



# Minor & Major Novice MD 2019-20 Season

Officiating Resource Guide

*Updated: June 2019*



# Introduction

### **“Developing Skills First”**

*The Hockey Canada Under 8 Programming is essential component in developing the hockey skills of all young kids playing the game in Canada. The Hockey Canada Novice Skill Development resource is the official hockey curriculum of Hockey Canada.*

How a player gets their initial taste of hockey is crucial. The first few years of hockey must be a positive experience full of fun and excitement.

The future of hockey lies with today’s youth. Because of this, Hockey Canada has developed age appropriate programming as a way to encourage the growth of foundational skills. Minor hockey associations and coaches lead the implementation of the Initiation and Novice programs with the assistance of volunteers, parents and others associated with hockey. The programming must provide opportunities for a wide range of people to get involved in order to improve the quality of the hockey experience through sound instruction and enjoyable play.

The success of grassroots hockey programming is measured by the level of development young players achieve. To optimize these levels, dedicated adults must play a large role as leaders and teachers who will create a challenging and motivating environment for all young players. The goals and objectives of 8 & under programming are to:

- Teach all basic skills of hockey so players can enjoy the game.
- Assist in development and enhancement of physical literacy and basic motor patterns.
- Develop and encourage the concepts of being a team member through player participation in both on-ice and off-ice activities.
- Encourage aspects of fitness, fair play and cooperation while having fun.

Hockey Canada, Ontario Hockey Federation & Alliance Hockey recommend tiering for 7-year-old hockey programming to meet the mandate set by the Ontario Hockey Federation for the 2018-19 season.

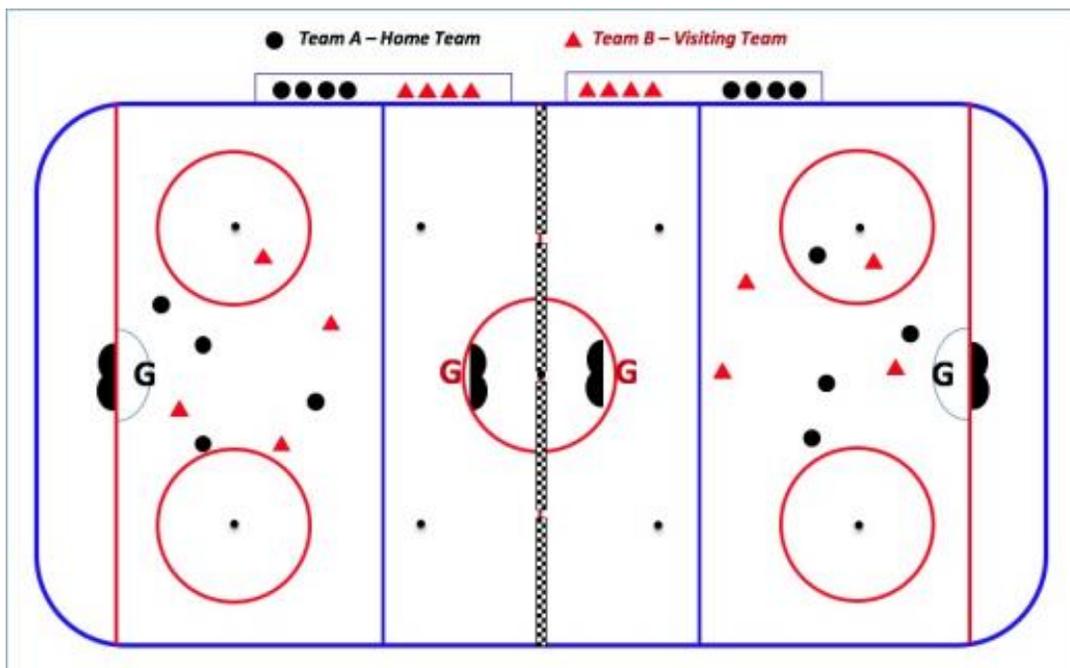
It is recommended that Associations tier their top eighteen 7-year olds and place them onto a team. Those eighteen players would then be divided into skill-based lines; with like-skilled players from each team playing against each other.

***“Learning the basic skills at a young age will set the foundation for everything a player will accomplish in the game of hockey”***  
***Corey McNabb, Director of Hockey Development Programs, Hockey Canada***

## Game Play Guidelines

The game play format is referred to as the Two-Team Game Play Model (Figure 3). This model is based on each Minor Novice team being divided into two units and each unit playing one another on two halves of the ice. Each team is required to dress two goaltenders, one for each half-ice game.

Figure 3: Two Teams – Two Half-Ice Games Model



- In the two teams two half-ice games model, each team will consist of 18 players (16 skaters and two goaltenders) divided into two units of nine players. Each team unit of nine players will have one goaltender and eight skaters. In the case of fewer numbers, there will be allowances for players to double shift to ensure that there are always four players on the ice. **Coaches must make sure all players take turns double shifting.**
- The length of a game is 50 minutes (2 x 22.5-minute halves) plus a 3-minute warm-up.
- It is recommended that on each half of ice, the center spot should be marked to indicate where the face-off will take place. This is to be marked at the mid-point between both nets.
- When play is stopped due to the goaltender freezing the puck or a goal being scored, the referee will signal the attacking players to back off three meters. Once the attackers have backed off, the play may resume as soon as the possession team has control of the puck. In the event the puck goes out of play, the referee will provide a new puck to the non-offending team and the offending team will be required to provide the three-meter cushion.
- There is no center-ice (red) line and therefore, no icing.
- There are no blue-lines in play therefore, no offsides.



- The Home team shall defend the two nets at the ends of the rink, while the visiting team shall defend the center-ice nets.
- When the buzzer sounds to end the first half, the visiting team will switch benches, so players can play on the other half of the ice against the opposing team.
- Teams will share the respective player's benches with each team using the gate closest to the net they are defending.
- The main score clock may be used to keep time for both games simultaneously.
- No score will be recorded.
- Teams will be required to use and complete an official game sheet for each game for roster purposes (not scoring purposes). All game sheets are to be submitted to ALLIANCE Hockey Office as per usual practice.

*Scaling down is important and the research shows that when children are more actively engaged, they touch the puck more often, have the puck on their stick longer, and are interacting with one another to a greater extent.*

*Dr. Stephen Norris, Consultant to Hockey Canada*

## Rules for Half-Ice Game Play

### Playing Rules

- 4 vs 4 format – plus each team with a goaltender
- Each team is required to have two goaltenders, one for each half of the ice
- Three minute warm up
- Rink Set-up:
  - One set of barriers or two sets of barriers with a space in between for spare players
  - May be foam rink dividers or board system
- Net Size:
  - **Minor Novice - Small Nets (3' x 4')** nets are placed on edge of center circle and at both end zones in the normal position
  - **Novice Regulation (4' x 6')** nets are placed on edge of center circle and at both end zones in the normal position
- Puck Size:
  - **Regular size black puck (6 oz)**
- Game Length:
  - Two 22.5-minute halves



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- Shift lengths are 90 seconds in duration with an automatic buzzer or whistle sounding to indicate player change. The clock continues to run throughout the 22.5-minute half.
  - Officials work to keep both games synchronized
  - Players change on the fly
  - If there are fewer than four players on the bench, the active player designated to stay out for the following shift must tag up at the bench prior to continuing play
- Face Offs
    - There will be two face-offs during the game: the first face-off will begin the game and the second face-off will begin the second half.

### Shifts

- Player shifts are recommended to be 90 seconds in length. A buzzer or whistle will sound to signal line changes.
- On the buzzer/whistle, players must relinquish control of the puck immediately and vacate the ice. The new players enter the ice immediately.
- Failure to immediately relinquish control of the puck or new players entering the ice surface prematurely may result in a penalty (see below) for the offending team.

### Change of Possession

- When the goaltender freezes the puck → the official blows the whistle to indicate the attacking team backs off and defending team gets possession.
- When the puck is shot out of play → the offending team backs off and the official gives the non-offending team a new puck.

### Penalties

- Minor penalties are noted by the officials briefly raising their arm to indicate that a penalty will be assessed. At the conclusion of the shift, the official notifies the coach of the infraction and the number of the offending player.
- If the offending team controls the puck after the infraction, the official blows the whistle and calls for a change of possession; the non-offending team is given room to play the puck (three-meter cushion)
- **Should an infraction occur that would normally require a player to be ejected from the game (i.e. game misconduct, match penalty or gross misconduct), the player will be removed for the remainder of that game. Under these circumstances, teams shall not play short-handed and no game incident report is required.**



# **Role of the Official**

**NOTE: SEE GAME PLAY GUIDELINES FOR GAME-SPECIFIC RULES**

Hockey Canada recommends the inclusion of officials at the Novice level. At this level, a one-official system will be employed. While this is not an official Hockey Canada Officiating Program (HCOP) system, this section provides an outline to assist local officiating programs with integrating officials into this developmental stage of the game. The system provides officials with an opportunity to experience several aspects of officiating, while keeping the operating costs at a manageable level for the teams and minor hockey associations.

### **Benefits to Involving Officials in Half-Ice Hockey**

There are numerous benefits for officials when considering the aspects of building foundational skills. This is a valuable opportunity for newer officials to put on their uniform, get on the ice in live action and learn basic aspects of being an official in a less formal and positive atmosphere. Basic skills include dropping pucks, skating skills, foundational positioning, spatial awareness, establishing good sightlines and making decisions such as goals and minor infractions.

This allows officials to apply newly-acquired information they received in their clinic in a game environment. It also provides an excellent opportunity for senior officials to mentor newcomers by shadowing them on the ice or evaluating them from the stands. The ability to mentor officials at ice level in this structure provides instantaneous feedback and assists in preparing these officials for full-ice games in a two- or three-official system.

Having an official for the half-ice games provides players with more structure than cross-ice games at the Initiation level. It also presents a more realistic game environment, while allowing the coaches to keep their focus on the players.

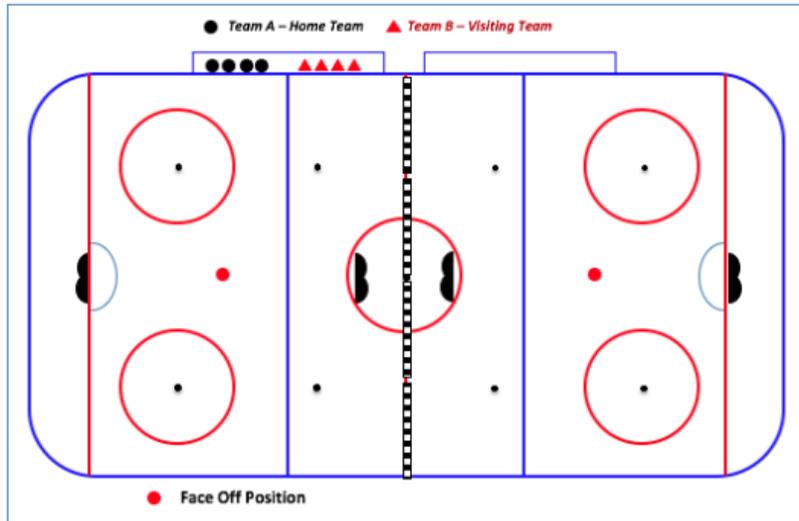
### **Officiating Procedures**

Flexibility is an important component to operating in a one-official system within the Novice structure. There is no absolute way to handle every possible scenario. However, game flow and establishing a basic structure to the game is the primary focus. Officials will NOT be required to call infractions for icing or off-side as the appropriate rink dimensions and markings are not available.

### **Face-Offs**

There will be one face-off location. This will be located approximately halfway between the goals (see Figure 4). Coaches and arena staff may mark the centre face-off location with a temporary marking for game play purposes.

**Figure 4: Location of the Face-Off Dot**

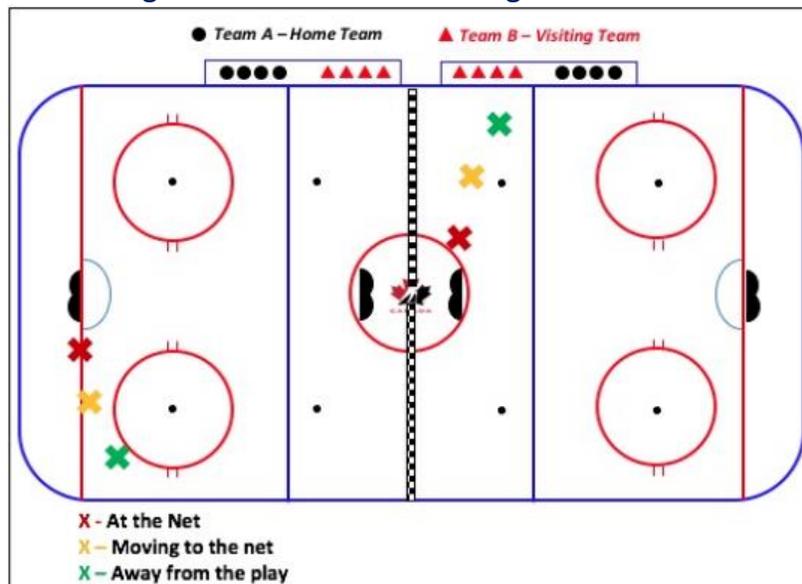


## Positioning

Foundational positioning principles will be used. The concept of the ‘cone’ should be reserved for when full-ice play begins. Under the half-ice structure, approximate positioning should be used to get officials comfortable with their proximity to the goal (see Figure 5). Officials should follow the play approximately 2-3 meters behind the puck carrier. They should remain about one meter from the boards or playing area perimeters. The examples from Figure 5 show guidelines for establishing recommended end-zone positions.

Officials are encouraged to move towards the net on goal situations and away from the play towards the boards as play comes towards them, allowing players to pass by; the official can then follow up the ice at a safe distance.

**Figure 5: End-Zone Positioning of the Official**





### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q: What are the core requirements of the Novice Half-Ice Game Play Model?**

**A:** The Novice Half-Ice Game Play Model was designed to maximize the opportunity to engage all players in the game. The core elements for this model are using running time, changing on the fly, no offside, no icing, no face-offs after goals and penalties are called.

**Q: How will player development be affected if there is no offside or icing called during game play?**

**A:** The Novice Game-Play Model is a 4 vs. 4 model (plus goaltenders) on half-ice. Learning offside and icing will come in time, but the primary focus on age-appropriate training and programming needs to be on skill development in the areas of skating, puck control, passing, receiving and shooting. Concepts like offside, icing, positional play and face-offs can be introduced at a later date when players move to the full-ice game-play model in the transition to Atom hockey.

**Q: Are Novice teams permitted to identify a full-time goaltender?**

**A:** The recommendation in the Novice Game-Play Model is that all players have an opportunity to play goal. All players should rotate through the goaltender position throughout the season. The Hockey Canada Long-Term Player Development Model encourages a wide range of skill development at a young age, and focusing on a single position may limit the opportunity to practice skills in all areas.

**Q: Are Novice half-ice games required to be two 25-minute halves?**

**A:** This is only a recommended timeframe for the game. The game time established for the Novice Game-Play Model is based on a 60-minute ice session. Ice sessions can be shorter or longer. If this is the case, adjust accordingly ensuring there is time for a short warm-up, two halves of play, and a short break between the two halves to make any adjustments that need to take place.

**Q: Is the length of a shift in the Novice Half-Ice Game Play Model limited to 60 seconds?**

**A:** The shift length is only a recommendation. Shifts may be up to 90 seconds or two minutes in length. This is at the discretion of the Member. However, it is important to reference the core requirements of the game to ensure the spirit of the game is maintained.

**Q: Are smaller nets required for the Novice Half-Ice Game format?**

**A:** There is no requirement to use smaller nets for Novice games. With goaltenders in full equipment in net, regular nets (4x6) are a suitable option. However, small nets (3x4) are also acceptable.



**Q: Is there a need to draw the crease in for the net situated in the neutral zone?**

**A:** There is no need to draw a crease for the neutral zone net(s). Each net should be placed just inside the centre circle which will provide a small marking to aid the goaltending in positioning themselves in front of the net. If there is no circle, a crease may be drawn on the ice.

**Q: What are the dimensions of a half-ice hockey game?**

**A:** The average dimensions of a regular ice surface in Canada is 200 feet by 85 feet. The half-ice playing surface can be a maximum of 100 feet by 85 feet if the dividers are placed at the centre-ice line. In a study conducted by Hockey Alberta, the half-ice playing surface illustrated the same stride distance for a child as relative to the full sheet of ice for an adult.

**Q: Is it a requirement to use a blue puck instead of a black puck and what are the advantages?**

**A:** It is NOT a requirement to use a Blue Puck for Novice hockey. The regulation black puck weighs six ounces, while the blue puck weighs four ounces. Scaling down all aspects of practice and game play for players eight and under is very beneficial. The blue puck is an appropriate weight in relation to the height and weight of these young players. Use of the blue puck can promote proper mechanics in shooting, passing and carrying the puck.

**Q: Do the officials need to be fully registered?**

**A:** This is at the discretion of the Member. It must be noted that the Novice Game-Play Model provides an excellent opportunity to introduce officials to the game.

**Q: Do the officials have to wear the full officiating uniform?**

**A:** If the Member elects to have officials work the Novice Game-Play Model, all officials on the ice need to wear the minimum of an officiating jersey with branch crest, black pants and a black CSA-approved helmet with a CSA-approved half visor.

**Q: How does the official or coach keep game flow and not lose time on shifts when a puck goes out of play?**

**A:** Officials are encouraged to keep additional pucks in their pocket in the event a puck is shot out of play. The official will simply provide a new puck to the non-offending team and play will resume.

**Hockey Canada Novice Half-Ice Games Video:**

<https://hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/hockey-programs/coaching/novice>