



A Special COMMEMORATIVE SECTION

An inside look at how the American Development Model is helping every youth hockey player reach his or her full potential while having fun along the way.



Welcome To Cross-Ice Country

Move To Cross-ice Mites Puts Everyone On A Level Playing Surface | **BY HARRY THOMPSON**

Imagine a Little Leaguer hurling a baseball off a mound that is 60 feet, 6 inches away from home plate. Or an 8-year-old Pop Warner player running 100 yards to paydirt. Or a pint-sized hoopster attempting to toss a regulation basketball through a 10-foot hoop.

It wouldn't make much sense to most parents. Yet, when it comes to ice hockey, some adults see nothing wrong with having a kid lugging a 6 ounce puck 200 feet down the ice and attempt to shoot it into the same net as an NHL player.

"For the longest time, the sport of ice hockey was the only team sport in the United States that does not downsize to the age and the size of the kids," said Mark Tabrum, director of USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program.

"When I played Little League baseball, I didn't pitch the distance they do in the major leagues. The ball and bat were also a different size and weight. However, we expect 5, 6, 7 and 8-year-old kids to play on the same size rink as a pro, use the same size and weight puck as a pro, defend the same size net as a pro. It doesn't make any sense."

That's about to change as starting in the 2013-14 season USA Hockey will put some muscle where its mouth is by requiring that all 8 & Under hockey will be played on a cross-ice playing surface, thus providing every association and Affiliate with a consistent and level playing field for the benefit of Mite players.



The program is designed to help the development among Mite-level players by reducing the ice surface, increasing opportunities to touch the puck and shifting emphasis from playing games to fun, skill-developing practices.

"This is just how hockey will be played in the United States in the future," said Ken Martel, technical director of the ADM, who views the move as the next logistical step in the program that is now entering its fifth full season.

"We want to provide the best experience and challenge our elite players to become even better. All we have done is change the size of the playing surface that our kids are playing on. It's about fitting the playing surface to match the size of our kids, fitting the game to them and giving them the opportunity to have success."

Affiliate presidents and many others around the country praised USA Hockey's board of directors for creating the new rule, which they say will help close the

loopholes that some have used to play by their own rules.

"I think it was a great move by the board of directors to pass it and it's something that a lot of the Affiliate presidents have been looking for for a couple of years," said Joe Baudo, president of New York State Amateur Hockey Association.

"With this rule or standard or mandate, however they want to phrase it, it's going to help us out along with other border Affiliates because people will not leave my Affiliate to go somewhere else in order to play at a different level because each Affiliate is a little different

with what they do. This puts everybody together on the same ice rink."

As part of the new rule, USA Hockey will create a special subcommittee consisting of Affiliate presidents and members of the Player Development Committee to consider requests to play a very limited number of full-ice games, particularly at the end of the season, to help this transition in the rare cases where an Affiliate thinks it's needed.

By cutting the ice into thirds using rink dividers, more young players will have an opportunity to play the game on a sheet of ice that is better suited to their size.

"Simple mathematics tells you that they're going to touch the puck more because you divide the amount of ice that they're on by eight players instead of 12," said Kevin McLaughlin, senior director of Hockey Development.

"You'll have success, which should provide them with an opportunity to have fun and enjoy the game more." ★

Ten Myths About The American

BY KEVIN UNIVERSAL



The Kids Won't Learn To Skate.

The ADM actually emphasizes age-appropriate skating drills but also places a lot of focus on fun drills and activities that help players develop more over the long term. The smaller areas also help kids increase their quickness and explosive speed, which is best developed at the younger ages.

Kids Won't Learn About Positioning.

It won't matter if kids know where to be if they can't skate there or if they don't enjoy the game. Also, teaching position too early can stifle creativity and a player's ability to think on the fly. Players can learn more when they are older about positioning, breakouts and forechecking systems without hurting their development early on.

The ADM Is Only For The Average Player.

Kids learn, grow and develop at different speeds and the ones you think at age 7 might be the next superstar might not develop as fast as others later on. Providing good coaching and development to all is important when kids are young since early segmentation has proven to be unreliable as a predictor of which kids will develop into elite athletes. It's best for those kids who excel early on to continue to focus on

I realize any change good, bad, or indifferent is still a change and can be difficult for people to accept, so I have started to collect a few of the negative comments that I have heard about the American Development Model with regards to cross-ice play in the hope that I can dispel these myths.

It Isn't Real Hockey. Using Half The Ice Surface And The Smaller Nets Won't Help Kids Learn The Real Game.

Do other sports ask their youngest athletes to play on a full-size football field, use a 10-foot basketball net, run 90-foot bases or use a full-size soccer net? No. Smaller fields and equipment are used everywhere except in hockey. Age-appropriate surfaces and equipment help put the game into perspective for younger kids, allow for better development of their skills, and most importantly, help make the game more fun for the kids.

It Will Be Too Crowded On The Ice.

I have now seen two practices in person with 60-plus Mites on the ice at the same time and have watched multiple videos of practices with the same amount or more and have yet to see it look crowded. Well-planned out practices with the right number of coaches to help run stations are effective ways to use ice efficiently without crowding. All of the kids I witnessed at these practices and jamborees were engaged in fun drills or games with lots of puck time and plenty of smiles.

The Kids Won't Learn Teamwork.

How much teamwork is involved with one skater taking the puck from one end of a full sheet of ice, skating it all the way down, and then shooting before most of the other teammates can catch up or get involved in the play? You know you have seen it at a Mite full-ice game over and over. Cross-ice forces kids to work together in smaller areas to develop scoring opportunities and be creative.



Development Model

age-appropriate drills that will best help their long-term development. Those drills can help both the 6-year-old who has been skating for three years and the 8-year-old who is enjoying his first season.

How Will Kids Get In Shape Or Get Their Conditioning?

Have you battled for a puck in the corner and gone back and forth in about a 10-foot space for 20 seconds? Have you ever worked the top of a penalty kill and gone back and forth between the point and the slot four times? There are numerous ways kids can get conditioned in small areas or in small games so don't worry about missing out on that aspect with the ADM. There are a lot more ways than skating lines on a full sheet to build up conditioning, especially with fun drills and small area games that keep kids smiling and wanting more even though they are dead tired.



Too Much Fun Is A Bad Thing.

Really? If the kids are enjoying the puck touches, the small games, the scoring, and are learning to love development how can that ever be a bad thing? I just don't get that comment but hey, people have said that (I can't make this stuff up). Think about it. If the kids come off the ice tired, developed, smiling and excited about when



they can come back again for more, where is the down side? I wish everyone could find something they enjoy so much that is also great for their long-term development.

The Rinks And Associations Are Just Trying TO Make More Money By Jamming More Kids On The Ice.

It couldn't be further from the truth. First, re-read the myth about crowding. Second, more efficient use of the ice can decrease your costs and can increase the number of times you practice each week. I, too, was once a hockey snob when my kids were younger and thought they needed more full ice. They would have been better developed if they had used what ice they had more efficiently and practiced more often than having a full sheet all to themselves. This could have improved their skills, made the game even more enjoyable to them, and helped reduced the cost mom and dad felt each season.

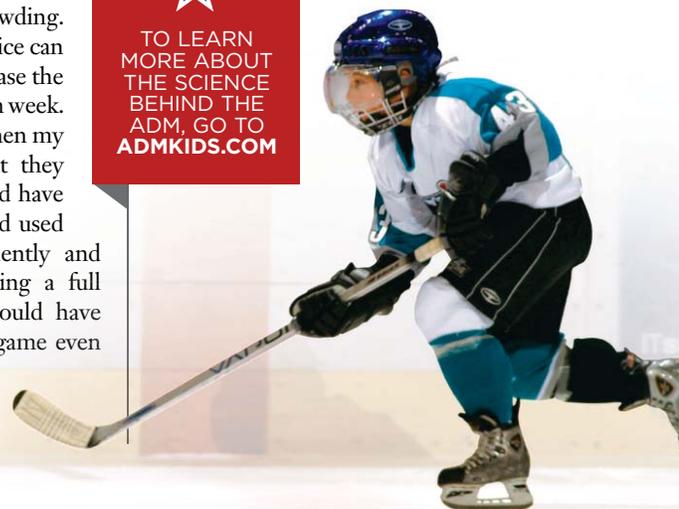
The Kids Won't Have As Much Fun.

Ask your kids if they like to play games or stand around? Ask them if they like to carry the puck and score goals? Ask them if they like whistles and stoppages in play? Kids invariably have more fun when they are actively engaged during practice or in a game. High-energy drills, variety of drills, drills with pucks and small games all help develop kids while they are having loads of fun. Also cross-ice games support these same ideals with more puck touches, more scoring opportunities, less stoppages and make for a more enjoyable game for everyone involved.

There has been a lot of research and effort by USA Hockey looking at how to approach the game so give the ADM a chance when your organization starts to implement pieces of the model and I am very confident you'll be pleasantly surprised with the results. ★

Kevin Universal is the president of Carolina Amateur Hockey Association and a hockey dad.

★
TO LEARN
MORE ABOUT
THE SCIENCE
BEHIND THE
ADM, GO TO
ADMKIDS.COM



More Than Just Mites

While Early Focus Has Been On 8 & Under Hockey, The ADM Is Really A Top-To-Bottom Approach To Development | BY HARRY THOMPSON

A journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step. When USA Hockey looked to roll out its revolutionary American Development Model, the architects knew that changing the culture of youth hockey in the United States would take time. That's why they started small, like Mite-sized, and focused on the bottom rung of the development ladder to build the right foundation for players who were just coming into the game.

Over the course of the past four seasons, the ADM has become synonymous with Mite cross-ice hockey because that's where much of the focus has been. But in reality, the American Development Model is every bit as important for a Midget player who is looking to take his game to the next level.

A more accurate interpretation would be that the ADM is a "cradle to grave" program that is designed to instill the basic skills and a passion for the game in our youngest players. It then spends the ensuing seasons nurturing and improving those skills as players continue up the youth hockey ladder until they reach the adult ranks where, hopefully, they continue to play and enjoy the game as a means of recreation and physical fitness for the rest of their lives.

"Any kid that comes through your programs, whether it's for one season or 10 seasons, should be able to look back on that experience and say two things, 'I learned a lot' and 'I had a great time,'" said Stephen Norris, a British sports and physiology scientist who helps train Canadian Olympic athletes.

"You do that, you'll find the superstars, but more importantly, you'll have kids who love the game."

By its very definition, long-term athlete development is not something that is achieved over the course of one practice, or even a single season. It's a consistent approach to proper physical activity and training that is achieved at specific ages.



Rushing kids through the system in hopes of giving them a leg up on the competition has not only proven to be counterproductive, it robs them of the fun of being a kid while impacting their development at crucial stages in their young lives.

As the American Development Model continues to take root in youth hockey associations across the country, parents and players will be looking to scale the next rung on the development ladder. As Kevin McLaughlin, senior director of Hockey Development, said, "there is no way we're

turning back."

"It's gaining momentum quicker than we ever thought it would, and the people who have been in Mite programs, people who have experienced well-run ADM programs, there's no way they'll accept anything less," McLaughlin said.

Players and parents in the past were used to things a certain way. They grew up playing full-ice games using regulation-sized nets and black pucks. But as future generations began to understand the logic behind the policies, they began to embrace them.

Now, as kids move up the ladder of development from Squirrels to Peewees, Peewees to Bantams, and Bantams to Midgets, they are looking for more of the same, and that's a continued emphasis on the same things that made their experiences at Mites so much fun.

"The ones who are now participating at Mites and Squirrels are wondering what's next at other levels," McLaughlin said.

"They return to an old type of practice and kids stand behind a cone and only one player goes at a time and they do the horse-shoe drill or the loop and shoot, and they're going to go 'no, this is unacceptable. This is not the ADM. I don't want my child to be left behind.'" ★

LONG TERM ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT

Sports science people have broken down the stages of long-term athletic development, which the ADM has adapted to the various age levels:

Early Childhood	Active Start	(Males & Females 0-6)
Late Childhood	FUNDamentals	(Males 6-9 & Females 6-8)
Adolescence (Early Puberty)	Learn to Train	(Males 9-12 & Females 8-11)
Adolescence (Late Puberty)	Train to Train	(Males 12-16 & Females 11-15)
Early Adulthood	Learn to Compete	(Males 16-18 & Females 15-18)
Early Adulthood	Train to Compete	(Males 19-23 & Females 18-21)
Adulthood	Train to Win	(Males 19+ & Females 18+)



CHECK OUT THE COMPLETE WINDOW OF TRAINABILITY CHART AT ADMKIDS.COM

Close To Home

USOC High Performance Director And Hockey Dad Scott Riewald Has Firsthand Experience With ADM Benefits

BY RYAN SATKOWIAK

Scott Riewald is a big believer in practicing what he preaches.

Working as the high performance director of winter sports at the U.S. Olympic Committee, Riewald is also a strong supporter of the American Development Model. That's because he has seen firsthand how the ADM has helped his 10-year-old son Maddox develop his skills and passion for the game.

This fall, his 8-year-old daughter Callie will follow suit by joining a Mite program within the Colorado Springs Amateur Hockey Association, one of 11 ADM Model Programs.

Among the core principles of the ADM is avoiding early specialization; that is, making sure kids play a variety of sports. Riewald makes sure Maddox gets that variety, and then some. Within the past 18 months, Riewald said his son has also participated in baseball, swimming, judo and soccer.

"We try to live by what we believe," said Riewald, who was a decorated swimmer at Boston University. "I think you see a lot of effort in youth sports for athletes and families to make a commitment earlier and earlier in their development. I think there's a lot of research, and you can look at ... a lot of the best athletes who had a multi-sport experience when they were younger."

It's something that Riewald sees at the USOC, where he collaborates with the governing bodies of winter sports to support the athletes who will potentially represent the USA at the 2014 Olympic Winter Games.

Even with his background, he's not

someone you would likely be able to pick out of a crowd. At the rink, he's just like any other hockey dad. He helps his son get dressed the same as any other parent. And he stands along the glass watching his son play, just like any other parent.

The only difference is in his head; his extensive background in sports science allows him to view the game from a different perspective.

"I think [the ADM] captures a lot of the principles that we hold to be cornerstones of what's important in an athlete's development," Riewald said.

"It's based around fun, and then using that fun to open the door for skills and play. We thought it was one of the best, if not the best, youth developmentally appropriate and organized programs that we've seen."

What makes the ADM so successful, Riewald said, is the way it keeps kids engaged. Instead of standing in line waiting for their turn in the next drill, the station-based practices keep kids moving.

"There's not a lot of standing around, and I think that's always a good thing to see as a parent," Riewald said. "They're engaged, they're active and they're getting feedback from the coaches. It's my overall feeling that it's a well-organized program."

Part of the criticism of the ADM at the younger levels has been that cross-ice hockey does not look like "real hockey" from the stands. From his perspective, Riewald points to other sports where the playing dimensions have been scaled to age-appropriate proportions.

"You see similar things across other sports, like a lower rim in basketball," he said. "I worked for the U.S. Tennis Association, and during the time I was there, they were introducing their 8- and 10-and-under tennis players to modified court sizes and balls that bounce to different heights.

"You have to make some adjustments and adaptations to younger kids to allow them to get the most out of the opportunity and to get the most out of the sport. They're not mini adults. The equipment and playing surface modifications are spot-on for what I think you're trying to accomplish with young athletes." ★

Scott Riewald and his children, Maddox, 10, and Callie, 8, have added hockey to their busy lifestyles.



"IT'S BASED AROUND FUN, AND THEN USING THAT FUN TO OPEN THE DOOR FOR SKILLS AND PLAY."

Living Proof

Associations Around The Country Are Finding Success With The ADM | **BY RYAN SATKOWIAK**

Success is often measured by matters of degree.

What is viewed as a “success” can depend on whom you ask, as people’s views are generally shaped by their experiences.

When talking to leaders of youth hockey associations about the American Development Model, success can be summed up in one word: fun.

And that is one of the main goals of the ADM. While its stated objectives are to maintain a high retention rate and improve the skills of the kids participating, the easiest and most effective way of doing that is to make practices and games fun.

The simplest answer to improving the “fun factor,” as Keith Barrett — former president of Vermont Youth Hockey and current New England District director — calls it, is to make practices and games engaging. No one has fun when they’re standing around on the ice, sitting on the bench or chasing the play on a larger ice surface.

Barrett and Vermont were well ahead of the curve when it came to cross-ice hockey games, one of the staples of the ADM. They first started cross-ice games six years ago, well before USA Hockey’s board of directors implemented the rule change in 2012.

Other associations in the New England area did not immediately follow suit, so the hockey associations of Vermont took a leading roll in what essentially was a large-scale game of show-and-tell.

“We would have teams come in when there would be a tournament and they were reluctant,” Barrett said. “So we’d say to them that the first half of the game we’ll do full ice and the second half we’ll do cross-ice. And the kids didn’t want to go back to full ice.

“I really think that’s what helped them sell it. We were over here doing it, and



they’d come over and play it, and they’d see that the kids got more touches, they were having more fun, they were on the ice more and were more engaged in the game. So the fun factor kind of went up.”

Even as kids appeared to be getting more out of the cross-ice games, there was still pushback from the parents.

These small area games were a new concept, something the hockey-playing parents didn’t grow up with. While the idea of a downscaled playing surface for younger kids wasn’t particularly revolutionary — it had already been implemented in other sports, most notably being baseball — some parents were turning their noses up at the idea.

“People don’t like change,” said Jon Gustafson, vice president of Sharks Ice in San Jose, Calif., one of 11 ADM Model

associations.

If that’s the case, how do you get someone to accept that change? As Mike Bonelli of the Bedford Youth Hockey Association in Bedford, Mass. found out, it’s to get the parents involved in the process.

“Normally these parents would never get on the ice because they would just be standing around in a traditional practice, where you can’t have six coaches on the ice,” he said. “But in the ADM, it give us the opportunity to open the door for a lot of other parents.

“In turn, I think that’s helped us continue to sell the ADM model because they get to see it first hand. They get to see their own kid on the ice, happy and sweating and improving drastically as opposed to the mom or dad sitting in the stands and



From Massachusetts to California, youth hockey players are getting a more enriched experience and improving their fundamental skills by competing in cross-ice hockey games.



drinking a cup of coffee.”

Getting that up-close look helped parents in Bedford to buy in. Despite the growing support for the smaller playing surface around the country, some associations and parents continued to carry the dogmatic view that playing on the full ice surface was the way to go.

The Chelsea Youth Hockey Association, one of the first associations in Michigan to mandate cross-ice games, took a similar approach to Vermont in showing parents the difference in play.

Located on the western fringes of Ann Arbor, Chelsea is part of Michigan Hockey's District Six, which mandated cross-ice games and the 8 & Under level.

To the east, a pair of Districts opted to allow Mites to play full-ice games. If

parents so chose, they could have pulled their kids from the district and gone to a place that would afford their children the opportunity to play full-ice games.

As it turned out, that didn't really happen.

“At the beginning, parents asked if we could play a handful of full-ice games,” said Don Wright, coaching director for the Chelsea association. “In that very first year we let them do it. It worked perfectly because the parents would see the cross-ice games one day and the full-ice games the next day, and we didn't have to do anything to convince them.

“They would say, ‘OK this makes total sense.’ We only lost a handful of kids, but have gained so many more.”

Parental pushback seems to be the greatest in areas of the country that are more widely considered to be hockey hotbeds, primarily in the Northeast and Midwest. There, you have parents who are more likely to have grown up playing hockey. When those parents were kids, cross-ice games were not even an idea.

“You're still going to get a couple of people, especially those ex-high school or college players that come out and think they're going to set the world on fire as the next Scotty Bowman and show their kids what real hockey is all about,” Barrett said.

That resistance hasn't been as heavy in more non-traditional markets, such as San Jose, where many of the kids are first generation players with parents who have little to know hockey knowledge outside of their local professional team.

As long as their kids are enjoying themselves, they are on board with whatever is being taught.

“I think the people here in Silicon Valley are smart enough and they understand that small area games, the more times their kid touches the puck, the kid comes off with a smile,” Gustafson said.

“There are less people playing baseball

and more people going into non-traditional sports here because their kids are having more fun at it.”

Fun. That's what it's all about. With more kids enjoying the game, the more kids are sticking with it.

The ADM isn't about separating the great players from the pack for the sake of focusing on their development. It's about making sure everyone gets equal attention and equal ice time. And then, naturally, that everyone has fun.

Because of that, fewer players at dropping out as they move up age levels. In Chelsea, they are fielding five Squirt teams, the most they have ever fielded. In Bedford, they have increased enrollment in their 8 & Under program from 40 to 60, and have two Squirt and two Peewee teams. San Jose will have 60 mini-Mites on the ice at one time. In Vermont, they continue to have success years after leading the charge.

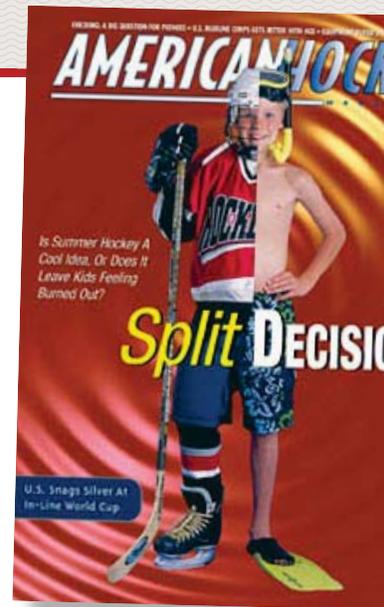
In these programs, parents have bought in. Soon, parents throughout the country will have to learn to buy in too. Beginning with the 2013-14 season, USA Hockey has mandated that all associations at the 8 & Under level will be played on cross-ice playing surfaces.

“The ADM provides that fun factor for the kids. I think USA Hockey is ahead of the curve, leading the charge,” Barrett said.

How long will it take parents to adjust to this concept? Based on the experiences of other associations, not too long.

“I used to be a hockey director for 25 years. Just on a great year, you'd have 10 percent of your people not happy about something,” Bonelli said.

“In this program, the last two years, we've had literally zero complaints. It's really remarkable. At 8 & Under, just let them play. If we get any complaints, it's that there's not enough water out there because these kids are exhausted.” ★



Multi-Sport Kid Hits The Big Time

Jake Gardiner On The NHL Fast Track 12 Years After Gracing The Cover Of *USA Hockey Magazine* | **BY HARRY THOMPSON**

The cover of the September 2001 issue of *American Hockey Magazine*, the predecessor to *USA Hockey Magazine*, featured a smiling 11-year-old boy decked out in half hockey gear, half swim wear, complete with mask, snorkel and swim fins.

He became the poster child for the benefits of taking the summer off to play other sports and enjoy the warm weather before the long hockey season and school year cranked up again.

Who could have known at the time that handsome pre-teen would go on to play on the 2010 gold-medal winning

U.S. National Junior Team, and eventually with one of the NHL's most storied franchises.

Fast forward 12 years and Jake Gardiner still enjoys taking time off in the summer months to spend time on Lake Minnetonka and hit the links at some of Minnesota's finest golf courses. It's a break from hockey that still keeps Gardiner physically and mentally sharp as he prepares for his fourth season in pro hockey.

"Like most guys, I took three weeks off this summer and then started training hard. As training camp gets closer I'll get after it even harder," said Gardiner, one of the cornerstones of the Toronto Maple

Jake Gardiner was featured on the cover of the September 2001 issue of *American Hockey Magazine*, as an 11-year-old.

Leafs youth movement.

Golf is one of the many sports that Gardiner played growing up, along with soccer, baseball and even football. Each of those sports contributed to the athleticism he now displays on the ice.

"Playing different sports helps with different things, like hand-eye coordina-



THREE-TIME
U.S. OLYMPIAN
JULIE CHU TALKS
ABOUT PLAYING
MULTIPLE SPORTS.

Click to
play now!

