

HOCKEY CALGARY

COMMUNITY HOCKEY AND MINOR FEMALE

GAME PLAY GUIDELINES

2026-2027 SEASON

UPDATED AUGUST 2026

1. Gameplay at a Glance

Division	Early Season	Mid/Late Season	Game Limit	Primary Format
U7 Jr	Cross-Ice	Cross-Ice	20 formal-modified games	4v4 + acting goalies
U7 Sr	Cross-Ice	Cross-Ice	24 formal-modified games	4v4 + acting goalies
U9	Half-Ice	¾ Cross-Ice; full-ice option from Dec. 26	35 games	4v4 / 5v5 + 3v3
U11	Full-Ice	Full-Ice	45 games*	Full-Ice
U13	Full-Ice	Full-Ice	No maximum; 40–50 suggested	Full-Ice
U15	Full-Ice	Full-Ice	No maximum; 40–50 suggested	Full-Ice
U18	Full-Ice	Full-Ice	No maximum; 40–50 suggested	Full-Ice

* U11 game count excludes Esso Minor Hockey Week (except Game 1) and playoff games.

2. 2026–27 Key Changes

- **U9 game format**:
  - **Half-Ice** September 1 to December 26 → **Three-Quarter (HC scheduled)** December 26 to March 31 → **Full-Ice Optional** (Tournament/Exhibition only) December 26 to March 31.
  - Full-Ice game maximum has increased from 8 to 12.
  - Full-Ice period lengths have changed to 3 x 15 mins. Periods.

3. General Gameplay Rules & Administration

3.1 Game Limits

Division	Regular/Seasonal Limit	Notes
U7 Jr	16 formal-modified games through regular season; up to 20 total	Includes Hockey Calgary scheduled games, exhibition and tournament games; no exceptions.
U7 Sr	18 formal-modified games through regular season; up to 24 total	Includes Hockey Calgary scheduled games, exhibition and tournament games; no exceptions.
U9	28 games through regular season; up to 35 total	Includes scheduled, exhibition and tournament games.
U11	45 games	Excludes EMHW except Game 1 and playoff games.
U13–U18	No maximum	Hockey Calgary suggests 40–50 total games.

3.2 Tournaments, Travel Permits & Schedule Windows

Tournament participation, schedule windows, travel permits, and out-of-town tournament counts are governed by Hockey Calgary's current Tournament Policy and related policies. For 2026–27, Hockey Calgary has continued an additional paid schedule window and a game-reschedule process for eligible teams.

3.3 General Game Management

- All game formats must comply with applicable Hockey Canada, Hockey Alberta, and Hockey Calgary rules and policies.
- Teams and officials should arrive prepared to complete the game within the scheduled permit.
- Where the guideline assigns a responsibility to coaches (board set-up), that responsibility remains with the coaches and is not transferred to officials or arena staff.
- Where a format permits coaches to choose between models, the designated default model applies if the coaches cannot agree (i.e. A/B rosters, black puck vs. blue puck).

4. U7 Timbits

4.1 Seasonal Structure

Game Type	U7 Jr	U7 Sr	Notes
Informal games until	Nov. 27	Nov. 13	
Formal-modified games	16 through Feb. 21; 20 total Sept.–Mar.	18 through Feb. 21; 24 total Sept.–Mar.	Includes HC scheduled, exhibition and tournament games
Tournament/Jamboree maximum	2	3	Only 1 may be out-of-town

The Hockey Calgary Timbits Jamboree does not count toward game limits.

Timbits games hosted by a Hockey Calgary team/Member Club must be played in a Cross-Ice format. Games or jamborees hosted by another minor hockey association may use half-ice when sanctioned by Hockey Alberta. Full-ice games are not permitted under the supplied U7 guideline.

4.2 U7 Game Format

- Split-squad Cross-Ice format, board-to-board / blue-line-down.
- 4v4 plus two acting goalies; acting goalies transition to players after their shift.
- Alternate goalie option: a player may play in goal for half of a half (12 minutes), then another player takes the position.
- Two face-offs: one to start the game and one to start the second half.
- No official score is posted. No offside and no icing.
- Blue pucks.
- Main score clock is used as the timing device for both games simultaneously.
- Coaches are on the ice with skates. A maximum of 4–5 players should be on each bench area.
- 90-second shifts.
- Resting players take a knee on the blue line. When the buzzer/whistle sounds, players relinquish the puck and move toward the resting area.
- Tag-up applies when fewer than four players are available on the bench.

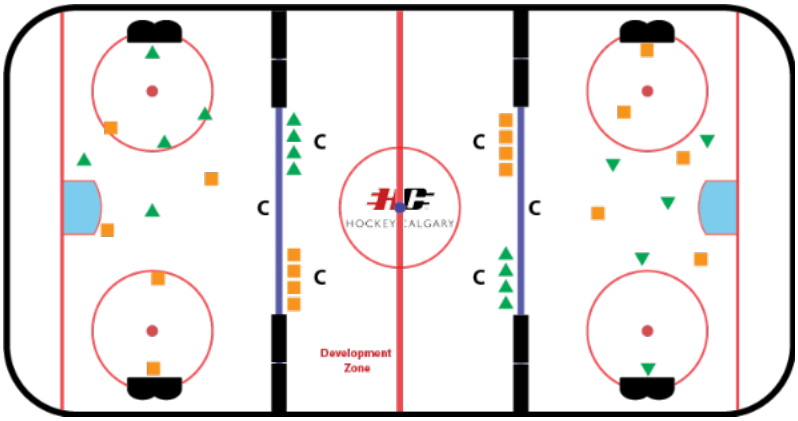
4.3 Developmental Zone

The Developmental Zone is intended to create opportunities for individual instruction and attention during the 90-second rest period.

- Coaches may address a specific coachable moment and provide a small number of repetitions.
- Players may use the zone to rest, hydrate, cheer for teammates, or receive targeted instruction.
- It is not intended for full drills between shifts.
- It is not intended for coaches to repeatedly remove players after every shift for instruction.

Coaching principle

Keep the intervention short, specific and connected to what just happened in the game. The goal is to have more meaningful play not more stoppages for coaching.



5. U9

5.1 Seasonal Structure

Period	League / Seeding Games	Exhibition / Tournament	Notes
Sept. 1–Dec. 26	Half-Ice	Half-Ice	Two-Four Half-Ice Model
Dec. 26-Mar. 31	Three-Quarter Cross-Ice	Three-Quarter Cross-Ice or Full-Ice (Optional)	Coaches choose for exhibition/tournament games; default to Three-Quarter if no agreement. Maximum 12 full-ice games beginning Dec. 26

Esso Minor Hockey Week: Three-Quarter Cross-Ice.

Seasonal game maximum: 28 games throughout the regular season and 35 total games from September to March.

Tournament maximum: 3 tournaments/jamborees, with no tournament participation prior to November 1.

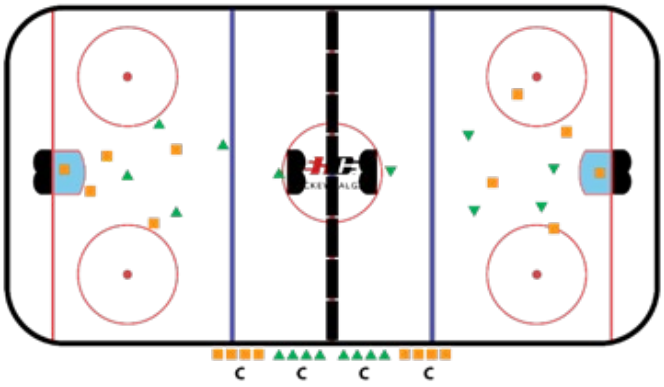
5.2 U9 Quick Reference

Feature	Half-Ice	Three-Quarter / Cross-Ice
Players	4v4; 2 goaltenders	5v5 in Three-Quarter; 3v3 in Cross-Ice
Shift	90 seconds	90 seconds
Offside / icing	No / No	No / No
Score	No official score posted	No official score posted
Puck	Blue	Blue default; black only if both coaches agree
Officials	1 at each end + mentor official	Both referees on Three-Quarter; coaches manage Cross-Ice
Roster Formation	Evenly balanced during seeding. A/B post-seeding only if both coaches agree. Evenly balanced is default.	Evenly balanced

Period	Half-Ice	Three-Quarter / Cross-Ice	Full-Ice (Optional)
Warm-up/Set-up	5 mins.	5 mins.	5 mins.
Period 1	24 mins.	15 mins.	15 mins.
Rest/change ends	3 mins.	3 mins.	3 mins.
Period 2	24 mins.	15 mins.	15 mins.
Rest/change ends	—	3 mins.	3 mins.
Period 3	—	15 mins.	15 mins.
Shake hands/move boards	3 mins.	3 mins.	3 mins.
Total Ice Slot	60 mins.	60 mins.	60 mins.

5.3 Sept. 1–Dec. 26: Two-Four Half-Ice Model

- Split squad. Visiting team switches ends at the midpoint.
- Teams share benches.
- 4v4 with two goaltenders.
- Half-ice runs from the goal line to centre ice; the net at centre ice is placed on the centre face-off circle.
- Two face-offs: start of game and start of second half.
- Main score clock times both games.
- Maximum two coaches per team on each bench.
- Tag-up is enforced by coaches when a team has fewer than four players on the bench.
- Roster formation: evenly balanced during seeding. A/B rosters post-seeding only if both coaches agree. Evenly balanced is the default.



Two-Four Half Ice Model

5.4 Dec. 26–Mar. 31: Three-Quarter / Cross-Ice Model

Roster splitting: coaches divide the roster into three evenly numbered and evenly balanced mini teams. Each mini team plays one period in the Cross-Ice competition zone and two periods in the Three-Quarter competition zone.

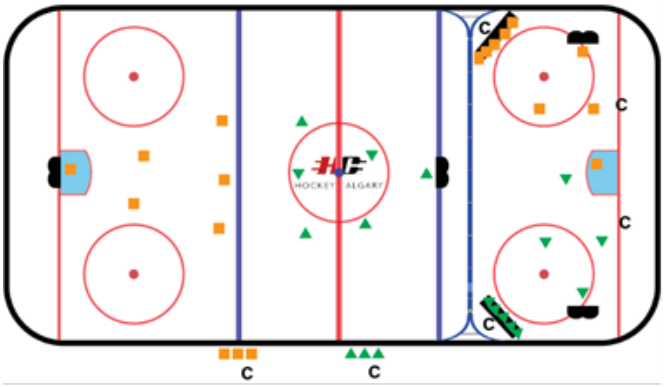
- If a team has 16 players or fewer, coaches should rotate an additional player into the Cross-Ice zone so that there are at least five skaters (excluding the goalie) in the Cross-Ice zone.
- Some players may play two Cross-Ice periods in this circumstance.
- Coaches may use the gameplay roster grid to assist with splitting players.
- Boards are set approximately 6–10 feet past the blue line, approximately halfway between the blue line and the tops of the in-zone face-off circles/ringette line.
- Small nets are recommended.
- Blue or black pucks may be used; both coaches must agree to black. Blue is the default.
- 90-second shifts; tag-up rule in effect.

5.5 Three-Quarter Game

- 5v5. Teams remain split into even numbers; some players may double-shift and receive slightly more ice time.
- Face-off to start each period and after each goal.
- Both referees work the Three-Quarter game to develop positioning in a two-official system.
- Coaches may identify forwards and defence, but players must rotate between positions.
- Focus should be on support and experimentation, not systems or rigid positioning.
- On a penalty, the official blows the whistle immediately. The penalized player exits the playing area, possession changes, the offending team backs off 3 metres, and a replacement player enters. Play continues 5v5; the replacement player remains on for the next shift.
- No offside and no icing.

5.6 Cross-Ice Game

- 3v3.
- Two face-offs: one to start each game/half.
- Coaches in the Cross-Ice game wear skates and helmets and manage the ice.
- Where available, one bumper in each corner can serve as a player bench/resting area. If bumpers are unavailable, coaches may mark the resting area.
- Players receive slightly more rest in the Cross-Ice game.



Three Quarter – Cross Ice Game

5.7 U9 Full-Ice Exhibition/Tournament Option

Eligibility

Beginning December 26, U9 teams may play a maximum of 12 Full-Ice exhibition or tournament games. Full-Ice gameplay is optional.

- 5v5 plus a goaltender; only one goaltender may dress.
- Face-off to start each half.
- Blue or black pucks; black requires agreement of both coaches.
- No official score posted; no offside; no icing.
- 90-second shifts.
- Maximum five coaches per team on the bench.
- Small nets recommended.
- Penalty procedure: immediate whistle; penalized player exits; possession changes; offending team backs off 3 metres; replacement player enters and play continues at even strength. The replacement player remains on for the next shift.

6. U11

6.1 Game Limits

Maximum

45 games. The game count does not include Esso Minor Hockey Week (except Game 1 of EMHW) and playoff games.

Game Type	Games	Notes
Seeding	6	U11 AA does not play seeding games.
Regular Season	12	Game 1 of EMHW is included in the 12-game regular-season total.
Exhibition	Approx. 4–11	Booked at team discretion.
Tournaments	Maximum 4	Only 2 can be out of town

***EMHW Game 1 — also counts as a regular-season game.**

6.2 Game Timing

Permit	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3
1 hour	13 min	13 min	13 min
1¼ hours	15 min	15 min	15 min
1½ hours	15 min	20 min	20 min

- All games are stop time.
- No timeouts permitted.
- Three-minute warm-up begins at the scheduled permit time.
- Players remain on the ice between periods; one-minute intermission between periods.
- No game may exceed the permit time.
- If undue delays prevent completion, at the first stoppage after the clock reaches five minutes remaining on the permit, the timekeeper notifies the referee. The clock is reset to two minutes, and the remainder is completed with stop time.

7. U13, U15 and U18

7.1 Game Limits & Scheduled Games

Division	Game Limit	Seeding	Regular Season	Tournaments
U13	No maximum; 40–50 suggested	8	12	Maximum 4. Only 2 can be out of town
U15	No maximum; 40–50 suggested	8	14	Maximum 4. Only 2 can be out of town
U18	No maximum; 40–50 suggested	8	16	Maximum 4. Only 2 can be out of town

*** EMHW Game 1 — also counts as a regular-season game.**

7.2 Game Timing

Permit	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3
1 hour	13 min	13 min	13 min
1¼ hours	15 min	15 min	15 min
1½ hours	15 min	20 min	20 min
1¾ hours	20 min	20 min	15 min
2 hours or greater	20 min	20 min	20 min

- All games are stop time.
- No timeouts permitted.
- Three-minute warm-up begins at the scheduled permit time.

- Floods occur between periods only according to permit length: 1¾-hour permit—between Periods 1 and 2; 2-hour permit—between Periods 1 and 2; 2¼-hour or greater permit—between both intermissions.
- For 1-hour and 1¼-hour games, players remain on the ice between periods with a one-minute intermission.
- For 1½-hour or longer games, players remain on the ice between periods when no flood occurs, with a one-minute intermission.
- No game may exceed the permit time. If delays prevent completion, use the same five-minute/clock-reset procedure described for U11.

Out-of-Town Tournament Definition

The following rinks will no longer count toward the 'Out-of-Town' tournament total and will be considered 'In Town' tournaments.

- Teams attending tournaments at these rinks are still required to request a Travel Permit.
- Tournaments hosted at these rinks still require the host to secure officials; officials are not assigned by Hockey Calgary.
- See the current Hockey Calgary Tournament Policy for the complete arena list and tournament-count rules.

City/Town	Rink Name	Address	Distance from Calgary
Chestermere	Chestermere Regional Community Association	201 W Chestermere Dr, Chestermere, AB	24 KM
Airdrie	Ron Ebbesen Twin Arena	200 East Lake Crescent NE, Airdrie, AB	33 KM
Airdrie	Genesis Place	800 East Lake Blvd NE, Airdrie, AB	33 KM
Airdrie	Plainsmen Arena	320 Centre Ave E, Airdrie, AB	36 KM
Cochrane	Cochrane Arena	609 4 Ave N, Cochrane AB	37 KM
Cochrane	Spray Lakes Sawmills Family Sports Centre	800 Griffin Rd E, Cochrane AB	39 KM
De Winton	Scott Seaman Sports Rink	32156 AB-552, De Winton, AB	40 KM
Indus	Indus Recreational Centre	225155 Range Rd 281A, Indus, AB	41 KM
Okotoks	Murray & Piper Arena	99 Okotoks Dr, Okotoks, AB	45 KM
Okotoks	Okotoks Centennial Arenas	204 Community Way, Okotoks, AB	47 KM
Crossfield	Pete Knight Memorial Arena	920 Mountain Ave, Crossfield, AB	51 KM
Strathmore	Strathmore Family Centre Arena	160 Brent Blvd, Strathmore, AB	55 KM
Diamond Valley	Oilfields Regional Arena	611 3 St SW, Diamond Valley, AB	63 KM
Morley	Stoney Tribal Hockey Arena	Morley, AB T0L 1N0	63 KM
Carstairs	Carstairs Memorial Arena	2100 AB-581, Carstairs, AB	68 KM
High River	Bob Snodgrass Recreation Complex	228 12 Ave SE, High River, AB	68 KM