

8U Girls 2016-17

The 8U teams will be divided into three groups consistent with the mite levels. Level 4 and Level 3 8U are considered upper level teams comprised of mostly 2nd and 3rd graders. A skills evaluation will be held early in the season to properly place players on the Level 3 and Level 4 teams. Most often it sorts itself out by school grade level.

Obviously the number of teams is based on the number of players registered for 8U. After the registration deadline its possible adjustments may need to be made. Girls teams will always skate to the highest level.

8U Level 1

This level is primarily for beginning skaters who have completed the Intro Hockey program or have some skating ability but no or very little experience playing hockey. Primarily kindergartners and 1st graders. This level will share practice ice with two or three other teams. Practices will be on Saturdays and Sundays. This level provides families with a new player a low cost/low time commitment option. There will be no skills evaluation for this level.

8U Level 3

This level is for players who have played hockey 2-4 years. Mostly 2nd graders. Less experienced skaters may play at this level if they can demonstrate the appropriate skill level. This team will practice 2-3 times per week. They will have a few solo ice sessions for games at the Lumberyard. Two team shared practices will mostly often be with the Level 4 8U team. Three team shared practices will be with Level 2 and Level 3 mite teams. This level will also have dryland training scheduled at the Tradewinds facility.

8U Level 4

This level is for the most advanced players who have played hockey for 4-5 years. Mostly 3rd graders. This team will practice 2-3 times per week. Some solo ice sessions will be scheduled at the Lumberyard in Stillwater. These solo ice sessions are intended for games against other associations. Two team practices will most often be scheduled with the Level 3 8U team. Three team practices will be with Level 3 and Level 4 mite teams. This level will also have dryland training scheduled at the Tradewinds facility. An evaluation session will be held early in the season to place players at this level.

The Level 4 and Level 3 teams will have the same number of two and three team shared practice hours. The difference is the Level 4 teams will have a few more solo ice sessions and will be scheduled for three

team practices with Level 4 and Level 3 mite teams. The Level 3 team will have three team practices scheduled with Level 3 and Level 2 mite teams.

Why no Level 2?

8U numbers are lower than mites so we have fewer players to divide up between the levels. Past experience has been 8U players that would be equivalent to mite Level 2 would do just fine skating at 8U Level 3. For parents who may think their daughter might be somewhere in between the best advice is to register for 8U Level 1. If it becomes apparent she is significantly above that level we can move her up.

Will the girls teams practice together?

The Level 3 and Level 4 girls teams will practice together for most practices when two teams are scheduled. Three team practices may or may not be with another 8U team. Three team practices, 8U and mites, we try and skill match the teams on the ice as close as possible. The Level 1 8U girls will skate with the other Level 1 Mite teams. If scheduling permits we may try and schedule all three 8U teams together a couple times this season.

Will the 8U teams practice more or less than the mite teams?

No. Everything is the same. For example the Level 4 8U team will have the exact same number of solo, 2 team, and 3 team practices as the Level 4 Mite team.

Will there be games with other associations?

Yes! District 2 will have 18 or more 8U teams. We are trying to arrange a schedule of games with other associations for Level 4 and Level 3 teams. There will also be numerous jamboree opportunities.

Will my daughter learn more skating with the mites?

No. Experience has shown girls do much better and have more fun skating with all girls teams. 8U is a more socially positive environment for the girls. This is supported by research done by USA Hockey.

A girls director from an area association recently asked girls who played with boys/youth and all girls teams what they liked best about girls hockey. Here are the responses:

- *Girls listen and work hard.*
- *We play more as a team rather than individuals. We still play aggressive hockey but the point is to score goals not to knock people down, so you have to be good skaters.*
- *I like playing girls hockey because of the great friends I have made and the fact that the girls actually pass to me during the games.*

- *The teamwork and cooperation. The friendliness. Everyone is nice, they pass the puck, they play more like a team, the locker room is friendlier.*
- *You play more as a team, you get to touch the puck and there are no puck hogs on the team. You make lots of friends. Some people don't think girl's hockey is competitive but it is. You still get to be aggressive but it's more skilled than boys. My team mates are some of my best friends.*
- *There's more even play among girls, it's just plain easier to get along with girls!*
- *I work better with girls. I get along better with my teammates and am friends with them. We hang out off the ice too*

Are we doing the pink jerseys again?

No

Will there be goalies?

Level 3 and Level 4 8U teams will have goalies. The opportunity to try goalie for practice sessions and the opportunity to attend the goalie training clinics will be offered. Players interested are encouraged to try it. Each team will have a set of loaner gear. Goalie skates and goalie mask are not needed at this level. Parents are encouraged to let their player try it if she wants to – she might be the next Noora Rätty!

If you have additional questions please contact me:

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