



HOCKEY CALGARY

INFORMATION BULLETIN

Date: September 1st, 2026
To: Hockey Calgary Member Clubs
From: Logan Sawka – Coordinator of Hockey Development
CC: Kevin Kobelka, Candace Kourounis, Cathy Gordon (U9 Governor)

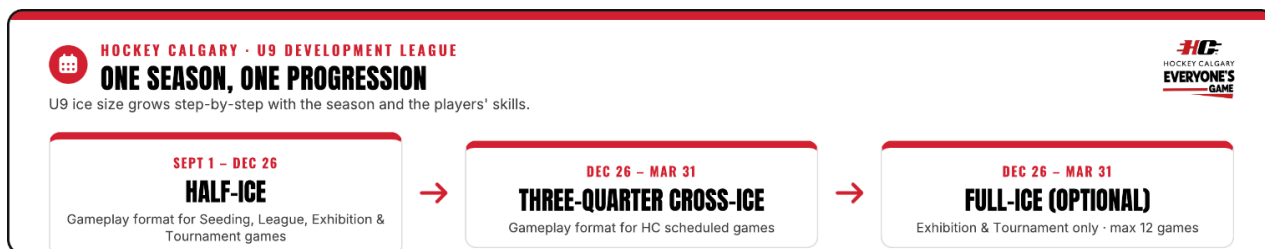
#2602

Subject: U9 Season Format Changes for 2026-27

Starting this season, Hockey Canada's national playing rules permit U9 teams to play full-ice games after December 26, 2026. To keep the proven developmental benefits of half-ice play while giving teams the choice to try full ice later in the season, Hockey Calgary's Development Team with input from our Member Clubs has built the three-phase U9 structure below for 2026-27.

2026-27 U9 Season Structure at a glance:

Phase	Format	When	Status
1	Half-ice, split-squad games	Start of season – Dec 26, 2026	Mandatory (Hockey Canada rule)
2	¾-ice/cross-ice (5v5 to the ringette line, plus 3v3 cross-ice)	Dec 26, 2026 onward, all scheduled league games	Mandatory (Hockey Calgary league format)
3	Full ice	Dec 26, 2026 onward, exhibition games/tournaments only	Optional, by team choice; not scheduled by Hockey Calgary





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Why This Format

Hockey Canada's own U9 Player research shows smaller-ice formats significantly increase puck touches, shots, passes, and ice time compared to full ice. Hockey Canada's Long-Term Player Development model places U9 in the "Fundamentals" stage, where individual skill-building, not formal team tactics, is the priority. This structure follows that guidance while still maximizing Calgary's limited ice resources.

U11 Transition

Graduating U9 players will continue to receive four prep skates before U11 evaluations, and Hockey Calgary is building a formal March transition plan with member clubs to help players step confidently into U11 play.

Additional Information

For the full rationale and Hockey Canada data behind this structure, please visit the link below or see attached document.

Related Policies & Documents available here: hockeycalgary.ca

Contact your Member Club's U9 representative or Logan:

Logan.Sawka@hockeycalgary.com.

On behalf of the Hockey Calgary staff, our Board of Directors, and our army of great volunteers, we want to wish all players, coaches, teams, and Clubs good luck this hockey season.

Regards,

Logan Sawka

Coordinator of Hockey Development