



OMHA U9 PILOT

2026-27



PILOT OVERVIEW

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The pilot applies exclusively to U9 MD teams. All teams begin with an extended development phase with a focus on individual skills and tactics starting on September 8, 2026.

During this period, coaches will deliver a standardized development program, supported by provided Hockey Canada practice plans.

Half-ice gameplay is permitted during this phase.

Following this phase, U9 MD teams will be eligible to transition to full-ice programming on October 1, 2026.



PROGRAM GUIDELINES

- Must maintain a minimum 2:1 practice-to-game ratio, including jamboree and tournament games.
- Coaches will complete three (3) Player evaluations – before the end of Development Phase, after December 26th and at the end of the season.
- Association Contacts will complete three (3) Practice evaluations – November, December and January.
- Teams must be active in the Hockey Canada Network App.



OMHA ROLE AND SUPPORT

- **OMHA U9 Pilot Lead** – Michael Dundas
(michael.dundas@omha.net)
- Provide access to U9 Pilot Resources.
- Confirm team schedules for all participating associations and teams by **October 15th**.
- Ensure a minimum 2:1 practice-to-game ratio is being maintained.
- Conduct a customer experience survey provided by the OHF.





PILOT RESOURCES

RESOURCES

Resource Page: help.omha.net/u9pilot

- U9 Skills Matrix
- U9 Pilot Player & Goalie Evaluation – Ice Plan
- U9 Pilot Player & Goalie Evaluation Tracker
- Hockey Canada Network App – TUTORIAL
 - This tutorial directs the Head Coach through the process to gain access to the HC Network App.



PLAYER EVALUATIONS

- Teams will complete Player & Goalie Evaluations **three (3)** times during the season:
 1. October 1st – November 1st
 2. December 15th – January 15th
 3. End of Season (after March 1st)
- Player & Goalie Evaluation sheets will be submitted by e-mail to michael.dundas@omha.net after each evaluation window.



HOCKEY CANADA NETWORK APP

- Each Head Coach will have access to the U9 Skills Matrix, U9 Seasonal Roadmap and Practice Plans through the Hockey Canada Network App.
- It is expected coaches utilize these plans as a framework for their practice sessions throughout the season.
- OHF will be reviewing activity levels of every user; it is important that coaches are active in the HC Network App.



PRACTICE EVALUATIONS

- Association Contacts (Leads) will complete Practice Evaluations **three (3)** times during the season:
 1. November
 2. December
 3. January
- Practice Evaluation sheets will be submitted by e-mail to michael.dundas@omha.net after each evaluation window.





PROGRAMMING SUMMARY



U9 SEASONAL STRUCTURE

MONTHS	September-October	November-December	December-March
PHASE	*Development 60 Days	First Season Nov. 1 – Dec. 25	Second Season Dec. 26 – Mar. 1
VOLUME	2:1 Practice to Game	2:1 Practice to Game	2:1 Practice to Game

* Extended Development Phase with focus on individual skills and tactics. Half-ice gameplay permitted.



AFFILIATION

AGE BY DEC. 31	DIVISION	CATEGORY	PLAY IN A HIGHER DIVISION?	MAY AFFILIATE?
8	U9	HL; LL	If deemed able by ability using parameters identified by the Association.	YES Only during full ice play
8	U9	MD	If deemed able by ability using parameters identified by the Association	YES Only during full ice play

- Affiliation will only be permitted from a team playing full-ice to another team playing full-ice.
- Affiliation could occur at the recreational level (Houseleague/local league) to a team participating in the U9 Pilot after Dec. 25th.





GAME PLAY GUIDELINES

U9 – DEVELOPMENT PHASE

SEPTEMBER 8 – SEPTEMBER 30

TEAM FORMAT:	Two-Team Model	GAME FORMAT:	4-v-4 plus Goaltenders
GAME LENGTH:	Determined by League	OFFICIALS:	1 or 2 Officials
WARM UP:	3 Minutes	SCORE KEPT:	No
PUCKS:	Blue/Black pucks		
PENALTIES:	• Referee puts arm up to signal penalty call. • Once the offending team has the puck, whistle is blown. • Referee explains to the coach what the penalty was and who received it. • Offending player goes to bench and misses next shift. • Teams play full strength.		



U9 – DEVELOPMENT PHASE

OCTOBER 1 – OCTOBER 31

GAME LENGTH:	Determined by League	GAME FORMAT:	5-v-5 plus Goaltenders
WARM UP:	3 Minutes	OFFICIALS:	2 Official System
PUCKS:	Black pucks	SCORE KEPT:	Yes
PENALTIES:	• Penalty is assessed. • Player goes to the penalty box and is ineligible to return until after the first stoppage once the one-minute time penalty has been served. • Teams play even strength. • Penalty is recorded, one-minute on penalty clock. • This applies to Minor penalties only, all other penalties will be assessed as per Hockey Canada rules.		



U9 – FIRST SEASON

NOVEMBER 1 – DECEMBER 25

GAME LENGTH:	Determined by League	GAME FORMAT:	5-v-5 plus Goaltenders
WARM UP:	3 Minutes	OFFICIALS:	2 Official System
PUCKS:	Black pucks	SCORE KEPT:	Yes
PENALTIES:	• Penalty is assessed. • Player goes to the penalty box and is ineligible to return until after the first stoppage once the one-minute time penalty has been served. • Teams play even strength. • Penalty is recorded, one-minute on penalty clock. • This applies to Minor penalties only, all other penalties will be assessed as per Hockey Canada rules.		



U9 – SECOND SEASON

DECEMBER 26 – END OF SEASON

GAME LENGTH:	Determined by League	GAME FORMAT:	5-v-5 plus Goaltenders
WARM UP:	3 Minutes	OFFICIALS:	2 Official System
PUCKS:	Black pucks	SCORE KEPT:	Yes
PENALTIES:	• Regular full-ice game play rules will be in effect. • Including Power Play/Penalty Kill.		





FAQs

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- Can Exhibition Games played during the Development Phase be full-ice?
 - Yes – Full-Ice game play is allowed as of October 1st.
- How many Exhibition Games can be played during the Development Phase?
 - Maximum of four (4) Exhibition games or two (2) Exhibition games and one (1) full-ice tournament.
- What is the affiliation process for U9 MD teams and U9 MD players?
 - Affiliation will be permitted for players and teams when game structure is the same.



FAQs

- Are we allowed to keep score during the Nov. 1 to Dec. 26 phase?
 - Yes.
- Do we use Game Sheet Inc. (GSI) for full ice games starting November 1st?
 - Yes, GSI must be used for ALL games.
- What does the End of Season Phase look like after March 1st?
 - Individual leagues will determine their End of Season structure.





Hockey is fun.