



# THE AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT MODEL AT 8U HOCKEY

## HOW TO IMPLEMENT 8U RED, WHITE AND BLUE HOCKEY GAMES

Red, White and Blue Hockey is USA Hockey's version of the cross-ice game. And the benefits are endless. Because without the comfort of open ice, kids have to rely on creative ways to stickhandle, skate and outsmart their opponent.

It's been proven that kids who begin their hockey training in this environment develop a better foundation of skills and hockey instincts and enjoy the game more.

For more information, go to [admkids.com](http://admkids.com).

- ▶ Each game lasts 50–60 minutes.
- ▶ The goal is to keep the players active every other shift in order to maximize playing time.
- ▶ Begin with a quick 3-minute warm-up.
- ▶ For 8U kids, keep shifts to 60 seconds. 90 seconds for 6U.
- ▶ Use a running clock buzzer to keep track of time.
- ▶ As best you can, match players with similar ability levels.
- ▶ Face-offs after goals and/or tie-ups are recommended, but drop the puck quickly instead of waiting for all players to line up in the right position.
- ▶ Rotate teams every 20 minutes or so.
- ▶ At 6U play 3v3 with mini nets (2' x 3') and no goalies. At 8U play 4v4 with intermediate nets (3' x 4.5') and goalies.
- ▶ Make sure you keep plenty of water bottles by the dividers.

## GAME RULES

Choose either of the below options, a combination of these options or any option that follows the Red, White and Blue Hockey guidelines tailored to fit your unique cross-ice programs and gameday competition. Playing half-ice games at the 8U level is also an option.

▶ **Option 1:** Don't keep track of score or use referees.

When one team scores they must hustle back and touch their own post. The team that gets scored on must dig the

puck out of the net and take the puck behind the net before they can attack offensively. No puck dropping, just lots of puck touches and play time.

▶ **Option 2:** Score is kept, but not recorded or posted.

Referees are utilized to facilitate the game. After a goal is scored, a quick face-off is used to restart the game. Even with the addition of referees and keeping score, the emphasis is still on maximizing puck touches and playing time.

## KEY POINTS

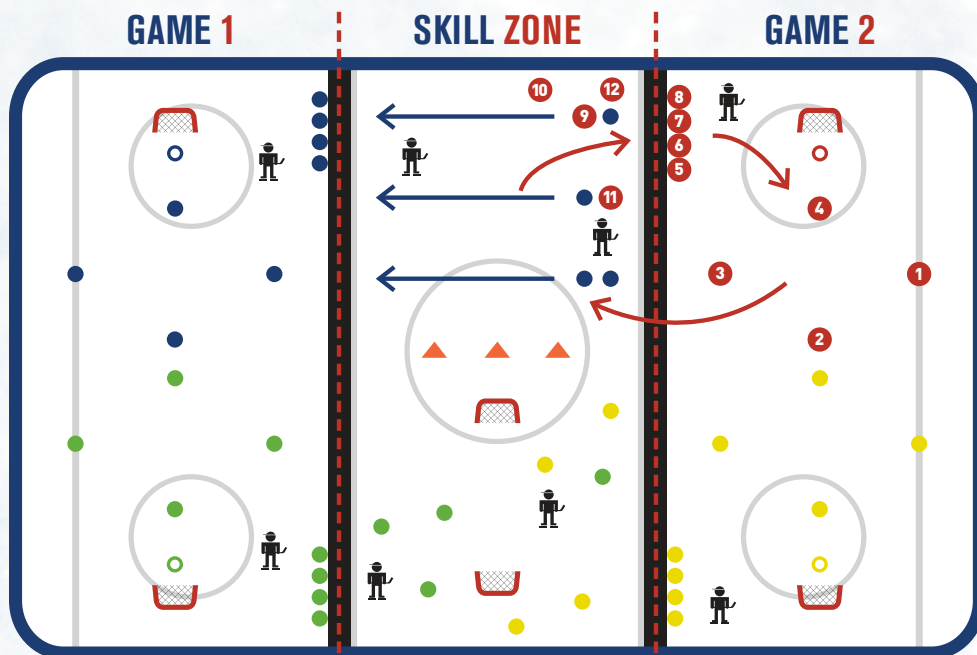
- ▶ **1.** Keeping score in cross-ice games should be used only as a tool to enhance the progression of players and create a game environment at 8U. Wins, losses, individual statistics and standings should not be a part of 8U hockey.
- ▶ **2.** Referees are encouraged to start at 8U. They do not call penalties, but rather help instruct players to follow the rules. For any flagrant infractions, situations which could result in injury, or repeated penalty situations for one player, the referee will escort that player to the coach for further instruction and/or discipline if needed.
- ▶ **3.** Shift lengths are designed to allow each age group to involve themselves in play based on their age, size and skill level, as well as to begin to introduce a sense of urgency into each shift.



## 8U SPECIFIC 4V4 2 GAMES WITH SKILL ZONE

- ▶ Using the principles listed above, start with **4** teams and **12** players per team.
- ▶ Each team creates **3** groups of **4** players. Players rotate from gameplay to Skill Zone to bumper/bench. Rotate every **60** seconds.
- ▶ A minimum of **2** coaches per team (for a total of **8**) is ideal to oversee Skill Zone and player rotation. Goalies play in with intermediate — or regulation — size nets. If there are no goalies, play with small (2'x3') nets.
- ▶ In the Skill Zone, have extra nets, cones and blue pucks for kids to experiment in an unstructured environment or run drills to work on skill techniques — the same that you would do in a cross-ice or station-based practice.
- ▶ If you have more teams, simply play another game instead of having a Skill Zone. Just start with **6** teams and **8** players per team and proceed with **4** on **4** gameplay in all **3** zones.

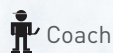
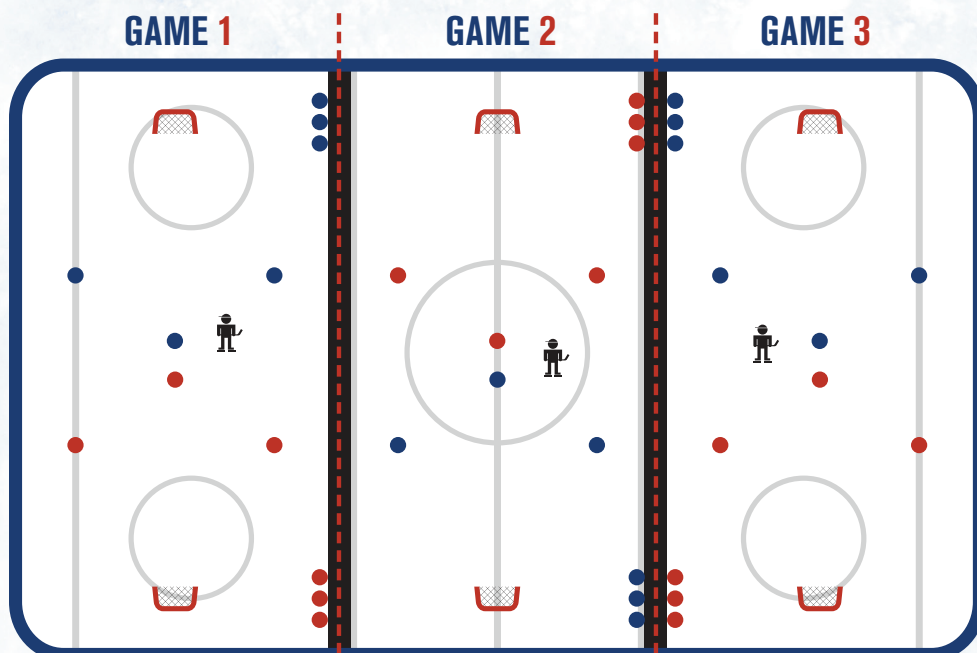
**Note:** Position bumpers over blue line to make **3** equal-size zones.



## 6U 3V3 3 CROSS-ICE GAMES

- ▶ Using the same principles listed previously (on the other side), start with **6** teams and **6** players per team.
- ▶ No goalies and play with small nets.
- ▶ Don't keep score, just let the kids play and have fun.
- ▶ If you are running **2** games with a Skill Zone in the middle, refer to the 8U model but stick to playing **3** on **3**.

**Note:** Position bumpers over blue line to make **3** equal-size zones.



Coach

Goalies

Players

Goals

Bumpers

Cone