



Dover Youth Hockey – Player Development Initiative House League Mini-Mites and Mites

We recognize the efforts of USA Hockey and other organizations and we have come to realize the many benefits that a cross-ice program brings to Mini Mite and Mite-aged skaters. This handout is designed to summarize some of the changes and the rationale behind upgrades to our programs and answer questions that parents and players may have about this new skill development and fun based program.

House Mini Mites

| Current Practices | Upgrade |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| All players on the full ice sheet | All players in skill focused stations |
| 1 or 2 coaches leading practice | 4-6 coaches leading stations, plus assistants |
| Talent mixed by team | Talent appropriate segregation in each station |
| Minimal training aids | Lots of cones, nets, dividers, training aids |
| Fun Practices | Tons of Fun in Practices |

| Current Games | Upgrade |
|---|---|
| All players on ice - 4 teams of 9 players | All players on ice - 6 teams of 6 players |
| 2 games concurrently | 3 games concurrently |
| 5v5 or 4v4 | 3v3 no goalies |
| Goalies, 6 foot by 4 foot net | No goalies 3 foot by 2 foot net |
| Some goals | Tons of goals |

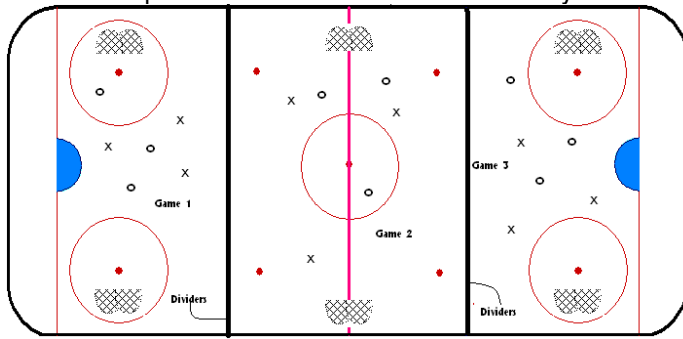
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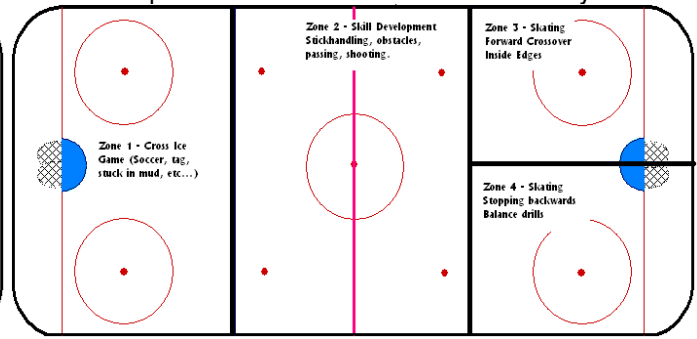
| Current Games | Upgrade |
|---|---|
| 2 teams per sheet - 2 teams of 12 players | 4 teams per sheet - 4 teams of 12 players |
| 1 game at a time, 5v5 | 2 games concurrently, 4v4 |
| 36 minutes of play in a 65 minute ice slot (3-12 min per) | 5-10 min warm-up / setup, 55-60 min of play, no periods |
| 2 minute shifts, 6 to 9 shifts per game | 90 second shifts, 12 to 18 shifts per game |
| 12 to 18 minutes on ice, plus stoppage | 18 to 27 minutes on ice, always skating |
| Whistles for offsides, icing, and goals | No stoppage of play |
| Some goals, keep score | Tons of goals, do not keep score |
| Rules, Structure and Coaches teach kids "how to play" | The Game teaches the kids how to play. |

**Through January 10th, then convert to 2 teams for full ice games and 2 teams per practice.

Example of Cross Ice Mini Mite Game Layout



Example of Mini Mite and Mite Practice Layout



From USA Hockey:

The USA Hockey Cross-Ice program is based on a model of practicing and playing hockey across the ice surface as compared to practicing and playing lengthwise along the full length of the ice surface. This cross-ice practicing and playing model has been used in many of the leading hockey nations in the world for a number of years and has stood the test of time. It has been shown that children who begin their hockey training in this environment have an outstanding hockey experience.

Cross-Ice Program

To help you further understand the benefits of the cross-ice practicing and playing model, some of the advantages are listed below.

PRACTICING

1. The children have **more energy** with which they can improve their skills when they are skating 85 feet across the ice surface as opposed to the 200 feet length of the ice surface.
2. Group sizes become smaller which means learning and teaching will become **more effective**.
3. The close feeling of belonging to a team will **motivate** a child to participate with even greater enthusiasm.
4. Drills designed according to the varying skill level of players within the group are **easier to organize**.
5. **More puck contact**, resulting in improved puck control skills.
6. **More repetition**/frequency in drills in one ice session.
7. Decision-making skills are enhanced, as more decisions must be made more frequently at a higher tempo.

ACTUAL GAME

1. Playing on a smaller rink results in **increased puck possession time** for each player.
2. Individual technical skills develop more quickly.
3. More frequent line changes in the game means **more ice time** for each player.
4. Each player's activity increases greatly.
5. **Scoring skills are enhanced** since the players have more shooting opportunities.
6. The goalkeeper's reading of the game and reaction to changing game situations become more effective.
7. **More repetition for goalkeepers**.
8. The game is full of continuously changing situations.
9. The speed in playing situations increase, which requires **quicker** mental and physical reactions by the players.
10. Due to increased tempo, all of the team members take part in solving the playing situations, which leads to a sharing of responsibilities between players.
11. The feeling of being an important part of the action increases because of the small size of the rink.
12. Hockey sense, or understanding the principles of the game, is being developed at a young age.
13. There are **no unnecessary breaks in the game** (i.e. off-sides, icing).

GENERAL ORGANIZATION

1. More efficient use of ice time and space.
2. **The size of the rink is in proportion with the size of the players (i.e. Youth Soccer)**.
3. USA Hockey recommends that teams play with two or three units of four or five players and one goalkeeper, which results in each player having more ice time.
4. More ice time for practicing and playing is made available to more teams within a single association.
5. Many teams can practice together by **sharing the ice surface**.

GENERAL SPIRIT OF PARTICIPATION AND FUN

1. More children get a chance to play ice hockey.
2. More children will experience a **feeling of success** when playing hockey.
3. The same exciting and fun environment as in a "real" game is created.
4. More and less gifted children will benefit from close/tight action on the ice.
5. Children are excited and **motivated to continue playing hockey**.
6. Hockey will be more appealing and rewarding to a wider range of children and their parents.