

OWHA U11 Player Pathway Implementation Policy Highlights

Received from OWHA 03-Mar-2020

The Player Pathways provide local minor hockey associations a framework of age appropriate development guidelines which includes an optimal seasonal structure. The Hockey Canada/OWHA Player Pathway Policy can be found [here](#)

Policy items that **MUST** be followed:

1. Player Tryouts

- No tryouts prior to or during the first week of school.
 - i. No tryouts during the off-season phase (previous season, including March through August).
 - ii. No tryouts during the first week of school where school starts the week after Labour Day.
 - iii. Where school starts prior to Labour Day, there must be four skates/practices starting the week following Labour Day before tryouts commence.
- Must offer a minimum of four practice/skill sessions prior to formal evaluation starting.
- Must have a minimum of three form evaluation sessions:
- Players should not tryout based on a specific position but should be encouraged to play both forward and defense in tryouts.
- Players should be selected for teams based on skill, not positional preference.

2. Fair and Equal Ice Time

- Positional Rotation:
 - i. All players play all positions
- Goaltender Rotation:
 - i. Full-time goaltender allowed.
 - ii. Goaltenders rotate for equal amount of playing time throughout the regular season and playoffs.

3. Seasonal Structure

- Preparation Phase (up to 4 Weeks)
 - i. See Player Tryouts above.
- Development Phase (up to 4 weeks)
 - i. Teams must have a period of development time following tryouts prior to the start of the regular season.
- Development and Regular Season Phase (Up to 24 weeks)

- i. Recommended maximum of 45 games per year (includes exhibition, league, tournament and playoff games).
- ii. Seasonal Breaks
 - Playoff Phase (up to 4 weeks)
 - i. Tournament style.
 - Offseason Phase (end of season to August)

4. 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.
- Limit position-specific specialization (except for goalies).

Policy items that are ENCOURAGED and SUPPORT:

1. Season should allow for two (2) seasonal breaks (not including Christmas/long weekends).
 - a. Seasonal break would be a minimum of five (5) days without a scheduled game or mandatory practice.

The Policy and Recommendations for the U9 (Novice) Pathways have been identified with the parent and player in mind; allowing families to have their summer break back while still providing on-ice opportunities ahead of evaluations, giving players key seasonal breaks to allow for holidays and the chance to play other sports throughout the year and establishing consistent age appropriate programming that is in line with the Long-Term Player Development model.

The transition from Spring to Fall evaluations at these age groups allows the Local Hockey Associations to provide sanctioned non-traditional hockey programming (i.e. 3-on-3, 4-on-4, or skills clinics) beginning any time after the conclusion of the OWSA Provincial Championships.