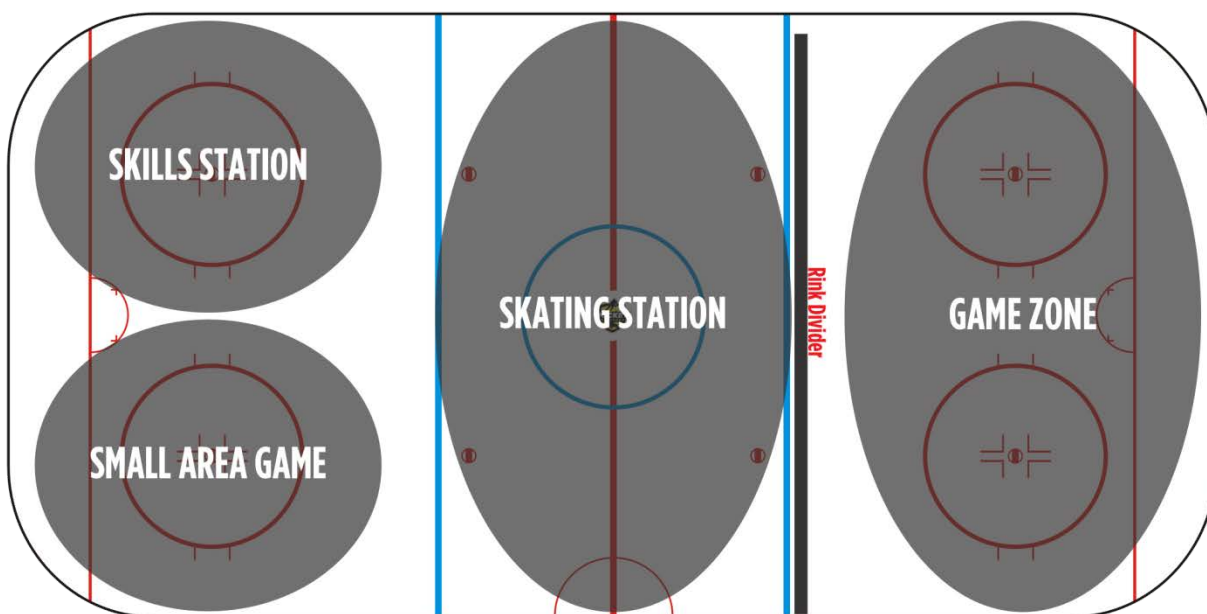
GAME ICE USAGE
INITIATION & NOVICE

HOCKEY MANITOBA



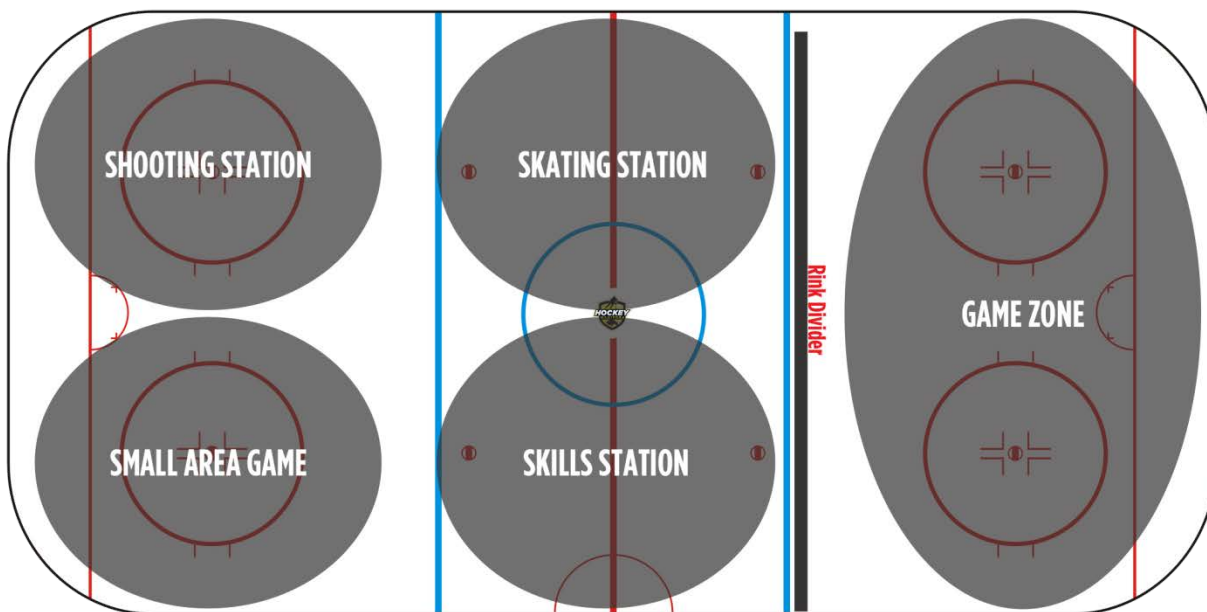
GAME ICE USAGE
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PRACTICE ICE USAGE
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PRACTICE ICE USAGE
INITIATION & NOVICE

Hockey Manitoba has adopted a new structure for the Initiation Program which will be implemented for all players at the 6-and-under age category in all Minor Hockey Associations in Manitoba. This Initiation Program structure has been developed using a combination of Hockey Canada Initiation guidelines and Long Term Player Development principles all designed to reflect Hockey Manitoba's player first approach to development.

Philosophy and Objectives

1. Create a safe and fun environment for players to experience the sport.
2. Incorporate physical literacy, fair play, cooperation and FUN into the sport.
3. Teach basic hockey skills so players can enjoy the sport.

An Initiation Program's success will be measured by the levels of enjoyment and development achieved by the players. To optimize those goals it is necessary to have a dedicated team of adults who will play a large role as effective leaders and teachers who create a safe, fun, learning, challenging and motivating environment for the player.

Hockey Manitoba Initiation Program Guidelines	
Category Name	All hockey open to players 6 years of age and younger will be classified as Initiation.
Playing Surface	All ice sessions (practices and games) are to be played on cross ice playing surfaces. For practices station work is strongly encouraged.
Surface Dividers	It is not <u>mandatory</u> , but recommended to divide the ice with small boards, or other rink dividers . Note: A few cones, coaches, or other objects are sufficient to divide the surface.
Puck	Recommend the blue 4 oz. puck to be used primarily and other implements such as tennis balls, soccer balls, rubber chickens etc.
Modified Game Rules	No off-sides or icing will need to be called. Ideally 4-on-4 game play with mix of 5-on-5, 3-on-3.
Game Operations	No timekeepers, scorekeepers or goal judges are needed.
Officials	The use of officials is optional as it is recommended the coaches be on ice for all sessions.
Goalies	Goalies are not to be used, therefore equipment is required. No specific positions are learned at this level.
Curriculum	Hockey Canada Initiation Skill Development Manual
Coach Support	Recommended to identify a Coach Mentor and support system for coaches.

Local Minor Hockey Associations - The Key to Success

There is nothing "realistic" about young children playing on a full ice surface, the most ideal representation of "real" hockey for young players is playing on a cross-ice 1/3 surface regardless if your arena is "large" or "small".

The changes to the Initiation Program have been made in order to ensure that young kids are provided with a fun start to hockey where they develop skills and confidence in a safe environment. Cross-ice hockey sets a stronger base for advanced skills, hockey sense, and competitiveness. Local Minor Hockey Associations must be committed to the Initiation Program and prepared to support it within their community. That commitment should come in the form of a plan for the Initiation Program that you can implement within your region creating the new normal for Initiation hockey in the community.

This new structure with cross-ice games and practices is very different from the traditional program with utilized "standard games" on a full ice surface. As a result you will undoubtedly face criticism and opposition to these changes from those who are proponents of a more "traditional" to hockey. It is important to remind those that are opposed to this new program that this plan has been designed using subject matter that was developed by people with extensive background in young athlete development. With that in mind it only makes sense that the program would be different than other programs designed for older players or adults. At the end of the day an effective Initiation Program should be designed based on the best interest of the players and their development as athletes in an overall sense.

Support for the Initiation Program should come in a variety of different ways, however for a Minor Hockey Association it is important that we look to do the following in our communities:

- Identify and recruit volunteers to help manage and run the program. *(Ideally there should be 1 volunteer for every 5 participants)*
- Appoint an experienced administrator to oversee the program and hold informational/update sessions within the community.
- Provide additional training and support for coaches beyond the required coach certification. *(This can be done using the clinics and support through the National Coach Mentorship Program)*
- Identify an experienced individual or committee to act as mentor(s) in the program to assist with additional training.
- Develop a plan to sell this program to parents and get them on your side. *(This can be done using information sessions, newsletters, player surveys...assistance can be provided by Hockey Manitoba.)*

Recruiting Volunteers

Coaches and other volunteers in the Initiation Program must be positive, energetic, creative, fun-loving and patient. While it is an asset, it is not necessary that potential coaches and volunteers have extensive hockey experience. What is necessary is that they are passionate about what they are doing and are eager to learn and provide a great experience for the players.

As an association you may need to get creative in order to find enough/the right coaches for the Initiation Program. IP can be a great way to groom a player that is passionate about becoming a coach when their playing days are over so don't overlook your male and female midget programs. As long as the interested coach is 16-year old they are eligible to become a certified Initiation Program coach.

The basic framework for the Initiation Program volunteer structure should be as follows: Program Administrator, Head Instructor(head coach), Support Instructors (asst. coaches) and coach mentor. While it is always easier in IP to have as many instructors on the ice as possible it is important to remember that when it comes to be on the ice and on the bench there is no such thing as "just helping out." If someone wants to help out on the bench or on the ice they are considered a coach and therefore must complete the required coach training.

Program Administrator

The program administrator in your association will be one of the most vital people in the execution and success of your Initiation Program. This person is directly responsible for the planning, organizing and execution of your Initiation Program as they will be the direct contact between the association and its IP coaches. In many associations this person might already be designated as your IP Convenor or Program Lead.

The qualifications that are expected from the Program Administrator are listed below:

- Understand the fundamental elements of the Initiation Program.
- Possess a commitment to the established goals of the Program.
- Possess strong organizational, interpersonal and communications skills.
- Have the ability to conduct group presentations.
- Have the ability to liaise with board members, volunteers, instructors and parents
- Has demonstrated adequate ability to commit the required time to the delivery of the Initiation Program.

On-Ice Instructors

On-ice instructors are typically drawn out of the parent group and will have varying degrees of knowledge and experience teaching hockey skills. Instructors may also include volunteers from the community including students and former players from the association. As long as the prospective instructors are at least 16-year of age and have a passion for what they will be doing we should look to bring as many people in as possible to build a strong and reliable group of instructors.

Qualification for a typical recruitment advertisement should be the following:

- Possess a coaching and or hockey background OR a strong desire to learn instructional techniques for teaching fundamental hockey skills.
- Possess an enthusiastic and positive attitude and a desire to work with beginning players
- Strong communications skills
- Possess a commitment to the goals and philosophies of the Initiation Program

NCCP Training for Initiation Instructors



In order to become properly trained through the required NCCP courses all on-ice personnel must complete the following steps:

- 1. Register for and complete the HU - Online Coach 1/2 course through the eHockey registration site.**
- 2. Complete the online Respect in Sport course for coaches and officials**
- 3. Once step 1 and 2 have been completed coaches can sign up for and attend a Coach 2 - Coach Level in person clinic where they will receive their Coach 1 - Intro to Coach qualification as well as their Coach 2 - Coach Level qualification.**

Once a course instructor has completed all of these steps they will be fully Trained to be an on-ice instructor for the Initiation Program.

All teams must also have a certified Hockey Canada Safety Person on the roster. The safety course can be completed by registering for HU - Online Safety on the eHockey registration site.

Seasonal Structure

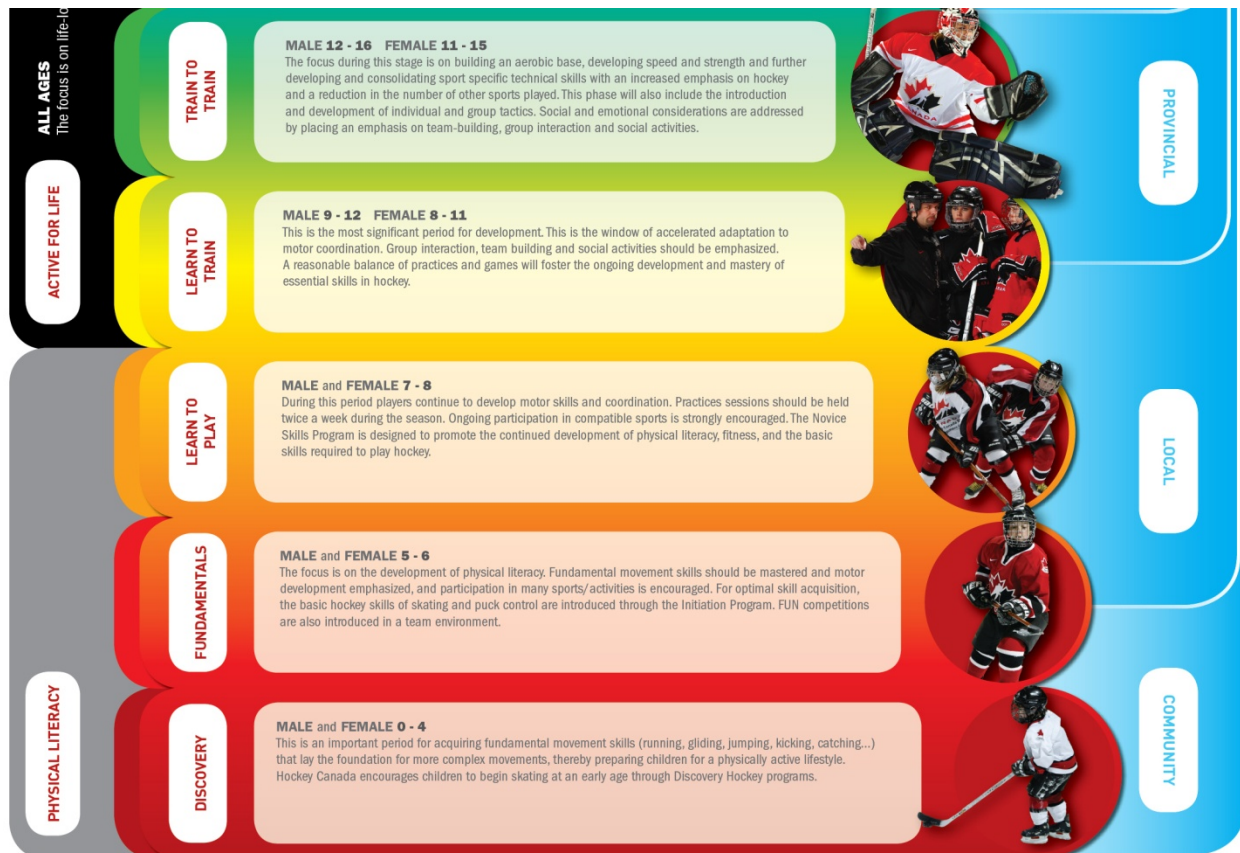
The Initiation Program curriculum is designed to introduce and teach the fundamental skills of hockey to beginning players through a slow progression. To ensure that this curriculum is successful it is important to build that curriculum into a seasonal plan. Seasonal plans may vary depending on the number of players in each association.

A proposed Initiation Seasonal Structure would look like the following:

Number of Practices	Start Date Practices	Developmental Season	Start Date Games	Regular Season	Tournaments /Festivals
35-40	late-Sept/ October	20 practices	December	20 practices 10 game sessions	2-3

Ensure players at Initiation, Novice, Atom and Pee wee levels play a variety of different sports and other physical activities throughout the year especially during the off-season (spring & summer).

[CLICK HERE FOR HOCKEY CANADA LONG-TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT GRAPHIC](#)



Grouping of Players - Program Design and Team Design

In areas with more than 20 players we must begin to organize our Initiation Programs in terms of a group setting rather than traditional rostering of specific teams with individual schedules and coaching staff.

Group/Program Design - this model is based on teaching your Initiation Program group as one large group rather than individual teams. This means that **all** on-ice instructors are responsible for the instruction of each player on the ice rather than a select number of players on their "team". Instructors may be responsible for station work in their particular area of expertise, but during the session instructors would instruct **all** players as they come through their station regardless of what "team" they may be assigned to for game-days. This model maximizes coaching staff resources and ice time/costs.

Modified Games would take place with players grouped onto "teams", these teams would constantly change perhaps on a weekly or monthly basis. Factor in dressing room space with this format - meaning to ensure to have you players arrive ready in equipment so that dressing room space is essentially not required to simply put on skates & helmets.

Generally associations will group players of a similar skill level together in the same ice section(s) but may also have players of all varying skill levels together if needed. This decision would be based on the number of IP players in an association. Groups should be updated constantly so that there is no perception of tiering or favouritism amongst your program.

Traditional Team Design - this model, which is more commonly used, is based on dividing all of the players in your association into teams who are assigned to specific instructors as their coaches for the season. Those coaches are responsible for teaching the entire IP curriculum to their specific team for the duration of the season. Associations will have multiple teams on the ice at one time, however players will always be instructed by the same instructors.

Balanced Teams - Games

When more than one team is made in an association those teams should be balanced and play against each other throughout the season to favour fair competition between teams in the same area. It is the responsibility of the association(s) involved to rebalance the teams to rebalance the teams when a significant difference appears between teams, including during an ice session if needed.

Examples of Ways to Modify Games

Modify the Ice Surface:

- Play 1/3 ice (divided at the two blue lines)
- See attached "Game Ice Usage" graphic

Modify the Equipment:

- Use pylons for goals
- Use smaller nets (it's OK if they move around when bumped into, just simply move back into place as play continues)
- Devise boards and benches to be used while dividing the ice, can also several chairs or small benches at rink entrance gates to add additional "Bench" space
- Use target, artificial goalies or empty net (no goalies)
- Use blue 4oz pucks primarily (also sporadic use of tennis balls, soccer ball/no sticks, multiple pucks simultaneously, etc)

Modify Players Playing the Game:

- Match skill strength of opposing players, ideally 4-on-4
- Change numerical advantages (i.e. 5 players vs. 4 players)
- Change numbers playing (i.e. 5-on-5, 3-on-3, etc)

Modify Basic Rules:

- No statistics
- Numerical strength may not be even
- No penalties
- Use buzzer system for line changes
- Player changes "on the fly" (no faceoffs)
- Can have players must make a certain number of passes
- Can have players may only score a limited number of goals

Emphasize Skill

- Can have players only pass on the backhand
- All players rotate all positions
- Goals only scored on shots outside a certain radius

Emphasize Fun

- Positive and lively encouragement from coaches & parents
- Small game production on game days with music, announcers, Oh Canada, etc