



USA Hockey Program Recommendations 10 & UNDER (SQUIRT)

As part of an ongoing effort to promote enthusiasm and enjoyment in hockey, USA Hockey has prepared a Practice Plan Manual for 10 & Under (Squirts).

The objective of this manual is to provide coaches with the resources to create a positive and healthy environment for players to learn. The emphasis is to develop a non-competitive environment for the younger age levels that stresses the fun of playing and the learning of basic skills.

This manual provides the coach with the knowledge to develop successful practice sessions. The drills have been developed to stress the youngsters' individual improvement. The fundamental skills of skating, puck control, passing, shooting and body contact are presented in a progressive manner.

It is important that coaches prepare and organize their session prior to going on the ice. The better thought out a practice, the more successful it will be. Coaches are encouraged to use the USA Hockey Age-Specific Practice Plan Manuals as well as their own imagination to create drills.

The overall emphasis at the 10 & Under (Squirt) level is fun, enjoyment, and a maximum amount of active participation for each player.

OBJECTIVES

- ❖ Enjoyable experience in ice hockey.
- ❖ Provide a healthy atmosphere for fun and learning.
- ❖ Introduce the concept of games and the fun in playing hockey.
- ❖ Development of communication at the player's level of learning.
- ❖ Encourage the players to enjoy, learn and continue to play hockey.
- ❖ Develop qualities important to hockey: quickness, agility, coordination, balance, strength and flexibility.

PHILOSOPHY

Enjoyment and recreational benefits are the focal points of the new guidelines for youth hockey issued by the USA Hockey Board of Directors. More than 80% of registered teams play in the classifications of 8 & Under (Mite), 10 & Under (Squirt), 12 & Under (Pee Wee), 14 & Under (Bantam), 16 & Under (Midget), 18 & Under (Midget), prompting the Youth Council of USA Hockey to emphasize the educational and recreational values of ice hockey.

The USA Hockey recommended guidelines encourage an environment in which children can learn the basic skills without the distractions that are often associated with an overemphasis on winning. Mastery of the fundamental skills and the fun of playing are essential to the development of a lifelong interest in hockey and player development. Programs must be conducted to accommodate all levels of players who wish to play hockey and to reduce the number who become disenchanted and drop out.



These voluntary guidelines are directed at youth programs, but they must be implemented by adults if they are to influence youth hockey programs. Coaches, parents, administrators and rink operators should do their part to promote the USA Hockey philosophy and the following guidelines.

PARENTS' CODE OF CONDUCT

- ❖ Be a good example to your player.
- ❖ Help make your child's participation rewarding.
- ❖ Be understanding and supportive of the coach and the officials.
- ❖ Support and assist the program in a positive manner.
- ❖ The parent is the most important example to which a child can relate.
- ❖ Be everything you want your child to be.

RECOMMENDED PROGRAMS

- ❖ Three practices to every game. **25 games maximum = 75 practices**
- ❖ Practice sessions lasting no longer than 90 minutes.
- ❖ Emphasis on the fundamental skills is the priority.
- ❖ Basic team habits and concepts may be introduced.

PROGRAM

A. On-Ice Training

- ❖ Individual instruction
- ❖ Skating
- ❖ Puck handling
- ❖ Passing and receiving
- ❖ Shooting
- ❖ Fun games
- ❖ Cross ice and small game activities
- ❖ Scrimmage

B. Off-Ice Activities

- ❖ Encourage the players to participate in other sports and activities.
- ❖ For this age, exercises that improve dexterity, agility, coordination and group participation are important.
- ❖ Emphasize fun.

PHYSICAL PREPARATION

- ❖ Daily physical activities
- ❖ Group games which do not require a high degree of organization, such as tag, keep-away and kick ball, etc.
- ❖ Select activities which permit all of the players to participate and achieve some measure of success and satisfaction. Praise and encouragement are important to these players.



PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION

- ❖ Positive reinforcement; build confidence.
- ❖ Stress group participation and sharing.
- ❖ Be aware that some youngsters are experiencing uneven growth, causing poor coordination and lack of balance. Some are easily fatigued.
- ❖ Be concerned with the youngster, not the level of performance.
- ❖ Support and protect the player in situations they are not prepared to handle.

TECHNICAL PREPARATION

- ❖ Introduction of specific skills by position.
- ❖ Introduction of skills necessary to perform elements of team play.
- ❖ Introduction of body contact skills and techniques (angling, puck protection, etc.).

TACTICAL PREPARATION

- ❖ Simple combinations in pairs, or in a line (2-on-1, 3-on-2, etc.).
- ❖ Simple game situation theory (when to pass, when to shoot, where to pass, where to shoot).
- ❖ Introduction of a basic team system including offensive and defensive tactics (basic breakout, forecheck, basic positioning).

SKILLS & ABILITIES

Suggested Emphasis for 10 & Under (Squirt)

PERFORMANCE AREAS					
Skating	Puck Control	Passing & Receiving	Shooting	Checking	Goalkeeping
Ready Position	Lateral Dribble	Forehand	Wrist Shot	Poke Check	Basic Stance
Forward Stride	Forward to Backward Dribble	Backhand	Backhand	Lift the Stick Check	Parallel Shuffle
Edge Control		Receiving (stick)	Snap	Covering	Lateral T-Glide
Control Turn	Forehand Shift	Receiving (skate)	Flip	Angling	Forward & Backward Movement
Crossover Start (right/left)	Backhand Shift	Receiving (hand)			Stick Saves
V-Start	Attacking the Triangle	Saucer Pass			Body Saves
Forward Crossunder	Change of Pace				Glove Saves
Control Stop	Puck Off Boards				Leg Saves
Backward Skating					Stacking Pads
Backward Stop					"V" Drop
					Rebounds
					Playing Angles
					Basic Stance