

# Benefits of Half-Ice Hockey Games for Novice Players

## Long-Term Player Development Model

Parents and coaches need to think long-term and not worry too much about children being the best player on the ice in Novice hockey. Research has proven that putting young players into a competitive environment too early will compromise their development. Children should only be placed into competitive situations that suit their skill level and abilities.

It is important to fully understand and appreciate the benefits of cross-ice and half-ice hockey and why Hockey Canada has a [national policy](#) ensuring all Initiation and Novice hockey is played in smaller, modified spaces.

You have to be able to make plays in pretty small areas. The more you practice in small spaces the better off you are.”

– Sidney Crosby,  
Canada’s National Men’s Team

An illustration of very simple statistics illustrates highlight the advantages to the smaller surface games model.



### **Small spaces equate to more engagement in the play:**

All players are close to the play at all times and have much more opportunity for puck touches. Regardless of the skill level or the ability of each player, their opportunities to be engaged in the play are doubled when the playing area is smaller.



### **A very large difference between full-ice and small areas:**

There are six times as many shots at goal in a cross-ice or half-ice game, because players are closer to the puck at all times and the puck finds its way to the net much more often.



### **Shrinking the playing surface increases offence:**

Players are much closer to the net, skate shorter distance from goal to goal and have increased opportunities for offensive play.



### **More of a team game is apparent:**

Players are observed passing and attempting to pass the puck more often. This is for two reasons:

1. All players are close enough to pressure the puck more frequently.
2. Teammates are in close support of the puck carrier at all times



### **Short, quick passes find their mark:**

In smaller spaces, more passes are attempted and most of these passes are five to 10 feet in length. When passes are shorter, accuracy improves and players have more success receiving the pass. Players also start to understand the important of team puck possession.

You need to be able to make quick passes and have quick communication. Small area games are important.”

– Brianne Jenner,  
Canada’s National Women’s Team

