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Little Avalanche Learn to Play Hockey Program

The focus of this program is to provide children with the opportunity to learn the basic skills of hockey without the pressures associated with more competitive programs.

We provide a safe and healthy environment in which these young athletes can learn the basics of hockey. This program can be used as a foundation to travel hockey or purely as a recreational activity, but either way it is the goal of the coaching staff and The Ice Den Arena to ensure these children have a fun learning experience along with making noticeable improvement in regards to the game of hockey.

The curriculum is one of progression, with skating being the focal point. The following is a list of skills to be taught/introduced throughout the program.

PRACTICES

1. Forward stroking
2. Forward one foot pushes (right & left)
3. One foot snow plow stops (right & left)
4. Forward swizzles
5. One foot pumping on a circle
6. Forward one foot glides
7. Backward skating
8. Backward swizzles
9. Backward one foot pumping on a circle
10. Backward one foot glides (right & left)
11. Stopping (right & left)
12. Crossover walks (right & left)
13. Forward crossovers
14. Backward crossovers
15. Pivots
16. Hockey turns
17. Stationary puck-handling
18. Skating with a puck
19. Open ice carry
20. Forehand sweep pass
21. Receiving a pass
22. Skating & Passing
23. Skating & Shooting

This is a long list of skills to be taught, therefore to ensure all these areas of the hockey skills listed above will be covered in practice we will often times be using practice stations. These stations will assist greatly in giving more individual attention to each participant, as the group sizes will be 10 or less. We will also be implementing 3 on 3 cross-ice play at various practice sessions to create a scaled down version of real game play. These 3 on 3 games will be helpful in the development of skating, stick-handling and shooting and will also provide a setting in which all players will more frequently handle the puck in a game situations. These groups will be comprised of children of comparable ability so not to have kids discouraged by being placed with the more advanced kids.

Games

Games will be played 5 on 5 and will be played on full ice, 12-minute periods. Games at this level will be buzzer games, meaning that every 90 seconds the buzzer will sound signaling a line change, this will ensure equal ice time for all participants. Kids will be matched up against kids of comparable ability and will rotate through each position. These games will create an environment that allows and promotes each player to become a contributor. Full ice games will be an effective way to teach the game of hockey, rules of hockey as well as being part of a team. Some of these kids have aspirations to move on to travel hockey and we are confident that these full ice games will have them prepared to make this move.