



U11 (Atom) RESOURCE GUIDE

Updated – March 2020





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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



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(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.



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Section 2: Rationale for U11 Programming

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.



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Section 3: U11 Policy and Recommendations

Seasonal Structure

Phase One: Preparation / Tryout

No teams shall run tryouts from April through August. Team pre-tryout practice/skill sessions begin the Tuesday after Labour Day for all U11 levels.

Following Labour Day, players must have a minimum of four (4) practice/skill sessions prior to the start of formal evaluations. These can be four one-hour sessions, or three 1.5 hour sessions, each on a separate day. Players are required to attend one set of these practice/skills sessions.

Following the practices / skill sessions, teams must conduct a minimum of three (3) formal tryout / evaluation sessions — one skills session, one small area games session, one game (is recommended). Teams must select players based on skill. Development research indicates that players most develop when they have opportunities to play all positions (LW, C, RW, RD, LD). Coaches should not limit a player's opportunity to tryout at any given position.

Phase Two: Development

Following tryouts/evaluations, teams must run a development period consisting of practices. House League teams are required to run a minimum of five (5) practices in this period and competitive teams a minimum of eight (8) practices. Tournaments and exhibition games can also be scheduled in the development period.

Phase Three: Regular Season

In the regular season, House League teams will play up to 20 games in their respective Leagues. Competitive teams will play 20 games in their respective leagues. Both House League and Competitive teams must run a minimum 1:1 ratio of practices to games during the regular season. Tournaments and exhibition games can also be scheduled in the regular season.

Phase Four: Playoffs

During the playoff phase, House League and Competitive teams will participate in a tournament style playoff structure, with a maximum of eight playoff games. The playoff phase should include one team practice per week.



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Tournaments

House League teams may participate in a maximum of three tournaments during the season. Competitive teams may participate in a maximum of four tournaments. As an alternative to tournaments, teams may play an equivalent number of exhibition games during the season. For the purposes of counting games, tournaments are considered to be four games.

Maximum Number of Games Per Season

A maximum 45 games per year can be played by a team in any one season. Games include regular season and playoff League, exhibition and tournament games.

Seasonal Break(s)

March Break shall be considered as a seasonal break (minimum five days without scheduled games or mandatory practice sessions). HEO teams may schedule a 2nd seasonal break by identifying it as a blackout period to their League at the beginning of the season.

Seasonal Structure: House League and Competitive

Seasonal Phase	House League		Competitive	
	<i>Practices</i>	<i>Games</i>	<i>Practices</i>	<i>Games</i>
Pre Tryout	4	—	4	—
Tryout	3	TBD(exhibition)	3	TBD(exhibition)
Development	5	TBD(exhibition)	8	TBD(exhibition)
Regular	1:1 ratio (practices to games)	Up to 20	1:1 ratio (practices to games)	20
Playoffs	1 per week	8	1 per week	8
Total	Variable (District/Association)	Up to 28+	Variable (District/Association)	28
Tournaments Exhibition Games	—	3 x 4 games=12 Or equivalent	—	4 x 4 games=16 Or equivalent
Maximum number of exhibition, tournament, League regular season and playoff games = 45.				

*Number of practices will depend upon the number of house league regular season games to be played in respect of the 1:1 ratio (house league games to be played will vary by District/League)
TBD(exhibition)= # of exhibition games played to be determined by teams/Associations.

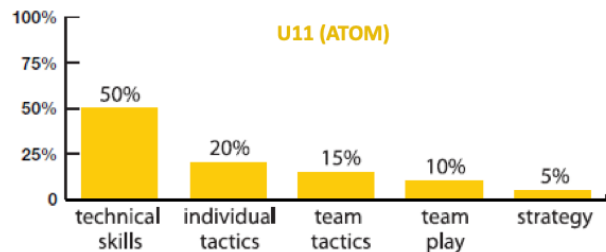


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Game/Team Structure and Approach

1. Throughout the season, all players must receive fair and as close to equal ice time as possible (no bench shortening or preferential playing time; players to have opportunities to start games, end periods and play end of game, power play and penalty kill).
2. Throughout the season, all players should play both forward and defense in the first half of the season, and then may move to more consistent positions in the second half.
3. Throughout the season, full time goalies are permitted.
4. Throughout the season, goalies must rotate for an equal number of games/playing time (goalies must split game time and have equal opportunities to play the final game in tournaments).
5. Throughout the season, goalies not playing can play out as a skater.



Practice Sessions

1. Practices should consist of small area games/station based/skill focused drills. A minimum of 85% of practice sessions must be spent on skills and tactics.
2. Basic defensive zone positions, off sides, icings should be introduced in the development period prior to the start of the regular season.
3. Positional play and rules of the game can be introduced in the development phase prior to the start of the U11 regular season.



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