

Children's Ringette Guidelines

2019-2020





Mandate

Beginning in the 2019-20 season, all games for players under the age of 8 years old (U8 category) should be played on an area that does not exceed half the ice surface.

Overview

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 is when participants are introduced to competition. It is in this context that participants develop fundamental movement which provide a foundation for all ringette skills. Priority fundamental movement skills include locomotion on ice (forwards and backwards skating skills – starting, stopping, falling, pivoting, turning, stumble recovery, jumping, etc...) as well as object control and manipulation (ring control, passing, shooting, stopping).

To optimally support athlete development, we must create a system of appropriate training and competition designed specifically for children, instead of forcing them to adapt to the adult system before they have reached that stage in their development. Changes to the system include scaling the game down through the implementation of small-area games and grouping athletes by developmental stages rather than chronological ages.

As more research emerges on the subject of youth sports and long-term athlete development, many sport organizations across Canada and internationally are adopting the concepts that form the foundation of the Children's Ringette program.

The Children's Ringette Guidelines intend to serve as a framework to structure Children's Ringette programs across the country for the 2019-20 season and beyond. All local ringette associations at the U8 level and below should be implementing small-area games and are strongly encouraged to implement as many of the guidelines as possible for the 2019-20 season. These guidelines should inform future programming decisions at the local and provincial levels as the ideal to strive towards; however, it is imperative to remain flexible and adapt to the realities of your organization. To this end, we have incorporated alternative options for associations to consider into the guidelines.

Glossary of Terms

Formal Competition –

Players from multiple associations located in different communities play a consecutive series of games outside regular practice play.

Group –

Refers to athletes in a program placed together for the purposes of participating in a program. Athletes should be grouped based on their ability to have meaningful, developmentally appropriate practice and competition experiences by being closely matched for the specific activity taking place during a session.

Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) –

Refers to Canadian Sport for Life’s athlete-centred framework for full sport system alignment in Canada and the optimal development of athletes of all ages, interests and abilities.

Meaningful Competition –

Refers to the concept of providing experiences that support learning for competitors, are structured to reinforce the development of LTAD stage-specific skills and abilities, and that lead to results that are relatively close and unpredictable.

Program –

Refers to a planned and progressive sequencing of activities that are adapted to an athletes’ age and sport experience.

Session –

Refers to individual on-ice or off-ice practices or games.

Stage –

Refers to the development level of an athlete in terms of Ringette Canada’s LTAD framework.

Team / Squad –

In Children’s Ringette, teams are formed from the group of athletes who play together in a given session, tournament or jamboree.

Program Structure

Athlete Stages and Ages

- 1) For the 2019-20 season, we are focusing on implementation at the U8 level and below.
 - a. The intention is to expand to the U9 and U10 levels in the 2020-21 and 2021-22 seasons respectively. If able, provinces and associations are encouraged to make this transition earlier.
- 2) This program corresponds with the Fundamentals (approximately 6-8 years old) and early Learn to Train stage (approximately 8-11 years old).

Divisions

- 1) Ringette Canada is recommending that existing U8, U9 and U10 age categories be gradually replaced with progressive programs that place participants in groups based on skill level rather than age.
 - a. *Appendix A* provides a framework of what these groupings may look like.
 - b. The purpose of the groupings is to create opportunities for meaningful competition between athletes of similar ability.
- 2) Assessments or evaluations at the start of the program should be used to determine appropriate programs placement.
 - a. Sample assessment criteria (derived from Ringette Canada's Athlete Development Matrix) can be found in *Appendix A*.
- 3) Groups of different stages can and should share ice time when possible. In part as this facilitates movement between groups as athletes' skills develop. Coaches are encouraged to move athletes between different groups during practice sessions to practice with players of similar skill levels during that session.
- 4) Full-ice games should be introduced in the final level of the Children's Ringette program.
- 5) Please see the following examples:
 - a. Manitoba Ringette4U program (Children aged 3-8)
 - i) Participants move through Red, Purple and Green stages once they have successfully demonstrated the necessary skills to progress to the next stage.
 - (1) Red – New players and those with limited skating ability.
 - (2) Purple – Returning or new players who have basic skating and ring skills.
 - (3) Green – Returning players that are preparing to transition to U10.
 - b. Alberta's Steps program (Children aged 7-9)
 - i) Participants are placed in divisions based on skill level and experiences.
 - (1) Active Start
 - (2) U10 Step 1
 - (3) U10 Step 2 & 3

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- c. BC's Fundamentals program (Children aged under 10)
 - i) Participants are placed in one of two divisions based on skill level.
 - (1) Fundamentals 1 – Children who are new to ringette or skating, learning basic game structure and are still developing basic skills.
 - (2) Fundamentals 2 – Children who have developed some basic skills and ready to learn more rules of ringette.

Program, Group and Team Sizes

- 1) **Program Size.**
 - a. There should be no limit to the number of participants in a program provided that there are an appropriate number of coaches to manage the number of participants.
- 2) **Group Size.**
 - a. 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.
- 3) **Team Size.**
 - a. Teams are formed for participation in tournaments, jamborees or intra-program games from the pool of participants in a specific group, and should not exceed 12 players.
 - b. Game format should be taken into consideration when determining team sizes as the goal should be to maximize participation and ice time of each player.
 - c. It is preferable to form multiple balanced smaller teams rather than one large team.
 - d. Examples:
 - i) At the end of a practice session, Group 1 will be playing 3v3 cross-ice games. Group 1 has 12 players; therefore forms 3 equal teams of 4 players.
 - ii) Association A is attending a half-ice Jamboree that is using the 4v4 (+ a goalie) format. 20 total players from Association A's Group 3 and Group 4 have decided to participate. Association A would then enter 2 equal teams of 10 players.

Program Length

- 1) 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.
 - a. This provides participants with the opportunity to advance one or more program levels every 3 months (if offered within the association).
 - b. This provides participants with sufficient time for exposure to other sports to support long-term athlete development.
 - c. Provides participants with another entry point to engage in a ringette program within the year.

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- 2) Associations currently running a longer program are encouraged to split their season into 2 seasons.
 - a. Should this not be possible for the 2019-20 season, Ringette Canada recommends limiting Children's Ringette programs to no longer than six months, with the intention to move towards two three-month programs in future seasons.

Sessions

- 1) On-ice sessions should be limited to 1-2 per week.
 - a. Minimum 45 minutes and maximum 60 minutes in length.
 - b. There should be no off-ice training sessions at this stage.
- 2) Please see *Appendix B* and *Appendix C* for sample session outlines.
- 3) Please see Ringette Canada's [Jamboree Guide](#) for detailed diagrams on ice-set ups.

Competition

Formal Competition

- 1) Ringette Canada recommends that formal competition be optional for participants in Children's Ringette.
 - a. Competition should be in the form of tournaments or jamborees where participants in a program who wish to compete form a team or multiple teams.
 - b. These tournaments and jamborees are opportunities to develop and measure skills while experiencing the social elements of sport.
- 2) Formal league play and rankings are not advised in Children's Ringette.
 - a. Associations can organize small-area games or scrimmages against other associations with teams of similar ability or stage. Emphasis should be on participation and skill development, and scores should not be kept.
- 3) Small-area intra-group or program games are to be regularly incorporated into weekly ice sessions.

Tournaments and Jamborees

- 1) Organizers need to ensure teams from different associations are playing teams of like ability.
 - a. Example - Fundamentals 1 team from Association A should not play against Fundamentals 3 team from Association B.
- 2) Organizers must ensure team sizes are appropriate for the chosen game format.
 - a. Example – If the Jamboree is using the Half-Ice 3v3 (+ goalie) format, each team should have 7-12 players to ensure sufficient ice and rest time. If Association A brings 20 athletes, they should form 2 separate teams of 10.
 - b. Team sizes should be determined by the chosen game format, but organizers must remain flexible to the notion that in reality, team sizes may sometimes dictate the format (i.e. move from 3v3 to 4v4 to accommodate larger team sizes).

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- 3) Organizers should ensure that coaches and parents are aware ahead of time that teams will likely have to share dressing rooms.
 - a. 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.

Game Rules and Guidelines

Please see *Appendix D*.

Equipment

- 1) **Reduced-size nets** should be used as a part of scaling the game down for participants. Reduced-size nets increase the chances of success for players who are trying goaltending, in addition to reducing the chances of a blowout game that leads to frequent stoppages in play.
 - a. 3'x4' (52") nets should be used as the first option and are available at most sporting goods retailers.
 - b. A second option is to use pop-up mini soccer nets available at most sporting good retailers.
 - c. Pylons placed 3' apart may also be used.
- 2) **Dividers.**
 - a. The use of rink or ice dividers is encouraged if available.
 - i. Ice dividers permit coaches to clearly define playing areas, and therefore help ensure player safety.
 - ii. Dividers help facilitate the flow of the game by keeping the ring in play and thus reducing the number of stoppages.
 - b. Alternatively, pylons may also be used to divide the ice.
- 3) Local ringette associations should attempt to create partnerships with local hockey associations to cost-share the purchase of small-area game equipment used in both sports.

Ice Markings

- 1) Creases should be approximately 1.8 meters in radius and should be approximately 1.5 meters away from the center line (half-ice games) or boards (cross-ice games).
- 2) In game formats that only use one passing line; the line should be drawn approximately half way between the two creases.
 - a. Alternatively, use the ringette line as the passing line.
- 3) In game formats that use two passing lines, use the existing blue line as one passing line with the second line drawn straight across the free pass circles.



Use of Shot Clock

- 1) Shot clocks are not to be used in Children's Ringette

Scores and Ranking

- 1) Scores and standings are not to be kept in Children's Ringette.

General Game Play

NOTE:

When multiple rule options are given, coaches and organizers should use their discretion to pick the best rule option for their athletes and the specific situation.

- 1) Starting the game.
 - a. Option 1: Coach tosses the ring into play.
 - b. Option 2: One team will start with the ring on their half of the ice and the defending team starts on their half of the ice.
 - c. Option 3: One team starts with a free pass with a 1-meter clearance to make a stationary pass to a teammate. Coaches can choose to draw or designate a specific spot for this to occur.
- 2) Re-start after a goal.
 - a. Option 1: Team that scored backs off and team that was scored against gets possession of the ring.
 - b. Option 2: Team that was scored against gets a goalie ring with a verbal five count.
 - c. Option 3: Team that scored retreats to their half of the ice surface and team that was scored against is awarded a free pass with 1-meter clearance to make a stationary pass to a teammate.
- 3) Re-start after ring leaves playing area.
 - a. Option 1: Coaches throw the ring back into play.
 - b. Option 2: Non-offending team is awarded a goalie ring.
 - c. Option 3: Non-offending team is awarded a free pass with 1-meter clearance to make a stationary pass to a teammate.

COACH TIP:

Coaches should consider intentionally giving specific players the ring when using some of the above restart options to ensure every player has the chance to start with the ring.



Rule Infractions

- 1) Rule infractions will likely happen frequently as athletes learn the game and move through the stages.
- 2) Coaches and officials should use their discretion in choosing the appropriate response from the options below based on the situation and considering player intent (i.e. player attempted to pass over the passing line but released the ring too late, tried to stay out of the crease, etc.).
 - a. Option 1: Continue play but give player verbal reminder.
 - b. Option 2: Stop play if player safety is at risk (i.e. kicking the ring, covering the ring, etc.) and give verbal explanation.
 - c. Option 3: Stop play and award non-offending team a free pass with 1-meter clearance to make a stationary pass to a teammate.
- 3) Key messaging:
 - a. Keep verbal cues brief and language consistent to assist with athlete learning.
 - b. Incorporate positive feedback into corrections.

Penalties

- 1) Many penalties committed in Children's Ringette are unintentional and stem from lack of understanding. Educating athletes on the rationale behind penalties or infractions via verbal cues and corrections is important
- 2) Formal penalties should not be awarded. Coaches and officials should use their discretion in choosing the appropriate response from the options below based on the situation. Ensuring player safety is paramount.
 - a. Option 1: Continue play but give player verbal reminder.
 - b. Option 2: Stop for unintentional dangerous play and provide verbal explanation before continuing play using any of the re-start options.
 - c. Option 3: Stop play and have player sit out a shift (or more). This option should only be applied if the player has had repeated warnings or if the behavior is putting player safety at risk.
- 3) Key messaging:
 - a. Keep verbal cues brief and language consistent to assist with athlete learning.
 - b. Incorporate positive feedback into corrections.
 - c. Emphasize safety rationale when explaining penalties.



Coaching and Officiating

Coaching Requirements

- 1) The program lead must be Community Sport Initiation (CSI) trained.
- 2) All on-ice (or bench) coaches must have completed the following modules:
 - a. Make Ethical Decisions (MED) – Contact Provincial/Territorial Coaching Representatives.
 - b. Coach Initiation in Sport – Coaching Association of Canada (<https://thelocker.coach.ca>)
 - c. Respect in Sport for Activity Leaders – Respect Group (<https://www.respectgroupinc.com/>)
- 3) All must have at least one qualified female on the ice or bench based on one of the above two requirements (1 or 2).
- 4) All program personnel must adhere to their local association's volunteer screening policy.

Officials

- 1) Officials are not required at this stage. Coaches can serve as acting referees to facilitate games.
 - a. These games may serve as development opportunities for junior officials.
- 2) The main role of officials or acting referees' in Children's Ringette to help ensure game flow and provide structure to the game, which requires strong flexibility and discretionary skills. They will also serve as educators to young athletes learning the game.

Appendices

Appendix A – Program Progressions and Assessment Criteria

Stage	Age	Description	Skating Skills – Exit Criteria	Ring Skills – Exit Criteria	Team Skills – Exit Criteria
Group 1 Fundamentals 1	U6, U7, U8	Children in this stage may have never played ringette before, have limited skating ability and wish to learn the sport of ringette.	<p>Athlete will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate basic stance. • Balance on one foot. • Demonstrate snowplow stop. • Demonstrate the “V” start. • Demonstrate basic forwards stride. <p>Athlete will be introduced to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic backwards stride. • Inside and outside edges. • Forward crossover strides. 	<p>Athlete will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properly grip stick. • Move the ring from side to side. • Pass and receive stationary forehand and backhand passes. • Position correctly for 1-on-1 checking. <p>Athlete will be introduced to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forehand sweep shot. • Passing and receiving in motion. 	<p>Athlete will be introduced to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of three zones and three lanes. • Concept of ring possession and importance of maintaining possession. • Concept of supporting ring carrier. <p>Goaltender skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic stance • Correct positioning
Group 2 Fundamentals 2	U7, U8, U9	Children in this stage may have never played ringette before, have defined skating ability, and wish to learn the sport of ringette.	<p>Athlete will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate basic backwards stride. • Understand inside & outside edges. • Demonstrate one-foot stop. • Demonstrate basic forward crossover. <p>Athlete will be introduced to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pivots moving in the same direction (forwards to backwards, backwards to forwards). • Backwards crossover strides. • Two-foot parallel stop. • Tight turns. 	<p>Athlete will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change hand position to protect the ring. • Complete forehand sweep shot. • Start to pass and receive in motion (forehand & backhand). • Sweep check in 1-on-1 situations. <p>Athlete will be introduced to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backhand flip shot. • Basics of the wrist shot (weight transfer, hand position). 	<p>Athlete will be introduced to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre and offensive free passes. • Breakout concepts. • Concept of the triangle. • One-on-one marking. • Free passes. <p>Goaltender skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracking the ring. • Shuffling. • Goalie rings. • Concept of crease.



<p>Group 3 Fundamentals 3 / Learn to Train 1</p>	<p>U9, U10</p>	<p>Children in this stage may have never played ringette before, can skate forward and wish to learn the sport of ringette.</p>	<p>Athlete will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stride forward more efficiently (decrease in stride frequency).</i> • <i>Use proper mechanics to improve power in forward cross-over stride.</i> • <i>Pivot both ways moving in the same direction.</i> • <i>Use and control edges.</i> <p>Athlete will be introduced to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Transitional pivots moving in the opposite direction.</i> • <i>Acceleration.</i> 	<p>Athlete will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Understand concept of timing and anticipation when passing and receiving.</i> • <i>Complete backhand flip shot.</i> • <i>Stick check in 1-on-1 situations.</i> <p>Athlete will be introduced to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>2-on-1 checking.</i> • <i>Shot selection.</i> • <i>1-on-1 defensive skills (gap control, goal side coverage, etc.)</i> 	<p>Athlete will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Understand and start to use passing lanes and quiet zones.</i> • <i>Provide passing outlets/support for the ring carrier.</i> <p>Goaltender skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Demonstrate basic stance, balance and agility.</i> <p>Athlete will be introduced to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Defensive triangle skills and tactics.</i> • <i>Ring control and possession tactics.</i> <p>Goaltender skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Correct positioning in relation to defensive triangle.</i> • <i>Fundamentals of low shot saves.</i>
<p>Group 4 Learn to Train 2</p>	<p>U10</p>	<p>Children in this stage have likely played ringette before, can skate forward and backward, and wish to learn the sport of ringette.</p>	<p>Athlete will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stride backwards more efficiently (decrease in stride frequency).</i> • <i>Use proper mechanics to improve power in backwards cross-over stride.</i> • <i>Maintain body control during body contact, gaining an advantage or in 1-on-1 in tight spaces.</i> <p>Athlete will be introduced to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Two foot parallel stop with transition to cross-over start.</i> • <i>Use of change of speed, change of direction or creation of separation from opponent to create offensive advantage.</i> 	<p>Athlete will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Improve consistency and accuracy of passing and receiving</i> • <i>Improve consistency and accuracy of forehand sweep and backhand flip shot.</i> • <i>Start to lift the ring off the ice with wrist shot.</i> • <i>Understand and beginning to apply stages of checking (contain, pressure, engage).</i> <p>Athlete will be introduced to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Deception skills (dekes, fakes, change of speed, change of direction).</i> 	<p>Athlete will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develop an offensive attack in a 3-on-3 situation.</i> • <i>Generally successfully execute free passes.</i> • <i>More consistently keep possession of the ring.</i> <p>Goaltender skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Distribute ring more effectively on goalie ring.</i> <p>Athlete will be introduced to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Defensive triangle skills and tactics.</i> <p>Goaltender skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fundamentals of the butterfly save.</i> • <i>Fundamentals of high shot saves.</i>



Appendix B – Sample On-Ice Practice Session

Timing	Activity	Notes
10 minutes (off-ice, prior to start of session)	Introduction	Safety rules and instructions for warm-up/first activity. Coaches can choose to use this time to divide athletes into their groups.
5-10 minutes	Warm-up	<p>A coach leads athletes through warm-up while another sets up stations and drills. This is also the time to move dividers and make ice markings if needed.</p> <p>Follow the leader is a great way to keep all participants moving and away from hazard areas while setup is taking place.</p>
25-30 minutes	Skill Development	<p>Athletes are working with their groups on appropriate skating and ringette skills using activities or drills.</p> <p>It is recommended that coaches rotate participants through stations, changing stations every 7-12 minutes. Coaches are encouraged to include cross-ice games as a station during most sessions. A key measure of success for all skill development sessions is that athletes are continuously moving, have many repetitions (chances to try) and are engaged in the task.</p>
5-10 minutes	Games/Cool-down	Small-area games (if not incorporated into skill development) or fun activity and wrap-up.

Appendix C – Sample On-Ice Game Session

Timing	Activity	Notes
10 minutes (off-ice, prior to start of session)	Introduction	Safety rules and instructions. Coaches can choose to use this time to divide athletes into their teams, assign benches and playing areas before getting on the ice.
5-10 minutes	Warm-up	A coach leads athletes through warm-up while another divides up the ice and makes any necessary ice markings.
25-35 minutes	Small-area games	Logistics will depend largely on the number of athletes on the ice and the game format. Focus should be on limiting periods of inactivity by keeping team sizes small.
5-10 minutes	Cool-down	Wrap up.



Appendix D – Game Format Guide

Stage	Game Format	Ice Markings	Positions	Shifts
Group 1 Fundamentals 1	Cross-Ice 3v3 or 4v4 (no goalies)	Crease – None or draw fun shape Passing lines - None	None	2-3 min. of equal shifts
Group 2 Fundamentals 2	Half-Ice 3v3 (+ goalie) or 4v4 (+ goalie)	Crease – Yes Passing lines - One	Rotated goalie only using stick	2-3 min. of equal shifts
Group 3 Fundamentals 3 / Learn to Train 1	Half-Ice 4v4 (+ goalie)	Crease – Yes Passing lines - Two	Rotated goalie only using stick	2-3 min. of equal shifts
Group 4 Learn to Train 2	Half-Ice 4v4 (+ goalie) Intro Full-Ice	Crease – Yes Passing lines - Two	Rotated goalie only using stick Introduction of Forward & Defense	2-3 min. of equal shifts