



Train to Train Stage

Ages 11-15 females

Ages 12-16 males

The objective of the Train to Train stage is to further develop sports specific skills, begin to introduce competition, and start to emphasize support training to continue development of speed, strength and stamina while maintaining flexibility.

General Description of the Learn to Train stage:

This is a window of accelerated adaptation to aerobic, speed and strength training, and for maximum improvement in skill development. As well, good training habits are developed during this stage. Technical and fitness training programs should be individualized. While formal competition is included, the focus remains on learning the basics through training, with competition being of secondary importance.

Training volume will increase as the athletes progress through the stage. Towards the end of this stage, athletes will likely begin to specialize in ice hockey. However, it is still recommended to participate in at least 1 complimentary sport.

USA Hockey's key focus for this stage:

Building the physical engine – endurance, speed and core strength

- Develop strong technical skills
- Begin to become more specialized in hockey late in this stage

Programs:

USA Hockey's member clubs can offer Tier 1 and Tier 2 competitive teams as well as Hockey for Life programs that meet each individual's ability and commitment levels in both the 14 & Under (Bantam) and 16 & Under (Midget) classifications. At 14, 15 and 16, USA Hockey also runs National Player Development Camps for both boys and girls. This is also the stage where USA Hockey has its NTDP - High Performance Clubs.

At the age of 16 is when players first have the opportunity to make a youth level U.S. National Team (U17), either through the National Player Development Camp or the National Team Development Program (NTDP)



Monitoring:

Note that both aerobic and strength trainability are dependent on the maturation levels of the athlete. For this reason, the timing of training emphasis differs depending on whether athletes are early, average, or late maturers. Monitoring for PHV is crucial as almost all participants will move through their major growth spurt during this stage.

- Consider growth spurt in programming. A decrease in coordination may be expected during this stage. Measure for PHV every 3 months.
- Monitor flexibility and emphasize flexibility training given the rapid growth of bones, tendons, ligaments, and muscles
- Monitor general endurance throughout the stage

Coach and Instructor Recommendations:

Level 3 CEP certification is required for coaching at the 14 & Under (Bantam) and 16 & Under (Midget) level. Tier 1 and Tier 2 national tournament bound 16 & Under (Midget) coaches need Level 4 CEP certification. Additional CEP training and continuing education is encouraged for coaches working within USA Hockey's high performance clubs or any other coach who wishes to improve their craft.

LTAD Window of Opportunity:

The Learn to Train and Train to Train stages are the most important stages of athlete preparation. During these stages we make or break an athlete!

- Increased strength is optimized for girls 1-2 months after peak of PHV
- Increased strength is optimized for boys 12-18 months after peak of PHV
- The endurance window is between 11 and 15 years old of age
- The second speed window for boys is between 13 and 16 years old, and for girls is between 11 and 13 years

Components of the Hockey Train to Train Stage**Physical Development:**

Stabilization and Foundation Building:

Proper and regular monitoring of physiological adaptation to training is essential. Continue monthly monitoring for PHV. The average age for girls reaching PHV is 12, for boys, 14. PHV is the reference point to begin a strength training program.

Continue participation in complementary sports for:

- Skill
- Speed
- Endurance
- Lifestyle



Introduce Specific Fitness Framework

Early in stage, off-ice training focuses on the following:

- Introduce free weights
- Injury prevention exercises (high reps, low intensity, focus on execution)
- Core and stabilizer strength
- Explosive arm and leg power
- Maximize speed development
- Introduction to physical testing and functional assessments two times a year

Further in stage:

- Maximum strength (females and early developing males)
- Strength endurance
- Power/speed endurance
- Build a level of fitness that allows the athlete to maintain high volume, high quality training
- On-ice and off-ice training to develop endurance
- Maximize stamina/aerobic capacity window of trainability for recovery, regeneration and training capacity
- Monitor training for high volume, low intensity sessions

Throughout the stage:

- Provide variation in off-ice and on-ice activities to avoid over-use injuries
- Emphasize flexibility and stretching exercises to manage the effect of rapid growth
- With rapid growth and changes in body proportions, athletes may need to re-learn some skills that were previously refined (adolescent maintenance)

Psychological Development:

Provide training and competition opportunities that focus performance on a preferred position (Forward, Defense, Goalie). Mental skills learned in the previous stage of athlete development should continue to be practiced and incorporated into all types of training and competitive situation.

The athlete should:

- Take personal responsibility for training, preparation, performance and recovery
- Bring consistent effort to training and competitions
- Become involved with coaches in decision making (e.g. goals, position specific development, training plan)
- Identify “what works” in the ideal performance state
- Be coachable – accept constructive criticism and work with other coaches or athletes



Continue basic mental skills development:

- coping strategies, goal setting, imagery, self-awareness
- Be introduced to the idea of self-reflection after training or competitions
- Have a training diary
- Athletes in this stage are ready to learn how to focus. They can understand that what they feel and think affects their performance, and learn how to develop control over these feelings and thoughts.
- Effective goal setting becomes more important in this stage and is related to outcomes, process and performance
- Introduce athletes to breathing and relaxation skills
- Teach athletes how to communicate effectively with coaches and how to ask for feedback

Training and Competitive Environment:

Standard Track

- **Training/Competition Ratio:** 60% training, 10% competition specific training, and 30% competition
- **Training Volume:** 3 to 4 times hockey per week, with session length of 60 to 80 minutes at 14 & Under (Bantam) and 16 & Under (Midget) levels. Training volume can be reduced for the Hockey for Life category based on the commitment level of the players involved.
- **Training Year:** 4 weeks/month, 7-8 month/year – Single or double periodization calendar will aid structuring and help maintain player interest
- **Team Composition:** Team composition will include a roster of 16 skaters and 2 goaltenders. (10 forwards, 6 defensemen, 2 goalies).
- **Team Structure:** Teams in these age groups can group players of like ability with out restrictions. Teams can be registered at the Tier 1, Tier 2 or Hockey for Life Level.
- **Competition format:** Game formats may vary to fit within the allotted ice time
- **Overall activity ratios:** 40% hockey, 30% fitness, 30% other sports
- **Complimentary Sports:** Athletes are encouraged to participate in 1-2 complimentary sports
 - 14 & Under and 16 & Under TII:**
 - 105 total ice touches
 - 3 – 4 times per week for 60 to 80 minutes
 - 7 – 8 months
 - 80 - 85 practices and 35 to 40 games
 - 16 skaters and 2 goalies per team



High Performance Track

- **Training/Competition Ratio:** 60% training, 10% competition specific training (exhibition/scrimmage games), and 30% competition.
- **Training Volume:** 4 to 5 times hockey per week, with session length of 60 to 80 minutes at 14 & Under (Bantam) and 16 & Under (Midget) levels. Begin strength training two times per week to coincide with Peak Height Velocity. Speed training 2-3 times per week.
- **Training Year:** 4 weeks/month, 9 months/year – Double periodization calendar will aid structuring and help maintain player interest
- **Team Composition:** Team composition will include a roster of 16 skaters and two goaltenders. (10 forwards, six defensemen, two goalies).
- **Team Structure:** Teams in these age groups are made up of players of like ability with out restrictions.
- **Competition format:** 14 & Under (Bantams) with 2.0 hour ice time play 17-minute stop-time period games with one ice resurface after the second period. 16 & Under (Midget) with 2.5 hours ice time shall play 20-minute stop-time period games with one ice resurface after the first period and a second ice resurface after the second period. 16 & Under (Midget) with two-hour ice time shall play 18-minute stop-time period games with one ice resurface after the first period and a second ice resurface after the second period.
- **Overall activity ratios:** 45% hockey, 35% fitness, 20% other sports
- **Complimentary Sports:** Athletes are encouraged to participate in at least one complimentary sport

14 & Under and 16 & Under High Performance:

~160 total ice touches

4 – 5 per week

9 - Months

120 – 130 practices and 40 to 50 games

16 skaters and two goalies per team

Coaching Considerations:

- Coaches should still spend significant amount of time refining technical skills, but the emphasis we gradually change to increase the both the difficulty and intensity.
- Use both high volume/lower intensity training and high intensity/low volume training.
- Include more skill execution in tactical situations, skills must be used in combination with decision making
- Tactics and strategy must be appropriate for the age but the volume of information presented at this stage will increase with age.
- Coaches should plan training loads with consideration to the athletes competition, rest and recovery
- Attention to individual growth patterns of players must be considered during this stage and the coach must be able to take advantage of the relative training windows



Technical Development:

- Continue to refine skating skills
- Introduce position specific skills
 - Forwards
 - Defenseman
 - Goalies
- Continue to develop deceptive skills

Tactical Skills:

- Playing the off-wing or off-side defenseman positions
- Offensive support concepts
- Defensive support concepts
- Introduce basic team systems of defensive zone coverage and aggressive forecheck,
- Introduce active read-and-react penalty killing
- Introduce power play concepts without specific individual positions, encourage interchangeability
- Emphasize transition play – offense to defense and defense to offense
- Emphasize quality playing habits
- At the 16 & Under (Midget) level, begin to introduce adaptations to various overall team strategies

On-ice time should be spent on 70% offensive skills, tactics, and concepts, and 30% defensive skills, tactics, and concepts.

Ancillary Skills:

- Athletes in this stage should be responsible for doing a proper warm-up and cool-down as part of practice
- They should also be developing a competition warm-up procedure
- Athletes should be aware of the importance of proper nutrition and hydration for competition days

Life Style:

Optimize training and education in:

- Cultural and lifestyle habits
- Smoke & tobacco free environment
- Alcohol free environment
- Drug-free sport
- Wearing proper safety equipment
- Care and maintenance of equipment
- Proper nutrition, hydration and recovery
- Self-management
- Taking responsibility for actions
- Respect for others
- The Code of Conduct for USA Hockey

