

WELCOME TO UNDER 8 HOCKEY

Under 8 Hockey is aimed at boys and girls who are turning 6, 7 or 8 during this season. Players who are turning 9 and who have not played hockey before may also be included in a team.

The main aim of Under 8 hockey is to allow the players to learn the skills and strategies of hockey in an enjoyable and positive environment. The emphasis is on participation rather than winning. Team sheets are not required as match results (win/ loss) are not recorded and ladders are not maintained.

Fair play and sportsmanship are extremely important – whether it be players, coaches or spectators. Teams are encouraged to share or loan players if their opposing team (from any club) has less players than their own team. Coaches are encouraged to modify their team positions as required to avoid stronger players dominating the game.

Games are 20 minute halves, with 5 minutes half time.

Teams may consist of 5 to 7 players, with 7 being ideal. It is preferable to have all players participating and not to use interchange, but if there are too many players, the game becomes very crowded. A maximum of 8 players on the field at the one time is recommended, so if you have extra players interchange may become necessary.

MODIFIED RULES FOR UNDER 8

The **game** is played by two teams of 6 or 7 players. Goalkeepers are not used in Under 8 hockey, so no player is permitted to use their feet or body to stop or play the ball.

Teams toss to decide which team starts from the centre spot with the ball. The other team has choice of ends. After the interval teams change ends and the other team has first possession.

There is 1 **umpire** who is to be obeyed at all times.

The **field** is 45 to 55 metres long and 23 to 27 m wide, equivalent to a quarter of a full size hockey field.

Goals may be flags, markers or wooden boards, placed 3 m apart.

The "shooting circle" is not used. A 10 m "defensive zone" is used instead

Ball. A white or coloured "Minkey" ball of about 23 cm circumference and 100 g in weight is used. This is lighter than the ball normally used.

Sticks have a flat face on the left side only. The weight of the stick must not be more than 737 grams. The stick must be of a size so that it will pass through a 51 mm ring. Sticks can be bought in varying lengths to suit the height of the child.

Footwear may be running shoes, hockey boots, football or gym boots depending on the surface. When playing on synthetic surface or gravel pitches no football boots or boots with long stops are permitted. No spikes or baseball boots are permitted at any time.

To **start the game** or to restart after a goal. Each team starts in their own defending half of the field. A player of the team with possession (usually the centre forward) passes the ball from the centre of the field. The ball may be passed forward or backward. Once the ball has been passed, players of both teams may move into the other side of the field. No opposition player is allowed within 5 metres of the ball until the ball is passed. After a goal is scored, the team just scored against has the possession to restart the game.

A **bully** is used to restart the game under special circumstances. A player from each team stands square across the field, facing each other, with their own defending goal on their right, and with the ball placed between them. Each player taps the ground beside the ball and then the flat face of the opponent's stick, with contact taking place directly over the ball. This is done one time only before either player can play the ball. All other players must be 5 metres from the ball but may otherwise stand anywhere on the field. A bully is taken close to the location of the ball when play was stopped but not within 15 metres of the back-line.



A **goal is scored** when the whole ball passes completely over the goal line into the goal, after being touched by the stick of an attacker inside the opposing team's defensive zone. The team scoring most goals wins.

Rules of play. Players must not:

- Play without a stick, or use or swing the stick in a dangerous way
- Touch, handle or interfere with other players or their sticks or clothing, or intimidate or impede another player
- Play the ball with the back of the stick
- Hit or push the ball so that the ball is raised off the ground, either intentionally or unintentionally.
The ball must go along the ground at all times.
- Play the ball dangerously or in a way which leads to dangerous play
- Stop, kick, propel, pick up, throw or carry the ball with any part of their body.
- Obstruct an opponent who is attempting to play the ball
- Tackle unless in a position to play the ball without body contact.
- Intentionally enter the goal their opponents are defending or run behind either goal.

PENALTIES are awarded for breaches of the rules, *where the breach creates a disadvantage for the opposing team.*

Free pass to the other team - is given for an offence by a player anywhere on the field.

- If there is an offence by the attacking team inside the opposition's Defensive Zone, a free pass is taken by the defending team from the line at the top of the Defensive Zone.
- If there is an offence by the defending team inside their own Defensive Zone, a free pass is taken by the attacking team from the line at the top of the Defensive Zone.
- A free pass may be a hit or a push, but must not be raised.
- A goal cannot be scored directly from a free pass.
- The ball must be stationary when the free hit or push is taken, and must move at least one metre before another player of the team which took the free hit is allowed to play it.
- After taking the free hit, the player taking the hit must not play the ball again or approach within playing distance of the ball until it has been played by another player.
- All players must be at least 5 metres away from the ball until the ball is played.

Penalty Push - a penalty push is given:

- For an offence by a defender in the Defensive Zone which prevents the probable scoring of a goal
- For an intentional offence in the Defensive Zone by a defender against an opponent who has possession of the ball or an opportunity to play the ball
- To take a penalty push, the ball is placed on the penalty spot, six metres from the goal line. One player from the defending team is selected to defend the push, standing on the goal line. One player from the attacking team is selected to take the push. All other players must stand well away from the Defensive Zone. The ball may be pushed but cannot be hit. The umpire will blow a whistle to indicate when the push may be taken. The defender's feet must not move until the ball is played. Once the push is taken the defender may move to stop the ball using the stick only. The attacker has one chance only to push.

Out of play

If the ball goes over the back line (or goal line) outside the goal

- from the stick of an attacker or unintentionally from a defender's stick - a free pass is given to the defending team, to be taken at the top of the Defensive Zone and opposite where the ball went out
- deliberately by a defender anywhere in the defensive half - a free pass is given to the attacking team to be taken at the top of the Defensive Zone and opposite where the ball went out.
- If the ball goes over the side line, a free pass is given to the opposition team of the player who last touched the ball. The pass is taken from the spot on the line where the ball went out.