

Learn to Compete

Ages 15-18 female

Ages 16-18 male



The objective of the Learn to Compete stage is to prepare athletes for the competitive environment, continue to refine technical skills, ancillary skills and develop the physical attributes.

General Description of the Learn to Compete stage:

All the objectives of the Train to Train stage must be achieved before the objectives of Learn to Compete can begin. This is the time to optimize fitness preparation and skills and to begin to specialize in ice hockey. Training should be individualized to the athlete's particular needs in skill development, mental preparation, fitness and recovery. During this stage, training volume will increase, as does training intensity. Competitions and tournaments become more important and the focus shifts to performance. Athletes learn to prepare for competition, and learn to handle competitive pressures in any situation. The training season is longer, and event-specific. This is the time to consolidate individual strengths and rectify weaknesses.

USA Hockey's key focus for this stage:

- Refine technical skills
- Gain confidence in a variety of competitive situations
- Good decision-making skills
- Make appropriate and measurable improvements in endurance, speed and strength

USA Hockey Programs:

USA Hockey's member clubs can offer Tier 1 and Tier 2 competitive teams as well as Hockey for Life programs that meet each individual's ability and commitment 18 & Under (Midget) classification. 16 and 17, USA Hockey also runs National Player Development Camps for both boys and girls. USA Hockey also has its NTDP - High Performance Clubs at this level.

At the age of 17, players have the opportunity to make a youth level U.S. National U18 Team, either through the National Player Development Camp or the National Team Development Program. The U18 age level is the initial age where the International Ice Hockey Federation holds an official world championship event.

Monitoring:

- Monitor development of endurance, strength and speed
- Monitor fitness - endurance, core strength, flexibility

LTAD Window of Opportunity:

- Speed Window #2 for Boys early in stage
- Strength Window for boys is 12-18 months after PHV

Coach and Instructor Recommendations:

Level 3 CEP certification is required for coaching at the 18 & Under Midget level. Tier 1 and Tier 2 national tournament bound 18 & Under (Midget) coaches need a Level 4 CEP certification. Additional CEP training and continuing education is encouraged for coaches working within USA Hockey's high performance clubs or any coach who wishes to improve their craft.

Components of the Hockey Learn to Compete Stage:

Physical Development:

Optimize endurance, strength and speed training.

- The athlete must have sufficient levels of fitness to withstand the demands of training and competition without sustaining injuries or burnout.
- Develop individualized programs for fitness and recovery
- Ensure progressive overload in training

Psychological Development:

- The athlete should have well-developed mental preparation skills, and should continue to refine these skills
- Competition becomes more important and athletes must learn to perform on demand
- Training and practice in mental preparation will help the athlete cope with the stresses associated with training, tournaments and selection, and will contribute to their overall development as competitive athletes.
- Athletes should have input in setting training goals and priorities, and should be included in decision-making process.
- Athletes are capable of self-coaching and should be encouraged to think for themselves, rather than relying solely on coach feedback

Training and Competitive Environment:

Standard Track

- **Training/Competition Ratio:** 50% training, 10% competition specific training, and 40% competition
- **Training Volume:** 3 to 4 times hockey per week, with session length of 60 to 90 minutes at 18 & Under (Midget) level. Training volume can be reduced for the Hockey for Life category based on the commitment level of the players involved. Fitness three times per week.
- **Training Year:** 4 weeks/month, 7 month/year - Single or double periodization calendar will aid structuring and help maintain player interest
- **Team Composition:** Team composition will include a roster of 18 skaters and 2 goaltenders. (12 forwards, 6 defensemen, 2 goalies).
- **Team Structure:** Teams in these age groups can group players of like ability with out restrictions. Teams can be registered at the Tier 1, Tier 2 or Hockey for Life Level.
- **Competition format:** Game formats may vary to fit within the allotted ice time
- **Overall activity ratios:** 50% hockey, 40% fitness, 10% other sports
- **Complimentary Sports:** Athletes are encouraged to participate in 1 complimentary sport

18 & Under (Midget) Tier II:

115 total ice touches

3 - 4 times per week for 60 to 80 minutes

7 - 8 months

80 - 85 practices and 40 to 50 games

18 skaters and 2 goalies per team

High Performance Track

- **Training/Competition Ratio:** 50% training, 10% competition specific training, and 40% competition
- **Training Volume:** 5 to 6 times hockey per week, with session length of 60 to 90 minutes at 18 & Under Midget level. 4 to 6 fitness sessions per week with account for strength development phase.

- **Training Year:** 4 weeks/month, 9-10 month/year - Double periodization calendar will aid structuring and help maintain player interest
- **Team Composition:** Team composition will include a roster of 16 skates and 2 goaltenders. (12 forwards, 6 defensemen, 2 goalies).
- **Team Structure:** Teams in these age groups are made up of players of like ability with out restrictions.
- **Competition format:** 18 & Under (Midget) with 2.5 hours ice time shall play 20-minute stop-time period games with one (1) ice resurface after the first period and a second ice resurface after the second period. 18 & Under Midget with 2.0 hour ice time shall play 18-minute stop-time period games with one (1) ice resurface after the first period and a second ice resurface after the second period.
- **Overall activity ratios:** 60% hockey, 40% fitness
- **Complimentary Sports:** Athletes are encouraged to participate in outside sporting recreation

18 & Under (Midget) High Performance:

~200+ total ice touches

5 - 6 per week

10 months

140 - 150 practices and 50-60 games

18 skaters and 2 goalies per team

Coaching Consideration:

- Coaches must plan with regard to training volume and intensity taking into consideration competition and rest and recovery
- Preparation must be detailed and well communicated
- Learning to compete within a team structure, placing team before self
- Intensity of training is high
- On and Off ice decision-making skills are of a high priority during this stage.
- Team play and accountability to the team must always be enforced.
- Players must be able to transfer the decisions made in practice to competition.
- Emphasis on speed of execution
- Emphasis on off-ice training

Technical Development:

- Refinement of skills at a high speed
- Execution of skills must be details and performed in tactical situations

Tactical Skills:

- Speed of transition from offense to defense and defense to offense
- Speed of decision making skills

Ancillary Skills:

- Ensure that key support systems (fitness monitoring, recovery and regeneration, psychology, nutrition and health needs) are in place and integrated with the training program.
- Regular, year-round aerobic and strength training
- Athletes should refine and individualize their own ancillary capacities

Life Style:

- Refine the skills listed in the Train to Train stage.
- Athlete assumes increasing responsibility for managing his/her competitive and training schedules, deadlines, registrations etc.
- Athlete assumes responsibility for his/her own behavior as representative of USA Hockey, his/her club, state and country.