

# U9

## Canadian Player Pathway





# What is the Canadian Player Pathway?

The Canadian Player Pathway is supported by the Hockey Canada Long-Term Player Development Model. This framework provides the guiding principles for age-appropriate and skill-specific programming for all players in Hockey Canada’s minor hockey system. By utilizing LTPD principles, Hockey Canada membership offers systems and structures that are more consistent and ensures continuity as players move through the system from one age level to the next.

Player development is at the core of the Canadian Player Pathway, with a focus on skill development so each player will experience success in both practice and game settings.

# About the U9 Player Pathway

Programming should be delivered through a progressive learn-to-play teaching curriculum that spans the seven- and eight-year-old age group. Children learn best through participating in practice drills and sessions, as well as informal and modified games such as shinny, freeze tag and obstacle courses.

The program consists of four levels of instruction, designed specifically for young hockey players. Each level consists of a series of practice plans (lesson plans) that follow a defined path of progressions. The skills of skating, puck control, passing and shooting are introduced and refined in a one-step-at-a-time manner.

## HOCKEY CANADA Long-Term Player Development Model

1. Discovery Hockey Skills  
0-4 YEAR OLDS | COMMUNITY
2. FUNdamental Hockey Skills 1  
MALE & FEMALE 5-6 | COMMUNITY/LOCAL
3. FUNdamental Hockey Skills 2  
MALE & FEMALE 7-8 | LOCAL
4. Learn to Play  
MALE 9-10 & FEMALE 8-9 | LOCAL
5. Learn to Train  
MALE 11-12 & FEMALE 10-11 | LOCAL/PROVINCIAL
6. Train to Train  
MALE 12-16 & FEMALE 11-15 | PROVINCIAL
7. Train to Compete  
MALE 16-17 & FEMALE 16-18 | NATIONAL
8. Train to Win  
MALE 18-20 & FEMALE 18-22 | INTERNATIONAL
9. Excel  
MALE 21+ & FEMALE 22+ | INTERNATIONAL



# U9 Program Goals

1.  
Have Fun,  
Get Active

2.  
Learn  
Fundamental  
Hockey Skills

3.  
Develop  
& Refine  
Basic Motor  
Patterns

4.  
Practice,  
Cooperation  
& Fair Play

“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, Hockey Development  
Hockey Canada





# What does the game look like at U9?

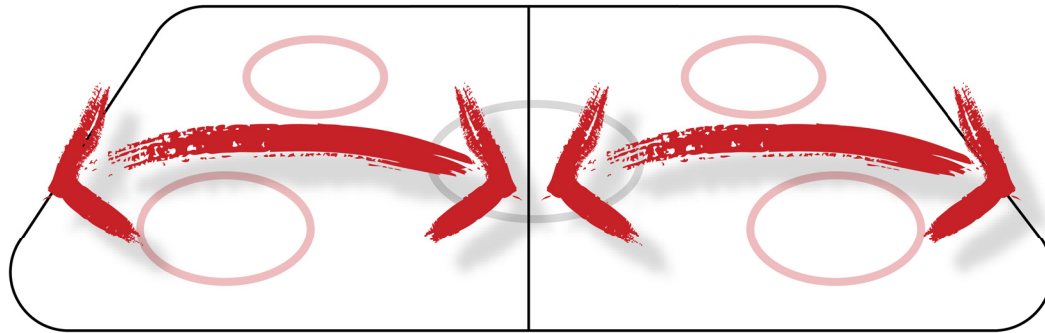
Half-ice (4-on-4)  
*Full-ice games permitted January 15 or later if Member allows*

Continuous play

No offside/  
no icing

Timed buzzer  
or whistle for  
line changes

Players  
change on  
the fly



No score or standings kept

Goaltenders wear full  
goaltending equipment

# What does the season look like at U9?



## Preparation Phase

Introduction to skill development in a fun environment prior to evaluation/selection



## Evaluation/Selection Phase

Teams are formed to participate in season activities



## Development Phase

Continuous skill development through practice, lessons, modified/fun games



## Regular Season Phase

Practices, half-ice games, tournaments/festivals



## End-of-Season Phase

Continued engagement in a fun environment; no playoffs in U9 hockey



## Off-Season Phase

Transition to other sports



# What U9 policies will benefit my child's experience?

## Player Evaluation/Selection

- No player evaluation/selection during the off-season phase (March through August).
- No player evaluation/selection prior to the first week of school, or during the first week if it starts the week after Labour Day.
- Where school starts prior to Labour Day, there must be four skates/practices starting the week following Labour Day before player evaluation/selections commences.
- Must offer a minimum of four practices/skill sessions prior to evaluation/selection.
- Must have a minimum of three evaluation/selection sessions.

## Development Phase

- Must be a period of development time following player evaluation/selection.

## Fair and Equal Ice Time

- Fair and equal ice time is designed to ensure that all players get the same opportunity to contribute to the outcome of games, regardless of skill or ability. A coach's responsibility is to develop all players to contribute. Shortening of the bench in an attempt to win games is not permitted. All players and goaltenders should receive fair and as close to equal as possible ice time.

### Positional rotation:

- All players play all positions – no full-time goaltenders (goaltenders wear full goaltending equipment in games)

## Playoffs

- There are no playoffs in U9 hockey.



CANADIAN PLAYER PATHWAY | U9 HOCKEY



**make  
hockey  
more**

