

U9 Report for the 2020/2021 Season
Submitted by Luisa Perry, division manager

We had a relatively smooth start to the season, all coaches, players and families being familiar with the cross-ice regulations. There were a few hiccups with figuring out how to abide by COVID rules while still respecting that the players in U9 are developmentally too young to be expected to dress themselves for hockey and it was not advised to bring players to the arena dressed as this impeded the safety of their booster seats.

Evaluations in September:

Players were broken into random groups, based on age, and assessed by coaches. All teams were solidified by October 15th this year, as per the cross-ice regulations.

Season Format:

We had 8 teams in total, 4 teams comprised of H3 players and 4 teams comprised of H4 players. The separation of players by age is mandated as part of the cross-ice rules and having 4 teams permits a rotation for game play. All teams had 10-11 players for the majority of the season.

Recruiting Coaches and Management team:

Each H4 team had a head coach and two to three assistant coaches, a minimum of two safety personnel and one or two managers. Each H3 team had a minimum of 2 coaches, one safety and one team manager. There were no head coaches. Due to the small size of the teams, most families were needed to assist in some capacity. All volunteers did a wonderful job.

Practices/Games:

With the exception of 2 weeks, where we tried scrimmages, teams had either 1 or 2 ice times per weekend. U9 received six ice times per weekend. These were divided such that either the H3 teams had 2 ice times or the H4 had the two ice times, alternating each weekend. The teams that had 2 ice times on a weekend had the 6am ice time. Teams practiced for the entire season, except for the second and third weeks in November.

Year End Evaluations:

These were given to the coaches at the end of the season.

Final Considerations:

This is the second year that U9 has run these very small teams. Although it is what is required for the cross-ice rules, this division manager recommends a different organization in the future. The volunteer requirements are extraordinarily high causing difficulties that would be alleviated with fewer teams. In addition, should the 2021-2022 season start-up with COVID considerations, in order for games to run with teams of 10 players, four teams must be present. This results in having close to 100 people at the arena to get players on the ice. Teams of 10 players are simply not big enough to split up into two for two concurrent cross-ice games. It is this division manager's opinion that teams of as close to 14 as possible should be formed in order to have 2 lines of 3 players and 1 goalie per half sheet of ice. The reality is that our organization is not big enough for 8 teams of 14 U9 players. It is recommended by this division manager, therefore, to form teams of mixed age groups, comprised of equal numbers of H3 and H4 players. For tournaments, the players would have to be redistributed into H3 or H4 teams, which would allow

for a first-come-first-served basis when applying for away tournaments. Only one hockey roster would be submitted for the division.