



Policy Name: U9 Pathway/ Jamborees		Date of Approval: September 19, 2026	Effective Date: September 19, 2026
Approved by: HNO Board of Directors	Prepared by: Development Committee	Replaces Previous Versions: Nov 1, 2025 April 26, 2025	
Review Cycle: Biennial			
Responsible Development	Accountable MHA's	Consulted Board of Directors	Informed HNO Members

A. GENERAL

- Each association within HNO shall ensure that its Constitution, Bylaws, and/or Rules and Regulations include clauses covering the U9 Program, in accordance with Hockey Canada's (HC) direction.
- All on-ice Coaches/Assistant Coaches involved in U9 must have attended and completed all applicable coaching certifications as per Hockey Canada.
- All U9 participants **MUST** wear proper hockey equipment in accordance with Hockey Canada's Rules and Regulations governing the outfitting of players.
- The U9 Program is predominantly for players aged 7 & 8 as of December 31st of the current hockey season.
 - If an association deems a U7 player eligible for U9 they may be younger. Regardless of the number of years a player is rostered/plays U9, they can only transition to U11 once they are age appropriate.
- As per HC and HNO Rules and Regulations, for all U9 events there must be a registered Safety Person present and available (this includes all on and off-ice events).
- Each HNO member Association shall develop its own infrastructure for the delivery mechanism based on the number of participants, the HNO Rules and Regulations, and the HNO U9 Program Policy, however, it is required that all Associations use and follow HC's U9 Program Skills Development Manuals and/or Network App to ensure players receive the best instruction. It should take a full season to properly complete the program.
- U9 players who are 8 years old **ONLY** as of December 31st of the current hockey season are eligible to affiliate to U11 beginning December 1st. The maximum number of affiliate games permitted is **10 games total per player** for the entire season, regardless of the number of teams to which the player is affiliated.

B. POLICY GOVERNING U9 PRACTICE SESSIONS AND HALF ICE GAMES

1. A normal practice session shall consist of a minimum of 40 minutes skill development and 10 minutes of cross ice or small area games (for example, freeze tag, red light/green light). After 15 practice sessions the minimum time for skill development may be decreased to no less than 25 minutes.
2. No U9 player/participant may play the entire season as a goalie. All players are to be given the opportunity to participate as a goalie should they so desire to do so.
3. U9 groups are permitted to play half-ice matchups against other Associations within Hockey Northwestern Ontario (HNO) beginning no earlier than November 1st. HNO teams may also play against Ontario Women's Hockey Association (OWHA) teams that are located within the HNO boundaries. U9 groups are not permitted to play against teams outside of the HNO boundaries
4. 4-ounce (blue) pucks are to be used for all U9 activities. Smaller age-appropriate nets (where available) should be used for all U9 activities. Teams may use black pucks after February 1st. Blue pucks should still be used for training purposes.
5. All U9 fun games and jamborees must be played half-ice format. **NO FULL ICE JAMBOREES OR TOURNAMENTS.**
6. One Coach/Assistant Coach, per group, is to be on the ice at all times during half-ice matchups.
7. During fun games or Jamborees all players are to be given EQUAL ice time during EACH half-ice game.
8. After February 1st, U9 teams can transition into full ice for the remainder of that season, ending March 31st. It will be up to the MHA's discretion when or if they want to transition to full ice after February 1st.

C. JAMBOREES

Jamborees are fun games between groups from the same or different Associations/District. They are played in a half-ice format. When played the following apply; a) Each team shall have 3-5 skaters on the ice for each shift; b) Scores are NOT to be kept or recorded; c) the use of Goalies shall be in accordance with Hockey Canada on a rotation basis.

1. Jamborees shall not be held prior to November 1st.
2. Any Association or Organization wishing to host an U9 Jamboree must apply to HNO for a Sanction Permit. Only half-ice format is to be used for Jamborees.
3. Game sheets are not permitted during U9 Jamborees.
4. One U9 Coach/Assistant Coach per group must be on the ice at all times at all levels.
5. During Jamborees, all players are to be given EQUAL ice time. U9 teams may dress a player as a goalie.
6. Only group awards may be distributed for U9 Jamborees.
7. U9 teams are not permitted to travel outside of HNO boundaries.

a) Associations that reside in the Eastern and Western zones may apply for one out of branch jamboree per team, provided they are located a minimum of 250km from Thunder Bay. Teams will need to submit the HNO Out of Branch Travel Application Form.

Resources:

- Hockey Canada U9 Player Pathway