HOCKEY NL

U9 HOCKEY HALF ICE POLICY

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1.0	September 2026	Original revision	Board Directors

Classification:	Under 9 Structure		
Policy Section/Contact: Operations	Minor/ Female	**Approved By:**	Board
Effective Date:	September 18, 2026	**Next Review Date:**	September

1. Purpose

This Policy establishes the provincial framework for U9 seasonal structure, game format, mandatory delivery requirements, and programming expectations to ensure age-appropriate participation and a consistent development experience across Hockey NL.

This Policy serves as an internal governance document for Hockey NL and its Members. The Hockey Canada U9 Player Pathway remains the primary public-facing document outlining the development philosophy and programming expectations for participants, families, and coaches.

2. Seasonal Structure

September – Evaluations & Development Phase

Used for evaluations and early-season development.

- Timelines may vary based on school calendars and Member scheduling.
- No evaluations may occur before or during the first week of school.
- No evaluations may occur during the off-season (March–August).
- Where school starts after Labour Day: no evaluations during the first week of school.
- Where school starts before Labour Day: a minimum of four practices/skill sessions must occur in the week following Labour Day before evaluations begin.
- No games permitted.

October 1 – Six Weeks Prior to Good Friday Annually

All U9 games must be played on half-ice.

Six Weeks Prior to Good Friday – End of Season – no later than April 30

U9 programs may transition to full-ice games.

3. Programming Options

3.1 Mixed-Age Programming (Ages 7–8)

Members offering mixed programming must select one of the following:

Option 1 – Full-Season Half-Ice
Half-ice programming delivered for the full season for both age groups.

Option 2 – Half-Ice with Transition
Half-ice programming from October 1 to Six Weeks Prior to Good Friday.
Optional full-ice games beginning Six Weeks Prior to Good Friday.

3.2 Single-Age Programming (U8 and U9)

U8 (7-Year-Old Players)
Half-ice for the entire season.

U9 (8-Year-Old Players)
Half-ice from October 1 to Six Weeks Prior to Good Friday.
Optional full-ice games beginning Six Weeks Prior to Good Friday.

4. Player Pathway Requirements

The following requirements apply to the delivery of U9 hockey:

4.1 Pre-Skates (Practice/Skill Sessions Prior to Evaluations)

A minimum of four practices or skill sessions must occur before formal evaluations begin.

4.2 Formal Evaluation Process

A minimum of three formal evaluation sessions must be delivered.

4.3 Development Phase

A development phase must occur after team selection and before the start of regular season games.

4.4 Fair and Equal Ice Time

- All players must receive, closely as possible, equal ice time as per Hockey NL Ice Time Allocation Policy. Ice-Allocation-Policy-Updated-October-2023.pdf
- Bench shortening for the purpose of winning is not permitted.
- Goaltenders must receive equitable participation.

4.5 Playoffs

There are no playoffs in U9 hockey.

4.6 Relationship to Hockey Canada Player Pathways

All additional delivery requirements for U9 hockey are governed by the Hockey Canada U9 Player Pathway and all applicable Hockey Canada Player Pathways. Where inconsistencies exist, the Player Pathway documents take precedence.

5. Reference Documents

- Hockey Canada U9 Player Pathway

Revision History

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September 18, 2026	1.O	