



USA Hockey Program Recommendations 8 & UNDER (MITE)

OBJECTIVES

- ❖ Enjoyable introduction and experience in ice hockey
- ❖ Provide a healthy environment for fun and learning
- ❖ Teach the basic fundamental skills
- ❖ Stress participation, fun, and skill development
- ❖ Development of communication at the players' level of learning
- ❖ Introduction to games

PHILOSOPHY

Enjoyment and recreational benefits are the focal points of the new guidelines for youth hockey issued by the Board of Directors of USA Hockey. Registered teams play in the classifications of 8 & Under (Mite), 10 & Under (Squirt), 12 & Under (Pee Wee), 14 & Under (Bantam), 16 & Under (Midget), and 18 & Under (Midget), prompting the Youth Council of USA Hockey to emphasize the educational and recreational values of ice hockey.

The USA Hockey recommended guidelines encourage a noncompetitive environment in which children and youth can learn the basic skills without the distractions that are often associated with an overemphasis on winning. Mastery of the fundamental skills and the fun of playing are essential to the development of a lifelong interest in hockey and player development. Programs must be conducted to accommodate the number of new players who wish to play hockey and to reduce the number who become disenchanted and drop out.

These voluntary guidelines are directed at children's programs, but they should be implemented by adults if they are to influence youth hockey programs.

PARENTS' CODE OF CONDUCT

- ❖ Be a good example to your player.
- ❖ Help make your child's participation rewarding.
- ❖ Be understanding and supportive of the coach and the officials.
- ❖ Support and assist the program in a positive manner.
- ❖ The parent is the most important example to which a child can relate.
- ❖ Be everything you want your child to be.

RECOMMENDED PROGRAM

- ❖ Sharing ice; each practice should conclude with a scrimmage (approximately 20 minutes of play, cross-ice, simultaneously).
- ❖ Three practices to every game.
- ❖ We recommend a maximum of one hour practice sessions; youngsters are easily fatigued.
- ❖ Games should be played cross-ice.
- ❖ Starting times for games should be no later than 7:00 p.m.
- ❖ We encourage and recommend the implementation of in-house programs.



- ❖ Emphasize recreation and fun.
- ❖ The recommended number of games per season should be a maximum of 20 games.
- ❖ If possible, the local program should provide equipment on loan.
- ❖ Place an emphasis on skill development and learning the fundamentals
- ❖ We recommend that as many of the youngsters who wish to try, be given the opportunity to play all positions.
- ❖ Players should be given an opportunity to participate, regardless of their abilities.
- ❖ Scoring records and statistics should not be kept.
- ❖ Any awards should be inexpensive and based on participation and effort.

PROGRAM

A. On-Ice Training

- ❖ Emphasize the fundamentals
- ❖ Introduction to skating
- ❖ Introduction to puckhandling
- ❖ Introduction to passing and receiving
- ❖ Introduction to shooting
- ❖ Use of more than one coach
- ❖ Fun games
- ❖ Cross ice/small game activities

B. Off-Ice Activities

- ❖ Encourage the players to participate in other sports and activities.
- ❖ For this age, exercises that improve dexterity, agility, coordination and group participation are important.
- ❖ Emphasize fun.

PHYSICAL PREPARATION

- ❖ Daily physical activities
- ❖ Group games which do not require a high degree of organization, such as tag, keep-away and kick ball, etc.
- ❖ Select activities which permit all of the players to participate and achieve some measure of success and satisfaction. Praise and encouragement are important to these players.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION

- ❖ Positive reinforcement; build confidence.
- ❖ Stress group participation and sharing.
- ❖ Be aware that some youngsters are experiencing uneven growth, causing poor coordination and lack of balance. Some are easily fatigued.
- ❖ Be concerned with the youngster, not the level of performance.
- ❖ Support and protect the player in situations they are not prepared to handle.



EQUIPMENT

- ❖ Use blue pucks (USA Hockey Rule 306)
- ❖ Use six goals
- ❖ Use small, portable boards to divide the rink at the blue lines
- ❖ Recommend lightweight equipment for the players

SKILLS & ABILITIES

Suggested Emphasis for 8 & Under (Mite)

PERFORMANCE AREAS					
Skating	Puck Control	Passing & Receiving	Shooting	Checking	Goalkeeping
Ready Position	Lateral Dribble	Forehand	Wrist Shot	Poke Check	Basic Stance
Forward Stride	Forward to Backward Dribble	Backhand	Backhand	Lift the Stick Check	Parallel Shuffle
Edge Control		Receiving (stick)	Flip	Angling	Lateral T-Glide/Push
Control Turn	Forehand Shift				Forward & Backward Movement
Crossover Start (right/left)	Backhand Shift				Stick Saves
Forward Crossunder	Attacking the Triangle				Body Saves
Control Stop	Change of Pace				Glove Saves
Backward Skating					Leg Saves
Backward Stop					Stacking Pads
					"V" Drop
					Rebounds