

10 Indisputable Statistics Proving Cross Ice is Better Than Full Ice for Young Players:

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My brother Boe and I have been running LGS and LGS America for 10 years. Since day 1, thanks to some fantastic mentors, we have been promoting small area skill stations and small area games. Our first memory of cross ice being mandated dates back to 1988 when we arrived as kids in Switzerland. All clubs have been running 3 simultaneous cross ice games for small players for decades.

We have always felt great support from many of the players, coaches, and parents, with whom we have interacted. It led us to the creation of Hockey Drills and Small Area Games downloads, now sold around the world in over 15 countries. Yet we have always felt this undercurrent of disagreement from what we will call 'the old guard.' We don't see enough youth coaches moving away from traditional full ice flow drills towards skill isolation drills and small area battles (with the exception of the forward thinking associations who hire us of course!).

Having spent time coaching in the States, and Boe running our programs out of Maryland and DC, we have admired the innovative steps USA Hockey has taken to promote the benefits of cross ice hockey. Today the argument can now be made, based on FACT and DATA. Using the same analytics technology used by the NHL, USA Hockey has proved the benefits of cross ice hockey for young players more than double benefits of full ice games. They used 'good' U8 players in their analysis. In the video they don't even mention the proportionally smaller nets the goalies are using (brilliant, and done in every other net/field sport except hockey!).

The following statistics courtesy of USA Hockey Cross Ice Hockey Study

- 1.** 6x more shots on goal/player
- 2.** 5x more passes received/player
- 3.** 2x more puck battles/player
- 4.** 2x more puck touches/player
- 5.** 2x more pass attempts/player
- 6.** 2x more shot attempts/player
- 7.** 2x more change of direction pivots
- 8.** 1.75 shots/minute vs 0.45 shots/minute playing full ice
- 9.** Turns out the actual stats of the U8 game resemble those of an NHL game.
- 10.** Simply put by Bob Mancini, Manager of USA Hockey Athlete Development Model, "The numbers show what is good for a child."