Novice and Below Programming 2018/19 Season

**Frequently Ask Questions:**

* **How will player development be affected if there are no off-sides or icings called during game play?**

Learning off-sides and icings 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, pass, 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.

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

The recommendation is that all players have an opportunity to play goal. All players should rotate through the goalie position throughout the season. The Hockey Canada Long Term Player Development philosophy encourages a wide range of skill development at a young age and focusing on a single position may limit a child’s opportunity to practice skills in all areas.

* **Are games required to be two 22-minute halves?**

This is only a recommended timeframe for the game. The game time established for the Cross-Ice or Half-Ice game model is based on a 50-minute ice session. Ice sessions can be either shorter or longer than a 60 minutes allocation. 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.

* **Is the length of a shift limited to 60 seconds?**

The shift length is only a recommendation. Shifts may be 90 seconds or 2 minutes in length. This is at the discretion of the Minor Hockey Association. However, it is important to reference the core requirements of the game to ensure the spirit of the game is maintained.

* **Are Novice teams permitted to play full ice games?**

For 2018-19 all Novice programming will be Full-Ice. Effective 2019-20 Minor Hockey Association may choose to play the entire season of Novice hockey with the half-ice game play model. The Hockey Canada policy permits the transition to full ice game play after January 15th for second year Novice hockey players. Please reference the Novice Seasonal Structure for information on the number of games permitted after January 15th.

* **What is the difference between a Jamboree and a Tournament?**

A jamboree is designed to engage players in a fun environment and is the coming together of several players who are then placed into teams. Games may or may not be competitive and the emphasis is on fun and fair play. A tournament is defined as a schedule of games played among three (3) or more teams, which follows an inter-locking schedule and leads to an eventual winner.

* **Are smaller nets required for the Cross-Ice/Half-Ice Game format?**

There is no requirement to use smaller nets, both are acceptable in Cross-Ice/Half-Ice.

* **Is there a need to draw the crease in for the net Cross-Ice/Half-Ice?**

For Half-Ice 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. For Cross-Ice, it is not required but can be marked if desired.

* **What are the advantages of practicing in small areas and playing half-ice games?**

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

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

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’ by 85’ if the divides are placed at the centre red 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.

* **Is it a requirement to use a Blue Puck?**

Blue Pucks are mandatory for Initiation and Tyke. Scaling down all aspects of practice and game play for players 8 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.