



**HOCKEY SASKATCHEWAN**  
**UNDER-7 CROSS-ICE**  
**INFORMATION BOOKLET**

**2022-2023**

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### HOCKEY SASKATCHEWAN MANDATE

Since the beginning of the 2016-17 playing season, Hockey Saskatchewan has undertaken age-appropriate programming for Under-7 players which consists of games being played in cross-ice sections.

### INTRODUCTION

The Saskatchewan Grassroots Development Model provides age-appropriate guidelines for U7 players as well as a curriculum to Minor Hockey Associations across Saskatchewan to work towards the common goal of helping more kids to play, excel and love the great of hockey in a positive environment.

### RULES AND REGULATIONS

- **There will be no Tournament or Exhibition games played prior to December 1st.**
- **ALL exhibition and tournament games played in Saskatchewan will be played Cross-ice.**
- **It is important to note that there are NO exceptions to this regulation regarding the participation in games and practices for U7.**
- **If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Hockey Saskatchewan.**

[www.hockeysask.ca/about/staff](http://www.hockeysask.ca/about/staff)



### HOSTING A CROSS-ICE TOURNAMENT

- ▶ Tournament rules MUST meet Hockey Saskatchewan regulations.
- ▶ No Tournaments will be played Prior to December 1st.
- ▶ All participating Teams MUST be registered with Hockey Saskatchewan through their Minor Hockey Association.
- ▶ An hour ice allotment, games will consist of two (2) twenty-five (25) minute straight time periods.
- ▶ Teams will NOT change ends after each period.
- ▶ Coaches are encouraged to be on the ice.
- ▶ Time-outs are NOT allowed to be called by any team.
- ▶ TOURNAMENT FORMAT: In an eight (8) team format. See Below.
- ▶ There will be NO overtime played.

### CROSS-ICE TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE TEMPLATE

<u>Time</u>	<u>Teams</u>	<u>Rink</u>	<u>Pool</u>
9:00am-10:00am	Team 1 vs. Team 2	1	A
9:00am-10:00am	Team 3 vs. Team 4	2	A
10:00am-11:00am	Team 2 vs. Team 3	1	A
10:00am-11:00am	Team 4 vs. Team 1	2	A
11:00am-12:00pm	Team 5 vs. Team 6	1	B
11:00am-12:00pm	Team 7 vs. Team 8	2	B
12:00pm-1:00pm	Team 5 vs. Team 8	1	B
12:00pm-1:00pm	Team 6 vs. Team 7	2	B
1:00pm-2:00pm	Team 3 vs. Team 1	1	A



### COACHING REQUIREMENTS

- ▶ HEAD COACHES – Must have Coach 1 - Intro to Coach & Respect in Sport
- ▶ ASSISTANT COACHES - Must have Coach 1 - Intro to Coach & Respect in Sport
- ▶ MANAGER, TRAINER, VOLUNTEER, BENCH PERSON – Must have Respect in Sport
- ▶ HOCKEY CANADA SAFETY PROGRAM (HCSP LEVEL 1 OR HU SAFETY) – 1 of the registered team officials (manager, coach, trainer, or volunteer).

### COACH MENTORSHIP

Hockey Saskatchewan with the support of the Minor Hockey Association will appoint a U7 Mentor to an assigned region.

Duties include regular visits to supervise, mentor the U7 Coach(s), offer Coach 1 clinics, and promote the benefits of Cross-Ice hockey.

For more information on how to become a U7 Mentor, please contact Blaine Stork at [blaines@hockeysask.ca](mailto:blaines@hockeysask.ca)

### ROSTERS

Hockey Saskatchewan understands there are challenges in having consistent roster sizes across the province. It is recommended that, whenever possible, team rosters should consist of 10-12 skaters plus one (1) rotating goalie.

This provides the opportunity to increase ice time while utilizing a Skills Zone (Optional). Frequent water breaks may be given at any time to ensure a point of rest. However, this format will work for any size team! Hockey Saskatchewan encourages ALL skaters to be trying different positions.

### WHY CROSS-ICE?

Hockey Saskatchewan along with Hockey Canada believes that hockey should be, first and foremost, fun for all participants. A big part of delivering on that is ensuring the programming is age appropriate.

Cross-Ice hockey at the U7 level effectively right-sizes the playing surface for young players:

- ▶ You don't put five- and six-year-olds on a full-size soccer pitch or expect them to play basketball on a full-sized court with no height adjustments – hockey is no different.
- ▶ Cross-Ice/Half-Ice hockey allows young players the opportunity for more puck-touches which promotes greater opportunity for skill development (puck-handling, shooting, skating, coordination) and decision-making.
- ▶ Players in Cross-Ice have been shown to receive five times more passes and take six times more shots than when they are on a full-sized rink.



- ▶ Small-area games are used at all levels of the game – including Senior national teams and the NHL.

The benefits of Cross-Ice hockey go beyond player development; the special boards and bumpers allow Minor Hockey Associations to alleviate pressure around scheduling and ice-time availability by safely allowing multiple practices and games to take place on one rink at the same time.

### KEYS TO SUCCESS

There is nothing "realistic" about young children playing on a full ice surface, the most ideal representation of "real" hockey for young players is playing on a Cross-Ice 1/3 surface regardless if your arena is "large" or "small." The changes to the U7 Program have been made to ensure that young kids are provided with a fun start to hockey where they develop skills and confidence in a safe environment. Cross-Ice hockey sets a stronger base for advanced skills, hockey sense, and competitiveness.

Local Minor Hockey Associations must be committed to the U7 Program and prepared to support it within their community. That commitment should come in the form of a plan for the U7 Program that you can implement within your Association creating the new normal for Initiation hockey in the community.

This new structure with Cross-Ice games and practices is very different from the traditional program with utilized "standard games" on a full ice surface. As a result, you will undoubtedly face criticism and opposition to these changes from those who are proponents of a more "traditional" hockey. It is important to remind those that are opposed to this new program that this plan has been designed using subject matter that was developed by people with an extensive background in young athlete development. With that in mind, it only makes sense that the program would be different than other programs designed for older players or adults.

An effective U7 Program should be designed based on the best interest of the players and their development as athletes in an overall sense.

A Minor Hockey Association can support a U7 Program in their community in the following ways:

- ▶ Identify and recruit volunteers to help manage and run the program.
- ▶ Appoint an experienced administrator to oversee the program.
- ▶ Conduct informational/update sessions with parents in the community.
- ▶ Provide additional support and training for coaches beyond the required coach certification.
- ▶ Promote the Hockey Saskatchewan U7 Mentorship Program to the coaches and make it mandatory to cooperate with the Mentor assigned.
- ▶ Utilize Hockey Saskatchewan material and website to promote the U7 Program to the parents.



### SEASONAL STRUCTURE

#### Season Start:

- ✓ RECOMMENDED - October 15<sup>th</sup>

#### Development Season:

- ✓ Before games are played - October 15<sup>th</sup>- November 30<sup>th</sup>.
- ✓ 15-20 practices. Recommendation of skill stations during practices.

#### Number of Practices for Season:

- 35-40

**Start Date for Games:** December 1<sup>st</sup>

**Maximum Number of Games During a Season:** 35

#### Carded Weekends:

- ▶ December 9-11, 2022
- ▶ January 13-15, 2023
- ▶ February 17-19, 2023
- ▶ March 24-26, 2023

### MYTHS ABOUT CROSS-ICE HOCKEY

**Myth #1:** To develop an understanding of positional play and off-sides, U7 players should play full-ice hockey.

#### Truth:

- ✓ Not only can positional play and off-sides be taught with Cross-Ice hockey, but it can also be taught more efficiently than in a full-ice environment.
- ✓ When the puck is dropped, positional play becomes a player's relationship to the puck, the opponent, and the net. These elements are key components of the small-area games. By teaching these concepts in the context of small-area games (spacing, gap control, angles, support, body positioning).
- ✓ Players not only learn the concepts but also learn them more efficiently thanks to increased repetition.
- ✓ Regarding off-sides, it can be easily taught by using a marker and drawing a line across the middle of a Cross-Ice environment. This line represents the offensive blue line. And much like positional play, it can be taught more efficiently through Cross-Ice play, since the number of zone entries (and especially non-breakaway zone entries) is dramatically increased in a Cross-Ice scenario.





**Myth #2:** Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) fails in youth goalie development. Kids need to be identified as goaltenders and taught goaltending-specific skills at young ages.

**Truth:**

- ✓ Almost none of the NHL's top goaltenders began playing between the pipes until they were at least 9 years old. Finland, which is viewed as a model for producing great goaltenders, doesn't let kids play full-time in goal until age 10. Goaltending experts worldwide state that, at 8U, it's far more important to develop overall athleticism and skating ability than goaltending technique.
- ✓ As Kevin Woodley recently wrote in *INGOAL MAGAZINE*, "Most NHL goaltending coaches will tell you they'd rather add some structure to a skilled athletic goalie than try to add athleticism to a technician." Thus, the LTAD emphasis on the development of athleticism at young ages is ideal for skaters and future goalies alike.

**Myth #3:** Cross-Ice practices don't provide enough skating, especially long skates.

**Truth:**

In August 2016, Hockey Alberta partnered with Powerscout Hockey and St. Albert Minor Hockey to conduct a study on the effectiveness of smaller ice surfaces in skill development. The study featured 40 Initiation-aged players (five- and six-year-olds) who participated in a series of tests to collect data on several game and practice scenarios.

With regards to skating development, specific data for skating speed and acceleration was collected from the following scenarios:

- ✓ 200-foot sprints
- ✓ Cross-Ice games
- ✓ Half-Ice games
- ✓ a full-ice game

The average distance for the 5-6-year-old players to reach top speed was **65 feet**.

**Why is this significant?**

Sixty-five feet is exactly the distance from the goal line to the nearest blue line (one zone) on a regulation-sized ice surface. A regulation ice surface is 200 feet x 85 feet. That means an average player CAN reach top speed in the Cross-Ice scenario and CAN EASILY reach top speed in a Half-Ice scenario. (*See graphic for dimensions of the regulation-sized ice surface.*)

***SPECIAL NOTE:*** The strongest skater needed only **60 feet** to reach top speed, confirming the importance of acceleration.

To view the full skating study done by Hockey Alberta please visit their website:

<https://www.hockeyalberta.ca/players/initiation-program>



### LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT (LTAD)

#### DISCOVERY (ages 0-4)

This is an important period for acquiring fundamental movement skills (running, gliding, jumping, kicking, catching...) that lay the foundation for more complex movements, thereby preparing children for a physically active lifestyle. Hockey Canada encourages children to begin skating at an early age through Discovery Hockey programs.

#### FUNAMENTALS (ages 5-6)

The focus is on the development of physical literacy. Fundamental movement skills should be mastered, and motor development emphasized, and participation in many sports/activities is encouraged. For optimal skill acquisition the basic hockey skills of skating and puck control are introduced through the U7 Program. FUN competitions are also introduced in a team environment.

### CROSS-ICE VS FULL-ICE

#### PUCK TOUCHES



All players are close to the play at all times and have much more opportunity for puck touches. Regardless of the skill level or the ability of each player, their opportunity to be engaged in the play doubles when the playing area is smaller.

#### SHOT ATTEMPTS



There are six times as many shots on goal or at goal in a Cross-Ice or Half-Ice game. Players are closer to the puck at all times and the puck finds its way to the net much more often.

#### SHOTS ON GOAL



Players are much closer to the nets, skate shorter distance from goal to goal, and have increased opportunities for offensive play.

#### PASS ATTEMPTS



In the smaller area games, players are observed passing and attempting to pass the puck more often. This results for two reasons:

1. All players are close enough to pressure the puck more frequently.
2. Teammates are always in close support of the puck carrier.

#### PASSES RECEIVED



In smaller spaces, more passes are attempted and most of these passes are 5 to 10 feet in length. When passes are shorter, accuracy improves, and players tend to have more success receiving the pass. Players also start to understand the importance of team puck possession.



### CROSS-ICE JAMBOREES

A Cross-Ice Jamboree is a half-day event that consists of various U7 teams developing their skills in skill stations as well as a chance to play Cross-Ice games.

Two teams will play a Cross-Ice game, while the other two teams will be working on skill development at various stations. After the allotted time the four teams will switch; the two teams that were playing the game will move to the skills, and the two teams that were doing the skills will move over and play the Cross-Ice game. Each team will get a chance to play three (3) Cross-Ice games, as well as work on developing their skills in various stations.



For more information on how to host a Cross-Ice Jamboree please contact Matt Miller at [Mattm@hockeysask.ca](mailto:Mattm@hockeysask.ca)

#### **SKILL STATIONS**

- ✓ Led by Hockey Saskatchewan instructors.
- ✓ Taken from Hockey Canada's Development Model.
- ✓ All the skill sessions will use blue 4oz pucks.
- ✓ **PROMOTION OF FUN!!**

#### **GAME ZONE**

- ✓ Games can be either 10, 12, or 20 minutes. Whatever the host MHA decides.
- ✓ Games can be played 5-on-5 or 4-on-4. The number of players will vary depending on each team.
- ✓ There will be **NO** face-offs after a goal is scored, or after a line change. In both instances, a puck will be shot in the corner to resume play.
- ✓ The goal of the **NO** face-offs during the game is to ensure the players skate as much as possible during the 20 minutes.
- ✓ Each game will be played with a blue 4oz puck.
- ✓ **NO** permanent goalies.
- ✓ **NO** specific skater positions.
- ✓ **NO KEEPING SCORE!**
- ✓ **PROMOTION OF FUN!!**

For more information about hosting a Jamboree, please email Matt Miller at [mattm@hockeysask.ca](mailto:mattm@hockeysask.ca)

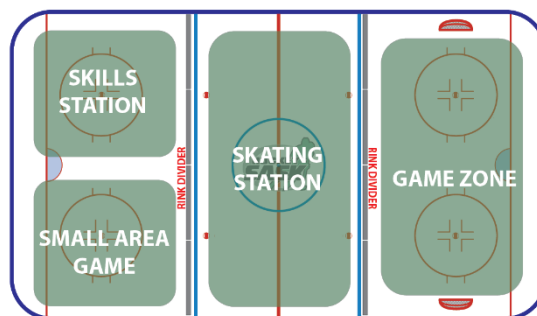
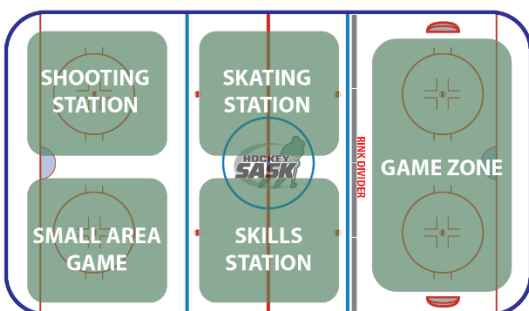
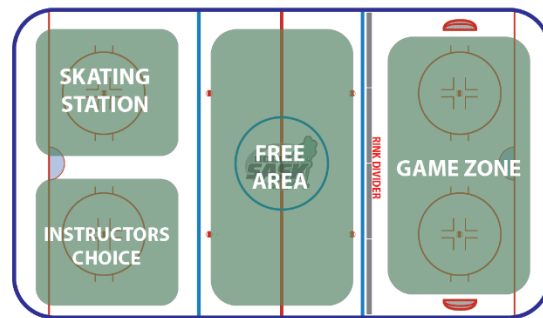
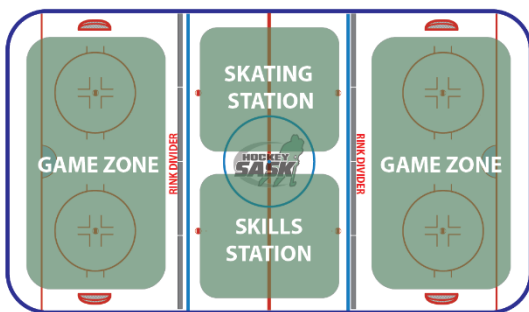


### RINK ORGANIZATION

The most effective way to teach basic skills of hockey is to divide your total group of players up into smaller manageable groups. The number of smaller groups you will be able to use depends upon:

- ✓ The total number of players (Try to divide them evenly).
- ✓ The different levels of skills of the players.
- ✓ The number of assistant instructors you have working with you.
- ✓ The number of different skills or components of each skill you intend to teach and the amount of ice available for your use.

The following diagrams are suggestions for dividing the ice into suitable areas for skills instructions, depending on the number of groups you have.





**SKILLS EVALUATION (CHECKLIST)**

**Phase I (Evaluation after 8 Practices)**

SKILL	EVALUATION (1= Weak, 10= Strong)	COMMENTS
<b>BALANCE AND AGILITY</b>		
1. Basic Stance		
2. Getting up from Ice		
3. Balance on one foot		
4. Jumping - One foot		
5. Gliding on 2 Skates		
6. Gliding on one skate - Forward		
7. Lateral crossover step and plant		
<b>STARTING AND STOPPING</b>		
8. T-Start		
9. One o'clock – eleven o'clock stops		
<b>FORWARD SKATING AND STRIDING</b>		
10. C-Cuts (Alternating)		
11. C-Cuts (Both Feet)		
12. Forward Striding		
<b>EDGE CONTROL</b>		
13. Figure 8's (Forward – Inside Edge)		
14. Figure 8's (Forward – Outside Edge)		
<b>TURNING AND CROSSOVERS</b>		
15. Glide Turns		
<b>STATIONARY PUCK CONTROL</b>		
16. Stance		



**Phase II (Evaluation after 16 Practices)**

SKILL	EVALUATION (1= Weak, 10= Strong)	COMMENTS
<b>BALANCE AND AGILITY</b>		
1. Gliding with knee bend		
2. Gliding on one skate (backwards)		
3. Lateral Crossover (continuous)		
<b>EDGE CONTROL</b>		
4. Figure 8's (Backwards – Inside Edge)		
<b>FORWARD SKATING AND STRIDING</b>		
5. Exaggerated Stride		
6. C-Cuts (Alternating)		
7. Gliding on two skates (Backwards)		
<b>STARTING AND STOPPING</b>		
8. Outside leg stop		
9. Backward C-Cut starts		
10. Front V-Start		
11. Two-legged backward stop		
<b>TURNING AND CROSSOVERS</b>		
12. Tight turns		
13. 360's (Left and Right)		
14. C-Cuts around circle-outside foot (Backwards)		
<b>STATIONARY PUCK CONTROL</b>		
15. Side-front-side		
16. Hands wide		
17. Hands together		
18. Narrow and wide combination		
<b>MOVING PUCK CONTROL</b>		
19. One leg (Left and Right)		
20. Narrow and wide combination		
21. Weaving with the puck		
<b>STATIONARY PUCK CONTROL</b>		
22. Sweep shot (Forehand)		
23. Sweep shot (Backhand)		



**Phase III (Evaluation after 24 Practices)**

SKILL	EVALUATION (1= Weak, 10= Strong)	COMMENTS
<b>TURNING AND CROSSOVERS</b>		
1. C-Cuts – around circle (Outside foot)		
2. Crossovers (Forwards)		
3. Crossovers (three quick / left and right)		
4. Backward one-foot stop & T-start		
<b>STARTING AND STOPPING</b>		
5. Crossover start		
6. One-leg backward stop		
7. Toe drag side and front		
8. Partner on knees (Moving Stick)		
9. Stick through legs		
10. Rotation		
11. Puck through legs from back		
<b>MOVING PUCK CONTROL</b>		
12. Open ice carry (Forehand)		
13. One ice carry (Backhand)		
14. Stick through legs		
<b>STATIONARY PASSING AND RECEIVING</b>		
15. Stationary forehand pass		
16. Stationary backhand pass		
17. Stationary bank pass		
<b>MOVING PASSING AND RECEIVING</b>		
18. Moving forehand pass		
19. Moving backhand pass		



### Phase IV (Evaluation after 32 Practices)

SKILL	EVALUATION (1= Weak, 10= Strong)	COMMENTS
<b>STARTING AND STOPPING</b>		
1. Two-foot parallel stop		
<b>TURNING AND CROSSOVERS</b>		
2. Mohawk on circles-open and reverse		
3. Pivots (bwd to fwd / fwd to bwd)		
4. Pivots open and reverse		
5. Crossovers (Backwards)		
<b>STATIONARY PUCK CONTROL</b>		
6. Switch hands		
7. Two pucks		
<b>MOVING PUCK CONTROL</b>		
8. Puck dots		
9. Puck inside pylon (off-stick)		
10. Puck in feet		
11. Toe drag skates on one side		
12. Puck through legs from back		
13. Switch hands		
14. Toe drag (Front and Side)		
15. Figure 8's (Two Pylons)		
<b>STATIONARY PASSING AND RECEIVING</b>		
16. Forehand pass (Backhand Receive)		
17. Backhand pass (Forehand Receive)		
<b>MOVING PASSING AND RECEIVING</b>		
18. Lead Pass		
<b>WRIST SHOT</b>		
19. Wrist shot (Forehand-Low)		
20. Wrist shot (Backhand-Low)		
<b>FLIP SHOT</b>		
21. Flip shot (Forehand)		
<b>INDIVIDUAL OFFENSIVE TACTICS</b>		
22. Body / Stick Fakes		





### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Now that Hockey Saskatchewan along with Hockey Canada have developed and approved Cross-Ice Hockey for ALL U7 players, the Hockey Saskatchewan Board of Directors has developed the following FAQs to offer further clarification to Minor Hockey Associations or teams as they move forward with the new format.

- What are the implications if I or our team doesn't follow the Cross-Ice or modified Half-Ice mandate and simply use full ice for all Under-7 activities?
  - The Hockey Saskatchewan Board of Directors has granted the following options to the Officer in Charge of Discipline, for any reported violations reported regarding teams or Associations not following the Cross-Ice at the U7 Program level. An investigation may conclude with:
    - Letter of warning and probation to the MHA and Team
    - A fine of \$500 levied upon the MHA
    - Eliminate any Tournament Sanctions for all age groups to the offending MHA
    - Prevent any teams from entering or hosting Hockey Saskatchewan sanctioned tournaments from the offending MHA
    - Eliminate any entry into Hockey Saskatchewan Provincial Playoffs for any teams in the offending MHA
  
- What should the U7 Program game structure be?
  - **Should there be periods? If so, how long? What should the length of the game be?**
    - Be flexible! Make the game fit the time of your ice slot!
    - If there is a one-hour time slot play two 25-minute periods with a short warm-up
  
  - **Should the score be kept? If not, can we? Should scoresheets be completed?**
    - Don't keep score, there is no need to do so!
    - If you are hosting a tournament, simply fill out the game sheets to indicate what players and coaches participated in the event for insurance purposes but please do not concentrate on the score!
    - The IP age division is about fun and skill development, not who wins a game!
  
  - **What should referees do?**
    - Have the young official drop the puck at the beginning of the game. If you want to drop the puck after each goal, have the young official do so or simply throw the puck in the corner and let the kids keep playing.
    - The young official will get the opportunity to get the feel of the game, how to skate to keep up to the play and how to move to keep out of the play with the smaller area.
    - These officiating aspects help ensure we develop & promote experiences for on-ice officials, which is an investment for the game.
  
  - **Do we need timekeepers? If they blow the horn when should this be done? In what intervals?**
    - If you use a timekeeper, simply have them set the clock for 2 minutes to blow the horn for a change of players.



- **What should the size of the nets be?**
  - Your choice! Options include:
    - Full-size nets
    - Modified smaller nets
    - Flip full-sized nets over
    - Two pylons 4 feet apart
- **Should there be dedicated goalkeepers?**
  - Absolutely not – don't worry about goaltenders let the players simply play and have fun!
- **What are the options if we don't have bumpers?**
  - Use 2x4s or 2x6s and lay them across the blueline
- **Should the player's boxes be used and if not, why not?**
  - Recommend not using them as it simply wastes time
  - Have all kids on the ice and those not participating in the game portion can be undertaking small area skill development with another coach and be ready to interchange
  - Keep kids moving and on the ice the entire length of the ice time
- **Should games be 6-on-6; 5-on-5; 4-on-4; 3-on-3?**
  - Again, be flexible and it is your choice depending upon the number of players per team!
  - If there are 8 players on one team and 9 on the other – play 4-on-4 with the extra players doing skill development drills while awaiting their time to play in the game
  - If each team has 15 players have two games of 5-on-5 going on at each end with the extra players working on skills in the neutral zone
- **Why can't we play full ice at some time later in the year? If we can what date can we do it?"**
  - The mandate is for the entire year and there are no exceptions. The focus on this age group is fun, skill development, and modified small area games
- **Is this just a money-grab that allows MHAs to put more kids on the ice at the same time? Will Under-7 registration costs be lowered now that more teams can be on the ice at the same time, reducing ice time costs?**
  - No
  - Cross-Ice hockey at the Under-7 age is not new – it has always been part of the program, which was built more than 35 years ago
  - This isn't about revenue – it's about delivering age-appropriate programming and skill development
  - One of the benefits of Cross-Ice is that it will allow MHAs who have not been delivering Cross-Ice at the U7 level to make more effective use of their ice time and availability in a safe manner



### OFFICIATING CROSS-ICE GAMES

#### INTRODUCTION

Based on the mandate set by Hockey Saskatchewan and Hockey Canada to use Cross-Ice hockey for all Initiation hockey to better help develop the skills of the players and offer age-appropriate regulations, Hockey Saskatchewan's Referee's Division sees an opportunity to also help develop and introduce our officials in this controlled environment.

The option to use one official on the ice for U7 games is still the local branch's choice and this officiating guide does not make this system mandatory, but simply provides an outline for those who chose to use this option and gives young officials some guidance.

#### BENEFITS

This is a valuable opportunity for newer officials to put on their uniform and get on the ice in live-action. This system will help them learn some basic aspects of being an official in a less formal and positive atmosphere.

Basic skills include: dropping pucks, skating skills, foundational positioning, spatial awareness, establishing good sightlines, and making decisions such as goals and minor infractions.

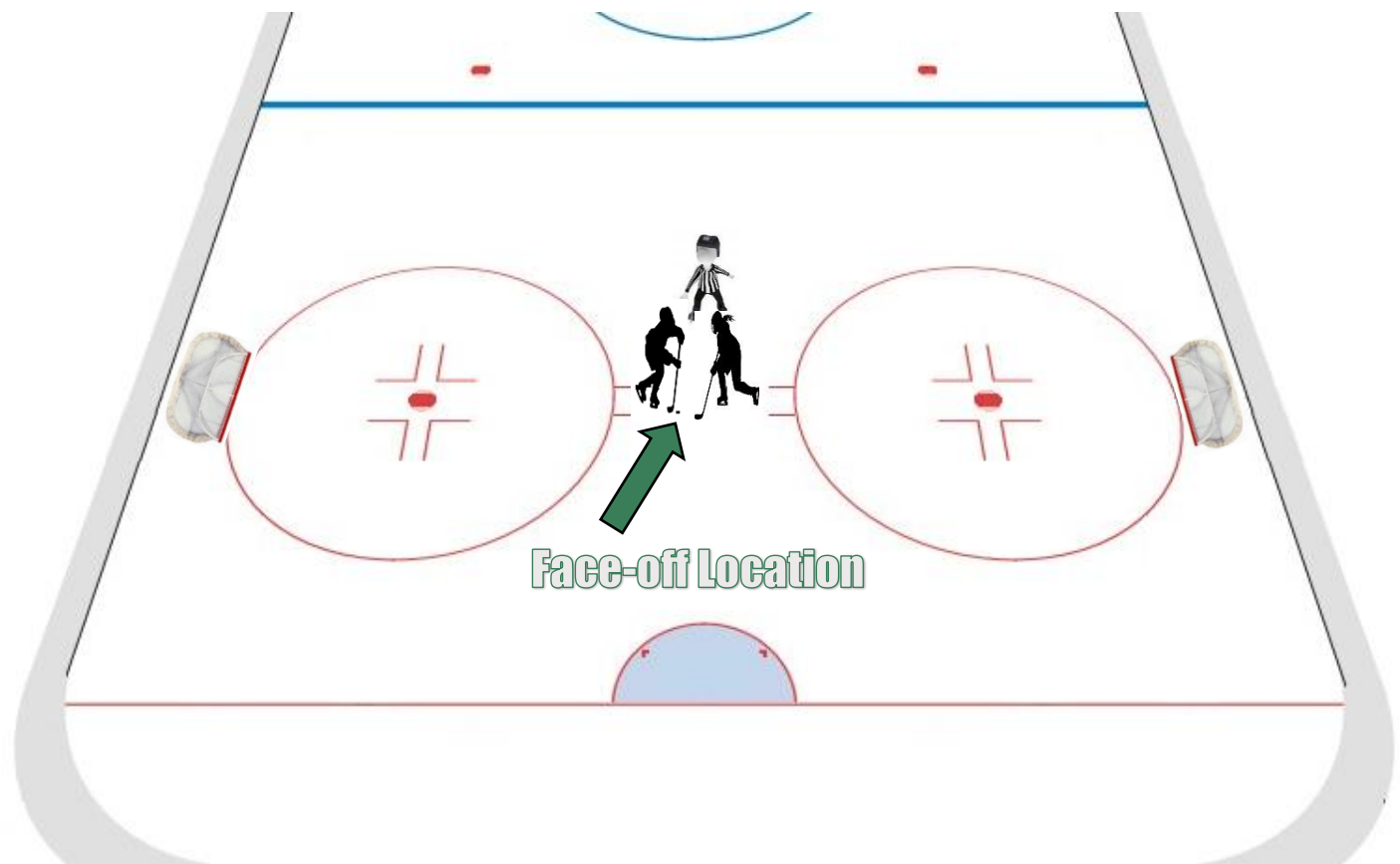
This format also provides an excellent opportunity for senior officials to mentor newcomers by shadowing them on the ice or evaluating them from the stands. The ability to mentor officials at ice level in this structure provides instantaneous feedback and assists in preparing these officials for Half-Ice and full-ice games in a two (2) or three (3) official system in their future.

It also gives the players and those at the rink that this is a 'real game' and that planning, and professionalism has gone into the experience for the players.

#### PROCEDURES

There is no absolute right or wrong way to handle every situation and local branches need to understand the importance of flexibility with the officials and procedures.

**Face-offs** – There will be one face-off location. Face-offs will occur at the start of each period and possibly each shift. There will be no need for face-offs after the puck is covered by the goalie or a goal is scored. The puck can be released to the corner and the game can continue.

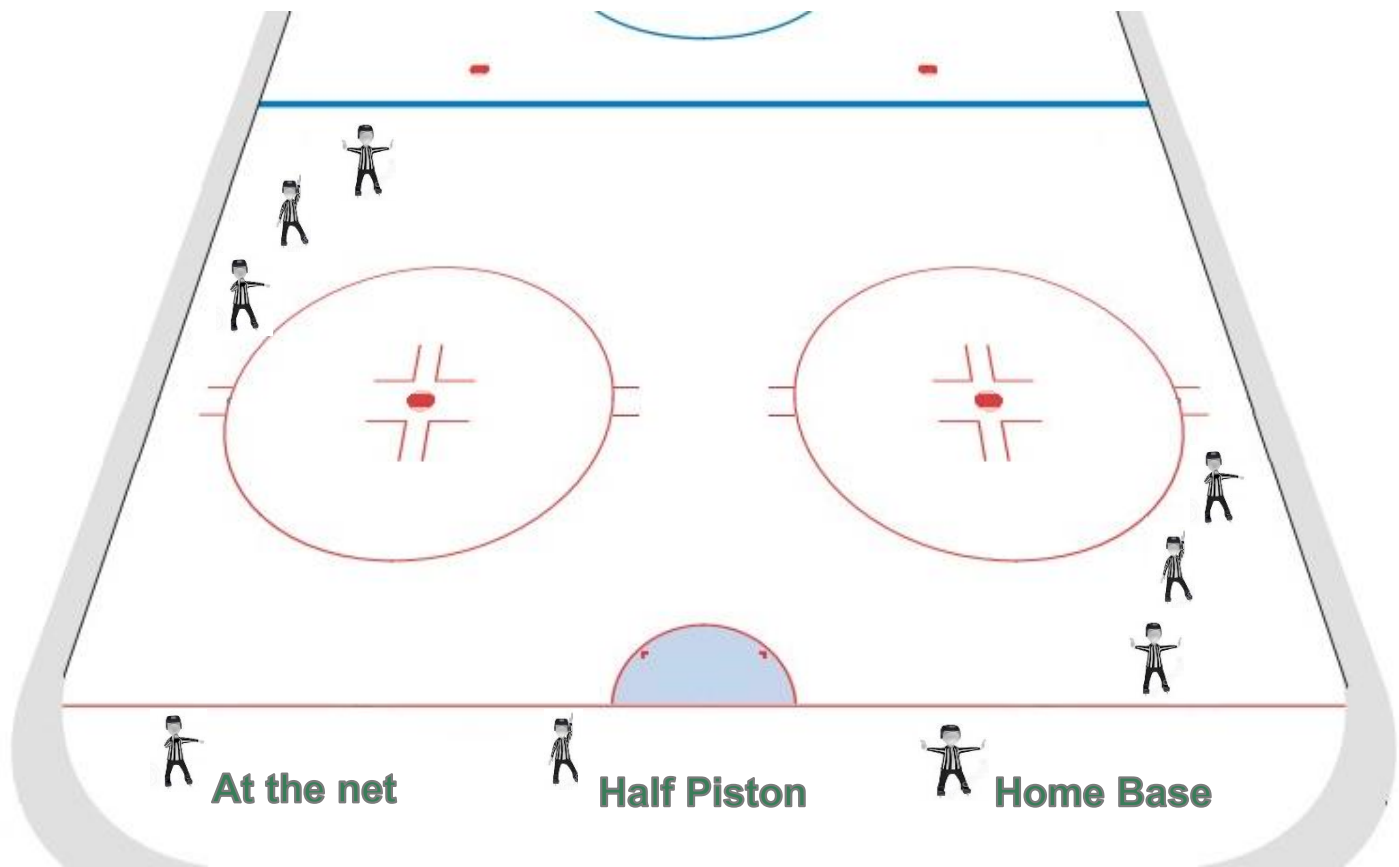


**Goals** – When the puck is scored, the official can signal the puck went in the net and assist in tossing the puck out and continuing play.

**Frozen Pucks & Game Flow** – When play is stopped because the acting goalie covered the puck, the official can blow their whistle and have the puck tossed to the corner to continue play. This can be the same procedure for pucks leaving the playing surface, or a player falling on the puck.

**Penalties** – There will very seldom be penalties called at the Initiation level. Often, it will be a coaching opportunity for the coaches on the ice to communicate with the player instead of sending someone off the ice.

**Positioning** - Foundational positioning principles will be used. The concept of the “cone” should be reserved for when full-ice play begins. Under the Cross-Ice structure, approximate “home base, half piston, and at the net” positions should be used to get officials comfortable with their proximity to the goal. Officials should follow the play approximately 10-15 feet behind the puck carrier. They should remain about 5-10 feet from the boards or playing area perimeters. The examples on the diagram below show guidelines for establishing recommended end-zone positions around the nets.



### CONCLUSION

For young players in the “full-ice game model” of development, the youngest players would require 180 games, and the older youth players would require 80 games to enjoy 60 minutes of actual puck possession time to execute their stickhandling, passing, pass receiving, and shooting skills. Professional and international players would require 60 games to ensure 60 minutes of puck control skill development. Many players never touched the puck in the game, especially in youth hockey. By giving children the opportunity to participate in Cross-Ice practicing and playing, their enjoyment of hockey as well as their hockey skills will be greatly enhanced.