



INITIATION PROGRAM MANUAL



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The Initiation Program

The Initiation Program (IP) is a program in which the fundamentals and skill development are at the forefront of the goal and mandate of the program. This grassroots hockey program is the first step in a player's hockey career with an emphasis on the FUNdamentals of the game stressing the importance of fun! The Initiation Program provides an opportunity for players to meet new friends while gaining a first-hand experience in the game of hockey. The coaches who partake in the program are encouraged to take part in the IP Learn to Play Program and gain coaching knowledge through coach specialty clinics.

1.0 Initiation Program Coordinator

1.1 Program Overview

The Initiation Program is a partnership between Hockey PEI and minor hockey associations across PEI that focuses on skill development and FUNdamentals for kids aged 4-6.

1.2 Philosophy

The Initiation Program encourages an environment in which children can learn the FUNdamentals of hockey in a safe, fun atmosphere that doesn't focus on winning.

2.0 Program Objectives

- Provide a positive environment for learning the FUNdamental skills of hockey.
- Stimulate interest and desire to continue playing the game of hockey.
- Develop basic hockey skills.
- Improve utilization of ice time.
- Increase opportunities for players to touch and handle the puck.
- To provide an intermediary program between the Initiation Program and the Full ice Novice program.
- Develop self-esteem through a sense of achievement.
- Teach the basic rules of hockey.

3.0 The Four Pillars of a Solid Foundation

Players

- Exposure to a FUN philosophy that creates learning opportunities.
- Focused more on informal games and drills rather than competing in games.

Parents

- Provide leadership and training to volunteers as program instructors, managers and safety personnel.
- Become an active participant rather than idle observer.
- Exposure to informal and formal parent education seminars and information to ensure an understanding of the role of the parent and player development model in minor hockey.



Instructors

- Train parent volunteers in Hockey Canada Intro to Hockey Program (Mandatory one coach/instructor holds certification, but Hockey PEI encourages all coaches/instructors to take the course).
- Mentor other instructors new to the program.
- Create ownership in the program, so that instructors are active participants rather than idle observers.
- Instructors take part in Associations Specialty Clinics.

Administrators

- Conduct seminars to provide all information to effectively run the Initiation Program.

3.1 The Association's Responsibilities

Who enrolls in the Initiation Program?

All Hockey PEI players aged 4-6 years of age will be enrolled in the Initiation Program.

The associations within Hockey PEI, who have an Initiation Program, are expected to follow the guidelines stated within this manual. The associations are expected to run the program as a **FUNDamental program based on skill development in practice settings**. Hockey PEI expects that the teams will only play the amount of games stated within this manual.

Associations and parents must realize that winning is not a main objective in youth playing sports. Associations and parents need to be prepared to deal with it, and not lose sight of the fact that this program has been designed for the children, not the adults.

Without the help of each and every association, parent, coach and volunteers this program would not have the success it has, and can have in the future. Hockey PEI deeply appreciates the time, effort and input everyone has to keep this program growing and flourishing on PEI.

Associations are responsible to identify and recruit volunteers to manage the Initiation Program.

- A ratio of 1 volunteer instructors per 5 players is ideal.
- Associations should provide training, support and clear measurables to the IP Coordinator.
- Associations should provide training, support and clear measurables to the technical personnel (instructors) beyond the Initiation Program. Hockey PEI offers coaching clinics.
- It is recommended by Hockey PEI that experienced hockey coaches deliver the first several practice sessions, establishing an expectation for all future practices for the year. An experienced instructor or committee member should provide follow up training to the next committee member the following year. Experienced coaches should help mentor individuals new to coaching.
- Each association shall at year end evaluate the Initiation Program for that year.



- Communications between the Initiation Program and other areas of the Association should be open, as should the communication between Hockey PEI and each association.

3.2 Recruiting Volunteers

Leadership is key to the Initiation Program, just as it is in any other cooperative hockey program. In addition to developing player's hockey skills and promoting physical fitness, instructors are responsible for encouraging initiatives, stimulating interest in the sport and instilling a desire for continued success. The goal of the program is to have every single player return the following year.

Because the Initiation Program deals with entry level players which may contain children who have not even entered the school system, the need for quality leadership is critical. For some of the children, the Initiation Program may be the very first time they have attended an organized event outside of the home. Therefore, the IP instructor may be the first authoritative figure, other than a parent, that the child encounters. Again, because of the fact that they are dealing with entry level players, instructors and other volunteers, you will have to be positive, energetic, creative, fun-loving and above all, patient. The instructor's course will emphasize many of the attributes necessary to conduct the program successfully. It certainly is not necessary that the potential instructors have previous experience in teaching hockey skills, although it certainly would be a benefit. At the beginning level, on-ice instructors will vary greatly in experience.

Associations must be innovative in their recruitment of IP volunteers. The Initiation Program can be a grooming area for the association's future instructors, coaches, managers and board members.

3.3 Key Roles for a Successful Initiation Program

No matter where you recruit the volunteers necessary to conduct a successful Initiation Program, a strong nucleus of volunteers is essential. The Initiation Program requires a number of roles to be filled to effectively operate the program and deliver the curriculum. However, in a number of minor hockey associations, a single individual may be able to fill one or more roles. The basic framework or structure of the personnel required to implement the Initiation Program is not very complex. The Initiation Program requires two key roles to be filled by individuals:

1. IP Off-Ice Coordinator – each association's elected personnel
2. Lead On-Ice Instructors

By filling the IP Coordinator and Instructors Positions from people within your association, your minor hockey associations are on the way to staging a very positive and fun filled learning experience for beginner hockey players in your community. Each of these individuals has a specific role to play in the delivery of the Initiation Program; each somewhat distinct, yet, interdependent upon each other to achieve a successful program.



3.4 The Initiation Program Coordinator

An Initiation Program coordinator is directly responsible for overseeing the implementation and delivery for the program. This volunteer plans, organizes and administers the program for the minor hockey association. The Initiation Program coordinator can be an executive member of the minor hockey association or may simply be the liaison to the association's executive. This position is responsible to report directly to the minor hockey association's Board of Directors.

The Initiation Program has a number of responsibilities to fulfill which require a number of administrative skills. Some of the duties of the IP Coordinator may include budgeting, liaising with the minor hockey association's executive, recruitment and placement of instructors, organizing the instructors' clinic, coordinating the evaluation of the program, undertaking special events and recommending changes to the program and its delivery. He or she may work closely with Hockey PEI.

The qualifications within a typical recruitment advertisement for an IP Coordinator may contain the following requirements:

- Understand the fundamental elements of the Initiation Program.
- Possess a commitment to the established goals of the Initiation Program.
- Possess strong organizational, interpersonal and communication skills.
- Have the ability to conduct group presentations.
- Have the ability to liaise with volunteers, board members, administrators, instructors and parents.
- Demonstrate the ability to provide adequate time to the delivery of the Initiation Program.
- Have an enthusiastic attitude working with parents, administrators and youngsters.

Pre-Season

Work with the minor hockey association's Board of Directors to have the Initiation Program sanctioned with the general association, even if it is through a formal change to the association's constitution. This may entail obtaining information from the Branch, conducting an information session for the minor hockey association's Board of Directors, parents and other interested individuals.

Some planning and preparation prior to the beginning of the season will be required that may include, but not be limited to:

- Organize and allocate equipment (pucks, pylons, whistles, etc).
- Obtain (paper, pens, envelopes, lesson manuals, etc).
- Organize rentals to conduct meetings.
- Obtain supplies (posters, photocopying, pamphlets, etc).
- Advertise (association website, social media, etc).
- Obtain first aid supplies and kits.
- Prepare a preliminary ice schedule for lessons and/or mini-games.
- Secure appropriate ice time in conjunction with the minor hockey association.
- Prepare and implement of recruitment procedures for participants, instructors and head instructors.



- Co-ordinate the registration of participants.
- Assist in the selection and training of Head Instructor(s).
- Allocate jerseys to respective teams.
- Conduct a PARENT ORIENTATION MEETING to familiarize parents of prospective participants with the objectives of the Initiation Program, and how it is to be implemented in the association.

On-Ice Delivery

- Co-ordinate the initial evaluation of participants for the purpose of grouping participants.
- Liaise with the minor hockey association's Board, and/or Head Instructor(s) and on-ice instructors, and the parents of the participants.
- Co-ordinate special events (photo sessions, mini-games, etc).

Post Season

- Get the jerseys back from respective teams.
- Prepare equipment and supplies for storage (jerseys, pylons, pucks, etc).
- Undertake necessary actions for preparation for the next season.
- Conduct a post-season evaluation of the association's Initiation Program for the Board of Directors suggesting recommendations for improvement.

3.5 Initiation Program On-Ice Instructors

The On-Ice instructors of the minor hockey association's program are generally recruited from the participants' mom and dads. In some situations the on-ice instructors may also be volunteers from other segments of the community including students (a minimum of 16 years of age), post-secondary students and other adult volunteers (see section on Recruiting).

Hockey Canada and Hockey PEI have mandated that all coaches and instructors on-ice must wear a helmet while on the ice.

This position entails the delivery of the Hockey Canada Initiation Skills Development Manual. The qualifications within a typical recruitment advertisement may contain the following requirements:

- Possess a coaching and/or hockey background OR a strong desire to begin to learn instructional techniques in the delivery of fundamental ice hockey skills.
- Possess an enthusiastic attitude and desire to work with beginning hockey players.
- Possess strong communication skills.
- Possess a commitment to the goals and philosophy of the Initiation Program.
- One coach/instructor from each team must have an Intro to Hockey Certification and be certified in Respect in Sport. All instructors are encouraged to obtain coach certification. Regardless of that fact, all IP volunteers must have Respect in Sport certification.



On-Ice Instructor Job Description

A typical job description for On-Ice Instructors may contain these responsibilities:

- Deliver the program's curriculum to the assigned groups.
- Arrive at the ice rink approximately 30 minutes prior to the session.
- Exemplify fair play and co-operation.
- Provide instruction in a manner that motivates and challenges the participants while respecting each individual.
- Demonstrate effective leadership on and off the ice, for example, providing effective feedback to the participants.
- Provide feedback to parents of the participants.
- Assist in the evaluation of the participants and the Initiation Program in general.
- Demonstrate necessary risk management skills at all times by doing an on-ice inspection before each practice.
- Ensure practice schedule is respected.
- Explain and demonstrate drills and games to the participants.
- Co-ordinate the orderly entrance and exit to/from the ice surface by the participants.
- Utilize the appropriate equipment for the lesson plan.
- Pick-up all equipment prior to leaving the ice surface.

The local constraints of the program will all play a role in the unique design of an association's seasonal plan. There are considerations such as:

- Association size
- Allotted ice time
- Number of instructors
- Age levels of hockey entry
- Numbers of entry level players

Even the surrounding communities may play a role in your program design. For example, a small community situated near a large one will be dependent on the large association if, in the later stages of the program, an introduction to playing an opponent is sought. The large association could run a totally "in house" program but must be sensitive to the effect this would have on their smaller neighboring association.

Every association will have its own unique design. The goal, however, is the commonality of using the curriculum of the Initiation Program and its teaching strategies to build a strong foundation of skills which will allow players to enjoy hockey for a lifetime.

Because of the parameters dictating the local program, it is impossible to tell someone how they must run the Initiation Program. However, over the beginning years of using the curriculum, a number of very good models have emerged. This section of the manual will examine some of the designs being implemented by associations across the country. Again, these models may not fit your particular program but they could be used as ideas to either modify or start your Initiation Program.



It is hoped that this section of the Manual will be constantly changing with the addition of new, innovative models, this section is not theoretical! The compilation of ideas comes from people across the country that are actually operating the Initiation Program. They have taken the time to document their ideas, to share them and to build better programs for entry level players.

4.0 Program Structure

Junior IP

All beginner 4, 5 & 6 year olds

Senior IP

5 year olds based on skill level

6 year olds based on skill level

Where possible, associations should attempt to incorporate the above structure.

Minor Hockey Associations should ensure that the skill levels among all teams is similar and that no one team is “Stacked” in skill level. ie. – if an association has 3 teams, then each of the 3 teams should consist of similar skill level.

If your association does not have enough Junior (first years) and Senior (2nd years) to make 2 teams, you are welcome to combine both age categories to create a team/group. If your team plays a formal game at the end of the season, please take into account the skill level of your team to play against a similarly skilled Junior or Senior team.

5.0 Program Guidelines

- IP teams should consist of approximately 12 players per team.
- All practices and informal games are to be cross-ice, half-ice or stations.
- The use of rink dividers is encouraged.
- All players should be learning and executing the same skills during practices.
- Use of the Blue Lightweight puck is encouraged.
- Practices can included up to 4 teams, no less than 2 teams (Approximately 20-40 kids on the ice at one time).
- Ideally would have 1 coach for every 5 players.
- All practices should be upbeat, high energy and most importantly FUN!

5.1 Game Philosophy

Practice/Games

- Cross ice games played in 1, 2 or 3 zones during regular ice sessions.
- No referees, no face offs, or time clock.
- Instructors allowed on the ice for player direction.

Jamborees

- No Jamborees will be sanctioned before December 1st.
- Half Ice or cross ice games are only permitted – Full Ice games are not permitted during Jamborees.
- Face-offs are permitted.
- Time clock can be used.



- No score will be kept – NO EXCEPTIONS.
- No game sheets will be used.
- No off sides.
- No icing.
- 90-180 second shifts with whistle or horn signifying shift change.
- It is recommended that coaches be on the ice to direct players.
- All Jamborees must be sanctioned by Hockey PEI. The host association must make application with Hockey PEI.

5.2 Game Rules and Regulations for Junior and Senior Divisions

Junior – Generally First Year Players

- Informal games during practice sessions until December 1st.
- No goalie equipment will be used during informal or formal games.
- No referees are to be used, instructors should be on the ice.
- All games are to be played using 1/3 or ½ ice formats.
- No full ice games are permitted.

Senior – Generally 2nd and 3rd Year Players

- Informal games during practice sessions until December 1st.
- No full ice games are permitted.
- Any games that are outside of home Association require a request submission and approval from Hockey PEI. Request should include date, time, location and an overview of the ice time (i.e. practice, play two ½ ice games for 30 minutes).
- Goalie equipment is optional during formal games. Check with opposition to see if they have a fully dressed goalie. Both teams must have a fully dressed goalie or both teams must not have a fully dressed goalie.
- No referees are to be used, instructors should be on the ice.

6.0 Game Play Regulations

What is a Game?

For the purpose of this manual the definition of a **“GAME”** is when an IP team(s) plays a team from another association. This would include if the team is the host team or travelling team to another arena. No games shall be played as full ice.

NOTE: IP teams under no circumstances are permitted to play against Novice teams.

Junior

Each team is permitted to play a total of 12 games. This includes exhibition and Jamboree games. **NO EXCEPTIONS**

- 4 games in December
- 4 games in February
- 4 games in March



Senior

Each team is permitted to play a total of 16 games. This includes exhibition and Jamboree games. **NO EXCEPTIONS**

- 4 games in December
- 6 games in February
- 6 games in March

Game Requests

In all cases when an IP team wishes to play a “Game” (excluding Jamborees) they must make a formal request and obtain permission.

The team coach/manager must notify their association IP coordinator/director as well as Hockey PEI that they will be playing a game. Such notifications shall include:

- Association and Team Name
- Team contact
- Date of game
- Opposing team and location

Such notifications shall be sent to Hockey PEI via email at info@hockeypei.com

7.0 Team Design

In this design, an instructor or group of instructors is assigned a number of players (a “team”) in the early part of the season. The instructional group would then be responsible for conducting the IP curriculum to their group of players. This design may lead to situations where these player groups are identifiable by the same colour sweaters and play minor games or scrimmages against different colours.

The player groups would, for the most part, be intact for the season. Ice schedules may have a number of these “player groups” on the same ice at the same time but when attending to the curriculum, the players are instructed by the same instructor.

Example:

A simple model would be 36 players on the ice with 12 each dressed in green, yellow and red. After warming up together, the 12 yellow players would be assigned to a station with an instructor. This group can stay intact in one location or rotate as a group to other stations after set periods of time, as would the other colours.

The benefits of this design are:

- Player groups are much easier to organize.
- Players form a more intimate identity to a smaller group.
- Players receive consistent instruction from their identifiable leaders.
- Easy transfer into mainstream hockey where this player group becomes a “team”.



7.1 Introducing The Game

With beginner hockey players, it is imperative that coaches/instructors start with the basics, by educating parents. You can guarantee that there will be a few parents who don't understand every rule or aspect involving the game of hockey. You must also take into account that some of the parents may have never played hockey before. Therefore might not even know the proper ways of dressing their young ones. With this said, coaches and team officials should hold a meeting before the first practice to teach parents the proper way to dress and fit kids for hockey equipment. One parent might know how to dress their child but not the other one. Single parents and 40+ hour work schedules make for no guarantees on who will be bringing the kids to the rink. Don't forget to educate parents on little things like, proper skate sharpening, and the difference between "rockered and unrockered skate blades". This might sound a little over the top or over-whelming but if you are the kid who's never had rockered blades and ends up with rockered skates after one sharpening, hockey's no longer a fun experience. It is imperative to educate parents as much as possible prior to the first ice session.

It is also a good idea to educate the kids on the equipment they are wearing and its purpose. They might not fully understand but this way they can tell you when something is bothering them. You can almost guarantee that two or three kids will complain about how their equipment feels during each session, whether its skates being tied too tight or pants not done up tight enough, it will happen!

When introducing kids to the game of hockey start with the basics and make the experience enjoyable. Remember that kids tend to have short attention spans. Start off each session with a 10 minute warmup. Incorporate fun games into this section. Kids can tremendously improve their skills by playing games. If you've ever watched them get chased playing tag, it might be the fastest you see them skate during a practice. Incorporate games like bowling for kids that incorporates jumping and agility. Another great game to improve balance is soccer on ice. It also builds confidence in the kids. They might not feel confident to lift one foot off the ice during practice but when they go to kick a soccer ball, they won't think twice. After you play games and warm up for 10 minutes, be sure to stretch. Kids at any age need to properly stretch to decrease the chance of injury.

Once the team is warmed up, start teaching skill sets. Concentrate on 2 or 3 skill sets each practice. If you try and do too much, it becomes over-whelming for the kids and they lose concentration. A great coaching tool that helps out the entire seasons coaching curriculum is the Hockey Canada Initiation Skills Development Manual. Each coach or instructor should have a copy of the manual and become familiar with the skills being delivered. Remember the little things when you are on the ice. Take the kids away from the glass where parents are standing when you explain a drill, get down to their level, talk slow and get them to relay the message back to you. Take time to demonstrate once or twice. Most importantly, have enough instructors on the ice to keep everything running efficient and effectively.

With beginner players, it is suggested to teach a new rule of the game at each session. Start small and uncomplicated and as the year goes by, teach the more complicated aspects like off side. Remember to keep reiterating the previous lessons. When explaining the rules of hockey, demonstrate what you are trying to explain. It's also a



good idea to have kids demonstrate so that they get familiar with the game of hockey. The earlier we teach the kids the basics of hockey, the stronger their game will be in the long run. Teaching the fundamentals at the grassroots level will have a significant positive impact in the development of PEI hockey players.

Ways of introducing the game of hockey are inherent in the Lesson plans. However, if we work from the premise that the curriculum is an integral part of the seasonal plan – then there are other opportunities to introduce the game to the participants. Remember that coaching and instructing are like everything else in life, the more you do it, the more you learn and the more you have to offer. Do nothing and you'll have nothing to offer.

With this said, one final caution would be to remember that the goal of the Initiation Program is to introduce hockey through fun, development of basic skills and confidence building. If not monitored, it is very easy to slip into a game model where participants are forced into competition that's too demanding. If this happens, not enough time is spent attending to the curriculum of skill development – leaving players without the skill foundation to enjoy hockey for a lifetime.

EXAMPLES OF HOW TO MODIFY THE GAME

Modify the Ice Surface

- play ½ ice (divide across center red line)
- play ½ ice (divide lengthwise down the center of ice)
- play 1/3 ice (divide at two blue lines)
- play 2/3 ice (divide at one of the two blue lines)
- play 1/4 ice (ice divided at center red line and down the middle)

Modify the Equipment

- Use pylons for goals
- Make smaller nets
- Use light pucks
- Use little pro pucks
- Use junior equipment
- Devise boards and benches to be used while dividing the ice
- Use targets or artificial goalies

Modify Players Playing the Game

- Match skill strength of opposing players
- Change numerical advantages
- Change number of players playing (i.e. 3 on 3 to 4 on 4)

Modify the Basic Rules

- No face-offs
- No offside
- No statistics
- Players must make a certain number of passes
- Players may only score a limited number of goals
- Numerical strength may not be even
- No penalties
- No referees



- Use buzzer or whistle system for line changes
- Player changes only “on the fly”

Emphasize Skill

- Players can only skate backwards
- Players must pass on the backhand
- All players rotate to all positions including goal
- Goals are scored on shots outside a certain radius are allowed

Instruction During the Game

- Have instructors on the ice following the play
- Stop the game to instruct

7.2 Jamboree Formats

3 Team – 3 Games Cross Ice

- 3 games being played simultaneously
- Ice divided into 3 zones – endboards to blueline, blueline to blueline, blueline to endboards
- Use of dividers encouraged
- 3 teams of 12 players participating
 - Each team divided into 2 small teams of 6
 - Games played 3 on 3 with whistle every 60 seconds
- 30 minute ice times
- 7 minute games
 - Teams rotate in clockwise manner around the ice with 2 of 6 small teams remaining in same location for all games
- Small hockey nets
- No goalies
- No face-offs, puck moved to free space by coach to start, after whistles, after goals, etc.

Sample Set Up

Three teams: Red, White, Black

Each divided into teams of 6: Red 1, Red 2, White 1, White 2, Black 1, Black 2

	<u>Game 1</u>	<u>Game 2</u>	<u>Game 3</u>	<u>Game 4</u>
Ice 1	R1 – B2	R1 – W2	R1 – B1	R1 – W1
Ice 2	R2 – W2	R2 – B1	R2 – W1	R2 – B2
Ice 3	W1 – B1	W1 – B2	B2 – W2	W2 – B1

2 Games Cross Ice

- 2 games being played simultaneously
- Ice divided into 2 zones – across center ice red line
- Use of dividers encouraged



- 25 - 30 minute ice times
- Small hockey nets
- Goalies are permitted. Both teams must have goalie gear or no goalie gear permitted
- No face-offs, puck moved to free space by coach to start, after whistles, after goals, etc.