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| <b>Policy Name:</b><br>U11 Pathway            |  | <b>Date of Approval</b><br>November 1, 2024<br>May 9, 2020 | <b>Effective Date:</b><br>June 1, 2020   |
| <b>Approved by:</b><br>HNO Board of Directors | <b>Prepared by:</b><br>Development Committee |  | <b>Replaces Previous Versions</b><br>New |
| <b>Review Cycle</b><br>Annually               |  |  |  |
| <b>Responsible</b><br>Development Committee   | <b>Accountable</b>                           | <b>Consulted</b>   | <b>Informed</b>                          |

### **About the U11 Player Pathway**

The U11 Player Pathway is a continuation of a skill development curriculum that is age appropriate and skill specific for players in this age group. This pathway is an important component in the transition from U9 hockey and serves as a bridge into U11 hockey. The U11 Player Pathway consists of four phases of instruction, designed for players graduating from U9 hockey and for entry level hockey players who may start playing hockey at this age level. The curriculum introduces, develops and refines the skills of skating, passing, puck control and shooting in a progressive step-by-step manner.

This is to be viewed as a continuous opportunity for young players to develop and refine fundamental movement skills (skating, turning, acceleration), manipulation skills (shooting, puck control, passing) and overall motor skills (balance, coordination, agility) in a fun and safe environment, promoting skill development through self-confidence. The main goal of the U11 Player Pathway is to continue to have fun while developing skills. When players continue on a positive note, they enjoy the game and will go on to have fun playing hockey for many years.

The U11 Player Pathway provides an environment that helps all players playing hockey at the U11 age level (9 and 10 years old) to realize their full potential. HNO strongly believes that in order for players to truly fulfill their potential and be the best they can be, the needs of the player should be at the forefront of programming.

The primary focus of the youth hockey system is to develop a lifelong passion for sport, develop important life skills through hockey and provide all players exposure to a development system that is progressive in nature and meets their needs based on age-specific and skill-appropriate programming.

### **Player Evaluations, Selections, or Tryouts**

- No player evaluations, selections, or tryouts prior to or during the first week of school.
- Must offer a minimum of four practices and/or skill sessions prior to formal player evaluations, selections, or tryouts starting.
- Must have a minimum of three formal player evaluations, selections, or tryout sessions.
  - One skills session, one small-area games session, one formal game. (Recommendation)
  - Players should not try out based on a specific position but should be encouraged to play both forward and defense in tryouts. (Recommendation)
- Players should be selected for teams based on skill, not positional preference. (Recommendation)



### **Development Phase**

- Must be a period of development time following team selection and prior to the start of the regular season.

### **Fair and Equal Ice Time**

- Fair and equal ice time is designed to ensure that all players get the same opportunity to contribute to the outcome of games, regardless of skill or ability. A coach's responsibility is to develop all players to contribute. Shortening of the bench is not permitted. All players should receive fair and as close to equal as possible ice time, including equal opportunities on special teams.
- Positional Rotation: o All skaters are to rotate through all positions to ensure each player has the opportunity to try out each position (forward – LW/C/RW and defence – LD/RD).  
(Recommendation) o All players get a chance to start the game and play end-of-game situations. (Recommendation)
- Goaltender rotation: o Full-time goaltenders are allowed. o Goaltenders rotate for equal amount of playing time throughout the regular season and playoffs.
  - Goaltenders' alternate games or split games as close to 50/50 as possible. (Recommendation)
  - Each goaltender plays the final game in an equal number of tournaments. (Recommendation)
  - The rotation schedule should be done in consultation with the goaltender and parents – share games or alternate playing full games.  
(Recommendation)
    - o The goaltender not playing the game be allowed to play as a skater. (Recommendation)

### **Playoffs**

- Playoffs must be tournament-style format versus elimination rounds.

### **Seasonal Structure**

#### Preparation phase

- o See Player Evaluations, Selections, or Tryouts above.

#### Development phase

- o Teams must have a period of development time following player evaluations, selections, or tryouts prior to the start of the regular season.

#### Development and regular season phase

- o Recommended maximum of 45 games per year (including exhibition, league, tournaments and playoffs).
- Recommended seasonal breaks:
  - o Season should allow for two seasonal breaks (not including Christmas/Long weekends).
  - o Seasonal break would be a minimum five days without a scheduled game or mandatory practice.

#### Playoff phase



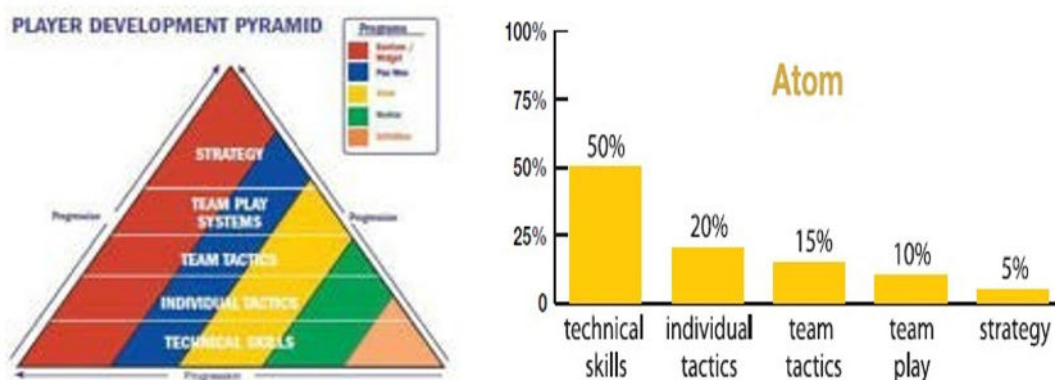
- Tournament-style format.

#### Off-season phase

- Recommend limited skills-based on-ice training, making more time for multisport activity.

#### Position-Specific Training

- Small-area games in practice/situation-based practices/skill-focused drills.
- Only 15% of practice time should be spent on team play and strategy/systems with 85% of practice time spent on skills and tactics.
- Basic positional play and rules of the game should be introduced prior to the start of the U11 regular season. Basic defensive-zone positioning, offside, icing, etc., can be introduced during the ice sessions prior to tryouts or after teams are selected.
- Players should rotate through forward and defence in the first half of the year and then may move to more consistent positions in the second half. Recommend rotation over a five-game segment would be: LW/C/RW/RD/LD.
- Limit position-specific specialization (except goalies – recommend goalie not playing plays as a skater).



#### Seasonal Structure

The Member must have a clearly identified seasonal structure as per the definition of an ideal hockey season. The ideal hockey season is a guideline and is subject to a range of minor differences regarding suggested numbers based on Member differences.

The annual calendar is divided into five phases to enhance the player engagement process and ensure each phase of development has a very specific focus. It is important to abide by these phases and not compromise the developmental process by accelerating the calendar and attempting to have players engaged in activities like competitive games and tournament play before the proposed schedule.

- 1. Preparation Phase (Player Evaluation/Selection/Tryouts) – Up to 2 weeks** • This refers to the period prior to the season starting. ○ See Player Evaluation/Selection/Tryouts for more information.
- 2. Development Phase – Up to 4 weeks**
  - This refers to the period following tryouts prior to the regular season starting.
- 3. Development & Regular Season – Up to 22 weeks**
  - This refers to the period from the first regular-season game to the start of playoffs.



**4. Playoff Phase – Up to 4 weeks**

- This refers to the period from the end of the regular season to the end of playoffs.

**5. Off-season Phase**

- This refers to the period from the end of the playoffs to the start of the next Preparation Phase.

**The Ideal Season**

The U11 Player Pathway will give young players an excellent opportunity to continue positive development while having excellent experiences in the game. The ideal season addresses issues like ensuring the season does not conflict with the start of the school year, what the tryout process must look like for young players and how the season will be structured to maximize development opportunities for all players in the system.

**Seasonal Framework**

The U11 level is the first to differentiate between recreation and competitive programming. The charts below help to illustrate the seasonal breakdown in terms of the length of the season, the number of practices and games and how the season is broken into phases for each of these programs. **Please note the timelines for each phase are meant to be maximums, be each phase can be shorter based on local logistics.**

| <b>SEASONAL STRUCTURE</b>  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <b>U11 – Community (Recreational)</b>  |  |  |   |
| <b>Weeks</b>   | Up to 6 weeks<br><i>prior to the start of the Regular Season Phase</i> | Up to 20 Weeks<br><i>after the completion of the Development Phase</i>   | Up to 4 Weeks<br><i>at the conclusion of the Regular Season Phase</i>   |
| <b>PHASE</b>   | Prep / Evaluation & Development Phase                                  | Regular Season Phase   | Playoff/Tournament Phase  |
| <b>BALANCE</b>   | 13% of the season  | 74% of the season  | 13% of the season   |
| <b>VOLUME</b><br><small>up to 30 weeks<br/>34 practices<br/>up to 32 games<br/>up to 3 tournaments</small> | Up to 6 Weeks<br>8 Practice Sessions<br>Up to 4 Games<br>1 Tournament  | Up to 20 Weeks<br>22 Practice Sessions<br>Up to 16 Games<br>1 Tournament | Up to 4 Weeks<br>4 Practices Sessions<br>Up to 12 Games<br>1 Tournament |

Table 1: Seasonal structure components for community (recreational) U11 hockey

| <b>SEASONAL STRUCTURE</b>  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <b>U11 – Developmental (Competitive)</b>   |  |  |  |
| <b>Weeks</b>   | Up to 6 weeks<br><i>prior to the start of the Regular Season Phase</i> | Up to 22 Weeks<br><i>after the completion of the Development Phase</i>   | Up to 4 Weeks<br><i>at the conclusion of the Regular Season Phase</i>    |
| <b>PHASE</b>   | Prep / Evaluation / Development Phase                                  | Regular Season Phase   | Playoff/Tournament Phase   |
| <b>BALANCE</b>   | 18% of the season  | 68% of the season  | 11% of the season  |
| <b>VOLUME</b><br><small>up to 32 weeks<br/>69 practices<br/>up to 65 games<br/>up to 4 tournaments</small> | Up to 6 Weeks<br>12 Practice Sessions<br>Up to 6 Games<br>1 Tournament | Up to 22 Weeks<br>44 Practice Sessions<br>Up to 24 Games<br>1 Tournament | Up to 4 Weeks<br>4 Practices Sessions<br>Up to 16 Games<br>2 Tournaments |

Table 2: Seasonal structure components for developmental (competitive) U11 hockey