



Novice Program

The Lakeshore Minor Hockey Federation (LMHF) would like to take this opportunity to welcome all new and returning Novice players to the new Hockey season!

It is with this level of excitement that the directors of LMHF would like to provide some key information for both parents and the players about the Novice program and share with you LMHF's mission statement:

"To focus on continuing to develop and expand the foundation that was set in the Pre-novice Program: Being part of a team, working hard, respecting others, and having fun as kids develop their hockey skills is the cornerstone of our programs and the building blocks for their future!"

The Program

The Novice Program is part of the Hockey Quebec's Initiation Program. Its primary focus is still to promote a fun approach to learning the skills of hockey and the basics of the game. The program is based on a teaching curriculum that incorporates all the appropriate skills for the age level. Novice is a 2 year program designed for players to build on the skills acquired during the Pre-novice stage. Some team tactics are introduced to players over the course of the 2 year Novice program.

The Pre-Season Program

The Novice pre-season program as it is currently structured (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. Many child development psychologists have been puzzled at how a complex game like hockey can be played by youngsters who typically have not developed the cognitive skills required to play a complex team game. One school of thought, for some who have examined the learning process for the game of hockey, is that the repetitive process used with the drills and the training, creates a patterned behavior that allows the player to cope with the game without requiring the cognitive formal abstract thinking

capabilities associated with what the hockey player is actually accomplishing. That's technical talk for "hockey players are pretty smart if given the right foundation."

From day one, LMHF's primary focus for the pre-season 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: *one could not attempt long division if one has not mastered basic math.*

The lessons are a continuation of the Initiation Program. In the early stages of development, young players should continuously repeat good form. Repetition of proper form is undoubtedly the ultimate target as 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 as the objective is to gradually introduce team play. 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 Novice age category are:

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

The Novice 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 following concepts are applied to our pre-season structure:

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

The Novice program recommends the following practice time allotment:

- 75% technical skills
- 15% individual tactics
- 10% team tactics

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.

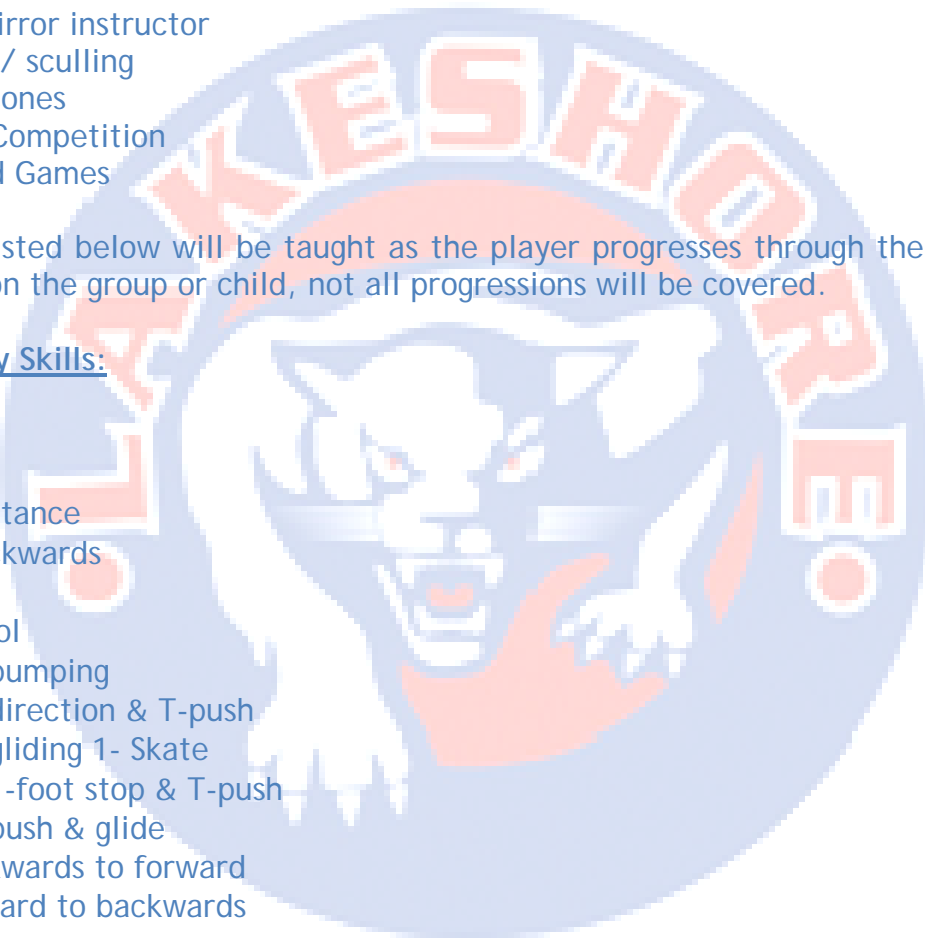
Individual Hockey Skills:

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 program.



Frequently Asked Questions

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 pre-season 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 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 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."*

Q. What levels will we have?

A. Instead of using age, we recognize the patterns and stages of growth and development differ within the same age group. Simply put, a player's progression is based on age and ability. A beginner may still a beginner whether he or she is 7 years old or 8. In Novice, there are generally 3 levels (A, B and C); with the players being grouped according to skill level - at this age usually skating ability. The convener and coaches will assess the skill level of the players and discuss placement according to ability. Remember that the level a child plays at when they are 7 or 8 is not reflective of the level they might attain as an older player. At this age we must lay the proper foundation to build on in future years. If they play at a level where they enjoy success and can try new skills, they learn more in a shorter time than they will if placed at a level that is over their heads.

Q. What equipment will be needed prior to starting?

A. Below the list of equipment required for the first day of practice. If you are not sure what to get or need assistance, please feel free to email one of the Novice Conveners.

- Helmet
- Facemask
- Neck Guard
- Shoulder Pads
- Elbow Pads
- Gloves
- Hockey Pants

- Jock/Jill Strap
- Shin Guards
- Skates
- Game Jerseys and socks will be provided once teams are selected

If it's your first practice and you're not sure how all the equipment goes on please don't hesitate to ask someone to help out (we have all been there before).

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

The LMHF hopes you and your child have a great and enjoyable experience and please do not hesitate to get involved, whether on ice or off the, ice to show the kids what teamwork is all about!!

