



HOCKEY NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR INITIATION PROGRAM

WHY CROSS ICE?

Hockey Newfoundland & Labrador in partnership with Hockey Canada believe, Cross Ice hockey or hockey on a smaller surface, is an important part of age-appropriate training for Initiation and even Novice players. Using a smaller surface in Initiation hockey offers several benefits, including increased puck battles, increased puck touches for all players, puck carriers will have to avoid more players in the small areas, etc. All of these benefits are extremely important in the long-term development of each player.

This Cross Ice practicing and playing model has been used in many leading hockey nations around the world for a number of years and has stood the test of time. It has been tested and proved that children who begin their hockey training in this environment have an outstanding

hockey experience. Parents may ask the question why should my child play Cross Ice hockey? What benefits will this bring? And they may believe that they want their child playing like professionals do, on full ice, because they want their child to experience "real hockey".

To help address these questions, let's think about a child trying to skate with a puck while performing a drill the entire 200 feet from one end of the rink to the other. How long will this take? How much energy will this require? Will the player's decision making skills be enhanced more in the close action of the smaller Cross Ice surface or in the wide-open area of the full ice surface? In which situation will the child be more involved in the action?

GENERAL ORGANIZATION OF CROSS ICE

- More efficient use of time and space.
- The size of the rink is in proportion to the size of the players.
- The child sized goal nets are in proportion with the size of players.
- The use of the blue 4oz puck is recommended.
- More ice time for practicing and playing is made available to more teams within a single Association.
- Many teams can practice and play by sharing the ice surface.
- Drills designed according to the varying skill levels of players within the group are easier to organize.

BENEFITS OF CROSS ICE

- More children get a chance to play hockey.
- Hockey IQ, or understanding the principles of the game, is being developed at a young age.
- More children will experience a feeling of success when playing hockey.
- Group sizes become smaller which means learning and teaching will become more effective.
- More repetition/frequency in drills.
- Children remain active between their shifts with various activities in the neutral zone.
- Playing on a smaller surface allows for a more puck contact resulting in improved puck control skills.
- The higher tempo of cross ice games results in players needing to make quicker decisions.
- Scoring skills are enhanced and although child sized goal nets are not mandatory, using these will give the players more accurate shooting opportunities.
- The speed in playing situations increases, which will require quicker mental and physical reactions by the players. This is because there are no unnecessary breaks in the game.

IDEAL SEASONAL STRUCTURE

- Start late September – Mid-October
(Example – Adjust to your MHA ice schedule)
- 35-40 practices
 - Small Area Games
 - Skills Stations
 - 45-60 mins
 - 5:1 player/coach ratio

Games start no early then Dec 15th

- All games cross-ice
- No full-time goalies
- Max 20 modified games
- No standings or play-offs
- Jamborees as opposed to tournaments



LTPD STAGE FUNDAMENTALS

- Small roster sizes, no goalies
- 4-6 teams each ice session
- Work as Coach Groups
- Well organized stations
- 90% Skills, 10% Individual Tactics
- Skating Fundamentals
- Agility, Balance, Coordination
- Positive & FUN!

