



Junior Hockey Policy

Hockey Australia's Junior Hockey Policy (JHP) will ensure the provision of quality hockey experiences for young hockey participants. It will encourage safe, enjoyable and accountable environments for everyone involved in junior hockey.

Why a Junior Hockey Policy?

Junior hockey provides the foundation for fostering hockey excellence and long-term involvement for all. The JHP is applicable to all people involved in junior hockey including:

- Junior hockey participants
- Parents/ guardians
- Teachers
- Coaches/ team managers
- Umpires
- Administrators
- Other Volunteers

Junior hockey providers must be familiar with, and put into practice, procedures to ensure young people have a positive hockey experience. The following six strategies will assist in ensuring the health, welfare and enjoyment of junior participants.



1. Hockey - A Game for Everyone, A Game for Life

Getting young people active is important because it is an integral component of a healthy lifestyle. Hockey can assist in the development of physical, social and emotional well-being and therefore should be accessible to all young people. A wide variety of skills and abilities developed in hockey can also transfer to non-athletic pursuits and influence social issues such as community pride and identity.

- Hockey should be available to all people as 'a game for everyone'
- Provide equal opportunity for young people regardless of their ability, cultural background or socio-economic status
- Opportunities should not be affected by body shape, gender or sexuality
- To increase hockey enjoyment the goal must be on maintaining involvement through fun and achievement
- Offer modified versions of hockey such as Rookey and Hook in 2 Hockey to encourage interest and allow for success at an early age
- An early positive hockey experience is vital in keeping young people involved and is more likely to lead to a lifelong involvement

2. People Making Hockey Happen

People are the most important resource in junior hockey because they provide the necessary infrastructure for its delivery and contribute greatly to the total hockey experience. A number of stakeholders have responsibilities for organising and conducting junior hockey including state and regional associations, clubs, schools as well as government, commercial and non-profit providers.

- Establish a welcoming and appropriate club environment
- Hockey providers should be positive role models and provide feedback and encouragement
- Establish links with local and state government and other relevant sporting bodies
- Share services and resources to benefit junior hockey participants (e.g facilities, equipment and personnel)
- Provide opportunities for junior hockey participants to become volunteers in coaching, umpiring and administration

3. Junior Hockey Pathways

Planning for the progressive development of hockey skills in juniors requires consideration of stages of development, different levels of ability, different rates in gaining skills and different interests of junior participants in hockey.

- Develop a framework of progressive stages to facilitate the movement of junior participants to experienced participants
- Understand the different concentration abilities of junior participants and modify activities and training times to maintain their interest
- Consistency of procedures can be improved through communication and cooperation (e.g timing of activities, age groupings, rules)
- Encourage transfer of hockey participants from school to club
- Foster pathways from Rookey to Hook in2 Hockey, through to becoming a club member

Beginner Participation Pathway:



Club Member

4. How Much Hockey is Healthy

Physical activity is essential for the normal growth and development of children. However, there are potentially harmful effects for young athletes through the impact of over-training. Determining when junior hockey players are ready for additional training and/ or competition is a duty of care required of hockey providers.

- Inappropriate and over-training can have an adverse effect on the growth, development and maturation of junior participants
- Plan and adjust training schedules based on individual growth, development and maturation
- Provide a structure to support talented young hockey players
- Focus on junior hockey people having fun to maintain interest until they are at an age and stage to specialise
- Focus on personal improvement rather than comparison against others



	Broad Experiences	Progression	Specialisation	Recreational Participation
Ability	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Any level
Age Range	6-10 yrs	10-13 yrs	14-18 yrs	All
Focus	Fun, learning, general athletic development	Fun, improving wide range of skills	Enjoyment and improving performance	Enjoyment, social and personal satisfaction
Considerations	Modifications to equipment, venue and game structure for safety and success (e.g Rookey & Hook in2 Hockey)	Athletic and behavioural skills for life-long participation	Fitness, technical and tactical training, goal setting, managing aspirations	Social aspects and events Encourage involvement in other roles (e.g coach, official)
Session Duration	Up to 60 mins	Up to 90 mins	Up to 120 mins	Up to 90 mins
Session Frequency (training & competition)	1-2 times/wk	1 -3 times/wk in total	2-4 times/wk in total	Up to 3 times/wk
Session Contents	Play, simple games, opportunities to participate focussing on gross motor skills	Skill development through understanding, training and games	Training and competition with the aims of skill development, game sense and performance	Training and competition with options at various levels
Approach to Conditioning	Minor aspect, not a focus	Careful introduction and progression to suit individual development	Evaluate individual to determine focus and gradually progress	Train to avoid negative outcomes (e.g injuries)
Competition	Modified activities with the objective of individual improvement No representative teams Scoring tallies optional; not central objective	Competition with emphasis on all-round development and rotation around all positions Emphasise fair play Representative teams and regional competitions in later years (U/13) Scoring tallies	Introduction of inter-state competitions (U15) Emphasis on individual and all-round development Experience competition also through officiating and coaching younger groups	Focus on social competitions Level of competitive intensity appropriate to individual motivation
Recognition	Recognise effort and participation	Recognise effort, improvement, application and participation	Recognise effort, improvement and performance	Recognise effort, participation and contribution to the sport

5. Quality Coaching

Understanding the learning process and the developmental stages in this process are necessary for quality junior hockey experiences. Young people have preferences for how they like to learn, and their preferences might change depending on the type of task and their prior experiences.

- Coaching should be conducted in a positive and encouraging manner and players should be kept as active as possible
- Provide training/ accreditation opportunities for all coaches, with the Hockey Australia Community Coaching Accreditation as a minimum standard
- Junior hockey players should be introduced to a variety of roles and playing positions
- Promote fair play, cooperation, teamwork and team spirit



6. Keeping Hockey Safe

To protect the welfare of junior hockey participants and providers an awareness of the relevant legal and safety issues is required.

- Promote a safe and harassment free environment
- Promote healthy practices for weight control, responsible alcohol consumption, use of medications and ensure smoke-free environments
- Inform junior members of their rights
- Develop and implement risk management procedures within the hockey club or association (e.g. medical condition form, facility and emergency management, blood rule, first-aid kit)
- Promote awareness and understanding of Hockey Australia's Member Protection Policy and in particular the Codes of Behaviour (coach, umpire, player, parent)
- Ensure your organisation meets the requirements for privacy protection and legislation

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