



WINCHESTER YOUTH HOCKEY LEARN TO PLAY HOCKEY PROGRAM

2020 – 2021





Winchester Youth Hockey's

Learn to Play Program

The Learn to Play Program is Winchester Youth Hockey's premiere program for beginning hockey and is the foundation of skills development for hockey in Winchester.

Players who learn the skills of the game are more inclined to enjoy playing. If they have the skills to play, they will love the game.

Winchester Youth Hockey developed its Learn to Play Program to make children's first contact with hockey a safe and positive experience. It's a structured program designed to introduce beginners to the game's basics with an emphasis on skating, puck handling and passing. The focus will be on skill development and improvement for **all** players. It enables participants to become contributing members of a team effort, develop self-confidence, and experience a sense of personal achievement.

These goals are achieved in an atmosphere of fun and fair play.

The program will consist of structured drills that will introduce basic skills and progressively work towards slightly more advanced skills all within a cross-ice format. The skills learned from these drills will then be implemented into game like scenarios where the players will have an opportunity to play in a semi-competitive

environment ensuring that we allow time for kids to just play.

The foundation of the Learn to Play Program is station-based practices and Cross-Ice games and the benefits include: more puck touches; maximum ice usage; increased competition for all players; and, most importantly fun for all participants.



About the Program

Winchester Youth Hockey's President has assigned Directors to be responsible for overseeing the implementation and delivery of the Learn to Play Hockey Program. For the 2020-2021 season, these Directors are: Sean McKeever (seanmckeever@yahoo.com); and Matt Spang (matthew.spang@gmail.com).

Throughout the season, they are responsible to report directly to the Winchester Youth Hockey Board of Directors regarding the Program. Any parents with questions, issues, or concerns should not hesitate to contact either Director.

The Program is designed for boys and girls age 4-8 (the oldest birth year allowed for the 2020-2021 season is **2012**) who have some previous skating experience and wish to learn the fundamentals of ice hockey in a team based Environment. All players participating in the Learn to Play Program should have completed at least one (1) year in a Learn-to-Skate Program.

In the initial sessions, all enrolled players will participate together where the Coaches will evaluate and identify those players with the least experience and generally the youngest to be grouped together to form the "Bruins" team. All other

players will be divided into evenly skilled groups to form the Tri-City teams.

Generally, the Bruins team will be comprised of 15-20 of the newest skaters and the Tri-City teams will be comprised of 10-12 players each with a head coach.

Program Model

Objective: Emphasis on fun and skill development.

Curriculum: Fundamental skills

Length of Season: Mid October through March

Frequency per Week: 3 times

- > 2 Practices
- > 1 Cross Ice Game
- > Games start no earlier than November

Locations:

Practices will be at the Flynn Rink in Medford or Holland Arena in Woburn. There may be a small number of practices at other facilities. The Bruins will practice on the little rink at Flynn and the Tri-City groups will be on the larger ice surface at Flynn.

Games will be on Sunday mornings at Flynn rink with the Bruins having an intra-squad game and the Tri-City teams playing anywhere from 8 AM to 12 PM in the Tri-City League against teams from Belmont, Melrose as well as the other Tri-City Winchester teams.

The Tri-City league will have dressed goalies on a rotational basis.

Score and game time, along with offsides and icings, will not be implemented during game play to focus on skill development rather than an emphasis on winning.



Schedules:

The Winchester Youth Hockey website will contain all scheduling information. Each team will have its own customized page that will contain all scheduling information. Team schedule will also be available through the TeamSnap App.

Miscellaneous:

- > One practice is a skating session run by Jacqui Lovato, a two-time NCAA D1 skating national champion at Miami University and world silver medalist.
- > All players must be fully equipped to participate in the Program – this includes, skates, helmet with a face mask, gloves, shoulder pads, elbow pads, hockey pants, protective cup, shin pads, a mechanism to keep

hockey socks supported, a hockey stick, and a mouth guard. Winchester Youth Hockey will provide each player with a set of hockey socks and jersey **after** teams are selected.

- > All participants in the Program **must** be registered with USA Hockey. Families can register their son or daughter through the Winchester Youth Hockey website after logging in as though you are making a payment. There is an option for “Registering with USA Hockey” and “Uploading the Registration Confirmation Number”. This link will take you directly to the USA Hockey website, where you can complete the registration process. When complete, you must

input your child’s registration confirmation number (9 digits and 5 letters) into the Winchester Youth Hockey website.

Coaching:

Coaching and leadership is the foundation of our Learn to Play Program. Our coaches are generally from the participants’ moms and dads. In addition to developing players’ hockey skills and promoting fitness, coaches are responsible for encouraging initiative, stimulating interest in the sport and instilling a desire of continued success. Our volunteer coaches must be positive, energetic, creative, fun-loving and above all, patient. Possessing a coaching and/or hockey background or a strong desire to begin to learn instructional techniques in the delivery of fundamental hockey skills is our preference when finalizing coaches for the Program.

Practice Structure

OCTOBER Weeks 1-4	NOVEMBER Weeks 5-8	DECEMBER Weeks 9-12	JANUARY Weeks 13-16	FEBRUARY Weeks 17-20	MARCH Weeks 21-24
Technical Skills Introduce	Technical Skills Acquire	Technical Skills Develop	Technical Skills Develop	Technical Skills Application	Technical Application
Skating Agility Balance Coordination Backwards	Skating Agility Balance Coordination Backwards	Skating Edges Quickness Speed	Skating Edges Quickness Speed	Skating Edges Quickness Speed	Skating Edges Quickness Speed
Puck Control Stationary	Puck Control Stationary	Puck Control Moving Dekes	Puck Control Moving Dekes	Puck Control Moving / Stationary Dekes	Puck Control Moving / Stationary Dekes
Passing Stationary	Passing Stationary	Passing Moving	Passing Moving	Passing Stationary Moving	Passing Stationary Moving
Fun Games	Fun Games	Fun Games	Fun Games	Fun Games Relays Competitive Drills	Fun Games Relays Competitive Drills

Benefits of the cross-ice model



About Cross-ice

The Learn to Play Program utilizes a “cross-ice” layout” for the majority of its practices and skills sessions. Cross-ice layouts consists of dividing the ice surface into one-third lateral sections for games and drill stations instead of using the entire ice surface or half ice. The rationale behind this method is that long-term hockey development research has shown that reducing the size of the playing surface offers more opportunity for skill development and greater participation from all the players. This leads to more interaction developing important skill intangibles leading to the building blocks of greater hockey sense and playing ability as growth and development progresses.

More efficient use of time and space:

- Size of the rink is in proportion to the size of the players
- More skaters get a chance to play hockey
- Hockey IQ, or understanding the principles of the games young age
- Group sizes become smaller which means learning and teaching will become more effective
- More repetition/frequency in drills
- The higher tempo of cross-ice games results in players needing to make quicker decisions

Cross-ice increases:

- Puck touches
- Passing attempts
- Shot attempts
- Puck battles
- Changes of direction
- Speed in playing situations, which leads to quicker mental and physical reactions by the players