



HOCKEY CALGARY

U9 ROSTER FORMATION GUIDE

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Overview:

- All League Games from Dec 1 – Jan 14 and all EMHW games will be played with Modified A/B Rosters. U9 teams play 2 games each as part of EMHW. As part of EMHW, instead of splitting their teams into two evenly balanced teams for games, coaches will form their two mini teams using a top-down approach (A/B Rosters).
- The ‘A’ roster will be referred to as the **Blue** roster while the ‘B’ roster will be referred to as the **Red** roster.

Background

- North America predominantly operates programming using a team-based (Rigid Team Rosters) approach where kids are placed on teams at the beginning of the season based on like-skilled abilities. This has a major benefit but also has some drawbacks.
- ‘Creating teams for the purposes of competition’ prioritizes creating the ideal environment for practices while still creating meaningful competition.
- Rigid Team Rosters vs. Free-Flowing Rosters
 - Rigid Team Rosters – creates teams as the beginning of the season for all hockey activities (practices, games, team activities, etc.). While this has benefits for team culture and dynamics, it also restricts players to a specific group of players/skill throughout the season. As players develop at different rates throughout the season, this format does not allow flexibility to move players up and down groups/teams for the benefit of their individual player development.

- Free-Flowing Rosters – creates large groups of players (~2 teams worth of players) for practices/development. ‘Formal Teams’ are formed for the purposes of competition and then are unformed for practices/development. This structure allows players to move up and down for practices and games within their large group at various points of the season to account for different levels of growth for each individual player. The large group gives the flexibility to create more than 1 team for games, which allows flexibility to form different types of teams (evenly balanced, top down, etc.), which challenges players by putting them in different environments.
- ‘Best of Both Worlds’
 - Teams are still formed at the beginning of the season, following the Rigid Team Roster model
 - Practice Environment – U7 and U9 teams share practices and can easily accomplish a free-flowing roster construction in a practice environment by splitting players in the like skilled groups during station practices. Many teams do this already, but increased collaboration is beneficial. Both teams on the ice should work together to run their practices and treat their individual teams like a ‘large group’, similar to the Free-Flowing Roster model. Teams would still have opportunity to conduct some drills/practices on their own as an individual team.
 - Game Environment – Teams are still formal. However, in a ‘split squad two-four game’ format in U9 which is currently operating, teams have some ability within the confines of a Rigid Team Structure to have some free-flowing rosters (evenly balanced, top down, etc.). This is currently permitted at U7, but not at U9.

Rationale

- Increased focus on individual player development
 - Free-Flowing Rosters allow players to experience all the benefits of different roster groupings. Different player groupings can easily be accomplished in practices, with an increased benefit when teams work together to make a larger group. The majority of players would experience the following benefits during the season depending on the grouping (evenly balanced, top down).
 - Benefits of ‘Like Skilled’ abilities
 - Easier to coach and modify drills – targeted instruction
 - Personalized development
 - Allows for a reasonable gap in player ability to facilitate both meaningful competition and creativity
 - Benefits of ‘Being the Best’
 - Develops confidence and creativity
 - Allows middle skilled players on the team to experience ‘being the best’
 - Players learn how to play with, include, and get the most out of lesser skills teammates
 - Benefits of ‘Being Challenged’
 - Develops resilience, work ethic, and creativity
 - Benefits of ‘Being Involved’
 - Lesser skilled players will get the opportunity to touch the puck more and be more involved in the play in a top-down grouping
 - Higher skilled players will be challenged more in a top-down grouping

Guidelines

- Coaches will internally rank their players and split their players into 3 groups using a top-down approach
 - Group 1 – top ~4 players
 - Group 2 – middle ~10 players
 - Group 3 – bottom ~4 players
- Please note that the above numbers are approximate and up to the coaches to determine the exact number of players in each group
- Group 1 would be identified as players on the **Blue** roster (these players will likely be identified as **Blue** roster players for both games)
- Group 3 would be identified as players on the **Red** roster (these players will likely be identified as **Red** roster players for both games)
- Group 2 would be identified as either **Blue** or **Red** roster players (these players will likely play 1 game each on the **Blue** and **Red** rosters)
- Sample Below – Group 2 players games should play 1 game on the **Blue** roster and 1 game on the **Red** roster
 - Note – this is just a sample. Some teams may have different numbers of players in each of the groups. However, Group 2 should include at least half of the players on the team.
- **NOTE:** Teams will not switch sides at the intermission/half. Teams will play the same opponent's mini team for both halves

| Player Ranking | Ex. Traditional Evenly Balanced | Group | Ex. EMHW Game 1 | Ex. EMHW Game 2 |
|----------------|---------------------------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Player 1 | Team 1 | Group 1 | Blue | Blue |
| Player 2 | Team 2 | | Blue | Blue |
| Player 3 | Team 1 | | Blue | Blue |
| Player 4 | Team 2 | | Blue | Blue |
| Player 5 | Team 1 | Group 2 | Blue | Red |
| Player 6 | Team 2 | | Red | Blue |
| Player 7 | Team 1 | | Blue | Red |
| Player 8 | Team 2 | | Red | Blue |
| Player 9 | Team 1 | | Blue | Red |
| Player 10 | Team 2 | | Red | Blue |
| Player 11 | Team 1 | | Blue | Red |
| Player 12 | Team 2 | | Red | Blue |
| Player 13 | Team 1 | | Blue | Red |
| Player 14 | Team 2 | | Red | Blue |
| Player 15 | Team 1 | Group 3 | Red | Red |
| Player 16 | Team 2 | | Red | Red |
| Player 17 | Team 1 | | Red | Red |
| Player 18 | Team 2 | | Red | Red |