



USA HOCKEY CROSS-ICE PROGRAM



PHILOSOPHY



USA HOCKEY encourages an environment in which children can learn the basic skills without the distractions that are often associated with an over emphasis on winning.

Mastery of fundamental skills and the fun of playing are essential to the development of a LIFELONG interest in hockey.

Programs must be conducted to accommodate the number of new players who wish to play hockey, and reduce the number who become disenchanted and drop out.



OBJECTIVES

- **To provide an intermediary program between the Initiation Program and a full-ice program.**
- **Modify the playing environment to meet the needs of young players.**
- **Increase opportunities for players to touch and handle the puck.**
- **Stress participation, fun and skill development.**
- **Increase the practice to game ratio to a minimum of three practices to each game.**
- **Provide a positive environment for learning the fundamental skills of hockey.**
- **Improve the utilization of ice time.**



PROGRAM GUIDELINES

- **Cross Ice Program “teams” should have between 10 and 12 players.**
- **All practices and games are to be conducted “cross-ice.”**
- **The ice must be divided into thirds – with the Border Patrol rink dividers across each blue line.**
- **The lightweight blue puck should be used for all games and practices.**
- **A practice to game ratio of 3 practices to each game is highly recommended.**





PROGRAM GUIDELINES

(continued)



Practice Structure

5 minute, fun warm-up games (tag, keep away, etc.)

45 minute individual skills to include skating, stick handling, passing and shooting drills and games.

10 minute pond hockey/scrimmages.

**Practices can include up to six teams – two teams in each section of the ice.
(Approx. 60 – 70 players)**

All practices should be up beat, high energy and most importantly FUN. It's important that the players leave the rink each day with a smile on their face.



INSTRUCT

Give, if necessary, short instructions. Never give instructions to players who have pucks. They can't concentrate on what you say.



SHOW one thing at a time, as clearly as possible. Children learn better by seeing and then imitating. Show what they should do, instead of what they shouldn't do – in other words, use a **POSITIVE** example.



Children learn best when they have to imitate and play. Therefore, it is good if someone in the group can demonstrate in a proper way.



TRY

Let the players try it out as soon as possible.



PRACTICE

Let them **PRACTICE** a great deal.



GAME STRUCTURE

- No score shall be kept for games
- The scoreboard shall be used as a timing device only – the horn shall sound every 90 seconds for a player change.
- Associations are encouraged to be creative with the “game days.” (Game day could include playing multiple teams within the one hour time slot.)
- ONE coach or referee should be utilized to officiate each game.
- Face-offs should be conducted in the middle of the ice section; to begin games, after every goal, after every penalty substitution.
- Penalties – flagrant injury type penalties should be whistled. A penalized player’s team will not play short-handed. Penalized players should be immediately substituted and miss the remainder of that shift.
- Teams shall play a maximum of 25 games – this would require a minimum of 75 practices.



**Scoring records, statistics and records
should NOT be kept.**



COACHES ROLE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Your impression upon these youngsters is profound. How they relate to the game of hockey depends upon YOU. Your role is vital and heavy with responsibility.

- **Provide positive reinforcement; build confidence.**
- **Make hockey FUN!**
- **Teach respect for teammates and opponents.**
- **Play within the rules.**
- **Teach the players to play for the love of the game.**
- **Emphasize skill development – skating, stick skills and a sense for the game.**
- **Make verbal instructions as brief as possible (max 30 seconds). Teach the players to gather and kneel on one knee on a given signal. The coach should do the same and communicate at their level. During drills, no player should wait in line for more than 10 seconds.**



Making the PRACTICES FUN and ACCENTUATING FUN GAMES is your most important task!! It doesn't mean in any way that the players do as they please. Order and method are an important ingredient even when you have fun.



It does not matter that the drills are simple, only that the players have fun and at the same time feel that they have learned something. Thus it is about getting to play a lot, often in small games, and that you pay attention and encourage each child in each practice.



PRAISE

Give a lot of praise and encouragement so that everybody feels pleased when they are successful!!

"Great Job!"

"Awesome!"

"Well Done!"

"Way to Go!"

"Excellent!"



Cross-Ice Equipment Suppliers

Athletica Rink Dividers 952-915-4226

**Please contact www.usahockeywear.com or call
888-806-7337 to order the Blue 4 oz. Lite Weight
Puck.**



**For a detailed packet about the
Cross-Ice Program, please contact
the Youth Hockey Department at
USA Hockey.
1-800-566-3288**

