

Children's Ringette FAQ

2019-2020





General

Why is Ringette Canada changing the structure of youth ringette?

Ringette Canada's Competition Review and Restructuring Report was released in 2018 and was the product of a two-year comprehensive analysis of the competition system. The report generated 61 recommendations for Ringette Canada, with the overall objectives of improving ringette competition and providing quality sport experiences for ringette participants at all stages. Ringette Canada has committed to the implementation of these recommendations to continue to drive our sport forward.

Children's Ringette stems from direct recommendations from this Report with the overall goal of better supporting long-term athlete development by placing greater emphasis on the individual athlete's experience.

Why are we switching to small area games?

Reducing the playing area helps to scale the game to the size of its players. Small area games also inherently increase the frequency of instances where athletes have to compete for the ring by preventing stronger skaters from simply skating away with the ring unchallenged; thus encouraging skill development and player engagement in all participants. The smaller area also takes away time and speeds up the game, enabling players to improve reaction times and their ringette IQ (i.e. ability to anticipate and recognize patterns of play).

Small-area games specifically target the development of the follow skills:

- Skating
- Passing – sending & receiving
- Ring protection
- Checking
- Decision-making

Why reduce the number of players on the ice?

Develop decision-making – Fewer options means players have the opportunity for a higher frequency of successful decisions. This helps them learn when they should shoot, when they should pass and when they should use their agility to get around a defender.

Learn to create space - Players can spread out and create space without having to go so far that they are out of range of passes and essentially out of the play.



Involve all players - Reduced number of players also means all players are engaged as they all need to work together to be successful.

Won't stronger players still dominate the game?

When youth play traditional full-ice games at this stage, it is common to see one or two players that rarely touch the ring or get involved in the play, particularly when their team has one or two dominant players, or early developers. The result is that these dominant players only work on a few skills (forward striding, shooting, etc.) and the other players are not developing their skills. In Children's Ringette, due to the reduced playing area and reduced number of players, everyone must be engaged and involved for the team to be successful. The result is that all players are getting more skill repetition in game situations, and the more dominant players are forced to work on other essential ringette skills (ring protection, checking, decision-making, skating agility, etc.) that they may not have to use to be successful in a full-ice game at this stage.

How will my child learn the rules of ringette?

Most sports modify the rules of the game to accommodate children who are trying to develop the basic skills of the game. For example, most sports that have an offside rule (soccer, hockey and rugby) do not enforce the rule at the Fundamentals stage. There is no evidence to suggest that this prevents or hinders players from understanding the concept of offside in the future.

It is important to keep in mind that at the Fundamentals stage, the focus is on the development of the fundamental movements that provide a foundation for all ringette skills – locomotion on ice (forwards and backwards skating skills – starting, stopping, falling, pivoting, turning, stumble recovery, jumping, etc.), object control and manipulation (ring control, passing, shooting, stopping). Once the foundation is established, participants are ready to focus on learning the rules and more complex elements of the game now that they have the basic necessary skills required to follow or execute them. With regards to rules, it is important to keep in mind that rules in sport are constantly changing. What is important is that children learn to respect, understand and follow the rules associated with a game they are playing on a given day vs. following the adult rules. Being exposed to different rules as they develop will help players to become adaptable and apply their skills in different conditions, rather than being conditioned to only be able to play in a specific setting.



How will my child improve their skating skills if they are not using the full length of the ice?

In ringette, athletes rarely need to use flat out maximum speed to get from end to end in a game of ringette. To be successful they must instead use skating skills such as agility, edge control, acceleration, turning, pivoting, starts and stops, and transitions. The best skaters are those who can move and work efficiently in small spaces. Small-area games forces players to have to use these skills that will be important as they continue on with ringette. To work on acceleration and top-end speed, speed skating and power skating offer great complimentary opportunities to develop these skills.

Are you going to make kids who have already experienced full-ice go back to using half-ice?

The change to small-area games is only being introduced at the U8 level for the 2019-20 season. It is then being phased in at the U9 and U10 levels in the 2020-21 and 2021-22 seasons respectively. This layered approach should ensure that most players are continuing with Children's Ringette and small-area games, and not "moving backwards". However, there may be some players who have played full-ice in the 2018-19 season who play on a reduced area in the 2019-20 season.

Will athletes be discouraged from becoming goaltenders if they are not used in games right away?

Despite not using goaltenders right away in games, all players should be introduced to goaltender skills in practice from the very first level of Children's Ringette as can be seen in Appendix A of the [Guidelines](#). Once goalies are implemented in games, all players should have the opportunity to rotate through the position (using only a stick), while continuing to develop goaltending skills in practices. This approach will introduce the position to more players and consequently should increase the number of athletes who continue with the sport as goalies.



Association Questions

Why does Ringette Canada want associations to split their seasons?

Children's Ringette programs are recommended to be limited to a maximum of 13 consecutive weeks (or 3 months), with no more than 2 programs (or 6 months) occurring per year.

There are a number of reasons for this:

- Provides participants with the opportunity to advance one or more program levels every 3 months (if offered within the association).
- Provides participants with sufficient time for exposure to other sports to support long-term athlete development.
- Provides participants with another entry point to engage in a ringette program within the year.
- Many local sport organisations have reported a net increase in participation when splitting their seasons in two, as a reduced season decreases both the time and financial commitment for parents while their child is still sampling sports

What if my association doesn't have enough players to split into multiple groups?

The number of groups an association can support will and should differ based on the size of the association. Each group should consist of 9 to 12 athletes. The Children's Ringette Guidelines should serve as the ideal to strive towards, however it is imperative that associations remain flexible and adapt to the realities of your individual organization.

Are we required to purchase modified or special equipment?

While Ringette Canada recommends the use of reduced-size nets and dividers in Children's Ringette, it is not required. Please see the [Children's Ringette Guidelines](#) for more details on equipment.

How do we manage teams sharing dressing rooms?

Organizers need to be sure to communicate to parents and coaches ahead of time if they will have to share dressing rooms so they know what to expect. Consider asking the facility to set up chairs or benches outside the dressing room for additional space for parents to tie skates and assist athletes with other equipment.

Additional Reading

Ringette Canada's Long Term Athlete Development Model - http://ltrd.ringette.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Ringette_mag_EN_WEBversion.pdf

Canadian Sport for Life's Long Term Athlete Development Pamphlet - https://sportforlife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/LTADPamphlet_EN_web.pdf

Canadian Sport for Life's Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity 3.0 - <https://sportforlife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Long-Term-Development-in-Sport-and-Physical-Activity-3.0.pdf>

Research on Modified Youth Sports

Brown, E.W., Wisner, D.M., & Kontos, A. (2000). Comparison of the Incidences of Selected Events Performed by Youth Players in Regulation and Modified Soccer Games. *International Journal of Applied Sports Sciences*, 12, 2-21.

- Data was collected from second-grade and fourth-grade youth soccer games played under two conditions: 11 players per side on a regulation field and 7 players per side on a smaller field. The study concluded that modified play offered greater exposure to game events and thus greater opportunity for learning and skill development.

Elliott, S., & Pill, S. (2016). Competitive engineering in junior Australian football: perceptions and experiences of parents, children and coaches of 9-a-side football in an Under-8 competition. *South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education and Recreation*, 38(1), 43-57(15).

- This study consisted of a qualitative evaluation of the perceptions and experiences of the parents, players and coaches that participated in a trial season of Under-8 Australian Football where they experienced the traditional format and a modified format with a reduced number of players and reduced playing area. Results indicated that the modified format provided an enhanced game experience.

Thomas, G.L., & Wilson, M.R. (2015). Playing by the Rules: A Developmentally Appropriate Introduction to Rugby Union. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 10(2-3), 413-423.

- This study compared the experiences of under-nine rugby union players playing in both the traditional format and a modified version with a reduced number of players on the pitch and specialized rules. Modified games had 25% more ball-in-play time, 55% more runs with the ball, more than twice as many successful passes and nearly twice as many tries scored.

Harwood, M., Yeadon, M., & King, M. (2018). Reducing the pitch length: Effects on junior cricket. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 13(6), 1031-1039.



- This study evaluated the effect of reducing the pitch length for under 10 and under 11 matches by comparing the statistics of games played on full pitch lengths against those of a reduced pitch length. The study found that playing on a shorter pitch had a positive impact for players in terms of the number of skill opportunities and resulted in more engaging matches.

Morley, D., Ogilvie, P., Till, K., Rothwell, M., Cotton, W., O'Connor, D., & McKenna, J. (2016). Does modifying competition affect the frequency of technical skills in junior rugby league? *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 11(6), 810–818.

- This study compared the frequency of opportunities to use technical skills for U7 to U9 players in a traditional rugby league game and a modified game (reduced players, reduced pitch size and modified rules). This analysis concluded that systematically modifying the competitive game was an effective way to increase skill opportunities for children within rugby league.

Piñar MI, Cárdenas D, Alarcón F, Escobar R, Torre E. (2009) Participation of minibasketball players during small-sided competitions. *Revista de Psicología del Deporte*, 18, 445–449.

- This study compared the game involvement (i.e. number of touches on the ball) of 9-11 year old basketball players playing the traditional format and the modified format with modified rules, reduced playing area and reduced number of players on the court. The study concluded that the degree of the individual participation was greater when the participants played the modified game.