Rochester Mite Hockey will follow the USA Hockey guidelines for [skill progression of youth hockey players](https://mail-attachment.googleusercontent.com/attachment/u/0/?ui=2&ik=8b89a6a764&view=att&th=155da8462bf86a52&attid=0.2&disp=inline&safe=1&zw&saddbat=ANGjdJ950BfAcJTgRJDQ6GBwQxG6f4YAw5vZl0pvap_2kDtZh6ZJKArNAniR-CHqzQ6wrs0iuhCjRjECBCDULjlR9Oq_Flm910jC9TNjvDccMDEbQbM_xzsmIUx410WeZor3kIkEoCwg-_ulwrr68SIpTK2zSKGPbuuqiBtW3_XDDP2No_ZdzLWUU5XPxXuU7Pi84-2nIfaE6R0Ig0Rnb2FrweDaQm2FxrYUBzB3GcXs49B_rvnlfzQcF0y2mCKCD8FyFLwmZCf4G1YrAuvqn83GytVpekESnjy9ZjB9_WL8G-NL817SMeU6Dk7j7oqPsNnCvg94zINyvIFPHkW_8HoW4vnDZ6ILcWP7DlwtrLpLZHjTofxGmKsSgb84pOOr3I_PjpzD5XSFCcgI6m8OZdHpAbMKdifFzGoV1QbSssogqoZUtE0DRi8H2CVZsfumUCMBP9SDRoXUCRvyfMCAn-vu1onSf3p-s3mRYBHVGTPRml2VXXfWUp6ySoWD1k4hiSS4g5Mxia7p9y2Z-qLJqZ107bozn14UdzgtCxMfo2YLAjKxfF0S_NARBcma6oZXtYUtyzOQdy82MtA5EdAeN2Lyzv6w_N2B7Cy6b2N3lVhfez0vWk9BCGzg6qHSVnO62UIFjWxmP2PaOYoj3hJv).

USA Hockey’s key focus for this stage:

* Help ensure our participants gain physical literacy
* Develop a passion for hockey in all children
* Encourage daily physical activity
* Provide the opportunity to explore a new surface (ice) and mode of locomotion (skating)
* Develop on-ice balance, coordination and agility
* Introduce basic skating movement skills through a Learn to Skate program

PRACTICE FOCUS

Practices should focus on (percentage of time listed after each):

1. Individual skill improvement (hockey skills, activities, and games) — 85%
2. Hockey sense (teaching of concepts through small area games) — 15%

Team Structure:

Players can be grouped into teams of like abilities, with the overall focus on evenly distributing the player ability pool across all teams.

PLAYER KNOWLEDGE

Mite players are not at a cognitive level where they should be lectured on the following topics; however, throughout the course of playing mite hockey, they should learn:

1. Puck Pursuit – Players should be taught to pursue the puck aggressively and engage in battles to gain possession of the puck.
2. Puck Support – Players should learn to make themselves available to receive a pass from a teammate. This is the beginning of the idea of “getting open.”
3. Acceptable On-Ice Conduct – Acceptable conduct should be taught and reinforced. Unsportsmanlike conduct is the broad term covering this topic, but acceptable conduct should relate to teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, etc. This is the beginning of teaching players to be good sports and to respect everyone involved with the game.
4. Allowable Contact with Opponents – Players should learn what types of physical contact are allowed with an opponent. Players should learn the importance of having their stick on the ice in puck battles, so that good body contact habits are established early. The players should also begin to learn the types of physical contact that are not allowed, such as body checking, checking from behind, slashing, tripping, etc. While these young players are not at an age where they should be lectured as to the types of illegal contact, they should be made aware when they have made contact in a way that violates the rules

INDIVIDUAL HOCKEY SKILLS

Players must learn and master:

1. Skating
	1. ready position
	2. edge control
	3. forward start
	4. forward stride
	5. controlled stop: two-foot and one-foot snowplow
	6. controlled turn
	7. forward crossover
	8. backward skating
	9. backward stop
	10. ABCs of skating (agility, balance, coordination, and speed drills)
2. Puck Control
	1. lateral (side-to-side) stickhandling
	2. front-to-back stickhandling
3. Passing and Receiving
	1. forehand pass
	2. backhand pass
	3. receiving a pass properly with the stick
4. Shooting
	1. wrist shot
	2. backhand
5. Body Contact
	1. stick on puck
	2. stick lift
6. Goaltending
	1. At this level, coaches should not designate full-time goaltenders so that players may begin the development of skills that will help improve their long-term skating and athleticism. These are crucial for goaltenders as they progress to higher age levels.

Skill Evaluation

Each player in the Rochester Mite Hockey Program will be evaluated at the beginning and end of the season to determine his or her appropriate team placement. We understand that there are players of different skill levels (beginner thru advanced) at each level as well as within a given team. Some will have mastered the skill by the end of the season while others are still learning. It is our expectation that every player will continue to grow their understanding of the game as well as their performance each year within the mite program.

Players will be divided into teams with players of similar skills so coaches can focus the practices. Here are the guidelines for teams:

Beginner Mites:

* A first year skater with no prior hockey or skating experience.

Intermediate Mites:

* A first year skater who has prior hockey or skating experience and demonstrates skills above a Beginner Mite.
* A second year mite who has been evaluated by the coaches and demonstrates mastery of skills at a Beginner Mite level.

Advanced Mites:

* A first year skater who has prior hockey or skating experience and demonstrates skills above a Intermediate Mite.
* A second year mite who has been evaluated by the coaches and demonstrates mastery of skills at an Intermediate Mite level.

The following tables defines the skills that are necessary at each level.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skating Skills** | **Beginner Mites** | **Intermediate Mites** | **Advanced Mites** |
| Basic stance – proper posture, knees bent, back straight, head up, stick on ice, balance | x | x | x |
| Getting to feet from knees | x | x | x |
| 2 foot glide | x | x | x |
| Backward C-cut | x | x | x |
| Front start | x | x | x |
| Stopping – 1 & 2 foot hockey stops; both left and right | x | x | x |
| Forward crossover turns: left & right | x | x | x |
| Power turn: left and right |  | x | x |
| Spinning: fwd to bkwd / bkwd to fwd |  | x | x |
| Pivot: fwd to bkwd / bkwd to fwd |  | x | x |
| Edge control: outside & inside |  | x | x |
| Power stop: left & right |  |  | x |
| Mohawk transitions: fwd to bkwd / bkwd to fwd |  |  | x |
| Lateral crossover |  |  | x |
| Backward crossover |  |  | x |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Stickhandling & Puck Control** | **Beginner Mites** | **Intermediate Mites** | **Advanced Mites** |
| Proper grip of stick | x | x | x |
| Stationary stick handling | x | x | x |
| Push puck | x | x | x |
| Skating with puck |  | x | x |
| Stopping with puck |  | x | x |
| Puck protection |  |  | x |
| Control puck with feet (kick to stick) |  |  | x |
| Lead pass |  |  | x |
| Power turn with puck |  |  | x |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Passing & Receiving** | **Beginner Mites** | **Intermediate Mites** | **Advanced Mites** |
| Forehand pass | x | x | x |
| Forehand receive | x | x | x |
| Off board to self |  | x | x |
| Passing – forehand & backhand |  | x | x |
| Receiving – forehand & backhand |  | x | x |
| Stopping the puck |  | x | x |
| Passing and Receiving while skating |  |  | x |
| Control puck with feet  |  |  | x |
| Communication (calling for puck) |  |  | x |
| Off board to teammate |  |  | x |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Shooting** | **Beginner Mites** | **Intermediate Mites** | **Advanced Mites** |
| Forehand stationary | x | x | x |
| Backhand stationary | x | x | x |
| Wrist shot |  | x | x |
| Backhand shot |  | x | x |
| Shooting while moving feet |  | x | x |
| Catch and shoot |  | x | x |