



HOCKEY CANADA

CANADIAN PLAYER PATHWAY

U11 (Atom) Player Pathway Policy

2020-2021 Season

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Section 1:

Introduction to U11 Hockey





Introduction

The U11 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 youth hockey system. By utilizing LTPD principles, Hockey Canada membership offers systems and structures that are more consistent and ensuring continuity as players move through the system from one age level to the next.

Player development is at the core of the U11 Player Pathway, with a focus on skill development so that each player will experience success in both practice and game settings. When viewed from the perspective of how kids learn, the number of repetitions of specific skills and situations that occur in practice versus a game, we quickly learned where players have a chance to develop the most: practice.

About the U11 Player Pathway

The U11 Player Pathway is a continuation of a skill development curriculum that is age appropriate and skill specific for players in this age group. This pathway is an important component in the transition from U9 hockey and serves as a bridge into U11 hockey. The U11 Player Pathway consists of four phases of instruction, designed for players graduating from U9 hockey and for entry level hockey players who may start playing hockey at this age level. The curriculum introduces, develops and refines the skills of skating, passing, puck control and shooting in a progressive step-by-step manner.

This is to be viewed as a continuous opportunity for young players to develop and refine fundamental movement skills (skating, turning, acceleration), manipulation skills (shooting, puck control, passing) and overall motor skills (balance, coordination, agility) in a fun and safe environment, promoting skill development through self-confidence. The main goal of the U11 Player Pathway is to continue to have fun while developing skills. When players continue on a positive note, they enjoy the game and will go on to have fun playing hockey for many years.

The U11 Player Pathway provides an environment that helps all girls and boys playing hockey at the U11 age level (9 and 10 years old) to realize their full potential. Hockey Canada strongly believes that in order for players to truly fulfill their potential and be the best they can be, the needs of the player should be at the forefront of programming.

The primary focus of the youth hockey system is to develop a lifelong passion for sport, develop important life skills through hockey and provide young girls and boys exposure to a development system that is progressive in nature and meets their needs based on age-specific and skill-appropriate programming.

Section 2:

U11 Policy and Recommendations





Hockey Canada Policy for U11 Hockey

Player Evaluations, Selections, or Tryouts

- No player evaluations, selections, or tryouts prior to or during the first week of school. (REQUIREMENT)
 - No player evaluations, selections, or tryouts during the off-season phase (previous season, including March through August).
 - No player evaluations, selections, or tryouts during the first week of school where school starts the week after Labour Day.
 - Where school starts prior to Labour Day, there must be four skates and/or practices starting the week following Labour Day before player evaluations, selections, or tryouts commence.
- Must offer a minimum of four practices and/or skill sessions prior to formal player evaluations, selections, or tryouts starting. (REQUIREMENT)
- Must have a minimum of three formal player evaluations, selections, or tryouts sessions. (REQUIREMENT)
 - One skills session, one small-area games session, one formal game. (RECOMMENDATION)
 - Players should not try out based on a specific position but should be encouraged to play both forward and defense in tryouts. (RECOMMENDATION)
 - Players should be selected for teams based on skill, not positional preference. (RECOMMENDATION)

Development Phase

- Must be a period of development time following team selection and prior to the start of the regular season. (REQUIREMENT)

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 is not permitted. All players should receive fair and as close to equal as possible ice time, including equal opportunities on special teams. (REQUIREMENT)
- Positional rotation:
 - All skaters are to rotate through all positions to ensure each player has the opportunity to try out each position (forward – LW/C/RW and defence – LD/RD) at least once. (RECOMMENDATION)
 - All players get a chance to start the game and play end-of-game situations. (RECOMMENDATION)
- Goaltender rotation:
 - Full-time goaltenders allowed.
 - Goaltenders rotate for equal amount of playing time throughout the regular season and playoffs.
 - Goaltenders alternate games or split games as close to 50/50 as possible. (RECOMMENDATION)
 - Each goaltender plays the final game in an equal number of tournaments. (RECOMMENDATION)
 - The rotation schedule should be done in consultation with the goaltender and parents – share games or alternate playing full games. (RECOMMENDATION)
 - The goaltender not playing the game be allowed to play as a skater. (RECOMMENDATION)

Playoffs

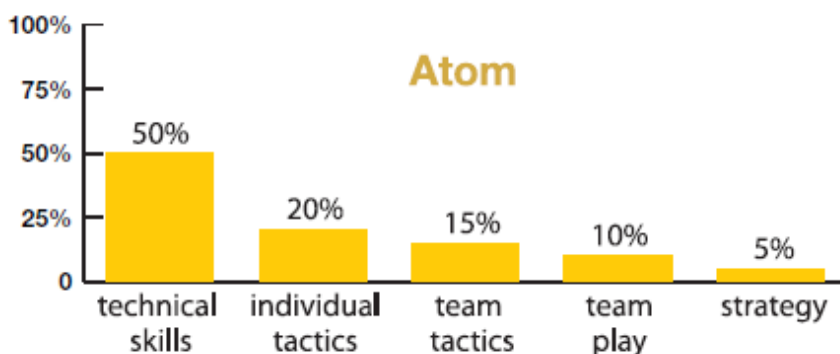
- Must be tournament-style format versus elimination rounds. (REQUIREMENT)

Seasonal Structure

- Preparation phase (REQUIREMENT)
 - See Player Evaluations, Selections, or Tryouts above.
- Development phase (REQUIREMENT)
 - Teams must have a period of development time following player evaluations, selections, or tryouts prior to the start of the regular season.
- Development and regular season phase (REQUIREMENT)
 - Recommended maximum of 45 games per year (including exhibition, league, tournaments and playoffs).
 - Recommended seasonal breaks:
 - Season should allow for two seasonal breaks (not including Christmas/long weekends).
 - Seasonal break would be a minimum five days without a scheduled game or mandatory practice.
- Playoff phase (REQUIREMENT)
 - Tournament-style format.
- Off-season phase (REQUIREMENT)
 - Recommend limited skills-based on-ice training, making more time for multisport activity.

Position-Specific Training

- Small-area games in practice / station-based practices / skill-focused drills.
- Only 15% of practice time should be spent on team play and strategy/systems with 85% of practice time spent on skills and tactics.
- Basic positional play and rules of the game can be introduced at the end of the previous U9 season or prior to the start of the U11 regular season. Basic defensive-zone positioning, offside, icing, etc., can be introduced during the ice sessions prior to tryouts or after teams are selected.
- Players should rotate through forward and defence in the first half of the year and then may move to more consistent positions in the second half. Recommended rotation over a five-game segment would be: LW/C/RW/RD/LD.
- Limit position-specific specialization (except goalies – recommend goalie not playing plays as a skater).



Section 3: Rationale for U11 Programming





U11 Player Pathway – Rationale

Dr. Stephen Norris has consulted with Hockey Canada in the areas of player development and performance programming for a number of years. Dr. Norris has also played a key role as a consultant to the 'Own the Podium' high performance/technical groups leading up to a number of Olympic Winter Games. He was one of the five founding members and contributors to the 'Canadian Sport for Life' movement focusing on athlete/participant development and supported Hockey Canada in the design of the Hockey Canada Long-Term Player Development Model and Canadian Player Pathways.

In each area of the policy's requirements outlined below, rationale has been provided and has been supplemented by Dr. Norris in the shaded areas.

Player evaluations, selections, or tryouts cannot be scheduled prior to the start of the school year. (REQUIREMENT)

- Give minor hockey associations and parents back the summer – the season does not need to start this early only to be finished at the end of January or early in February (start later and end later).
- Give minor hockey associations a chance to get organized and begin planning.
- The start of school year can be very stressful for young players, and they do not need to add hockey tryouts starting at the same time as the school year.

There are very serious considerations that need to be addressed here. First, the notion of tryouts taking place weeks, if not months in advance of the actual season for this age group makes very little sense due to the realities of child development during these periods.

The summer months are a time where youngsters not only consolidate previous experiences, but also advance their competency due to aspects such as recovery from earlier specificity, demonstrate adaptation of all previous experiences to new situations and activities over the summer months, and reveal growth and development opportunities that occur naturally – physical, psychological, cognitive, motor development, social, etc.

Second, everyone should understand that the return-to-school period (both the couple of weeks before, the week of and the 'wash-in period' until the student is settled back into the routine) is an extremely stressful period in terms of the biological impact upon the student.

Must offer a minimum of four practices and/or skill sessions prior to formal tryouts starting. (REQUIREMENT)

- A player's first experience in the new hockey season should not be a formal tryout – this gives all players the opportunity to get back on the ice in a more 'player-friendly' scenario.
- Help level the playing field; not all players have a chance to go to hockey schools or prep camps prior to the start of the season.
- Provide minor hockey associations the opportunity to run their own prep camp instead of members spending money outside the association.



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There is a great benefit for children to be offered the opportunity to participate in four ice sessions prior to formal selection or evaluation. Players feel both more relaxed and are able to perform at a better skill level following four ice sessions, rather than the alternative of being evaluated in their first time back on the ice. By providing these opportunities, players are now in situation where stress has been mitigated and they are able to showcase their ability on the ice.

Player evaluations, selections, or tryouts must be minimum of three formal tryout sessions. Recommendation is one skills session, one small-area games session and one formal game. (REQUIREMENT)

- Players need a fair chance to be evaluated – a standardized process will show transparency, fairness and consistency.
- Provide coaches with the foundation for a development plan based on a solid and quantifiable evaluation.

This follows the previous point of providing ALL young players with the opportunity to re-engage with the hockey. For example, it would be unacceptable for a school in the first week of September to give children an exam that they must pass, or else the child would not be permitted to take that subject during the school year. This would be unacceptable to parents, yet this is the impact of tryouts early in the process before anything is taught.

Must have a period of development time following team selection and prior to the start of the regular season. (REQUIREMENT)

- It is very important to provide coaches with the opportunity to develop and improve their players' skills prior to getting into organized games.
- The progression should be skills before tactics and tactics before systems.
- This will eliminate or reduce pressure and or focus on winning.

As outlined above, professional and/or knowledgeable individuals wishing to provide positive developmental experiences for children or youth would reinforce the need for an instructional or practice component prior to the start of the season. With the implementation of this policy, we are moving forward to not only accept, but welcome development opportunities for the betterment of players.

Playoffs must be tournament-style format versus elimination rounds (REQUIREMENT)

- Give all teams the chance to play to same end point in the season.
- All players deserve the same chance to play to the end of the year.
- More teams and more players playing longer into the season.
- Allows more rest and recovery within the season and the regular season schedule can be spread out.
- Greater opportunity for more players to participate in different activities.

Often in Canada, minor hockey associations finish their regular season at the end of January or beginning of February. This is done to accommodate a protracted playoff scenario that is mimicking what professional adults or semi-professional age-group development teams do.



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However, it is important to keep in mind that this is minor hockey designed for children and youth who are developing and wanting to play hockey for as long as possible each season. After the first round of this playoff format (often the first week), 50% of the teams are no longer playing and with each successive round, 50% of the remaining teams get knocked out. This means that weeks before the end of the Canadian winter, we no longer have kids playing hockey, at least in terms of the original MHA connection.

What happens with an elimination-style playoff structure is teams look for tournaments and exhibition games to keep playing at least until the end of March. However, the unintentional consequences are increased costs to each participant due to travel, accommodation, food, entry fees, the associated costs of tournaments and even lost wages/salaries for parents. It is recommended that minor associations look at competition structures that keep their participants playing until as late in the season as possible. There are plenty of opportunities for the experiences of external tournaments and exhibition games.

Section 4:

U11 Seasonal Structure





Seasonal Structure

The Member must have a clearly identified seasonal structure as per the definition of an ideal hockey season. The ideal hockey season is a guideline and is subject to a range of minor differences regarding suggested numbers based on Member differences.

The annual calendar is divided into five phases to enhance the player engagement process and ensure each phase of development has a very specific focus. It is important to abide by these phases and not compromise the developmental process by accelerating the calendar and attempting to have players engaged in activities like competitive games and tournament play before the proposed schedule.

1. Preparation Phase (Player Evaluation/Selection/Tryouts) – Up to 2 weeks

- This refers to the period of time prior to the season starting.
 - See Player Evaluation/Selection/Tryouts on Page 6 for more information.

2. Development Phase – Up to 4 weeks

- This refers to the period of time following tryouts prior to the regular season starting.

3. Development & Regular Season – Up to 22 weeks

- This refers to the period of time from the first regular-season game to the start of playoffs.

4. Playoff Phase – Up to 4 weeks

- This refers to the period of time from the end of the regular season to the end of playoffs.

5. Off-season Phase

- This refers to the period of time from the end of the playoffs to the start of the next Preparation Phase.

The Ideal Season

The U11 Player Pathway will give young players an excellent opportunity to continue positive development while having excellent experiences in the game. The ideal season addresses issues like ensuring the season does not conflict with the start of the school year, what the tryout process must look like for young players and how the season will be structured to maximize development opportunities for all players in the system.

Monthly Goals

The U11 Player Pathway and corresponding coaching materials provide for a progressive and incremental application to skill development that is age-appropriate for the U11 player. Referring to the Hockey Canada Skills Manual for U11 hockey will provide coaches with the necessary framework for practice sessions that meet their players needs. The monthly seasonal goals should correspond with the chart that outlines the skills players should be exposed to throughout the season.



Seasonal Framework

The U11 level is the first to differentiate between recreation and competitive programming. The charts below help to illustrate the seasonal breakdown in terms of the length of the season, the number of practices and games and how the season is broken in to phases for each of these programs. **Please note the timelines for each phase are meant to be maximums, but each phase can be shorter based on local logistics.**

SEASONAL STRUCTURE

U11 – Community (Recreational)

Weeks	Up to 6 weeks <i>prior to the start of the Regular Season Phase</i>	Up to 20 Weeks <i>after the completion of the Development Phase</i>	Up to 4 Weeks <i>at the conclusion of the Regular Season Phase</i>
PHASE	Prep / Evaluation & Development Phase	Regular Season Phase	Playoff/Tournament Phase
BALANCE	13% of the season	74% of the season	13% of the season
VOLUME <i>up to 30 weeks</i> <i>34 practices</i> <i>up to 32 games</i> <i>up to 3 tournaments</i>	Up to 6 Weeks	Up to 20 Weeks	Up to 4 Weeks
	8 Practice Sessions	22 Practice Sessions	4 Practices Sessions
	Up to 4 Games	Up to 16 Games	Up to 12 Games
	1 Tournament	1 Tournament	1 Tournament

Chart 1: Seasonal structure components for community (recreational) U11 hockey

SEASONAL STRUCTURE

U11 – Developmental (Competitive)

Weeks	Up to 6 weeks <i>prior to the start of the Regular Season Phase</i>	Up to 22 Weeks <i>after the completion of the Development Phase</i>	Up to 4 Weeks <i>at the conclusion of the Regular Season Phase</i>
PHASE	Prep / Evaluation / Development Phase	Regular Season Phase	Playoff/Tournament Phase
BALANCE	18% of the season	68% of the season	11% of the season
VOLUME <i>up to 32 weeks</i> <i>60 practices</i> <i>up to 46 games</i> <i>up to 4 tournaments</i>	Up to 6 Weeks	Up to 22 Weeks	Up to 4 Weeks
	12 Practice Sessions	44 Practice Sessions	4 Practices Sessions
	Up to 6 Games	Up to 24 Games	Up to 16 Games
	1 Tournament	1 Tournament	2 Tournaments

Chart 2: Seasonal structure components for developmental (competitive) U11 hockey

Section 5: U11 Coach Requirements and Resources



Instructors & Coaches

All head coaches of U11 teams require:

- 1) Hockey University – Online Community Coach training
- 2) Coach 2 – Coach Level training. (See Section 7 for additional Member-specific coaching policies)
- 3) Checking Skills
- 4) Respect in Sport – Activity Leader



Overview

The NCCP Coach 2 – Coach Level clinic is the second level of the Community Sport Stream. The Coach 2 – Coach Level clinic is a competency-based education and training method of learning for all new and recreational-level coaches, emphasizing basic skills and the importance of having players develop confidence, self-esteem and a love for the game. The NCCP Coach 2 – Coach Level clinic will provide an introduction to player development and will teach coach knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas:

- How to communicate effectively with athletes and parents.
- How to support the athlete in a team environment.
- How to support the athlete in the training environment.
- How to support the athlete in a practice environment.
- How to support the athlete in a game environment.

Certification

Pathway for certification is shown in the graphic above.

NOTE: Hockey Canada, the Coaching Association of Canada and Members do not require CERTIFIED status in this stream, only TRAINED.

Professional Development – NCCP Instructional Clinics

Hockey Canada has created a series of instructional clinics in addition to the Coach Stream program. While the coaching clinic is more specific to supporting coaches in the team environment, the instructional clinics are specific to teaching skills in all areas of the game.

Members offer these clinics as a way of supporting/enhancing the ongoing development of coaches in the following areas:

- skating
- skills
- developing defencemen
- shooting and scoring
- small-area games
- checking skills
- goaltending

Resources

The following resources are available to support minor hockey associations and coaches in the design and delivery of programming that meets the needs of young players aged nine and 10 years old. A wide variety of materials are available for download [HERE](#).



The **Hockey Canada Network** is an iOS and Android app that contains a wealth of information for coaches and instructors. The entire series of Hockey Canada Skills Manuals and the Skills of Gold DVD series are available on the Hockey Canada Network. This includes the entire series of lesson plans designed specifically for the U11 program. All lesson plans are available to coaches and instructors at no cost. While there is a fee to access all the resources in the **Hockey Canada**

Network, downloading the free version of the app will permit the user to create an account and log in to access all the resources that support the U11 level of programming.



The **Hockey Canada Drill Hub** is located at HockeyCanada.ca. This coach resource tool also provides coaches of U11 players with access to all of the program ice-session plans for free. Coaches can sign up to have free access to Hockey Canada's growing library of drills to create practice plans with a set of drills or use suggested practice plans, which are easy to print or view on most devices. Minor

hockey associations must encourage coaches to access both resource platforms to ensure they have up-to-date resources to support the program implementation.

U11 Skills Matrix

The Long-Term Player Development Model places U11 hockey at the ‘learn to play’ stage and is a time when programming is focused on fundamental skill development. With this in mind, the U11 skills matrix provides an overview of the skills that players in this age group must have opportunities to develop through progressive and meaningful practice sessions.

The Hockey Canada U11 Skills Manual contains a series of 32 practice sessions that provide the appropriate skill instruction cues and drills designed to support players in their efforts to acquire these skills. For more information on the Hockey Canada U11 Skills Manual, refer to the resource section below.

U11 SKILLS LTPD STAGE – Learn to Play

Balance and Agility	Edge Control	Starting and Stopping	Forward Skating and Striding	Backward Skating	Turning and Crossovers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Skating Skills from Initiation and novice Forward Scissor Skate Lateral Crossovers C-cuts toe on puck 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Figure 8's – forward – inside & outside edge Figure 8's – backward – inside & outside edge Heel to Heel (Mohawk) 1 leg weaving – fwd / bwd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Front v-start Crossover start Backward c-cut start Outside leg stop Two-foot parallel stop One-leg backward stop Two-leg backward stop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forward striding Linear crossovers Acceleration Quick Feet Evasive skating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C-cuts – left foot / right foot Backward Scissor skate 1 Crossover / Reach Backward Striding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glide turns / Tight turns C-cuts – around circle – outside foot – forward & backward Crossovers – forward & backward Pivots – bwd to fwd & fwd to bwd Pivots – open & reverse
Stationary Puck Control	Moving Puck Control	Stationary Passing and Receiving	Moving Passing and Receiving	Shooting	Individual Offensive Tactics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow / Wide Side – front – side Toe drag – side/front Attack Triangle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow / Wide Open ice carry – forehand & backhand Weaving with puck Toe drag – front & side Attack the Triangle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stationary fwd pass Stationary bhd pass Forehand saucer pass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving forehand pass Moving backhand pass Pass and Follow Cross and Drop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forehand - wrist shot Backhand - shot Forehand / backhand shots in motion Forehand - flip shot Backhand - flip shot Tips / Deflections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Body fakes Stick fakes Dekes Moves in Combination Net Drives
Individual Defensive Tactics	Team Play				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angling Basic 1 on 1's Escape moves Puck retrievals Gap Control Tracking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Positioning – D Zone Basic Breakouts Basic Entries 				

The Hockey Canada Skills Manuals are part of the skills development series – the official instructional curriculum of Hockey Canada. All coaches and on-ice volunteers are encouraged to utilize these resources to assist in enhancing skill development in all programs and levels of play.

The Hockey Canada skills development coaching manuals are meant to be a guide for the coach, allowing them the flexibility to make adjustments, if necessary, to meet the demands of their players and team. Eventually, from the direction provided in the manuals, coaches will gain the confidence and creativity to begin designing their own lesson plans.

Section 6: Frequently Asked Questions





Frequently Asked Questions

Section 7: Member Recommendation Amendments





Member Recommendation Amendments
