

## American Development Model High Performance Club Overview



High Performance Clubs will be required to follow the designated USA Hockey Long-Term Athlete Development protocols on training-to-game ratios and incorporate National Team Development Program training philosophies.

The HPCs will be required to run 8 & Under, 10 & Under and 12 & Under programs that follow the LTAD model as a feeder system, or partner with existing Tier 2 clubs to ensure that the appropriate model is being followed.

The structure of USA Hockey's 12 & Under program is an integral part of the player developmental model for both the Hockey for Life track and the High Performance track. The developmental model for both tracks is the same through the 12 & Under level.

### **8 & Under**

Through the 8 & Under age group all competitions are run cross ice. The goal is to provide an environment that focuses on the development of the ABC's of fundamental movement skills. The emphasis is on fun and developing a passion for the sport.

Teams shall be divided into three groups of equal abilities for half-ice/cross-ice competition purposes. (Top 1/3; middle 1/3; bottom 1/3) All players should be evaluated as:

1. Advanced = top 33%
2. Intermediate = middle 33%
3. Beginner & Less Skilled = bottom 33%

Players can move between these groups as they progress through the season. Practice/Training can include teams from any/all of these three levels. During the cross-ice competitions the more advanced players may be placed against each other to balance the competition equally. Team composition is ideally at a maximum of 9 to 13 skaters per team. The goaltender position is rotated between team members.

A gymnasium/off-ice component is also included at this level. A 30-minute session prior to, or immediately following the ice sessions, will be incorporated into the basic practice plan. One gymnasium/off-ice session per week for this age group is required. The focus continues to be on the ABC's of fundamental movement skills. An introduction to warm-up and cool down can begin during this age bracket to enhance the future receptiveness to training. Components that enhance speed and quickness should also be incorporated to address this particular window of optimal trainability.

This age group shall be encouraged to play multiple sports at different times throughout the year with no periodization schedule implemented.

The on-ice schedule should consist of a maximum of two or three ice sessions per week with the sessions lasting no longer than 50 minutes. The occasional, monthly, half-ice/cross-ice jamboree can be used as the third ice session for the week.

Competition should be limited to local competition at this level to reduce the time and financial commitment for players and families. Extended competition (out of town) at this level has no long-term benefit for the player.

### **Training and Competitive Environment:**

- **Training/Competition Ratio:** No formal competition

- **Training Volume:** Hockey two times per week, with session length no longer than 50 minutes in the Learn to Play Program. A third session at the 8 & Under level can be held for an informal competition - cross ice/half-ice games
- **Training Year:** 4 weeks/month, 5 months/year
- **Team Composition:** Teams should consist of a maximum of 9 to 13 skaters. The goaltender position is rotated among team members.
- **Team Structure:** All players should be evaluated as:
  1. Advanced = top 33%
  2. Intermediate = middle 33%
  3. Beginner & Less Skilled = bottom 33%

Teams shall be divided into three groups of equal abilities for half-ice/cross-ice competition purposes. (Top 1/3; middle 1/3; Beginner & Less Skilled 1/3) Players shall be grouped into teams of like abilities, with the overall focus on evenly distributing the player ability pool across all teams.
- **Competition format:** All competitions are held cross-ice/half-ice with the focus on skill development not outcomes. At 8 & Under, the occasional jamboree can be held as a third ice touch for the week.
- **Overall activity ratios:** 25% hockey, 75% other sports and activities

#### **8 & Under (Mites)**

9 - 13 skaters per team; no full-time goalies  
 2 - 3 ice touches per week  
 50-minute ice sessions  
 20 weeks per season  
 = 50 - 60 ice touches per year  
 Minimum of 16 cross-ice/half-ice games and 34 practices  
 Maximum 20 cross-ice/half-ice games and 40 practices

#### **10 & Under**

At this age group, the LTAD model program will focus on the greatest level of individual skill development in order to maximize the window of optimal trainability. The prescribed 70-to-30 percent training-to-competition ratios should be strictly adhered to.

Club structure should incorporate players who are grouped into teams of like abilities, with the overall focus on evenly distributing the player ability pool across all teams within in their skill-level. Teams shall be divided into two groups of equal abilities for competition purposes. (Top 1/2; bottom 1/2) All players should be evaluated as:

1. Top 50%
2. Bottom 50%

Practice/Training can include teams from both of these levels.

Team composition will include a roster of 10-12 skaters and one goaltender. The physiological aptitudes of players at this age can easily handle the playing requirements of competing every other shift. This will increase each player's individual puck touches within the competition and make the individual game more productive in player development terms. Competitions should be limited to the local area. This is the age when club-to-club competition can be introduced. All teams within the club at this age group must be registered at the same level to help address the balancing of all teams within the association.

The model LTAD 10 & Under program should consist of three-to-four ice touches each week. All training sessions are in groups of two to four teams with the focus on hockey skills and small group tactical awareness. Sessions should be 60 minutes in length.

Multiple sport participation shall be encouraged. A periodization or double periodization schedule should be incorporated to maintain interest and help with basic skills development.

A gymnasium component must also be incorporated twice each week for 30-to-40 minutes either prior or post practice. Athleticism and hockey skills should be the focus.

All hockey in the United States is Tier 2 at the 10 & Under level. The need for extensive competition at this age is counter-productive to maximizing player potential. The more community based the club can be at these ages, the better stability that will be displayed at the later age groups.

### **Training and Competitive Environment:**

Formal competition can be introduced in this stage, although it must not divert the focus from training. Competitions should be limited to the local geographic area. Competition should be fun, and structured to address differences in training age and abilities. Athletes should be recognized for their success and achievement. Training should include small-area games to encourage the application of skill techniques in game play. Small-area games help develop a player's decision making abilities.

- **Training/Competition Ratio:** 70% training, 10% competition specific training (Exhibitions/Scrimmage Games), and 20% competition
- **Training Volume:** 3 to 4 times hockey per week, with session length of 60 minutes at 10 & Under level.
- **Training Year:** 4 weeks/month, 7 months/year - a double periodization calendar will aid structuring and help maintain player interest.
- **Team Composition:** Team composition will include a roster of 10-12 skaters and one goaltender at 10 & Under. The physiological aptitudes of players at this age can easily handle the playing requirements of competing every other shift. This will increase each player's individual puck touches within the competition and make the individual game more productive in player development terms.
- **Team Structure:** At 10 & Under, all players within the club should be grouped into teams of like abilities at two different levels, with the overall focus on evenly distributing the player ability pool across teams within in their skill level. Teams shall be divided into two groups of equal abilities for competition purposes (top 50%; bottom 50%). Training/practice sessions can include teams from both levels.
- **Competition format:** This is the stage when club to club competition can be introduced. Competitions are full ice for 10 & Under, with game length of 60 minutes.
- **Overall activity ratios:** 25% hockey, 25% fitness through sport, 50% other sports

#### **10 & Under (Squirts):**

95 - 100 total ice touches per year  
3 - 4 times per week for 60 minutes  
6 to 7 month season  
75 to 80 practices and 20 to 25  
10-12 skaters & one goalie per team

## 12 & Under

At the 12 & Under (Peewee) level, teams should maintain a 70% training, 10% competition specific training (exhibition/scrimmage) and 20% competition ratio to maximize the skill acquisition optimal window of trainability. Clubs should look to provide four ice touches each week for all 12 & Under teams. While it is recommended that roster sizes be kept small, an expansion to 15 skaters and two goalies is now allowed. Shared ice practices should consist of two or three teams.

The club may begin at this level to group players onto teams of like ability. While separation on ability is now allowed, the club must field more than one team at the highest level that the club participates in at the Peewee level. **As an example, if a club has enough players for three Peewee teams, it would need to field two or more Peewee A teams before a Peewee B team and should balance the A teams based on talent level.** Two B teams and one A team are not allowed. The goal at this level is still the maximum individual development with a process-driven model not an outcome-based model.

Clubs should look at structuring their organization as broadly as possible through the Peewee age categories. Limit player cuts for the top level of play to as few as possible. Player retention at the top level should be the goal. Competition and the limiting of positions at the top level will be introduced at a later time. By keeping the base wide, it allows the more skillful players to have greater success and it allows for the lesser players to emulate the better players. Both situations are beneficial for the individuals involved.

At the Peewee level, the focus should be on individual skills and small group tactics. **All teams within the club shall receive the same number of ice touches per week regardless of level.**

### **Training and Competitive Environment:**

Formal competition can be introduced in this stage, although it must not divert the focus of training. Competitions should be limited to the local geographic area. Competition should be fun, and structured to address differences in training age and abilities. Athletes should be recognized for their success and achievement. Training should include small-area games to encourage the application of skill techniques in game play. Small-area games help develop a player's decision making abilities.

- **Training/Competition Ratio:** 70% training, 10% competition specific training, and 20% competition
- **Training Volume:** Hockey four times per week at 12 & Under (Peewee).
- **Training Year:** 4 weeks/month, 7 months/year - a double periodization calendar will aid structuring and help maintain player interest.
- **Team Composition:** At the 12 & Under level the roster size can expand to 15 skaters and two goalies.
- **Team Structure:** At 12 & Under, the club may begin to group players onto teams of like ability. While separation on ability is now allowed, the club must field more than one team at the highest level that the club participates in at the 12 & Under level. For example, if a club has enough players for three Peewee teams they would need to field two or more Peewee A teams before a B team. The club should balance the A teams in regards to talent level. The goal at this level is still the maximum individual development with a development process-driven model, not an outcome-based model.
- **Competition format:** Full-ice competitions for 12 & Under. With game length of 60 minutes.
- **Overall activity ratios:** 25% hockey, 25% fitness through sport, 50% other sports

### **12 & Under (Peewee):**

105 - 120 total ice touches per year

4 times per week for 60 minutes  
7 - month season  
80 to 90 practices and 30 to 35 games  
15 skaters and two goalies per team

### **13 & Under (Bantam) to 18 & Under (Midget) High Performance component**

A national HPC league will be established with regional divisions. Games are played within the HPC system. This will ensure the quality-level of play. To maximize the competition environment, games will be played as three, stop-time periods. Competition-to-training ratios, as well as game limits will be in place for each age bracket based upon the LTAD model. Competition within regions will be established to reduce costs. Separate 'showcase' events can provide additional cross-region play. These showcases will provide excellent competition at a reduced cost and provide scouting opportunities for the players. As part of the 'competition specific training' component, teams may play up to five exhibition games against teams of their choices (E.G. non HPC teams).

**It should be noted that players not selected to play on an HPC team, should be encouraged to play competitively on a Tier I or Tier II team in the same or different club. All players shall have the opportunity to tryout for an HPC team the following season. All other players should be encouraged to play the game in the Hockey for Life track.**

Ideally, a 36-team league is the goal with six regional divisions of six teams each. The United States will be divided into the most cost-effective travel groupings.

To help increase the number of participants, HPC teams will be birth-year teams, instead of the traditional two-year age category teams. Players should be club registered, not team registered, to allow for player movement due to injuries. Teams can carry a roster of 18 players, (10 forwards, six defenseman and two goalies) at the 13 & Under to 16 & Under levels. If players are injured, movement can be done freely within the club. Each HPC will field individual birth-year teams at 13U, 14U, 15U and 16U. Teams at 13 to 16 will each be allowed up to three late year date-of-birth (September to December) players from the age group above them. This allows for some room to address late maturing players and the birth date effect. At the 18 & Under category, the HPCs will field a single team. This will help to account for the attrition to NTDP, Junior, and NCAA.

USA Hockey will develop a 'Best Practices' guidelines for player development and coaching for each age group to follow the appropriate LTAD model.

Games will be officiated by selected USA Hockey officials who are targeted as part of the officiating high-performance track. This will ensure the highest quality game environment for players, coaches and clubs.

The appropriate off-ice components need to be included at all levels of the HPC operation. A gymnasium/off-ice component is a key to achieving high performance potential. Off-ice training at all levels is necessary as well as an expectation to play complimentary sports.

USA Hockey will establish a mentoring program to assist in the growth and development of coaches within the high performance program. Mentors will come from USA Hockey as well as selected collegiate and professional coaches. HPC coaches will also participate in the regional off-season programs to provide more interaction with the U.S. National Team coaches and selected professionals.

USA Hockey will pay particular attention and support to the 12U, 10U, and 8U coaches. These age groups are the MOST IMPORTANT in the long-term success of any high performance program and should receive significant assistance. A Coaching Education Program (CEP) track will be developed specifically for each age category. Mentoring relationships with USA Hockey staff and select coaches will be established. Special workshops will be held to help address the needs of these coaches.

HPC coaches will also be provided an opportunity to attend the NTDP internship program. It is also possible to occasionally include an HPC coach on a staff of one of our National Teams.

The High Performance Club structure will have oversight by the High Performance Director. The director will have six high performance managers, each with the responsibility of overseeing a six-club region. These individuals will be responsible for the performance markers (to be established) for each of their subordinate clubs.

Player movement into the HPCs will come by a vertical track through the 12 & Under LTAD structured programs. This will provide a base of players who have a solid foundation in basic movement and core hockey skills to reach their potential. A horizontal transfer of players is also available through the outside Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs as later developing players pass through the maturation process. Biological age considerations must always be kept in mind.

Tryouts for each HPC team will be scheduled within the same time frame (to be established) so as not to interfere with the athletes' periodization training calendar.

USA Hockey will utilize its resources to develop a player profile and tracking system for all the players within the HPC system. Progress can be monitored from year to year and players promoted to Junior, NCAA and the NHL.

#### **High Performance Track 13 & Under (Bantam) to 16 & Under (Midget)**

- **Training/Competition Ratio:** 60% training, 10% competition specific training (exhibition/scrimmage games), and 30% competition.
- **Training Volume:** 4 to 5 times hockey per week, with session length of 60 to 80 minutes at 14 & Under (Bantam) and 16 & Under (Midget) levels. Begin strength training two times per week to coincide with Peak Height Velocity. Speed training 2-3 times per week.
- **Training Year:** 4 weeks/month, 9 months/year - Double periodization calendar will aid structuring and help maintain player interest
- **Team Composition:** Team composition will include a roster of 16 skaters and two goaltenders. (10 forwards, six defensemen, two goalies).
- **Team Structure:** Teams in these age groups are made up of players of like ability with out restrictions.
- **Competition format:** 14 & Under (Bantams) with 2.0 hour ice time play 17-minute stop-time period games with one ice resurface after the second period. 16 & Under (Midget) with 2.5 hours ice time shall play 20-minute stop-time period games with one ice resurface after the first period and a second ice resurface after the second period. 16 & Under (Midget) with two-hour ice time shall play 18-minute stop-time period games with one ice resurface after the first period and a second ice resurface after the second period.
- **Overall activity ratios:** 45% hockey, 35% fitness, 20% other sports
- **Complimentary Sports:** Athletes are encouraged to participate in at least one complimentary sport

**14 & Under and 16 & Under High Performance:**  
~160 total ice touches

4 - 5 per week  
9 - Months  
120 - 130 practices and 40 to 50 games  
16 skaters and two goalies per team

#### **High Performance Track 18 & Under (Midget)**

- **Training/Competition Ratio:** 50% training, 10% competition specific training (exhibition/scrimmage games), and 40% competition
- **Training Volume:** 5 to 6 times hockey per week, with session length of 60 to 90 minutes at 18 & Under (Midget) level. 4 to 6 fitness sessions per week with account for strength development phase.
- **Training Year:** 4 weeks/month, 9-10 month/year - Double periodization calendar will aid structuring and help maintain player interest
- **Team Composition:** Team composition will include a roster of 18 skaters and two goaltenders. (12 forwards, six defensemen, two goalies).
- **Team Structure:** Teams in these age groups are made up of players of like ability with out restrictions.
- **Competition format:** 18 & Under (Midget) with 2.5 hours ice time shall play 20-minute stop-time period games with one ice resurface after the first period and a second ice resurface after the second period. 18 & Under Midget with 2.0 hour ice time shall play 18-minute stop-time period games with one ice resurface after the second period.
- **Overall activity ratios:** 60% hockey, 40% fitness
- **Complimentary Sports:** Athletes are encouraged to participate in outside sporting recreation

**18 & Under (Midget) High Performance:**  
200+ total ice touches  
5 - 6 per week  
10 - Month season  
130 - 140 practices and 50-60 games  
18 skaters and two goalies per team

| HPC Age Group  | HPC Requirements  |
|--|---|
| <b>8 &amp; Under (Mites)</b>                               | 2 - 3 ice touches per week<br>50-minute ice sessions<br>20 weeks per season<br>= 50 - 60 ice touches per year<br>Minimum of 16 cross-ice/half-ice games and 34 practices<br>Maximum 20 cross-ice/ half-ice games and 40 practices<br>9 - 13 skaters per team; no full-time goalies                        |
| <b>10 &amp; Under (Squirts):</b>                           | 95 - 100 total ice touches per year<br>3 - 4 times per week for 60 minutes<br>7-month season<br>75 to 80 practices and 20 to 25 games<br>10-12 skaters & 1 goalie per team  |
| <b>12 &amp; Under (Peewees):</b>                           | 105 - 120 total ice touches per year<br>4 times per week for 60 minutes<br>7-month season<br>80 to 90 practices and 30 to 35 games<br>15 skaters and 2 goalies per team   |
| <b>14 &amp; Under (Bantam) to 16 &amp; Under (Midget):</b> | ~160 total ice touches<br>4 - 5 per week<br>9-month season<br>120 - 130 practices and 40 to 50 games<br>16 skaters and 2 goalies per team<br>13 & Under (Up to 3 showcase events)<br>14 & Under (Up to 3 showcase events)<br>15 & Under (Up to 4 showcase events)<br>16 & Under (Up to 5 showcase events) |
| <b>18 &amp; Under (Midget):</b>                            | ~200+ total ice touches<br>5 - 6 per week<br>10 months<br>130 - 140 practices and 50-60 games<br>18 skaters and 2 goalies per team<br>18 & Under (Up to 6 showcase events)  |
|  |   |