



## LMHF ATOM PIJE PROGRAM

The Lakeshore Minor Hockey Federation would like to take this opportunity to welcome all new and returning Atom players to the new hockey season! The purpose of this letter is to inform both parents and players on some of the fundamentals regarding this program.

The LMHF has developed the Atom PIJE program with the following mission statement in mind:

***“To focus on continuing to develop and expand the foundation that was set in the Initiation Program and as always, teach players how to be part of a team, work hard, have respect for others and above all, have fun as we believe that these are the fundamental characteristics and building blocks for all of our players’ future.”***

### The Program

The Atom PIJE program, now entering its eighth season, was implemented by Hockey Quebec to provide players with an opportunity to enhance their fundamental skills in a positive and learning environment. While the curriculum is flexible, the program calls for the focus to be primarily on skill development. It also calls for the sessions and lessons to be given in a teaching environment with progressions. Similar in nature to building the proper foundation in any skill, it requires patience and repetition.

From day one, LMHF’s primary focus for PIJE lessons has centered on “on-ice” fundamental skill development. The focus is teaching and working on ensuring that players are equipped with the tools they will require as they move on to higher levels. Think of it in these terms: *you could not attempt long division if you have not mastered basic math.*

The PIJE is an extension of our Initiation Program. Young players should continuously repeat good form because their bodies change and as they grow, they need to adjust and relearn the correct form. The philosophy behind the technical teaching drills used in this program is precisely that - to adjust the players’ form. Repetition of proper form is undoubtedly the ultimate target. The development of good work habits will lay the foundation for the future as it is a lot easier to fix defects in technique when players are younger.

It is also the next progression in skills development. The objective is to eventually introduce team play and tactics. However, if a player still has problems making a simple pass or being able to skull or carve, it will be difficult to execute team play and tactics. A simple sweep pass is still a challenge to many kids. C-cuts and proper strides are often overlooked by kids trying to compete to win battles. Proper technique must be taught in a non-competitive environment where kids will feel comfortable in taking the time to properly execute the techniques required. Placing them in competitive situations will only lead to them taking short-cuts and learning bad habits.

## **The goals for the Atom age category are:**

- intro to team tactics
- refining of basic skills, doing it correctly and then doing it faster
- achieving all of the above while still having fun

The PIJE program will progress to placing the kids in competitive situations only once the basic skills have been covered and for that, we thank you in advance for your patience.

## **The PIJE Program is based on the following concepts:**

### **Dividing the players into smaller groups on the ice**

- An instructor can more effectively manage a small group of young players
- Drills are run much faster and players are spending less time waiting in line
- Players get more attention and repetition

### **Grouping the players by ability**

- The players in each group are at about the same skill level, bringing continuity and simplicity to the instruction

### **Emphasizing fun in each session**

- Players are having fun, while learning the skills

The initial sessions are geared at teaching players the basic skills of hockey and not formal evaluations on players' competitiveness (there will be plenty of time for that in due course).

### **Skills Progression:**

At the Atom level, players will continue to focus on the skills taught at the Pre-novice and Novice levels. The progressions will ultimately lead to the ability to execute individual tactics in a collective environment.

The Atom program recommends the following practice time allotment:

- 50% technical skills
- 20% individual tactics
- 15% team tactics
- 10% team play
- 5% strategy

Progression:

- a) Stationary: mirror instructor
- b) Moving: mirror instructor
- c) Free skate / sculling
- d) Circuits / cones
- e) Individual Competition
- f) Small Sided Games

Note: The skills listed below will be taught as the player progresses through the different levels of play. Depending on the group or child, not all progressions will be covered.

## **Individual Hockey Skills:**

### **Skating**

- Glide turns
- Striding
- Backward stance
- Gliding backwards
- C-cut
- Edge control
- Crossover pumping
- Reversing direction & T-push
- Backward gliding 1- Skate
- Backward 1-foot stop & T-push
- Backward push & glide
- Pivot, backwards to forward
- Pivot, forward to backwards
- Tight turns

### **Puck Control**

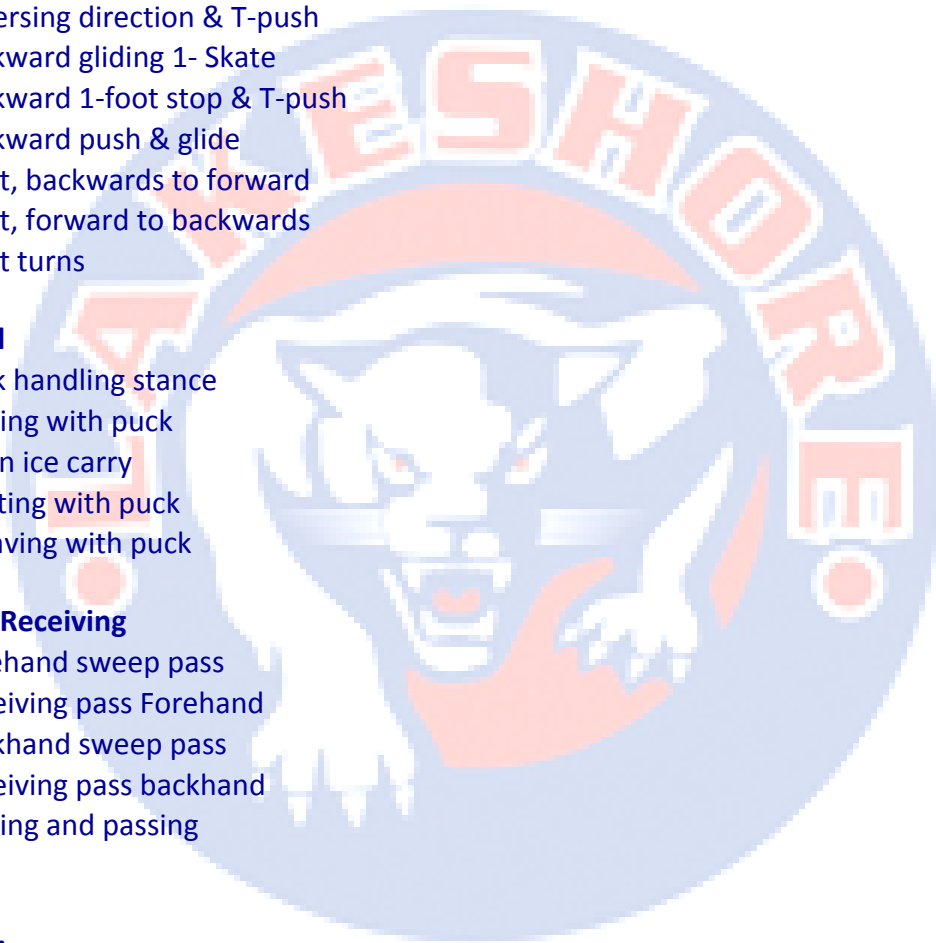
- Puck handling stance
- Skating with puck
- Open ice carry
- Starting with puck
- Weaving with puck

### **Passing and Receiving**

- Forehand sweep pass
- Receiving pass Forehand
- Backhand sweep pass
- Receiving pass backhand
- Skating and passing

## **Team Play:**

Players will be introduced to the concept of teamwork and team play toward the latter stages of the PIJE program.



## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. *Why do we start so early?***

A. With the number of participants and the limited ice resources that are available, we are required to start early so that we can have the time to give our lessons and hold our evaluations so that we can successfully meet our team formation deadlines.

**Q. *Do we have to attend?***

A. The question is why would you not attend? Every year Lakeshore participants spend money sending their kids to summer hockey camps. The PIJE lessons are part of your registration so why not take advantage of the sessions. It is understood that it is a busy time of the year with other sports and vacation and that not everyone can attend every session. The objective is to lay the ground work for the coaches to continue to build on during the year.

**Q. *My player has never skated before...can she/he still participate?***

A. Absolutely! There are groups designed specifically for Beginners aimed at introducing them to both skating and hockey.

**Q. *My child is not challenged by the material. What do I do?***

A. We must pay particular attention to the fact that players develop their skills in practice and not in games. The more repetitions, the quicker they will master the basics and be able to progress to more complex tasks. Every child can benefit from the PIJE sessions no matter what their individual skill set is. Have a talk with your child and explain that she/he should be going out there and always trying to be better than they were the previous time. This is their chance to be a leader or role model to others on the ice. As Faulkner once said "Don't bother just to be better than your contemporaries or predecessors. Try to be better than yourself."

## Some interesting stuff...

### **The proof is in the Numbers;**

The following statistics were recorded during a 60 minute Pee Wee level hockey game.

- Players will have the puck on their stick for an average of 8 seconds per game
- Players will take an average of 1 - 2 shots per game
- 95% of passes made backwards are successful
- Players will take an average of 18 shifts per game
- 99% of the feedback coaches give players is when they have the puck. *Ironically, players only have the puck on their stick for 0.2% of the game!!!*

### **Some words from the Pro's;**

*"Very few Jean Beliveau's or Paul Coffey's come through the ranks now because we're taught so many systems and so much discipline at a young age that we've taken away a lot of creativity."*

*Wayne Gretzky*

*"There is no use teaching team play, until the kids have reasonable mastery of skating, passing and puck control."*

*Dr. Murray Smith*

*Sports Psychologist*

*"You need to practice to become a better player. You see some kids playing 60 – 70 games, that's almost too much for a 15 or 16 old. When you are 6 to 10 or 6 to 12, you've got to be practicing all of the time."*

*Paul Kariya*

*"When they have too many games when they are young, they are going out trying to fulfill a role and trying to not make mistakes, and as a result they get very little skill improvement."*

*Dr. Murray Smith*

*Sports Psychologist*

*"It is imperative in Canada that we focus on our youth development programs to ensure that every player gains a skill base and enjoys the game."*

*Mike Johnston*