

INTRO TO HOCKEY MODEL

[FAQ]

A guide for the introduction and implementation of the Intro to Hockey Model for U7 and U9 Hockey in Alberta.

Updated September 2024



FAQ

01

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF PRACTICING IN SMALL AREAS AND PLAYING HALF-ICE GAMES?

Small spaces equate to being more engaged in the play and activity for young players. Through small area station-based practices and half ice games, players are closer to the play and have much more opportunity to be engaged in the game. Regardless of the skill level or the ability of each player, opportunities to be engaged in the play double when the playing area is smaller. NHL Analytics research illustrated that all skill areas of the game improved substantially when players played in small spaces more suited to their age and skill level.

02

HOW WILL PLAYER DEVELOPMENT BE AFFECTED IF THERE ARE NO OFFSIDES OR ICINGS CALLED?

The game play model is a 4 vs 4 model on half ice. Learning offside and icing will come in time, but the primary focus of age-appropriate training and programming needs to be on skill development in the areas of skating, puck control, pass receiving and shooting. Concepts like offside, icing, positional play and face-offs (which are mental skills) can be introduced when players move to the full ice game play model in the transition to U11 hockey.

03

SHOULD PLAYERS AND/OR TEAMS BE TIERED?

Grouping of players of like ability can be a very important principle for setting up young players for success and enjoyment. The focus of the Intro to Hockey model is player development. It is important in both station-based practices and in half-ice game play that players be grouped by similar ability levels when possible or necessary. It is recommended that prior to the start of the half-ice game(s) coaches of opposing teams may wish to discuss possible line combinations to ensure that the skill level of the players on the ice is similar which will allow more puck touches and fun for all the players participating.

04

WHAT GUIDELINES SHOULD BE FOLLOWED WHEN STORING AND SETTING UP EQUIPMENT AT COMMUNITY ARENAS?

Each facility in Alberta is unique and will have its own Standard Operating Procedures when it comes to the storage, the set-up, and the take down of the portable board system or the foam divider system. In many cases, municipalities have developed these procedures to apply to all arenas within their jurisdiction.

It will be important to work with the facility's management to ensure that proper protocols are being followed. This will maximize efficiency, ensure safe practices for all, and promote a harmonious relationship between the arena staff and members of the local minor hockey association.

Hockey Canada's liability insurance covers all involved if they are performing a function for the Minor Hockey Association. This includes coaches and parents who may be setting up and taking down the board system. Hockey Alberta recommends these individuals wear helmets and skates when doing so. Associations should hold a training session for coaches and parents to educate for safety and efficiencies in setting up, moving for floods and taking down the boards.

05

WHERE CAN PORTABLE BOARDS OR FOAM BARRIERS BE PURCHASED?

There are numerous suppliers for portable boards, foam barriers, and small nets. It is advisable to check local sources to ensure best pricing on the shipping of product. On a national level, two suppliers handle large volume orders for these products.

OmniSport Inc
14 Boulder Blvd.
Stony Plain, AB T7Z 1V7
Phone: 780-968-2344
<http://www.omnisport.ca>

Athletica Sport Systems Inc.
554 Parkside Drive
Waterloo, ON N2L 5Z4
Phone: 1-877-778-5911
<http://athletica.com>



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