

HEO U11 Player Pathway Policy for the 2020-21 Season

Seasonal Structure

Phase One: Preparation / Tryout

1. No teams shall run tryouts from April through August. Team pre-tryout practice/skill sessions begin the Tuesday after Labour Day for all U11 levels.
2. Following Labour Day, players must have a minimum of four (4) practice/skill sessions prior to the start of formal evaluations. These can be four one-hour sessions, or three 1.5 hour sessions, each on a separate day. Players are required to attend one set of these practice/skills sessions.
3. Following the practices / skill sessions, teams must conduct a minimum of three (3) formal tryout / evaluation sessions — one skills session, one small area games session, one game.
4. Teams must select players based on skill. Development research indicates that players most develop when they have opportunities to play all positions (LW, C, RW, RD, LD). Coaches should not limit a player's opportunity to tryout at any given position.

Phase Two: Development

5. Following tryouts/evaluations, teams must run a development period consisting of practices. House League teams are required to run five (5) practices in this period and competitive teams eight (8) practices. Tournaments and exhibition games can also be scheduled in the development period.

Phase Three: Regular Season

6. In the regular season, House League teams will play up to 20 games in their respective Leagues. Competitive teams will play 20 games in their respective leagues. Both House League and Competitive teams must run a minimum 1:1 ratio of practices to games during the regular season. Tournaments and exhibition games can also be scheduled in the regular season.

Phase Four: Playoffs

7. During the playoff phase, House League and Competitive teams will participate in a tournament style playoff structure, with a maximum of eight playoff games. The playoff phase should include one team practice per week.

Tournaments

8. House League teams may participate in a maximum of three tournaments during the season. Competitive teams may participate in a maximum of four tournaments. As an alternative to tournaments, teams may play an equivalent number of exhibition games during the season. For the purposes of counting games, tournaments are considered to be four games.

Maximum Number of Games Per Season

9. A maximum 45 games per year can be played by a team in any one season. Games include regular season and playoff League, exhibition and tournament games.

Affiliation

10. Affiliation for U11 players falls under the usual affiliation rules for minor hockey. Individual players affiliated to higher division/age categories may therefore exceed the 45 game limit as a result of playing with their rostered and their affiliate teams.

Seasonal Break(s)

11. March Break shall be considered as a seasonal break (minimum five days without scheduled games or mandatory practice sessions). HEO teams may schedule a 2nd seasonal break by identifying it as a blackout period to their League at the beginning of the season.

Seasonal Phase	House League		Competitive	
	<i>Practices</i>	<i>Games</i>	<i>Practices</i>	<i>Games</i>
Pre Tryout	4	—	4	—
Tryout	3	TBD(exhibition)	3	TBD(exhibition)
Development	5	TBD(exhibition)	8	TBD(exhibition)
Regular	1:1 ratio (practices to games)	Up to 20	1:1 ratio (practices to games)	20
Playoffs	1 per week	8	1 per week	8
Total	Variable (District/Association)	Up to 28+	Variable (District/Association)	28
Tournaments Exhibition Games	—	3 x 4 games=12 Or equivalent	—	4 x 4 games=16 Or equivalent
Maximum number of exhibition, tournament, League regular season and playoff games = 45.				

*Number of practices will depend upon the number of house league regular season games to be played in respect of the 1:1 ratio (house league games to be played will vary by District/League)
TBD(exhibition)= # of exhibition games played to be determined by teams/Associations.

Game/Team Structure and Approach

1. Throughout the season, all players must receive fair and as close to equal ice time as possible (no bench shortening or preferential playing time; players to have opportunities to start games, end periods and play end of game, power play and penalty kill).
2. Throughout the season, all players should play both forward and defence in the first half of the season, and then may move to more consistent positions in the second half.
3. Throughout the season, full time goalies are permitted.
4. Throughout the season, goalies must rotate for an equal number of games/playing time (goalies must split game time and have equal opportunities to play the final game in tournaments).
5. Throughout the season, goalies not playing can play out as a skater.

Practice Sessions

1. Practices should consist of small area games/station based/skill focussed drills. A minimum of 85% of practice sessions must be spent on skills and tactics.
2. Basic defensive zone positions, offsides, icings should be introduced in the development period prior to the start of the regular season.
3. Positional play and rules of the game can be introduced in the development phase prior to the start of the Atom regular season.

Addendum

Note of Clarification for the 2021-22 Season

In light of the potential for multiple interpretations of how U11 team games are to be counted in the 2021-22 season, please note the following:

Section 9 of this policy (Maximum Number of Games Per Season) establishes the maximum number of games to be played in a given season as 45. By definition, "games" include regular season and playoff league games, all exhibition games and tournament games.

Section 8 (Tournaments) provides an estimate of the number of games per tournament as four, for the purpose of counting games, and allows for competitive teams to enter up to four tournaments and for HL teams to enter up to three.

There are questions as to whether tournament games are to be counted as 4 (the average that Section 8 suggests) or by the actual number played, so as to comply with Section 9's requirement to count all games up to and including the maximum of 45.

Given that the policy provides for competitive teams to enter four tournaments and HLs to enter three, teams may do so. It is recognized that teams entering four tournaments in 2021-22 may exceed 45 games in total as a result of strong performances.

Therefore, District Chairs whose U11 teams are approaching 40 games at the conclusion of the regular season are requested to discuss next steps (in terms of team participation in league playoffs) with HEO before playoffs begin. The decision reached as a result of those discussions will be conveyed to the relevant League.

This approach calls for proactive planning and monitoring on the part of teams, Associations and Districts, provides some flexibility for teams who may slightly exceed the maximum number of games in playoffs as a result of a strong playoff performance, and does not penalize those teams who chose not to enter more tournaments during the regular season in respect of the U11 policy.

In terms of exhibition games, U11 teams are reminded that per HEO Policy for Minor Hockey 6.49, Section 7.4.2, all games must be officiated by HEO registered and crested officials. Gamesheets must be kept as a record of these games. Scrimmages between Associations without HEO registered and crested officials on the ice are not considered sanctioned activities, and therefore participants are not eligible for HC insurance. Districts and Associations are responsible to ensure that U11 teams from different Associations engage in exhibition game format only, in compliance with HEO's Policy for Minor Hockey 6.49 Section 7.4.2, so as to avoid potential risk and safety issues and to be able to correctly address in-game discipline issues. Teams that engage in such scrimmages are subject to the provisions of the Code of Discipline (minor hockey).

In addition, participation in scrimmages without proper officiating and record-keeping may be subject to the provisions of Hockey Canada's Action Bulletin regarding non-sanctioned leagues (October 2019). HEO is in the process of implementing a Branch version of that policy for divisions and categories of hockey that do not compete for regional or national championships. This could affect player and/or bench staff participation in HEO's programs, as individuals found to have participated in non-sanctioned leagues after September 30th, will be removed from HEO's programs, and must file an appeal to Hockey

Canada/HEO requesting reinstatement to regain access to these programs, either in the same or subsequent seasons.

Addendum

October 12, 2021