



Initiation Program (IP) FAQs - Associations

1. What has been mandated by BC Hockey and what does it mean?

The BC Hockey Board of Directors mandated the following: [That] All Minor Hockey Associations (MHAs) are required to operate the Hockey Canada Initiation Program and Novice Program Development for participants below the Atom division. This means that all games/practices for Initiation players must take place on a cross-ice surface and all games/practices for Novice (Major and Minor) players must take place on a cross or half-ice surface.

BC Hockey has adopted program guidelines and resources to support and provide direction for our Local MHAs to implement and operate a skill development program for players eight (8) years of age and younger. Based on Hockey Canada's Long Term Player Development (LTPD) model, players who are eight (8) years old and younger should be focusing on having fun, learning skills and developing physical literacy. All programs should adhere to the following principles:

- a. The technical curriculum should focus on physical literacy and having fun
- b. The official playing surface for practices and games should be reduced to one-half, one-third, or one-quarter the size of a regulation playing surface. Additionally, while not ideal 3 on 3 Ice surfaces can be used.
- c. The equipment should be amended to fit the size and skill level of the player. i.e. Mini nets.
- d. Instructors should be trained in an appropriate manner to teach players of this age and skill level.

2. How does Long-term Athlete Development tie into the Initiation/Novice Program Delivery mandate?

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 should be encouraged. For optimal skill acquisition, the basic hockey skills of skating and puck control are introduced via the Initiation Program and continued at the Novice level by using a more suitable on-ice environment. Key tie-ins include:

- a. Refined fundamental movement skills and begin to acquire age appropriate basic hockey skills.
- b. Motor skills development and coordination
- c. Multi-Sport participation
- d. Fitness
- e. Agility, quickness, change of direction
- f. Suppleness, flexibility throughout the stage
- g. Active Start/FUNdamentals I & II





3. What are the benefits of the Initiation/Novice Program Delivery?

- a. This is the stage where children learn physical literacy; the interrelationship between movement skills and sport skills.
- b. Skills that children acquire during this stage will benefit them when they engage in any activity regardless of their level of participation
- c. Basic sport skill development in this stage should be well structured, positive, and done in a FUN and social environment.
- d. Cross-Ice Hockey has been proven to provide players with the following when compared to full ice (games):
 - 2x more puck battles
 - 6x more shots per player
 - 2x more puck touches
 - 3x more passes
 - 2x more change of directions
 - More 5ft passes
 - Every player (8 and under) will benefit from cross-ice hockey games.
- e. All programs should be structured with proper progression
- f. Encourages the concept of team, through player participation in on and off-ice activities
- g. implement fitness, fair play and co-operation aspects within the fun of the game
- h. More repetition/frequency in drills in one (1) ice session
- i. Hockey will be more appealing and rewarding to a wider range of children and their parents
- j. The feeling of being an important part of the action increases because of the small size of the rink
- k. Playing on a smaller surface allows for more puck contact resulting in improved puck control skills
- l. Decision-making skills are enhanced

4. How will the program be administered?

BC Hockey is relying on the local MHA to administer the Initiation/Novice Program Delivery program in their area. However, BC Hockey will be there to assist in the following ways:

- a. **Resources:** BC Hockey has developed a webpage devoted to the Initiation/Novice Program Delivery. Expect resource material to be continually added to this page including drill packages, support videos and parent education documents. If you have an idea for webpage content or structure, please contact info@bchockey.net our goal here is to serve our membership and support them through the changes.
- b. **IP District Leads:** We are in the process of identifying District Initiation and Cross-Ice Hockey Leads. The person identified for this position will champion the Initiation and Novice programming in your area and will work as a direct representative to BC Hockey for all program rollout and maintenance. Some of their duties include:
 - Serves as a member of the Initiation/Novice Program Delivery Hockey workgroup
 - Arrange and facilitate Initiation/Novice Program Delivery Hockey meetings in their district
 - Understand the Hockey Canada LTPD program and present where required
 - Educate and assist with effectively setting up cross-ice dividers
 - Act as a communication lead for branch Initiatives
 - Observe local level programming and assist with identified challenges





c. **Branch Support:** Our goal is to continually add to this FAQ document with questions from every MHA. We realize that the rollout of a program of this nature will raise questions that have not been thought of yet and we look forward to consulting with our branch and national experts to get the right answers.

5. How will we know we are doing a good job? What is success?

The biggest gauge of success with this programming Initiative would be whether or not the athletes are having fun. If smiles are seen through the cage then we know we are doing a good job! Some other measures of success that will be built into the Initiation/Novice Delivery Program are:

- a. Evaluated by each district using a branch standard
- b. Players retention
- c. Enrollment increasing
- d. Increased level of player development
- e. Parent/player surveys

6. What are the facility requirements to support the Initiation/Novice Program Delivery Program?

One of the biggest misconceptions concerning the Initiation/Novice Delivery Program is the requirement for expensive rink dividers. While these are great when available they are not required to operate the program. The ice can be broken up by using the lines on the ice, benches, or whatever else is available. For those MHAs who are interested in purchasing dividers please contact info@bchockey.net to find a list of suppliers. If you have an arena setup that you would like to share please let us know!

7. What is expected from our community, including our volunteer coaches and families?

We ask for acceptance and support of the Initiation/Novice Delivery Program as it gets implemented in your area. We would also appreciate an open dialogue with what works and what doesn't. We also need players, parents, coaches and administrators to understand that we are breaking the look of traditional hockey and to tender their Initial reaction with one based on the tangible information we've provided.

8. What resources can we expect to help with the transition?

- a. Hockey Canada/BC Hockey lesson plans, network app
- b. Training in implication of the Initiation Program
- c. Mentorship of MHA program volunteers
- d. District/MHA/Parent information packages regarding Initiation Program (presentations)
- e. Providing a curriculum built into a complete seasonal plan.
- f. District Initiation Representatives

9. We don't have the budget to purchase all the equipment required to support the Initiation Program. Is there any monetary support being provided?

At present BC Hockey does not have funding to purchase materials for implementation of the Initiation/Novice Program Delivery program. There are other options see question 6. Additionally, we are looking at potential sponsorship opportunities and will send out information.





10. What are best practices for Associations to ensure success of the program as we seek to support volunteer coaches and families? Some ideas include:

- a. Best practises guidelines developed by Hockey Canada/BC Hockey
- b. Full support of program, “Coach Kick Off Session” prior to start of season,
- c. Getting our coaches & parents on board with program
- d. Support BC Hockey District IP Lead

11. How many players should be participating in cross-ice or half-ice games?

This is dependent on many factors including skill level and number of players. There is no right amount of players that should be participating. These games could be 3 vs. 3, 4 vs. 4 or 5 vs. 5.

12. Gameplay questions:

- a. Should there be game numbers? No, there should not be game numbers for Initiation/Novice Hockey. They don't serve a purpose.
- b. Should we keep score? No, the focus should not be on competition.
- c. Do we hire referees? BC Hockey is working on an introduction to officiating program which will see young officials on the ice during cross-ice and half-ice games. The goal here is to slowly introduce the official to the game in a fun and non-threatening environment.
- d. Should we use modified nets? Yes, if they are available it makes sense to use modified nets (<http://www.omnisport.ca/products/hockey-accessories/goal-frames/>). Coaching personnel need to be creative and utilize the tools available to them.
- e. Score clock? The score clock can be used to time player shifts
- f. Additional gameplay content can be found here: http://cdn.agilitycms.com/hockey-canada/Hockey-Programs/Coaching/Initiation-Program/Downloads/initiation_implementation_2013_e.pdf

