

The Benefits of Cross Rink Hockey

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Cross rink hockey is a modified version of the full game of inline hockey played on a smaller rink, or modified area, with reduced team sizes. For young athletes, playing cross rink hockey offers numerous benefits, including:

- **More puck touches and possession**

With fewer players on the rink, each athlete has more opportunity to handle the puck, and come in contact with the puck. That helps to develop and enhance their stickhandling, passing and shooting skills.

- **Improved skating and agility**

The smaller rink requires quicker changes of direction, enhancing agility, acceleration and overall skating ability.

- **Enhanced decision-making and reaction time**

Cross rink hockey's faster pace and reduced space force players to think and to react faster, making better decisions during games. Games move much faster, forcing players to make quicker decisions.

- **More goals and scoring opportunities**

The smaller rink and reduced team sizes lead to more scoring chances, building confidence, and a sense of accomplishment.

- **Greater emphasis on skill development**

Cross rink hockey focuses on individual skill growth, allowing young athletes to develop essential skills before moving to full rink hockey.

- **Reduced costs and increased accessibility**

Cross rink hockey requires less time, making a more affordable option for young athletes and families.

- **More player involvement and engagement**

With fewer players on the rink at a given time, each athlete is more engaged and involved in the game, reducing time on the sidelines or on the bench waiting to go on and increasing the overall enjoyment of playing the sport.

- **Better preparation for full rink inline hockey**

Cross rink hockey's emphasis on skill development and decision making prepares young athletes for the transition to full rink hockey, where these skills are essential. The skills worked on and developed are accelerated at a faster rate and are immediately transferable to a full game.



By playing cross rink hockey, young athletes can develop their skills, develop their confidence, and enjoy a more engaging form of the game. It is also more accessible. They will get way more puck touches, spend a lot longer skating (as they are invested and engaged in the smaller game) and they will keep their interest levels up.

Cross rink hockey is the perfect structure for younger (and newer) players because it allows them a lot more time skating and handling the puck.

In larger games on full rinks, a player can go almost a full game without touching the puck. This does happen in New Zealand, where the more dominant players hold onto the puck too long, and don't pass as much as they could or should. This doesn't develop the players around the player with control of the puck. Those players often get less touches of the puck and have a much harder time if they do get it, reaching all the way down into the other teams end to get close to the goal to get a scoring chance.

One of the other ways you could play cross rink games is without a goalie. That way goal scoring is increased, and that sense of scoring comes more often, and young athletes become accustomed to how that feels, their involvement and happiness all go up.

Another idea is to decrease the size of the goals. Smaller nets make the players adjust to their size by being more precise with shots, which improves their accuracy and aim as well as places another emphasis on defense as well as attacking opportunities.

Cross rink hockey creates an experience that sticks with the athlete and allows them to access the many benefits of being involved in the sport.

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