

# Welcome to ice hockey

A concise guide  
to junior ice hockey



INTERNATIONAL  
ICE HOCKEY  
FEDERATION



ice hockey  
is for **me**



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ice hockey  
is for **me**

The International Ice Hockey  
welcomes you to the **WORLD**





# International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) A wonderful world of ice hockey

## What is ice hockey?

Ice hockey is the fastest team sport in the world with almost 2 million players, of all ages, participating worldwide.

It is a fast-paced, team sport built on skill, speed, discipline and teamwork. It is a game that requires quick thinking and fast reactions along with the development of many special skills such as skating, passing, puck handling and shooting.

## Why become involved in ice hockey?

The benefits for children are numerous; learning skills that enhance their agility, strength and coordination. Ice hockey can also develop a child's self-confidence; self esteem, sportsmanship and teamwork skills. Most of all they will have fun in a positive, healthy and safe environment where they can meet other children.

A sport that's great to watch, yet even better to play, the **International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) welcomes you to the wonderful world of ice hockey.**

### Did you know?

The IIHF is the governing body for international ice hockey. 69 member National Associations make up the IIHF. It is responsible for the World Ice Hockey Championships and the Olympic Ice Hockey Tournament, as well as the development and promotion of the game worldwide.

## Why children play ice hockey

A study was undertaken to determine why children participate in hockey and why they continue to play. The many reasons can be divided into four categories. In order of importance they are:

- ✓ Affiliation
- ✓ Sensation
- ✓ Excellence
- ✓ Success

### Affiliation

Children want to develop and maintain close relationships with their teammates and coaches. They want to be accepted as a member of the group, be appreciated by their teammates and have fun. They enjoy:

- ✓ making friends
- ✓ playing with their teammates
- ✓ team meetings and get-togethers

### Sensation

They enjoy the speed and competitiveness that ice hockey provides, and like the novelty of playing a sport that is different. They like:

- ✓ the excitement and speed of a game
- ✓ the sensations of being part of a team
- ✓ to work hard

### Excellence

They want to excel at playing ice hockey, master the skills of the game and be a good hockey player. They want to:

- ✓ improve their ability
- ✓ learn new skills
- ✓ be the best

### Success

Children like to receive recognition and admiration for their achievements. They want to receive rewards and become known as a hockey player. They like:

- ✓ winning
- ✓ recognition for achievements
- ✓ receiving trophies

## Ice hockey is a family concept

The whole family is encouraged to support their children in ice hockey and one of the best ways of doing this is to show them that you want to be involved! If they see that you are excited about the game then they are going to be excited about the game too.

All ice hockey programmes depend on the support of parents, grandparents and other family members to ensure a rewarding ice hockey experience for everyone. Parents should support and encourage their children's interest in the sport, and should not display or encourage abusive or negative attitudes.

The skills learnt at the rink will reinforce those learnt at home. Team work and sharing are important qualities in all areas of life.

Fair Play and Respect are values that the IIHF promotes continually to all participants: players, game officials, team staff, parents and fans. This provides an important message, especially to children, that is beneficial in all aspects of life.

Parents also play a very important role in helping ensure the safety of their children, and ensuring the use of correctly fitted and certified equipment is vital. For more information on equipment please see the following page.



### Please remember

Children are involved in sports for their enjoyment, not their parents'. A child should not be forced to participate in sports if they do not want to.

## The four basic skills of ice hockey

### Skating

Skating is the skill that makes ice hockey unique and is as important to ice hockey as running is to football. Skating is something that players at all levels of ice hockey continually strive to improve. Without good skating ability, players are less able to perform the other essential skills of the sport.

### Stick handling

Stick handling is perhaps the most difficult of the basic skills to master. It allows a player to carry the puck down the ice and to move around opponents to create better scoring opportunities. Puck handling is one of the most exciting parts of ice hockey to watch and the more skilled a player is, the more involved in the game they will be.

### Passing

Passing is what makes ice hockey a real team sport and helps make the game fun. Passing gets everyone on the ice involved in the action and turns scoring into a team effort. Working together with teammates to achieve success is what the game is all about. Passing allows the thrill of scoring to be shared. Remember an assist is worth as much as a goal.

### Shooting

Shooting is the end result of an offensive team play and is the action that produces a goal. Many players spend most of their time practicing shooting because they believe scoring is the most fun. But statistics show players generally take fewer than six shots in an entire game.

When practicing the skills of ice hockey, players should concentrate and work on all of the basic skills equally, but with a special emphasis put on skating.



## Equipment

This page is meant to offer basic advice to parents in selecting the proper protective equipment before their children go on the ice. The information here is only a guideline and further information can be found in the equipment section of the 'Introduction to Coaching' seminar.

Three important factors to remember when purchasing ice hockey equipment:

1. the equipment fits properly
2. the equipment is in good condition
3. the equipment is properly maintained.

If a piece of equipment is broken, it should be replaced immediately or properly repaired by a professional. All equipment should be taken out of the bag and hung up to dry after every time it is used.

Find out what equipment your child must have to be able to go on the ice. The first four pieces of equipment to select are:

### Skates

- Skates are the hockey player's most important piece of equipment
- Never buy skates that are too big (for the player to grow into) as this puts them at risk of injury and will hold back their skating ability
- Young player's skates should be the same size as their shoes

### Gloves

- Should fit the players' hands snugly but not too tight
- Gloves should overlap the elbow pad throughout the entire range of motion
- Padding on the back of the glove should be shock-absorbing

### Helmet

- Loosen helmet and open right up
- Place on the player's head and push together for a snug fit
- Tighten the screws while the helmet is on the head

...and for the **Stick** > flip to the next page.

Equipment continued

### Stick

- With skates on, the stick should just reach the chin
- Junior sticks should be used for younger players as these sticks are lighter with narrower shafts, shorter blades and greater flexibility
- The entire bottom of the blade should be on the ice when the player is in a ready position.

Any piece of equipment should cover the entire area of the body which it is meant to cover and should never be bought to grow into as this leaves the player at risk of serious injury.



### The right start

There is a learning process which every player must go through in order to learn the basic skills that will help them to enjoy the excitement and the fun of playing ice hockey. The first step in the learning process is the most important as it introduces the beginner player to ice hockey and gives them their first exposure to the game. If children are introduced to the game in a positive, fun-filled manner, then not only will they enjoy the experience, they will want to come back again and continue to play.

Children can practice the basic skills through playing 'cross-ice', a variation of ice hockey designed to speed up the learning process for children. This creates a fun, non competitive atmosphere, especially as they begin the process of trying new skills and realizing their first successes.

**The IIHF's Learn to Play Programme is the ideal way to introduce children to the sport of ice hockey and a necessary first step to becoming a hockey player.**



## The Learn to Play Programme

**“The IIHF is pleased to provide the Learn to Play Programme for the worldwide development of hockey. We trust that member national associations will use the programme to introduce entry-level players to our sport and teach them the skills that will last a lifetime.”**

Let's learn to play



The Learn to Play Programme is a development initiative introduced by the IIHF. In a partnership with its member National Associations, the IIHF have been using this Programme to promote the development of ice hockey globally since 2002.

The programme is a cooperative effort drawing on ice hockey experience and expertise from around the world. It promotes a child-oriented educational approach to teaching the skills of ice hockey to the youngest and newest players.

The Learn to Play Programme is a well organised step-by-step programme that enables children to have fun whilst learning the basics of the great game of ice hockey.

## Goals of the programme

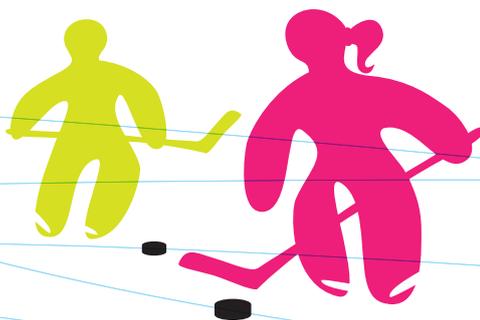
The main objective of the programme is to give 6 to 9 year old children the best possible introduction to ice hockey. Ice hockey at this level should be based on having fun, participation for all, and learning the basic skills required to play.

These ice hockey skills include:

- Skating
- Puck handling
- Stopping
- Passing
- Turning
- Shooting

In addition to ice hockey specific skills, the Learn to Play Programme encourages the development of valuable life skills that the child can take into their everyday life. Such as:

- Having fun whilst playing ice hockey and being involved in physical activity
- Developing an understanding of teamwork through group play
- Participation in a variety of activities and game situations
- Development of coordination and basic motor skills
- Introduce the idea of cooperation, fair play and respect
- Development of the child's self-confidence and self-esteem



### Did you know?

Many of the greatest ice hockey players attribute their success to growing up playing and learning on small ice surfaces like ponds and backyards.

## Advantages of Learn to Play Programme

The Learn to Play Programme recognises the development needs of children. We need to remember that children are not mini-adults and the way in which children learn is completely different to that of ourselves. They see the world from a different perspective and react to situations differently than adults.

The Learn to Play Programme has been shown to give children a fulfilling ice hockey experience that teaches the fundamental ice hockey skills. It keeps players in the game by focusing on fun and participation rather than on winning.

Many parents want their child to play like the professionals do, on full-ice, because they want their child to experience “real” hockey. However, think about a child trying to skate with a puck while performing a drill the entire 60 meters of the ice rink; how long will this take? How much energy will this require? Will the player's decision-making skills be enhanced? Will this lead to greater involvement in the action? For a child this is the equivalent of an adult playing on a rink the size of a football field.

Some specific advantages of cross-ice ice hockey include:

- Increased puck possession time for each player
- Decisions made more frequently at a higher tempo
- More repetition for goalkeepers
- More efficient use of ice time and space
- Many teams can practice together by sharing ice surface
- More children get a chance to play and to feel successful
- All children will benefit from close action on the ice
- Children are active between shifts in the centre zone

## Cross-ice hockey – practicing & playing

The cross-ice practicing and playing model that the Learn to Play Programme is based on has many different components. The key ones are:

### Cross-ice playing surface

All practices and games are played across the ice in the 3 zones, each equalling one-third of the normal rink size. The cross ice model has been used in many of the leading ice hockey nations in the world for a number of years and has stood the test of time.

### Child sized goal nets

Child sized goal nets are used to give the goalkeeper a greater chance of success.

### Lightweight pucks

Lightweight pucks are used to allow children better puck control. This is a normal size puck that weighs less than the ordinary one.

### Practice

- Children have more energy when they are skating 30 meters across the ice surface instead of the 60-meter length of the ice surface
- Smaller group sizes means learning and teaching is more effective
- More players can be on the ice at one time
- Drills are designed to benefit all skill levels of players in the group
- More puck contact resulting in improved puck control skills
- More repetition/frequency in drills in one ice session
- Decision-making skills are enhanced
- Reduction in cost per player

### The ice surface

A child playing on a full ice surface is the same as an adult playing ice hockey on an ice rink the size of a football field.

### The Learn to Play Practice Manuals

The IIHF has developed 4 Practice Manuals, a total of 80 practices, for National Associations to help local ice hockey clubs to organise and operate their own Learn to Play Programme.

The practice plans have been created in a definite progression, so that each playing skill builds into the next one. Every practice has specific objectives that introduce and improve specific basic ice hockey skills. Various fun games are included to enhance the learning process and later in the programme cross-ice hockey games are played.

**Along with this the Learn to Play Programme encourages the development of valuable life skills such as self-confidence, team work, communication and fair play.**



## Games

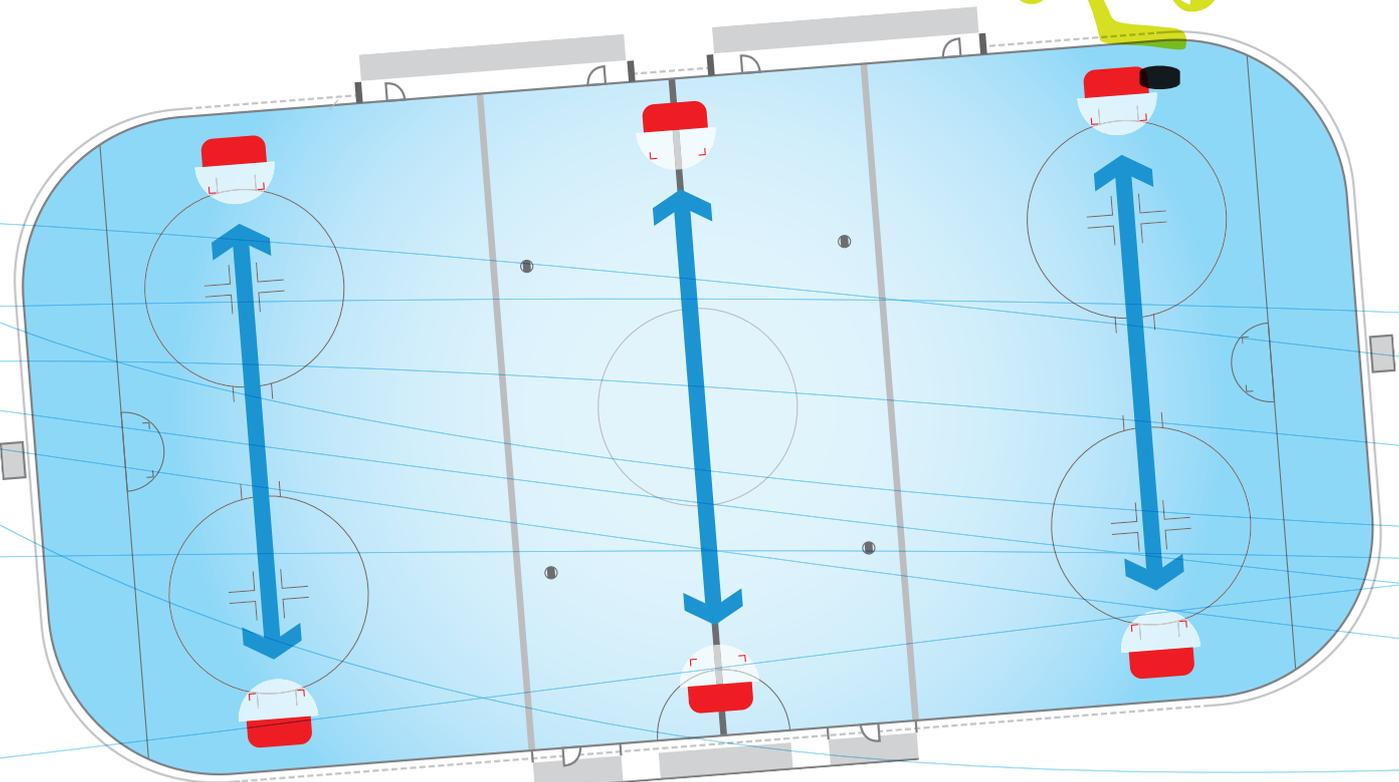
Games are played during Jamborees (friendly tournaments) with several matches played in one day. They are organised to give more children a chance to participate, with equal playing time to improve their skills by getting involved in the game. This is accomplished by matches being played at both ends of the rink with the centre zone used as an area where players can rest, practice their skills and take part in organised drills.

### Jamboree Organization

- Jamborees can involve many different clubs
- Players may be mixed into teams promoting fun and fair play
- No recording of game scores and statistics
- Equal ice time for all players (90 second shifts)
- Teams always play at even strength (5-5, 4-4, 3-3)
- No body checking is allowed
- No penalties but the game is stopped by the coach to explain a violation.



### A typical cross-ice set up



## Preparing players for the future

One of the objectives of any ice hockey programme is to prepare its players to play in the future, by developing both their physical and mental skills.

The cross-ice model is real ice hockey in a child sized format. The cross-ice model teaches children the fundamental skills needed in the full-ice game but more effectively. The equal participation of all players builds a strong sense of team work and cooperation, thereby preparing players for future full-ice team competition.

### Why this way?

Leading ice hockey nations have used the cross-ice practicing and playing model for many years, and their experience is the basis for the Learn to Play Programme. Many other sports have also adapted their game in this way for the development of their young players.

Ice hockey is a team sport and for a Long Term Athlete Development Plan, it requires a wide-ranged approach to early training. The emphasis of the training should be on the development of general, fundamental motor and technical skills. As the player improves and gets older they can then be taught tactics and an emphasis can be placed on winning.

## Learn more

To learn more about ice hockey and the Learn to Play Programme please visit the IIHF Website at [www.iihf.com](http://www.iihf.com). You will find news from around the ice hockey world, up-dates on the latest World Championships, Sport Development Programmes and contact details for all member National Associations.

For more information about ice hockey in your nation and how to help your child start their ice hockey experience, please contact your National Association or your local ice hockey club.

### Did you know?

A study of a 60 minute full-ice running-time game, found that the actual playing time was less than 21 minutes. The cross-ice model gives children more ice time and more opportunity to play the game.

**Learning today...**  
**Winning tomorrow!**



# From **A to Z** through ice hockey

## **Assist**

An assist is credited in the scoring record to the offensive player or players involved in the play immediately preceding a goal. Maximum of two assists per goal.

## **Back Check**

The action of the forwards skating back into their defensive zone to break up the opposing team's offensive play.

## **Body Check**

Using the body to impede an opponent who has possession of the puck to break up or disrupt an offensive play.

## **Breakaway**

A scoring opportunity that occurs when there are no defending players between the puck carrier and the opposing goaltender.

## **Breakout**

Movement of a team in possession of the puck out of its defensive zone.

## **Changing On The Fly**

Substitution of players without a stoppage in play.

## **Clearing The Puck**

Shooting the puck out of the defensive zone or away from the front of the goal

## **Delayed Whistle**

When a violation occurs, the official will not blow the whistle to stop play as long as the non-offending team is in possession of the puck. The moment the offending team touches the puck, play will be stopped.

## **Face-Off**

Dropping the puck between one player from each team to initiate play.

## **Forechecking**

Pressuring the opponent when they control the puck in the neutral or defensive zone.

## **Goal Crease**

The area marked off in front of the goal. An offensive player may not enter the goal crease unless the puck is already inside this area.

## **Goal Judge**

An off-ice official who sits behind the goal, outside the boards, and determines if the puck enters the goal. Should there be a difference of opinion; the referee will have the final decision.

## **Hat Trick**

Term referring to a player scoring three goals in a single game.

## **Icing**

A team, when both teams have an equal number of players on the ice, may not shoot the puck from behind the centre red line over their opponent's goal line (except if the puck goes into the goal).

**Minor Officials**

More commonly referred to as “office officials”. Includes the goal judges, game timer, penalty timer and official scorer. Not all positions are utilized in youth games.

**Offside**

When an offensive player precedes the puck across the blue line and into the offensive zone. For an offside violation, a faceoff will be conducted in the neutral zone.

**Poke Check**

Using the blade of the stick to knock the puck away from an opponent.

**Power Play**

An attempt to score by a team which has a numerical advantage in players due to a penalty or penalties.

**Referee’s Crease**

A restricted area, marked by a red semi-circle, in front of the timer’s table which a player is prohibited from entering while the referee is reporting a penalty.

**Screen**

Offensive players positioning themselves to block or shield the opposing goaltender’s view of the puck.

**Shorthanded**

When a team is playing with one or two fewer players than their opponent due to penalties.

**Slap Shot**

A sweeping motion with an accentuated back swing to shoot the puck.

**Slot**

An unmarked area in front of the goal approximately 10 to 15 feet in diameter.

**Wrist Shot**

The motion of shooting the puck with the puck directly against the blade of the stick.

**Zamboni**

A machine used to resurface the ice between periods.

Come on  
**break the ice**

**...contact us!**



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