

INITIATION PROGRAM





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ALLIANCE Hockey Initiation Program Contact: Tyler Tolton, ttolton@alliancehockey.com, 519-273-7209 x6



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Hockey Canada Initiation Program

During the 2016-17 season, Hockey Canada implemented the following National policy:

'To accept the recommendation that the Initiation age group shall only use cross-ice, or half ice for all game play effective the 2017-18 season. Full ice games shall not be permitted.'

Motion Unanimously Carried

(January, 2017 – Hockey Canada Board of Directors)

The policy (above) is directed specifically at the Initiation age level (5 & 6 year-olds).

While the mandated policy is new, half-ice/cross-ice hockey has been part of the Initiation Program since it was first developed more than 35 years ago. The purpose of the IP is to introduce the basic skills of the game, and make a child's first introduction to the game one that is safe, positive, and fun.

There are NO exceptions to this mandate regarding games and practices at the Initiation level, which also includes exhibition and tournament play.



Why Cross-Ice Hockey?

Cross-ice hockey is a major part of age-appropriate development for Initiation players. Using a modified ice surface in Initiation programming allows young players the opportunity for more puck battles, puck touches which promotes greater chance for skill development (puck-handling, shooting, coordination) and decision making. These benefits are important in the long-term development of an individual player.

Cross-ice hockey is based on a model of practicing and playing hockey across 85-foot width of ice as compared to the full length of 200-foot ice. *"We would never put a five or six-year-old on a full-size soccer pitch, or expect them to play basketball with any adjustments made for their size. Hockey is no different"* Paul Carson, Vice president of Development, Hockey Canada.

The cross-ice modified ice surface has been used in many leading hockey nations around the world for a number of years and has stood the test of time. It has been tested and proven that a child who begins their hockey training in a modified environment have a greater hockey experience. Many parents may ask the questions why should my child play cross-ice? What are the benefits? Others may believe that they want their child to experience 'Real Hockey' like the NHL on full 200-foot ice.

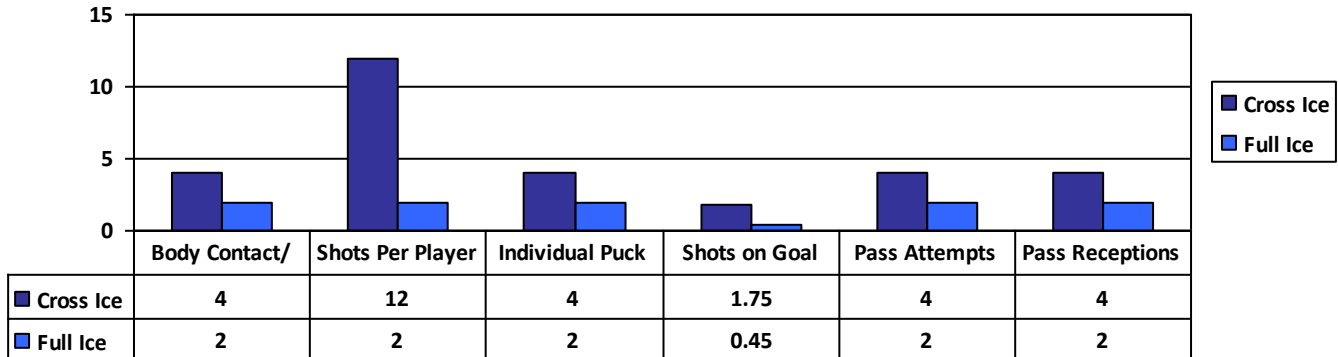
If we were to answer these questions, let's think about a child trying to skate with a puck while doing a drill the entire 200 feet from one end to the other. How long will this take? How much energy will



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this require? Will the player's decision making skills be enhanced more in the smaller modified ice surface or in the full ice surface? What situation will your child be more actively involved in?

Cross-Ice vs. Full Ice



General Organization of Cross-Ice hockey:

- More efficient use of ice time and space
- The size of the rink is in proportion to size of the player
- The smaller nets are in proportion with the size of the player
- The Neutral Zone is available for other purposes (Player's bench, skill development area, warm-up etc.) while games are playing in the end zones.
- Recommended that teams play with two or three units of four or five players and one goalkeeper which results in each player having more ice time.
- The use of Blue 4oz. pucks.
- More ice time for practice and playing is made available to teams within a MHA. Teams can practice and play by sharing the ice surface.

Resource Videos:

- Hockey Canada <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKttt-8c7Xo> (Mandate Video)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXzqYPW17No&t=4s> (In depth of IP)
- OHF – (Importance of IP) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5dy9byC74M&feature=youtu.be>
- USA U8 Analytics https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CB_Ygapyl7c
- From a Childs View <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXhxNg59pWg&t=3s>

Click [here](#) for more Hockey Canada information on cross-ice hockey.



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ALLIANCE Hockey Initiation Program Commitment

ALLIANCE Hockey will support all Initiation Programs by providing great resources and tools, IP Mentor Coaches, Coach 1-Intro to Coach Clinics and assist to promote the overall benefits of cross-ice hockey.

ALLIANCE Hockey IP Working Group

ALLIANCE Hockey formed an IP Working Group in the 2016-17 season to further establish Initiation Programming Standards to compliment the implementation of the Hockey Canada cross-ice mandate. The Working Group was comprised of Association Members who currently coordinate the local Initiation Programs.

The Working Group Standards – updated for 2017-18 season:

- Use of small/modified nets
- Use of blue 4 oz. pucks
- Implementation of Coaching requirements – outlined below





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Initiation Program - Frequently Asked Questions

The following Frequently Asked Questions were also addressed by the ALLIANCE Hockey Working Group, with answers indicated below.

Q. Is this just a money-grab that allows MHAs to put more kids on the ice at the same time? Will IP registration costs be lowered now that more teams can be on the ice at the same time, reducing ice time costs?

A. No –

- Half-ice/cross-ice hockey at the Initiation age is not new – it has always been part of the program, which was built more than 35 years ago.
- This isn't about revenue – it's about delivering age-appropriate programming and skill development.
- One of the benefits of half-ice/cross-ice hockey is that it will allow MHAs who have not been delivering half-ice/cross-ice hockey at the Initiation level to make more effective use of their ice time and availability in a safe manner.

Q. How do we register players on the Hockey Canada Registry?

A.

- NOTE: You can complete your Association's Initiation Program registration as you always have.
- If you assemble a **Team** for participation in a Tournament, Festival, Jamboree, exhibition game, etc. outside of your normal Initiation Programming, the team shall:
 - be on an official ALLIANCE Hockey roster
 - require 1 Trained Coach (see pg. 7 for Coach Requirements)
 - require 1 certified [Trainer](#)
 - require a completed Travel Permit

Q. Can a 3-year old participate in Initiation Programming?

A. No –

- We do not encourage the participation of 3-year olds in Initiation Programming. We recommend that you refer 3-year olds to a local Skate Canada program or Parents & Tots program. If a 3-year old were to join an Initiation Program they would be in the same programming as 4 and 5 year olds which often results in burnout and dis-interest by their 2nd and 3rd year.

Q. Can 6-year olds move up and play full-ice hockey with 7-year olds?

A. No –

- Rationale –It is a disservice to the 6-year old player to place them on full-ice with 7-year olds. Cross-ice/half-ice hockey ensures that kids are learning the basic skills in an age-appropriate manner. It allows young players the opportunity for more puck-touches, which promotes greater opportunity for skill development (puck-handling, shooting,



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skating, coordination) and decision-making. When appropriately utilizing cross-ice hockey, the traditional 'superstar' scenario is avoided.

- *If a MHA deems a 6-year old to be of exceptional status, the 6-year old may move up to play with the 7-year olds only when the 7-year old program utilizes cross-ice/half-ice.

Q. May a 7-year old participate in an IP Program (of 6-year olds) and still participate in a cross-ice/half-ice tournament with 7-year olds?

A. Yes –

- The MHA may determine this on an individual basis considering what is best for the player.

Q. Do we require a full-time goalie?

A. Changes you can expect –

- You do not need to have a full-time goalie at the 4-5 age levels. It is encouraged that they don't even put Goalie Equipment on. Goalie Stick, Glove and Blocker are enough for the 4-5 age levels and you can rotate through goalies more than once during an ice session.
- At the 6-year age level it is recommended that the use of full goalie equipment be introduced and that the equipment is rotated from player-to-player.

Q. What is the recommended Participant/Instructor ratio?

A.

- 1 Head Instructor for every 30 participants
- 1 Coach for every 5 participants (1:5 or better)

Q. Can we play full ice later in the season?

A. No -

- The Hockey Canada mandate refers to an entire season and there are no exceptions. The focus at this age group is upon safety, fun and a positive experience.

Q. What are the options if we don't have bumpers/ice dividers?

A.

- Use a Fire Hose...Be CREATIVE!
- Have coaches on skates along blue lines chipping pucks back into play

Q. Can Associations host IP Tournaments/Festivals? (Also see pg. 7)

A.

- IP tournament games must be played using the cross-ice/half-ice format. When applying for a tournament sanction you **MUST** indicate the format you are using.



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Initiation Program - Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Games

Q. With cross-ice/half-ice games, how many players are on the ice per team?

A.

- This is up to the MHA, but staying at 5-on-5 or 4-on-4 with a goaltender is recommend.

Q. Do we require referees for games and tournaments?

A.

- This is a MHA decision. Referees are not required for games, but it is a good opportunity for young Officials (and players) to learn some basic officiating in a positive and fun atmosphere.

Q. When are face-offs used during a cross-ice game?

A.

- This is a MHA decision. Face-offs may be conducted in the middle of the modified ice surface at the start of each game, and may also occur at the start of each timed shift.

Q. What about off-sides and icings?

A.

- With cross-ice and half-ice hockey there are no off-sides or icings, just let the kids play and have fun! The players will have ample time to learn these rulings at a later stage.

Q. What should an Initiation Program game structure look like?

- **Should there be periods? If so, how long? What should the length of the game be?**
 - Incorporate the game into your ice slot. If there is a one-hour time slot, play two 25-minute periods with a short warm up.
- **Should the score be kept? Should scoresheets be completed?**
 - Don't keep score, there is no need to do so!
 - If you are hosting a tournament, game sheets should be used (for insurance purposes) but please do not concentrate on the score!
 - The IP age division is about fun and skill development, not who wins a game!

ALLIANCE Hockey Initiation Program

Contact: Tyler Tolton,
ttolton@alliancehockey.com,
519-273-7209 x6





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Requirements for IP Coaches/Instructors

During the 2016-17 season, Hockey Canada implemented the following National policy:

"For the 2017-18 season, it is recommended that all IP Coaches/Instructors be Coach 1-Intro to Coach trained; 2018-19 Mandatory."

To be consistent and compliant with the Hockey Canada national policy, ALLIANCE Hockey has implemented the following requirements for all **IP Coaches/Instructors**, effective the 2017-18 season:

IP Coaches/Instructors Training Requirements:

- [Coach 1-Intro to Coach](#) (4 hours in-class, 1.5 hours on-ice, no expiry)
- [Gender Identity Training](#) (online training module, no expiry)
- [Respect in Sport \(Activity Leader\)](#) (online training module, no expiry)

Hosting Cross-Ice Tournaments

ALLIANCE Hockey is compliant with Hockey Canada by mandating that all tournament games will be played either using Cross-Ice or Half-Ice formats. Associations applying for a tournament sanction, shall be required to indicate which format they will be using. Other tournament requirements include:

- Tournament rules must meet ALLIANCE Hockey IP mandates and standards
- All teams participating must be sanctioned by ALLIANCE Hockey
- For 50-minute ice allotment, games shall consist of two, twenty (20) minute run-time periods
- For 1-hour ice allotment, games shall consist of two, twenty-five (25) minute run-time periods
- Minimum of one Coach on the ice, two Coaches are encouraged
- No time-outs
- No overtime
- Referees are not required but may be used (MHA decision)
- See Sample 8-Team →



Time	Teams	Rink	Pool
9:00AM-9:50AM	Team 1 vs Team 2	1	A
	Team 3 vs Team 4	2	A
10:00AM-10:50AM	Team 5 vs Team 6	1	B
	Team 7 vs Team 8	2	B
11:00AM-11:50AM	Team 1 vs Team 3	1	A
	Team 2 vs Team 4	2	A
12:00PM-12:50PM	Team 5 vs Team 7	1	B
	Team 6 vs Team 8	2	B
1:00PM-1:50PM	Team 1 vs Team 4	1	A
	Team 2 vs Team 3	2	A
2:00PM-2:50PM	Team 5 vs Team 8	1	B
	Team 6 vs Team 7	2	B



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ALLIANCE Hockey IP Roadshows

The ALLIANCE Hockey IP Roadshows are **4-hour** events that consist of an off-ice session with parents and an on-ice session with players designed to showcase the cross-ice format.

Parent Session (45 minutes):

A motivating message that provides a complete overview of the Hockey Canada Initiation Program goals and outcomes.

Ice Session (1.5 hours):

IP participants develop their skills through a variety of skill stations and play cross-Ice games in a fun and positive environment.

4 Groups:

- Group 1 & 2: Skill Development Station (15 minutes)
- Group 3 & 4: Play cross-ice games (15 minutes)
- Groups rotate after 15 minutes
- Each team will participate in two 15-minute games and two 15-minute skill stations

Skill Stations

- Taught by ALLIANCE Hockey Instructors + MHA Instructors
- Plans are from Hockey Canada Development Model
- Age-appropriate equipment i.e. Blue 4oz. pucks, small nets, etc.
- Emphasis is on FUN!

Cross-Ice Game

- Games are 15 minutes
- 5 on 5 or 4 on 4 depending on the amount of players per Group
- NO Face-offs. Pond-hockey style, ensures players are skating as much as possible
- Modified nets and Blue 4 oz. pucks
- No permanent goalies
- No keeping score



Coach 1 – Intro to Coach Clinic

A Coach 1 – Intro to Coach Clinic to train IP Instructors/Coaches may be included when planning your



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Roadshow Event. The Clinic may be coordinated on a weeknight or weekend. *The on-ice portion of the Roadshow would double as the on-ice portion of the Coach 1 – Intro to Coach Clinic. *ALLIANCE Hockey highly recommends that Associations utilize the opportunity to train your Coaches in conjunction with the Roadshow.*

Below are some sample schedule templates that incorporate the Roadshow and Clinic:

Option 1: Parent Session with Coach Clinic on a Weekend

Time	Activity	Location
9:00am – 10:00am	Parent Session	Community Room @ Arena
10:00am – 2:00pm	Coach Clinic (Classroom session)	Classroom / Community Room @ Arena
2:15pm – 3:15pm	On-Ice Session (roughly 40 skaters)	Arena

Option 2: Parent Session on a Weeknight with Coach Clinic & Ice Session on a Weekend

Time	Activity	Location
7:00pm – 8:00pm (M-F)	Parent Session	Community Room
8:30am – 12:30pm (Sat. / Sun.)	Coach Clinic (Classroom session)	Classroom / Community Room @ Arena
1:00pm – 2:00pm (Sat. / Sun.)	On-Ice Session (roughly 40 skaters)	Arena

Option 3: Coach Clinic on a Weeknight with Parent Session & Ice Session on a Weekend

Time	Activity	Location
5:30pm – 9:30pm (M-F)	Coach Clinic (Classroom session)	Classroom / Community Room
9:00am – 10:00am (Sat. / Sun.)	Parent Session	Community Room @ Arena
10:30am – 11:30am (Sat. / Sun.)	On-Ice Session (roughly 40 skaters)	Arena

Note: All times are suggested. ALLIANCE Hockey will be as flexible as possible when coordinating Roadshow Events and Clinics.

[CLICK HERE TO COORDINATE YOUR ALLIANCE HOCKEY ROADSHOW](https://alliancehockey.com/Forms/7755/)

(<https://alliancehockey.com/Forms/7755/>)



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Memo from the OHF

To: Alliance Hockey, GTHL, NOHA, OMHA

From: Phillip McKee - OHF Executive Director

Date: 7/13/2017

Re: Initiation Program Implementation



The Ontario Hockey Federation Board of Directors has been made aware some Minor Hockey Associations (MHAs) have not yet taken the appropriate steps to prepare for the mandatory introduction of cross-ice/half-ice for the Initiation Program (all hockey 6 years and under). This role-out is being mandated by Hockey Canada across all Branches.

The OHF and its Members are happy to act as support for MHAs still working toward the 2017-18 implementation. Please review the information provided on our website and contact either your Member or the OHF with any questions: <http://www.ohf.on.ca/view/ohfmainsite/initiation-program>

The Initiation Program, and cross-ice/half-ice hockey specifically, is designed to introduce players to the game in a fun, safe, and positive way by creating an environment more suited to their physical capabilities at six-years-old and younger. The differences in skill-development opportunities with cross-ice or half-ice hockey are significant: players receive five times more passes and take six times more shots. They're called on to have to make more decisions more quickly, and are overall more engaged in the game.

If a MHA is not compliant with the mandatory introduction of cross-ice/half-ice hockey for Initiation Programs, all Teams from that MHA, regardless of the age group, will be prohibited from participating in tournaments and the MHA will not be provided sanctioning to host tournaments at any age group. This was approved by the OHF Board of Directors, on June 24, 2017.

The OHF and its Members believe this sanction will not be required, as there are many support options out there to help MHAs transition into successful implementation. Additional resources are also available at: <http://www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/Hockey-Programs/Coaching/Initiation>