

Train to Compete (20U Juniors and NCAA)

Ages 19-21 female

Ages 19-23 male



USA Hockey Programs

USA Hockey has 20 and Under Junior classification programs at several levels, with the USHL being the top level league classified as Tier 1; the NAHL being classified as Tier 2; and several additional leagues in the Tier 3 classification. USA Hockey recognizes NCAA Division I college hockey as the pinnacle of the amateur player developmental process in the United States.

USA Hockey Programs

The objective of the Train to Compete stage is to transfer from the training environment to a competitive environment. Players must consolidate technical skills, and maintain ancillary skills and underlying physical capacities (e.g., strength, speed, etc.). The competitive performance should be predictable and appropriate.

General Description of the Train to Compete stage

During the Train to Compete stage, training volume remains high while intensity increases with the importance of competitions. The training is usually 10 months of the year. Players will usually be required to move away from home for training and competition environments that fit this level of athlete development. The training is individualized to the player's particular needs in skill development, mental preparation, fitness and recovery. Players need to continue to consolidate individual strengths and rectify weaknesses.

USA Hockey's Key Focus for this Stage

- Competing well in a variety of conditions
- Understand their own role in critical thinking and decision making both in and out of sport settings
- Manage lifestyle to meet training and competition commitments

Components of Athlete Development: USA Hockey Train to Compete Stage

Technical and Tactical Skills

- Competitive events and tournaments should be selected carefully, with a specific purpose and performance objective in mind
- Athletes must apply critical reasoning skills to maximize performance in competition
- Model high level competitions in training and develop competitive abilities under a range of simulated training conditions
- Continue to focus on long-term process of athlete development

Physical Development

- Biological maturation is typically completed during this stage; however, some athletes may still be growing
- Fundamental movement skills should be incorporated into dynamic warm-up and fun speed, agility and conditioning games

- **Strength and Power Development:** Programming will depend on training age. Most athletes have been exposed to strength training by this age. More advanced concepts can be applied if appropriate training age and qualified instruction such as eccentric-based training, complex training, velocity-based training and Olympic lifts and variations for power development.
- **Plyometrics:** High intensity plyometrics; multiple 2-foot hopping & jumping; 1-2x per week
- **Speed:** Maximal speed and acceleration; Strength training focused on maximal strength + explosive exercises; Complex training, plyometrics & Olympic lifts
- **Agility:** Primary focus on reactive agility (60%); Incorporation of FMS (20%) and COD (20%) technique through warm-ups
- **Conditioning:** Acquisition of expertise through deliberate practice; combination of small-sided games, HIIT and repeat sprints
- Develop individualized programs for fitness, primary and secondary injury prevention or rehab, and recovery

Psychological Development

- The athlete in this stage takes full responsibility for his/her training and competitive performance
- Work with coaches is more collaborative, as athlete is capable of self-analyzing and correcting and refining skills
- Goal setting is important to give direction and purpose to the training program

Ancillary Skills

- Ensure all programs for fitness, recovery, technical skill development and psychological preparation are individualized to focus on the specific needs of the athlete

Lifestyle

- The athlete must learn to balance the demands of training, competition, school, employment, family and social life
- The athlete makes a full commitment to specialization in ice hockey
- As more travel is required, athlete must learn to travel with a team, adapt to new environments and make choices for meals, hydration, rest and recovery that promote sound training and meeting competition performance goals
- Sleep and nutrition need to be emphasized for recovery and rejuvenation, and overall health and well-being

Monitoring

- Must conduct regular medical monitoring
- Most athletes have finished growing by this stage and are fully mature. Body mass and body composition can be monitored.
- Assessment of fitness and athleticism can continue to inform programming and maximize individual performance potential
- Athlete health and well-being and recovery should be monitored

Training and Competitive Environment

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| High Performance Track Juniors / NCAA | |
| Training/Competition Ratio | 40% training, 30% competition specific training, and 30% competition |
| Training Volume | 5 to 6 times hockey per week. Session length of 60-120 minutes at 20 and Under Junior level. 4-6 fitness sessions per week. |
| Total # of sessions | ~200+ total ice touches |
| # Practices | 140-150 practices |
| # Competitions | 50-55 games a year |
| Training Year | 10-11 months/year |
| Team Composition | IIHF game roster of 20 skaters and 2 goaltenders |
| Team Structure | Teams in these age groups can group players of like ability without restrictions |
| Competition format | 20 and Under Junior teams play 20-minute stop-time period games |
| Overall activity ratios | 60% hockey, 40% fitness |
| Complementary Sports | Athletes are encouraged to participate in outside sporting recreation |

Quality Coaching

General Considerations

- Coaches must plan with regard to training volume and intensity taking into consideration competition and rest and recovery
- Preparation must be detailed and well communicated
- Learning to compete within a team structure, placing team before self
- Intensity of training is high
- On- and off-ice decision-making skills are of a high priority during this stage
- Team play and accountability to the team are required
- Players must be able to transfer the decisions made in practice to competition
- Emphasis on speed of execution
- Emphasis on off-ice training

Coach and Instructor Recommendations

- Junior coaches must all have the appropriate level of USA Hockey Coaching Education Program (CEP) certification and completed the following:
 - On-line coaching module for the age category being coached
 - Background check
 - Completed the United States Center for Safe Sport online program
 - Current year membership registration with USA Hockey

- Additional CEP training and continuing education is encouraged for coaches working within USA Hockey's high performance program or any coach who wishes to improve their craft.