



U8 MAJOR BUNNY GUIDE TO SUCCESS For Coaches

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- To continue to develop the components of physical literacy: fundamental movement and motor skills
- To introduce fundamental Ringette skills in a fun and safe environment that promotes self-confidence
- To increase awareness of Ringette and create a welcoming environment for all participants
- To introduce structured, sport-specific programming and modified game situations

COMPLIANCE INFORMATION FOR U8 MAJOR BUNNY

- Focus on FUN!
- 100% Development – Team Activity Logs must be maintained and submitted to the Regional Sport Development Coordinator by April 30th
- Teams are selected vertically using the Skills Matrix
- Team Composite Scores will be recorded on each team's TRF
- Athletes are evaluated using the Skills Matrix by October 20th and again by February 28th
- One or more coaches on the ice at all times
- No scores posted
- Start learning positional play, switching positions throughout the year (no pads on goalies, but goalie sticks may be used)
- Emphasis on skating skills, developing ring skills
- Two minute buzzer should be utilized to introduce line changes
- May play full-ice scrimmages with basic Ringette rules to be observed
- A maximum of 3 events per year, including any year-end event (events may have off-ice activities and any awards will be identical participation awards for everyone)

WHAT SKILLS DO WE FOCUS ON AT U8?

- Basic Skating Skills:
 - Basic stance, falling and getting up, edges, balance on skates, start, stop, walking all directions, forward/backward stride and glide
- Basic Ring Skills:
 - Basic skills, grip, carrying the ring, passing, receiving, checking, shooting – all within a controlled environment
- Introduce Goalkeeping Skills:
 - Introduce concept, basic grip, stance, stick on ice, use only a goalie stick in regular player's equipment

STARTING THE SEASON

- Select a volunteer from your team's parents to complete the Team Activity Log throughout the season
- Work with your Association representative to identify objectives for your team to work towards throughout the season

PLANNING PRACTICES

- PLAN, PLAN, PLAN!!
 - The most important thing you can do as a coach is to have a clear idea of what you want to accomplish – set out objectives for your season and for each practice
 - Make sure you plan out your practice before you arrive at the arena!
 - Practice plans should be developed with your long-term and short-term objectives in mind as determined in conjunction with your Association representative
- Make sure to always have enough coaches on the ice to properly execute your practice plan, otherwise it may need to be altered
- Nutrition after a practice
 - Have chocolate milk
 - Consider having a small snack available to the athletes after every ice time (granola bar, orange, raisins, etc.) to bring their energy levels back up
 - Often these athletes are on the ice before they have a chance to go home and grab a snack or meal after school

RESOURCES

- Sample resources
 - Ringette Canada website – www.ringette.ca
 - Ringette Canada's ABC Program
 - Be sure to register on the Ringette Canada Coaches' page to gain access to the available coaching tools and resources, which include demonstration videos and a set of sample Practice Plans for U9 (can be adapted for U8)
 - Your CSI (Community Sport Initiation) coaching clinic materials
 - The Ringette Canada Drill Manual (obtained at the CSI clinic or ask your Association for a copy)
 - The ORA website – www.ontario-ringette.com (see Coaching Resources)
 - ORA 'Drills for Skills' document
 - ORA Skills Video – available from your Association
 - Your Region's website may have helpful links
- Who can you go to for help in your Association/Region?
 - Your Association should identify these individuals at the beginning of the season (this list should be distributed at the coaches' meeting)
- Use your resources!

- Instructors don't have to be coaches (parent who is a skilled skater but can't commit to coach can lead a station at your practice – make sure to adhere to your Association's volunteer screening policy)
- Use older athletes when you can!
- Be creative with the practice plans and drills you find

ATHLETE VOLUNTEERS

- In your Association there should be a pool of athlete volunteers who have various areas of expertise (e.g. skating, shooting, passing, goaltending, etc.)
- This is a great way to involve athletes who don't have the time to commit to being a full-time coach
 - Contact information for these athletes should be distributed to coaches at the start of the season and athletes can be contacted to come out to practices for any team who can use them
 - Some of the athlete volunteers may be able to make the commitment to be at every on-ice session for your team
- Athlete volunteers should always be under the supervision of an adult coach
 - Many of these athletes may be in high school and looking to complete their requisite Community Involvement volunteer hours, so may ask you to sign their volunteer hours sheets when they come out to help
- Use these athletes on-ice to:
 - Assist with less-skilled players and to provide one-on-one instruction (one athlete volunteer could work with the same younger athlete all the time)
 - Demonstrate and correct skills/drills
 - Provide feedback to coaches/recommend drills
 - Set up/clear up drills
- Encourage these volunteers to run drills on their own
- Ask them for suggestions and really listen to what they have to say
- Coaches should give feedback to these athlete volunteers to let them know how they are appreciated and how they could improve

SKILL GROUPINGS ON YOUR TEAM

- Consider combining practices with another U8, U9 and/or U10 team
 - This gives you more coaches on the ice and allows for more specific groupings by skill ability – e.g. 6 stations, 6 different groupings, each group rotates through the stations, getting ability-specific instruction on the skills
- When you have just your own team on the ice:
 - Put your strongest coach with your weakest players
 - Divide into groups according to skill ability and # of instructors
 - Rotate through stations

RULES

- Encourage an understanding of the basic rules, focusing on the blue line, crease, different zones, and tripping (be responsible for where their stick is)

- What are penalties?
 - Introduce the athletes to the concept so that they aren't surprised by it in a game situation

MODIFIED GAMES

- Use the two-minute buzzer for shift changes
- 6 athletes per shift, one becomes the "goalie" and picks up the goalie stick for that shift – each player should rotate through all positions every game, as much as possible
- No scores posted!
- Coaches allowed on the ice
- Multiple games, same ice surface
 - Try 3-on-3 in these limited areas
- Do-Overs!
 - Allow do-overs in the first half of the season (e.g. An athlete who carries the ring over the blue line is allowed to try again)

HOW DO I MAKE IT FUN? ON-ICE

Fun Drills:

- Two teams, all of the rings start in the centre circle, each team has to bring the rings back to their own end, once centre rings are gone, each team tries to get the rings from the other team's end while being checked by the opposing team
- Keep-away (Buzzing Bees)
- Wonder Woman (Snow Queen) – skate as fast as you can to the blue line then dive on your belly
- Sharks and fishes
- Relay Races
- Any skill-challenging games (Who can score on the net from centre ice? Who can glide on one leg for the longest?)
- Ring in hand, "Bus drivers," practices starts and stops
- Move pizza boxes by shooting rings at them
- Freeze tag, once tagged you must stop and wait for someone to touch you before you're allowed to move again
- Pick up the ring and throw it
- Put a net in the middle of the ice, have them skate around it with the ring and shoot into the net
- Hang a rubber chicken in the net – can you hit it?
- Follow the leader – along the lines – like a dance – everyone do what the player in front of you is doing
- Any modified game where every person has equal involvement (Ringette Canada Drill Manual has a lot of great ideas for this!)
 - Consider bringing in alternative objects to play with (e.g. soccer balls, beach balls, rubber chickens, frisbees, etc.), but keep in mind that safety comes first
 - Make sure to consider the age and ability level of your athletes before selecting a game to play

- Try starting your on-ice session with a fun activity to encourage slow dressers to move more quickly so that they don't miss out on the fun
- Communicate with your athletes about what their favourite parts of on-ice sessions are and include more of them if possible
- Make the last activity game-like (scrimmage)
- Consider a parent vs. players game (make sure that all involved have the proper equipment – safety first!)

HOW DO I MAKE IT FUN? OFF-ICE

- Swimming, bowling, holiday parties
 - Halloween party to kick off the season
 - Holiday party
 - End-of-Season party
- Try out a different sport together (e.g. Flag Football, Ultimate Frisbee, etc.)
- Sleepovers
- Team cheers, team mascot, off-ice attire
- Team twinning with an older team, each team watches some of the other's games, the older can teach Association cheers to the younger, etc.
- Not all off-ice activities need to cost money – consider how you could use your local park for team-bonding activities
- Every time the team is together, try to do some social activity (could even be a 5 minute dance party, etc.)
- Recognize special events
 - Recognize each individual athlete during the season somehow
- At Events
 - Team Dinners
 - Envelope on hotel room doors (each athlete writes a positive message to each of their teammates – parents can help!)
 - Develop a team cheer
 - If there are older teams from your Association at the tournament/event, watch some of their games as a team
- **Make sure that all of your team events include ALL of your team members**

HOW DO I BECOME A BETTER COACH?

- If you are sharing the ice for a practice, communicate with the coach of the other team before the practice to see how you can both benefit by working together
- Have a practice scrimmage before the first game to make sure that you know where the best places are for you to stand while your athletes are playing a game
- Approachability
 - Be available to your athletes and their parents
- Be a student of the game
 - Volunteer to go on the ice with other teams in your Association at different levels to strengthen your understanding of the game
 - Watch practices and games at other levels

- Adapt what you see to make it appropriate for your age level (including drills and games)
- Have an experienced goalie coach work with your athletes on goaltending skills (could be an athlete volunteer)
- Your yearly plan should be flexible
- Head Coach should be the first to arrive, last to leave
- Read and adhere to the Bench Staff Code of Conduct

BE A ROLE MODEL

- Show respect to the Officials
- Show respect to the other team

Make sure your behaviour sets the right example

COACHES SHOULD MODEL USE OF RINGETTE EQUIPMENT

- Use a proper Ringette stick
- Wear approved gloves
- Model the use of an approved helmet

AT THE GAME

- Before the game go around the dressing room and have every athlete say what they think the “Key to success” will be for that game
- Head Coach should be visible on the bench so that the officials know who to talk to – consider where you stand, don’t stand up on the bench – be where you can talk to the athletes easily
- Coaches on the door need to train themselves to focus on the door and the line changes, not the game
- Coach the team, not your child (try to make sure that parents aren’t on the same door as their child)
- Success comes in CANS not CAN’TS!
- What is your body language like on the bench?
 - Avoid an Alpha impression
- Keep your post-game talk to a 5 minute maximum

FAIR ICE POLICY

- Every athlete should be playing every position an equal amount of time
- Please adhere to the ORA Fair Ice Policy for playing time expectations

COMMUNICATION

- Language should always be positive and terminology should match the terminology in the Ringette Canada Drill Manual
- Observe, Correct, Encourage
- Intonation
 - Keep your tone upbeat

- Make sure that all of the coaches are on the same page about what is being communicated to the athletes
- During practices, Head Coach should be facilitating the entire practice – if there are stations, the Head Coach should be circulating to ensure that each one is running smoothly
- Never overload your athletes – give them bite-sized bits of information that they can focus on in order to improve – always end on a positive note
- With parents
 - Have a meeting with all of the parents at the start, middle, and end of the season, and any additional meetings you deem necessary
 - This should ensure that all the adults understand how the season will run
 - When a parent is upset, instate the “24-hour Rule”
 - This will allow both the parent and you as the coach to discuss the situation more calmly and productively
 - Do not discuss an athlete’s performance with any parent other than their own

CHANGE ROOMS

- Etiquette
 - Establish how athletes should treat each other in the change room
 - Two bench staff in the change room at all times
 - Develop a skate-tying and change room policy with your Association representative before the season starts that includes where and when parents can tie skates, who is allowed to enter the change room and at what times
- Proximity
 - Always be close to where your athletes are – if they are in the change room, be outside the door; if they are warming up somewhere, be where they are
 - Be aware of what your athletes are up to – i.e. that interaction is positive and activities are appropriate
 - Safety first!

OFF-ICE TEAM WEAR

- Coaches should wear it too - get in the spirit!!

CAPTAINS

- Instead of assigning captains, rotate captains – allow every athlete equal opportunity to take on this leadership position