

THE AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT MODEL HOCKEY AT 10U-12U



INTRODUCTION

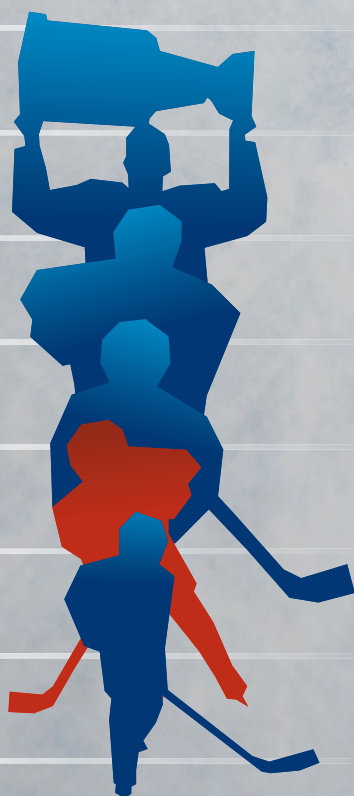
**A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY
TO GET IT RIGHT.**

Because it's the beginning of a golden age in skill development, there's no better time to learn hockey skills than the 10U/12U level. And there's no better time for us to foster those skills than by promoting a fun, positive and focused environment for them to develop in. One that recognizes that they're still kids, but also understands that age 10 through 12 is the prime window of skill development.

**SIMPLY PUT:
IF WE FAIL THEM AT
THIS AGE, WE RISK
LIMITING THEIR GROWTH
AS A HOCKEY PLAYER.**

LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT STAGES

- 8. HOCKEY FOR LIFE**
- 7. TRAINING TO WIN**
19+ Junior (NCAA, NHL)
- 6. TRAINING TO COMPETE**
Junior, NCAA
- 5. LEARNING TO COMPETE**
18-and-under (Midgets)
- 4. TRAINING TO TRAIN**
16-and-under (Midgets), 14-and-under (Bantams)
- 3. LEARNING TO TRAIN**
12-and-under (Peewees), 10-and-under (Squirts)
- 2. FUNDAMENTALS**
8-and-under (Mites), 6-and-under (Mites)
- 1. ACTIVE START**
6-and-under



10U

TWO YEARS CAN MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE.

Even though the years between 8 and 10 may not seem like a long time, they can make all the difference in a hockey player's life. Their brain is rapidly developing in ways that allow them to better understand concepts, learn skills and use their natural creativity to their advantage.

Which means we need to begin to push their cognitive abilities in practices by developing their hockey sense, spatial awareness and overall understanding of the game. There's still plenty of physical skills to learn as well, but the mental side of hockey is something that needs to be introduced at this stage in their development.

TOP 3 THINGS AT 10U.

As 10U is the beginning of a player's prime development window, their development hinges on how we teach them the game. Things like reducing roster sizes to maximize playing time, understanding the rules and ethics of the game, and learning proper nutrition and exercises are important, but the 3 most important things are:



1. PRACTICES NEED TO BE OF A HIGHER QUALITY WITH A FOCUS ON INDIVIDUAL TRAINING.
2. THERE SHOULD BE A 3-TO-1 PRACTICE-TO-GAME RATIO.
3. WE NEED TO DEVELOP THE ATHLETE BEFORE THE HOCKEY PLAYER.

A HIGHER QUALITY OF PRACTICE.

A quality practice doesn't mean just working hard — it's about working smart. And by increasing the level of decision-making challenges, players begin to push their mental abilities — something they'll need to continue to hone as they get older. We can do this through staging small area

games in practices and running drills that require hockey decisions and feature a balance of skill work and live-action game play. The bottom line is that by promoting fun and engaging age-appropriate skill development, we can ensure that practices are of the best quality.



A BETTER ATHLETE MEANS A BETTER HOCKEY PLAYER.

By taking a break from hockey and playing other sports, kids will learn different sports skills and muscle movement that translate to more speed, agility and strength once they get on the ice. Think of playing multiple sports like an early version of dryland training. Since hockey is a late-specialization sport, early specialization can be detrimental to overall development. Instead of concentrating too much on hockey at a young age, players should focus on developing a solid base of athleticism through participating in 2-3 other sports. Because a better overall athlete means a better overall hockey player.



PRACTICE-TO-GAME RATIO **10 & UNDER (SQUIRTS):**

95-100 ICE SESSIONS 3-4 ice per week, 2 off-ice / 60 minutes ice sessions

75-80 QUALITY PRACTICES

20-25 GAME DAYS

MORE PRACTICES LEAD TO BETTER GAMES.

As the 10U level is the beginning of the golden age of skill development, this is our best chance to instill a set of hockey skills that can shape the rest of their playing days. So emphasizing practices over games at a 3-to-1 ratio in order to maximize development makes perfect sense for the player. And just because there's a bigger emphasis on practice, that doesn't mean it can't be enjoyable. Practice should be enjoyable. But it should also be challenging and engaging to help them get better. Through age-appropriate training, and by playing small area games, we can both keep practices fun for the kids while teaching them crucial hockey skills in a controlled environment.



12U

**SKILL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS TO GROW
ALONGSIDE THE PLAYER.**

At 12 years old, a player is beginning to fill out his or her body — albeit at completely different times. Some may hit a growth spurt at 12 and have difficulty adjusting to their new frame while others grow at a slower rate. It's not uncommon to have a 12U player standing almost 6 feet while their linemate is still trying to crack 5 feet. But wherever they're at physically, skill development should remain front and center.

TOP 3 THINGS AT 12U.

1. DEVELOPING HOCKEY SENSE.
2. CONTINUING TO BUILD ON SKILLS FROM 10U.
3. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE CLOSING WINDOW OF PRIME SKILL DEVELOPMENT.

At 12U, a player's prime window for skill development is still wide open. Players are better suited to acquire both physical and mental hockey skills, and it's the final chance for coaches and players to take advantage of developing fundamental hockey skills that will allow them to be the best player they can be in the years to come. The bottom line at 12U is that your players don't rise to the level of the occasion — they fall to the level of your training.

MAKING SENSE OF HOCKEY SENSE.

At this age, a player's ability to grasp the conceptual side of the game is increasing every day. From in-game nuances to body positioning, 12U Pee wee is the right time to increase a player's on-ice sense and awareness. And we can develop a player's hockey sense by adding focus to the mental side of the game through increasing the complexity of drills. Increased social skills and a sense of team come into play as well, as the player matures more.



PRACTICE-TO-GAME RATIO 12 & UNDER (PEEWEEES):

105-120 ICE SESSIONS 4 ice per week, 2 off-ice / 60+ minutes ice sessions

80-90 QUALITY PRACTICES

30-35 GAME DAYS



THE WINDOW IS SHUTTING.

Because it's the golden age of skill development, 12U Pee wee is a good time to continue basic hockey skills. It's also a good time to start emphasizing decision-making skills — skills like stickhandling, puck movement, skating and shooting — and applying them to game-like situations. This is why small area games played in practice are the best way to foster their decision-making skills. Not only are small area games in practice perfect for Pee wees, but they're played at the NCAA,

THEY'RE STILL LEARNING.

Because the player is still in the middle of the prime window of skill development, they should continue to work on skills they learned back in 10U. And coaches should continue to make sure that practices are of a higher quality, that there's roughly a 3-to-1 practice-to-game ratio, and that we all work to develop the athlete before the hockey player by having them play multiple sports.

NHL and Olympic level as well. The same game-like situations are repeated multiple times in succession, helping to increase a player's pattern recognition and leading to better play during a real game. It promotes the idea that executing a skill is tied directly to decision-making. And at the 12U Pee wee level, proper decision-making combined with skill development and increased hockey sense will make all the difference on the ice.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT **8U** MITE

- 1) More puck touches
- 2) Maximum ice utilization
- 3) Increased competition for all players
- 4) Fun for all participants

WHAT TO EXPECT AT **10U** SQUIRT AND **12U** PEEWEE

- 1) A better practice-to-game ratio
- 2) Prime window for skill development
- 3) Athletes first, then hockey players
- 4) Increased emphasis on decision-making skills

WHAT TO EXPECT AT **14U** BANTAM AND **16U** MIDGET

- 1) Increased hockey training schedule
- 2) Player takes more responsibility for off-ice training
- 3) Managing recovery becomes important
- 4) Make sure the competition is meaningful

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