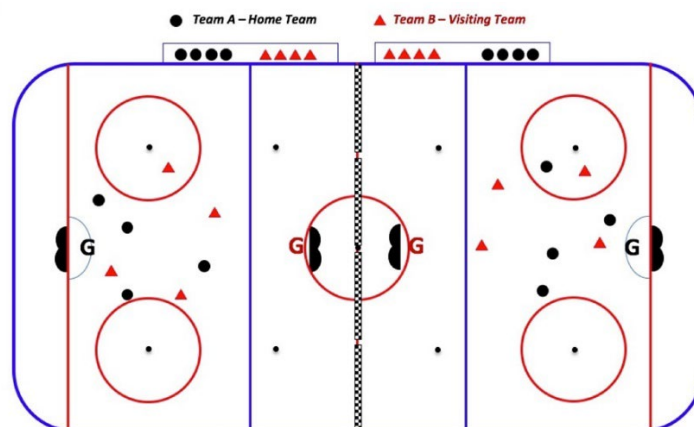




For the kids, For the game, For the fun of it!

Waterloo Girls Minor Hockey Association

U8 / U9 LTPD Program Handbook



OWHA Rules must be followed, so any conflicting guidance provided in this document is usurped by OWHA Rules / Guidance. Refer to the OWHA website for up-to-date information and/or the OWHA Handbook.

Terminology: Hockey Canada and OWHA documentation have some interchangeable terminology, and this should aid in clearing up confusing. All U7 to U9 is LTPD (Long Term Player Development) and is not HL or Rep, but tiered levels of play. You will see HL or Recreational used for all U7 or U8 and lower tiered U9. You will see Rep or Competitive used for U9 higher tiers. The WGMHA will use U8-# or U9-# for Recreational/HL and U9 A, B or C for Competitive/Rep.

Representative U9: U9 Rep is a tryout-based team that runs like a traditional rep team. Players not wanting the additional time commitment and expense can play U9 HL/Recreational.

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1. General Principles for LTPD – U8 and U9 Program

- No positional play taught, meaning forward and defense specific roles not defined.
- No full-time goalies. Players should rotate through all positions, including goalie. At no time should a player be 'assigned' as the goalie at the U9 or below age groups.
- No scores will be kept, and no elimination style playoffs will be held.
- Festivals replace the traditional tournament. These are teams that come together for a weekend, typically, to play games in a round robin style with no scores kept or elimination games.
- Mandatory half-ice games. Only exception is for U9, Transition Phase – after January 15th full-ice games can be played, which are optional. Most centers will move to full-ice games.
- Consistent days and times for practices and games, no earlier than 7am and no later than 8pm.
- Fair/Equal Ice Time – no exceptions.
- 5:1 player-to-coach ratio minimum should be adhered to. On-ice assistants count toward this number.
- All Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches must have/obtain Coach 1 – Intro to Coach, regardless if they possess a higher certification. The Coach 1 is considered "Age specific" and required for U7, U8 and U9 and U9 Rep.
- Station based practices are recommended as outlined on Hockey Canada and OWHA websites.

1.1 Seasonal Structure

- OWHA Rules must be followed, so any conflicting guidance provided in this document is usurped by OWHA Rules / guidance. Refer to the OWHA website for up-to-date information.
- The season runs the week after Labour Day, to March 31st. Changes to this require OWHA approval or guidance.
- U8 and U9 Programs must be separate. Combining age 7 and age 8 players is not permitted unless a team cannot be viable, and with WGMHA our registration numbers mean this does not happen.
- Age 6 players are not permitted to be rostered (move-up) to U8 or higher. *There may be an exception in order for a team to be viable, but this decision is made by the OWHA.*
- Age 7 players are not permitted to be rostered (move-up) to U9 or higher.
- Age 8 players are not permitted to be rostered (move-up) to U11 or higher.
- All activities must be no earlier than 7:00 am and no later than 8:00pm. *This is a fine-able rule.* Ice times for practices should be consistent for the teams.
- Pick Up (PU) players from U9 to U11 may only happen after the transition to full-ice. (See OWHA Handbook 2019-20 page 4-32).
- The season consists of 3 phases which are outlined below. The WGMHA U8 and U9 Program will be entering the Kitchener Girls Local League (KGLL) for all its U8 and U9 half-ice teams. U9 Rep will be in the OWHA run league.
- **PRACTICES:** All practices for U8 and U9 will be group practices, meaning they are not conducted as teams. Team based practices will only happen for U9 Rep (Tiered) teams and may occur for U9 teams playing full-ice. Generally, one practice per week will be a group U9 and U9 Rep practice where a coach from one team leads the practice for all player.
- **Festival = Tournament = Jamboree** for U7, U8 and U9; these are interchangeable. All are no scores kept and no elimination games permitted. Festival will be used in the rest of this

document. Festivals can be found on the OWHA website under the Tournaments > U9 Tournaments/ U7 Festivals tab for all divisions.

Development Phase: 8 weeks. September to October will consist of station-based practices with no more than 4 half-ice exhibition games. The exhibition games will be held with Ravens players, if possible, and be used to create suitable teams to optimize development.

- Teams do not need to be formalized until the end of the Development Phase, end of October.
- U8 teams will be formed to achieve the best fit with the KGLL programming. This means even strength teams, usually, but may mean a higher and lower tier(s). The aim is to best match player skill levels to optimize LTPD.
- About 17 ice times; 10 practices + 4 exhibition games or scrimmages + 3 tryouts.
- Lead Coaches work together with additional staff to run practices and formulate.

Regular Season Phase: 12 weeks. November to January will consist of station-based practices with half-ice games in the KGLL.

- Recreational teams will participate in a the KGLL run by the KMHA. Usually, 10 games during this phase. U9 Rep teams will participate in the OWHA run league (this started in the 2021-22 season).
- Recreational teams may be rebalanced, if needed, to ensure proper development and fair play.
- About 39 ice times; 23 practices + 1-2 Festival's + 10 games.
- U9 Rep teams may add additional ice time; budget required, submitted to the Director of Rep or Rep Convenor.
- Festival by KMHA: Jason Cripps Memorial Tournament, end of December. *U9 Rep not included.*
- Each team may add 1 additional Festival during this phase.

Transition Phase:

- Recreational U9 teams will be tiered into suitable pools in the KGLL. 6 games plus home-and-home at end of season with a suitable team.
- U9 Rep teams will remain in the OWHA loop.
- About 24 ice times; 13 practices + 1 Festival + 8 games.
- Another Festival may be done.
- Waterloo Cup participation (End of season House League wrap-up). U9 Rep teams are not included in the Waterloo Cup.
- Possible OWHA event for Competitive teams.
- Pick Up (PU) players from U9 to U11 can be done when a U9 team is playing full-ice.

2. Game Play

2.1 Half-ice

- Refer to the OWHA [Rules for Half Ice](#) and note that the KGLL may have modifications to the rules. For the 2019-20 season the following outlines gameplay.
- The following is subject to change and is dictated by the KGLL or OWHA leagues:
 - o 4-on-4 with goalies (5v5).
 - o 3 min warm-up.
 - o 2x 20min halves; rotate 1 team on benches at the half. 1 faceoff per half to start the game. May be dictated by the league.
 - o Coaches from both teams should meet and discuss the game approach prior to the game. For example: matching strength of players between the split teams; blending strength of players within the split; whether one team switches ends for second period, etc.
 - o When one team has too few players for 2 half-ice games, one game should be played (9 and 9) and additional players will practice on the other half. For the second half, switch the players to allow all players to play in a game.
 - o Buzz every 1 to 2 minutes for changes but clock never stops. Change on the fly. If < subs all players remaining on must tag up at bench. KGLL will start with 1:30 buzzer.
 - o Buzzer = immediate relinquishment of the puck or a penalty.
 - o Penalty = loss of possession if penalized team has possession. 3-meter free zone for loss of possession. Offending player will miss 1 shift as official records number and notifies coach. Always even strength.
 - o Officiated games with 1 official per half of ice. For Age 8 Transition Phase (full-ice after Jan 15th) 2 officials. WGMHA will use officials, which are optional, after November 1st. This is to provide development for officials.

2.2 Full-ice (Transition Phase)

- Cannot start until after Jan 15th.
- Phase-in normal game rules (offsides, etc).
- 10-10-12 stop time but may be dictated by the league

2.3 Officiating

- U8 and U9 Recreational will follow KGLL requirements.
- U9 Rep officials will follow OWHA requirements.

3. U8 and U9 Programming Overview

The Waterloo Girls Minor Hockey Association provides a U8-U9 LTPD Program to enable girls to play hockey in a Hockey Canada / OWHA required format with emphasis on fun, skill development and fair play. The focus is on “*Developing Skills First*” for all participants. The goals and objectives of LTPD hockey programming are to:

- Teach all basic skills of hockey so players can enjoy the game.
- Assist in development and enhancement of physical literacy and basic motor patterns.
- Develop and encourage the concepts of being a team member through player participation in both on-ice and off-ice activities.
- Encourage aspects of fitness, fair play and cooperation while having fun.

3.1 Leagues, Tiering and Ages

- U8 = Age 7 players
- U9 = Age 8 players
- Competitive U9 = U9 Rep = higher tier of U9; only age 8
- Recreational U9 = U9 HL = tiered hockey; only age 8
- KGLL = Kitchener Girls Local League, run by KMHA
- ~~LLFHL = Lower Lakes Female Hockey League, this league folded in 2020~~
- OWHA-SOUTHERN = U9 Rep league, run by OWHA

3.2 Combined U8-U9

The Hockey Canada program permits running either a separated U8 (age 7) and U9 (age 8) Program, or a Combined (age 7&8) U9 Program. WGMHA is too large an organization for this to be permissible. This is only for small centers that may only have 18 players in U8/U9 ages combined.

3.3 Competitive/Rep vs Recreational/HL

The OWHA U9 Program allows for a Competitive U9 league using a tiering system. The Competitive division is designed for U9, not U8. In 2021-22 there were U9 A and U9 B tiers. The WGMHA will field a Rep team, or teams if viable, which will be selected with tryouts. The team(s) will be for U9 aged players only.

Recreational / HL is for U8 and U9 players. U7 (age 6 players may only play with approval from the LMC and the OWHA and are typically only allowed to make a U8 team viable. Requests to move up to U8 must be submitted to the Director of House League by Sept 1st of that season and a decision will not be made until mid-late September (we need to await registration numbers to see if any additional players are needed). If the U8 Program needs players the LMC will hear submissions case-by-case. Those permitted to move on by the LMC will ultimately know if they can play if the OWHA permits it when rostering the team.

3.4 Practices

- WGMHA will book 2 practice sessions per week for the season for each player with 1 weekend time and 1 weekday time.
- Practice sessions may be used for home games when possible.
- Competitive/Rep teams may add additional practice times with parent approval and a budget
- Depending on registration numbers, U9 HL and U9 Rep will practice together once per week for the season (target on-ice numbers for practices are 36 players).
- Practices will have a minimum of 5:1 coach-to-player ratio.
- Any Head Coach or Assistant Coach must have Coach 1 certification (age specific). On-ice Assistants do not need Coach 1.
- All players will practice as a group with mostly station-based practices; team-based practices are not encouraged when sharing ice.
- Practice times should be same time, same place, as mandated by Hockey Canada for the Recreational and Competitive players; WGMHA best effort.
- Competitive/Rep teams may obtain additional ice for extra practice times or exhibition games during the season, but the schedule is dependent on the available ice (may not be set time and day). Any additional ice must be paid for by the team.

3.5 Games

- All games are half-ice, with no exceptions, except as noted below:
 - o U9 teams during the Transition Phase – after January 15th may move to full-ice.
- Playing full-ice is never mandatory. It is an option. Teams may choose to remain at half-ice unless the league in which they play cannot accommodate the request (other teams are playing full ice). Rep leagues will move to full-ice and KGLL typically move to full-ice.
- It is recommended to have set goalies for each specific game but rotate players playing goalie for each game played. There are no rostered goalies as all are rostered as skaters.
- The purpose of the game is to have a competitive, even-strength game with the other team. Coaches should meet prior to games to discuss how to best achieve this. Typical setups:
 - o Make half higher tiered players and other half lower; *caution wrt player confidence*.
 - o Make even-sides.
 - o Not enough for 2 games but too many for 1; have a practice for the others on one half then switch for the next game.

4. WGMHA LTPD Season Programming – Choosing Team Structure

The WGMHA will use the following as a guide in choosing appropriate programming:

- If a U9 Rep team, or team(s) are viable they will be formed first using tryouts. This will follow the required 4 Prep Skates which will be the first practices for ALL U9 registered players.
 - o No evaluations are permitted during prep skates.
- U9 Rep teams will be placed into projected tiers, such as U9 A, U9 B or U9 C.
 - o The level can be moved prior to the season and Exhibition games with the team are intended to ensure you are in the appropriate level.
- If multiple Competitive teams are to be made, tryouts will be done in order for tired teams, U9 A then U9 B, for example.
- The decision on how to structure the Recreational/HL teams will be decided by the Director of House League and HL Convenor and will be guided by the best way to optimize development of the players.
- Recreational teams, regardless of format chosen, will be named U9 1, U9 2...

5. U8 and U9 Team Formation Process

- The WGMHA will form teams with a target of 18 players per team.
- Competitive teams will be formed asap following the Prep.
- There must be 4 pre-season practices (Prep Skates) offered to all U9 players prior to any Competitive Team tryouts; these are optional to attend.
- Tryouts cannot begin until after the first week of school is completed in September.
- Tryouts must consist of a minimum of 3 tryouts with no releases during the process.
- Recreational teams should be formed after Competitive teams are formed.
- Recreational teams do not need to be formed until the end of October (Development Phase).

6. LTPD Program Staff

- Prior to September, U8 and U9 staff will be recruited to include Head/Lead Coaches, Assistant Coaches, On-ice Assistants, Trainers and Staff (dressing room / bench staff).
- The staff will be a collective team for the Development Phase (Sep-Oct) with the Head/Lead Coaches coordinating and running practices.
- Competitive U9 Head Coach, or Coaching Team will be a separate application process as they involve tryouts. Once selected they will still work with the U9 Program Staff as a collective team but when performing tryouts will assess players without any U9 aged parents, using independent evaluators.
- Coach 1 – Intro to Coach certification required by all coaches and on-ice staff
- RIS and VSS required by all staff.
- HTCP 1 required by Trainers.
- A minimum of 1 Trainer is required for any practice or game.
- A minimum of 5:1 Coach-to-Player ratio is required for practices.
- No more than 5 staff on a bench for a game.
- Head Coach may not also act as the Trainer for a game.

6.1 Staff Roles

- Programming at U8 and U9 is the first WGMHA that requires all staff to be volunteers, of which many are parents. Rookie Ravens (U7) welcomes parent volunteers, but the programming is run by WGMHA. U8 and U9 programming is run by staff largely made up of players parents and siblings (need to be 3+ years older minimum).
- The WGMHA website has a list of requirements for all volunteers that can be reviewed to understand the OSHA requirements for various staff positions. At the time of this revision that location is here: [waterlooravens.com Home Page > Volunteer Coaches and Staff > Required Volunteer Staff Certifications and Documentation](http://waterlooravens.com/Home-Page-Volunteer-Coaches-and-Staff-Required-Volunteer-Staff-Certifications-and-Documentation)
- The following are staff roles that are needed in place prior to the season beginning. The Director of House League takes volunteer submissions for next season at the end of the previous season to ensure the required staff is in place. Please consider volunteering for any of the roles below:
 - o **Head Coach** - Runs the team and is responsible for conducting practices, running the bench at games, and oversees the team. This person is responsible for all aspects of the team and usually manages the team as well.
 - o **Trainer** - Is responsible for caring for injuries, is on the bench for games, and attends to player needs. *Any assistance to a female player requires a female staff to be present if the Trainer is not female. It is not a requirement, but Trainers are often female. Male trainers will have a female staff accompany them for player interactions.*
 - o **Assistant Coach** - Assists in practices and can be on the bench for games. May run games or practices in the coach's absence.
 - o **On-ice Assistant** - Assists in practices. Cannot be on the bench for games (Ravens policy).
 - o **Staff** - Dressing room supervision and can be on the bench for games. Dressing rooms always need a minimum of 2 female staff supervisors.
 - o **Other roles:** Generally, not required for U8, other typical team roles include Manager and Statistician.

6.2 Volunteers for WGMHA Tournaments

The WGMHA run Rep tournaments during the season of which the profits are used to fund the LTDP and HL Programs. This keeps the actual cost of your registration down. This also allows us to increase the ice times for all U7, U8 and U9 teams. The U9 Rep team does pay for their additional ice time costs, but the baseline ice they receive is also subsidized by our tournaments:

- Fall Challenge Cup – early November
- USA-Canada Cup Series – early December

These tournaments require a huge volunteer commitment and without the help of Ravens families we could not run these very popular, high-level tournaments. It is expected that each Ravens family volunteer in some way, whether its as staff on a team, or in assisting their time with tournaments.

As tournament dates near your team will be asked to fill time slots for various roles. We greatly appreciate your time volunteering. High school aged volunteers can earn volunteer hours. This is also a great opportunity for the younger players to see the higher levels of hockey. We usually have 70+ teams in each tournament. The FCC attracts U9 to Senior Rep teams typically from all over Ontario. The USA-Canada Cup Series is U15 AA, U18 AA, and U22 AA teams from around North America representing the top level of girls' hockey for each age group.



7. Teams

7.1 Competitive U9 Rep Team(s)

- Head Coach(s) or Coaching Team(s) selected prior to tryouts.
- Team(s) selected by tryouts in Development Phase (Sept) using independent evaluators and the approved Coach/Coaching Team.
- Team(s) to be formed and rostered no later than October 31st but target is late-Sept. League games cannot start until November.
- Only players that are age 8 may play on the U9 teams, no exceptions.
- Prep Skates and Tryouts are NOT permitted until after the first week of school in September as per OWHA rule.
- A minimum of 4 practices prior to tryouts are required and all players in U9 should be included in the “Prep Skates”.
- Prior, or during tryouts, a U9 Rep information session will be held by the Head Coach, or Coaching Team, to give information to all interested parents.
- A list of interested players will be created and maintained from the date of the Competitive Team Pre-Tryout meeting, to the end of the 3rd tryout. This list is required to know how many U9 players are trying out and interested in playing U9 Rep. Players attending tryouts do not have to commit to playing until after the 3rd tryout.
- Formal tryouts will be a minimum of 3 sessions (skill session, small area game session, and a formal half-ice game). 2 additional tryouts may be added but should be Exhibition games which count toward the allotment for the team.
- Teams will play in the OWHA-SOUTHERN loop in a Tiered A, B or C division.
- Each U9 Rep team must prepare a Budget that includes the additional cost. The U9 Program includes the 2 practices per week for the season, games (some will take the spot of a practice and the Prep Skates and Tryout ice. All Exhibition games, Festivals and extra practice ice must be put into the Budget. Team swag, like a Ravens hoodie, may be added as well.
 - o The Budget must be approved by the parents with a majority in support.
 - o Refer to the WGMHA Manual of Operations for all Budget requirements and Team Bank Account instructions. A Treasurer role is usually required for Rep teams.
- At the start of the season, the regular practice sessions set up for the U9 Program will all be conducted with all U9 Rep and HL teams included, meaning the competitive team will not be segregated from the other players for some practices. Ideally, one practice per week should involve all the U9 players practicing together to encourage unity and proper LTPD.
- Additional practices for the U9 Rep team may be added, as approved by the parents during the Budget approval.
- The teams may add up to 3 Festivals; 1 per Phase recommended but 2 in a Phase is permissible.

7.2 Ravens U9 HL Program – Age 8

- Head / Lead Coaches will work together to prepare and run station-based practices with the on-ice staff, and this may involve multiple teams or ages and may include the U9 Rep team(s) for some practices.
- 4oz (blue) or 6oz (black) pucks may be used.
- Mini nets or standard nets used.

- WGMHA will assemble 1 large pool of U9 players in September that will participate in the Prep Skates. After tryouts, remaining U9 players and those that did not wish to tryout will practice as a collective group.
- The Lead Coaches will work over the month of October to best create HL teams to meet the criteria in section 3.

7.3 Ravens U8 Program – Age 7

- Head / Lead Coaches will work together to prepare and run station-based practices with the on-ice staff, and this may involve multiple teams or ages.
- Lead Coaches will work over the month of October to best create teams to meet the criteria in section 3.
- 4oz (blue) pucks should be used.
- Mini nets should be used.

8. Jerseys and Name Bars

- Tryout pinnies will be available for Tryouts but are not to be used for Prep Skates; players should bring their own practice jersey for Prep Skates and practices.
- Ravens' jerseys may be used for Exhibition game and will be used for the Regular Season.
- Players will supply their own practice jersey and practice socks.
- Socks will be provided for games and may not be worn for practices.
- Name bars at U9 HL are not required but may be used for those wanting them. U9 Rep are required to attain a name bar.
- It is recommended that jerseys be maintained by the staff at this age level using the team jersey bags. A parent can be appointed to care for the jerseys, airing them out and washing them.
- Teams may elect to take jerseys home. If doing so, the sweaters *must* be kept in a suitable garment bag which cannot be stored inside the players hockey bag. Players are not permitted to wear an association jersey other than for games, team building events such as a team outing to a hockey game, or for a special occasion such as a school sports day. These occasions should be approved by the Head Coach. Jerseys not returned, or damaged due to mishandling will be billed to the team.
- It is not permitted to wear name bars upside down, exchange name bars with other players, or wear mismatched socks during games. White jersey, white socks. Black jersey, black socks.