

# 2024-2025 MAHA MITES

## What's Important At Mites?

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- They are having fun and developing friendships. We want our players to fall in love with the game of hockey
- They enjoy coming to the rink
- Small Area Games, and Station Based Practices
- Lots of repetitions, and not a lot of standing around
- They are listening and fully engaged in the on-ice activity
- They are trying their best
- You see them making improvements throughout the season



**Jamboree requests must be submitted to the Hockey Director and MAHA President ahead of time for approval PRIOR to registering.**

**Submit Jamboree requests to:**  
[hockeyoperations@mankatohockey.com](mailto:hockeyoperations@mankatohockey.com) AND  
[mahapresident@mankatohockey.com](mailto:mahapresident@mankatohockey.com)

### **MAHA JAMBOREE GUIDELINES**

- No Jamborees for Mite Levels 1, 2, 6U.
- 1 Jamboree Per team for the 24-25 Season for Levels 3, 4, 5, 8u.
- Jamboree must be approved by Kelli and Carter prior to registering.
- Teams will need to cover the cost of the Jamboree.

### **MAHA EXHIBITION GUIDELINES**

- Each team may play up to 5 exhibitions for the 24-25 Season (Jamborees do not count towards the 5).
- **\*Please note that during the Mite season we designate either every Saturday OR Sunday to GAMEDAY. So, although they are not playing against other teams, kids are still getting 1 gameday a week and roughly 12-14 of those In House exhibition games from December – March. \***
- No exhibitions prior to January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025.
- Exhibitions cannot interfere with practice schedule (can't cancel practice ice to go play exhibition).
- Travel Restriction and Crossing District Lines: All exhibitions must be played against teams within D9, if travel exceeds an hour OR you wish to schedule out of town against a non D9 team, that must be approved by

Kelli and Carter prior to scheduling. If you are playing non district on home ice, that does not require approval.

- Per MN Hockey: *“To reduce expense and promote development rather than competition, Mite teams shall participate within their home association and district only.”*

- **Exhibitions to be played cross ice, not full ice.**

***-Why is this?*** As an association we are putting a point of emphasis on **INDIVIDUAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT, REPETITION, and SMALL AREA/COMPETE**. Our goal is to continue to develop players individual skills (skating, puck handling, hockey sense, etc). We aim to increase players development through increase in puck touches and repetition of critical hockey skills along with small area/compete games to facilitate competition.... Going full ice at the Mite level, whether level 1 or 5, the number of puck touches drops drastically. By keeping exhibitions, half ice and cross ice kids are getting more puck touches and are more consistently involved in plays.

***-What about Offsides for the older groups?*** Yes, offsides is important to learn, however, it can still be taught in drills or cross ice by using a blue ice marker you can put a line in the middle of the zone and teach the concept that way. This still allows them to learn offsides, without having to play full ice.

# USA HOCKEY ADM 6U/8U (American Development Model)

## PUCK TOUCHES

- *CROSS ICE*  **2X MORE**
- *LARGER ICE* 

## PASS ATTEMPTS

- *CROSS ICE*  **2X MORE**
- *LARGER ICE* 

## SHOT ATTEMPTS

- *CROSS ICE*  **6X MORE**
- *LARGER ICE* 

## PASSES RECEIVED

- *CROSS ICE*  **5X MORE**
- *LARGER ICE* 

## PUCK BATTLES

- *CROSS ICE*  **2X MORE**
- *LARGER ICE* 

## CHANGES OF DIRECTION

- *CROSS ICE*  **2X MORE**
- *LARGER ICE* 

## GOALIE SHOTS/MINUTE

- *CROSS ICE*  **4X MORE**
- *LARGER ICE* 

## **Coaching Requirements**

1. Requirements to be on ice at the Mite level:
  - USA Hockey Number for 24-25 Season
  - Level 1 CEP
  - SafeSport completion
  - Background check
  - Register through MAHA here:  
[https://mankatohockey.sportngin.com/register/form/511496791?\\_gl=1\\*1dyb2sx\\*\\_ga\\*MTM5MjAyNDQ1Ni4xNjg3MzAzMzg0\\*\\_ga\\_PQ25JN9PJ8\\*MTczMTA5NDA0MS40Njk uMS4xNzIxMDk0MDQzLjAuMC4w#\\_ga=2.179472737.450117777.1730995109-1392024456.1687303384](https://mankatohockey.sportngin.com/register/form/511496791?_gl=1*1dyb2sx*_ga*MTM5MjAyNDQ1Ni4xNjg3MzAzMzg0*_ga_PQ25JN9PJ8*MTczMTA5NDA0MS40Njk uMS4xNzIxMDk0MDQzLjAuMC4w#_ga=2.179472737.450117777.1730995109-1392024456.1687303384)
2. Need to have helmet on when on ice.

## **Coaching Expectations**

1. **Communication** → If you can't make a practice, please let the other coaches know so they can adjust their stations accordingly.
2. **Be prepared** → Practice plans are sent out in advance, please take a minute to look over the drill you're helping run. This will ensure that you're running the drill correctly and that you know how many cones, tires, etc that need to be set up.
3. **Remember, it's a math problem** → 1 to 3 work to rest ratio ... Reps are the most important thing for the kids from a development standpoint. Keep the players moving, coach them, interact with them, but keep them moving and make sure there aren't kids standing around.



**A coach will impact more people in one year than an average person will in an entire lifetime.**

**BILLY GRAHAM**

- Carter Foguth is the contact for any coaching related questions:  
[hockeyoperations@mankatohockey.com](mailto:hockeyoperations@mankatohockey.com)

**\*DIB's Requirement - Coaches must be on the ice 75% of practices to get credit for DIBS. Mite coaches will not get the credit if they only go on the ice to help for the 4 hours. \***

### **Player Expectations at the Mite Level**

- Have fun, we want them to look forward to coming to hockey every day.
- Pay attention in line and ready to go in drills. I know this is a tough one for such a young age group and is why it is important that the drills/stations we're running don't have too many kids standing around.
- Encourage kids to complete the drills regardless of how fast or slow they can do it, how many times they lose a puck, fall down, etc.
- Have fun and enjoy themselves but do not distract or prohibit others from learning/getting better! Ex: slashing, cross checking in line, shooting pucks at players during drills, bullying, etc.
- Players must wear all appropriate gear – including neck guards and mouth guards.
- Mites is a great time for kids to get a taste of the goalie position and give it a try! For Mites 3/4/5 Coaches will create a weekly goalie rotation that Mite players must follow, this will allow everyone to at least attempt the position once, even if they don't intend to play it in the future. At least trying it at the Mite level will hopefully give kids an idea of whether they have interest in it in the future! The goalie gear is free and provided on behalf of MAHA.

### **Guidelines regarding on travel MAHA players being on ice with mites:**

**1. Be Responsible, remember that the Mite players look up to you.**

#### **2. Pay Attention to Coaches**

- **Follow Instructions: Carry out the tasks and drills assigned by the coaches accurately.**
- **Support the Coaches: Assist the coaches in setting up drills, organizing players, and maintaining order on the ice.**
- **Encourage: Motivate and encourage the Mite players during drills.**

#### **3. Safety**

- **Keep an eye on the younger players to ensure they are following safety rules on the ice.**
- **Always wear the appropriate safety gear.**

#### **4. Drill Participation**

- **Demonstrate Skills: When appropriate, demonstrate skills and drills to the Mite players.**

**Ultimate discretion and approval will be up to the on-ice level lead. Not all travel player requests to be on the ice can be honored based on number of coaches on the ice and number of skaters due to size constraints. If inappropriate behavior is observed by coaches travel players will be given one warning before they are asked to leave the ice or to not return to a mite practice.**

### **2 Areas of Focus**

**·Skating** – Working on developing proper technique as a skater so that the players can improve their speed and acceleration. By working on their technique at this age they can continue to grow and develop the appropriate skating habits: good knee bend, chest up, striding all the way out and using their edges efficiently.

\*\*\*Be careful including pucks when focusing on skating. If the player is already struggling with skating adding a puck will not only make it more difficult for them, but will also prohibit them from focusing on skating.

**Drill 2: Edges**

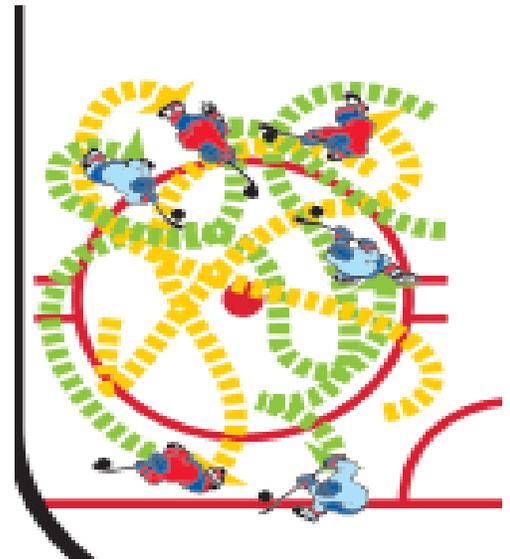
**(7 minutes)**

**2-Foot Glide Turns:** Players take a few strides to gain momentum then work on glide turns up the ice around cones. Focus on bent knees, skates shoulder-width apart, head and shoulders initiate turn by leaning toward cone, lead with inside skate (make sure they do not drag toe around cone), when player reaches cone they turn toes, belly button and head towards next cone and skate to the next cone.

*\*Make sure to perform drill in both directions.*



**Puck Handling** – Working on getting the players plenty of puck touches throughout practice. By putting the players in small area drill situations, it forces them to handle pucks in tight which allows them to get comfortable moving with the puck in different directions. Developing good puck handling skills will allow them to grow not only their stick handling efficiency but also get them comfortable making and receiving passes.



**“Player development is what we need to focus on, not winning and losing at the Mite level. Nobody becomes Patrick Kane at the Mite level. It’s a process. These kids need to go through a lot of growing before they get to that stage.”**

## PRACTICE PLANS:

# ALGEBRA OF AN EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

**ICE TIME     ÷     REPS     =     DEVELOPMENT**

**\*\*\* 8-10 Minutes full ice skating to start your practice \*\*\***

**\*\*\*We will divide into 5 stations after\*\***

<https://www.usahockey.com/practiceplans>

### **6U Skating**

(4-5 lines, starting on goal line, have next group go when they get to the 1<sup>st</sup> blue line)

With the smaller sheet have them do this 2 times. Once down, Once back.

\*\*You will not get through all of these in 1 session, pick 2/3 that you want to do\*\*

#### **1. Forward Skating**

-Have them skate straight down ice forward, focus on knee bend, stick on ice and having chest up. NO PUCKS

#### **2. Backward Skating**

-Have them skate straight down ice backward, focus on knee bend, stick on ice and having chest up. NO PUCKS \*\*This will be tough for some, may need to shorten to near blueline or redline. \*\*

### 3. Forward Up Downs

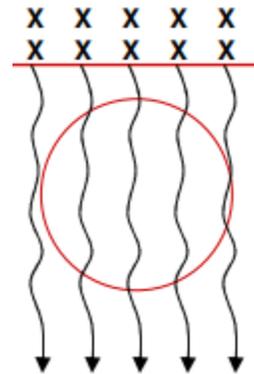
-Have them skate straight down ice, focus on knee bend, stick on ice and having chest up.... When they hit the blue lines and red line, drop to both knees, get back up. NO PUCKS

### 4. Forward Super Mans

-Have them skate straight down ice, focus on knee bend, stick on ice and having chest up .... When they hit the blue lines and red line, slide on their stomachs, get back up. NO PUCKS

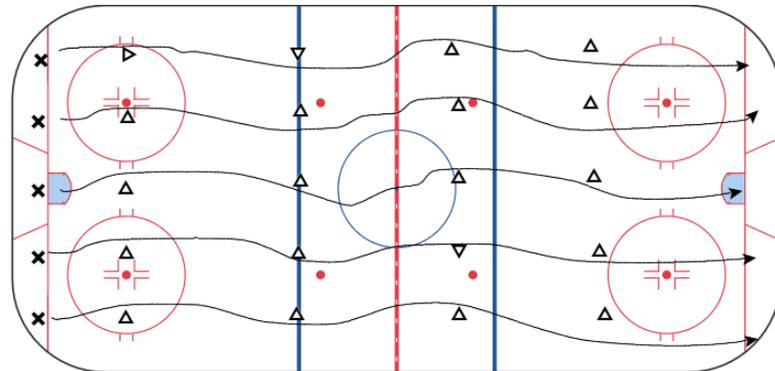
### 5. ABC's Wave Skating

- 2-foot glide
- 2-foot glide with butt to heels
- Run on skates
- Glide and 2-foot jump
- NO PUCKS



### 6. Agility/Weave

- Have them skate straight down ice forward, focus on knee bend, stick on ice and having chest up.
- Go in and out of 4,5,6 cones down the ice.
- NO PUCKS



### 7. Bubbles

-Use both legs to do bubbles or C Cuts at same time. Encourage them to use their inside edges to form "bubbles."

- This isn't a race, have them focus on using the entire inside edge, bringing feet all the way back underneath themselves (hockey stance).
- Chest up, good knee bend, stay low (don't bounce up and down!).
- NO PUCKS

Skating is a primary skill for ice hockey and although players must continue to master skating technique throughout their career, there must be a special emphasis placed on the ABC elements of skating in the early years of development. Players at the 6U Mite age have a harder time processing technical skills instruction and their bodies lack some of the fine motor control required. At this age large muscle groups and multiple joint movements should be incorporated into the practice sessions. Agility, balance and coordination (ABC's) on the ice surface are at the foundation for 6U Mites. Activity volume plays a significant role in development at the 6U age group. Little kids are doers so keep instruction short and activity high. Players at all levels must be mentally engaged in order to best acquire new skills. When skills repetition lacks an emotional element, children at this age quickly become bored. If the skills repetition is hidden in the form of a game, children are capable of extended periods of focused effort. Play is the key to emotional engagement in the skills repetition. Young kids are comfortable with repetition and like familiarity in the drills that they are asked to perform. Similar drills are rotated down the progression from practice to practice. This gives each practice a slightly different look and feel without changing too much. With the 50 minutes block of ice the practice sessions are easily modified by 8-10 minutes skating, 5 stations at 6-8 minutes each.

## **8U Skating**

(4-5 lines, starting on goal line, have next group go when they get to the 1<sup>st</sup> blue line)

With the smaller sheet have them do this 2 times. Once down, once back.

**\*\*You will not get through all of these in 1 session, pick 2/3 that you want to do\*\***

**1. Forward Skating – Stride Out (Do same leg down and back, then switch).**

- Left Leg
- Right Leg
- Alternate

-Have them skate straight down ice, focus on knee bend, stick on ice, having chest up, stride should extend all the way out and bring all the way back underneath body. Not a race. NO PUCKS

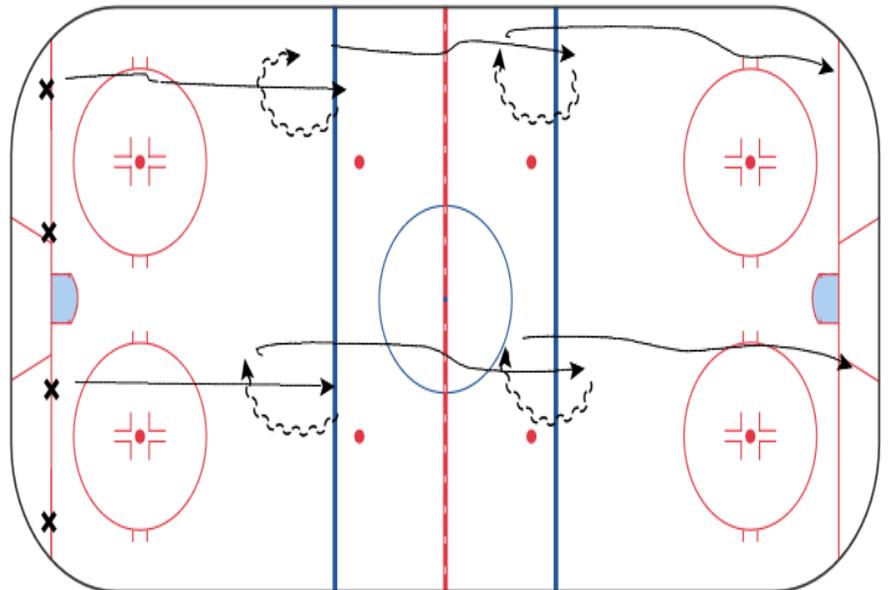
**2. Backward Skating – C Cuts**

- Left Leg
- Right Leg
- Alternate

-Have them skate straight down ice, focus on knee bend, stick on ice, having chest up, C Cuts should extend all the way out and bring all the way back underneath body. Not a race. NO PUCKS

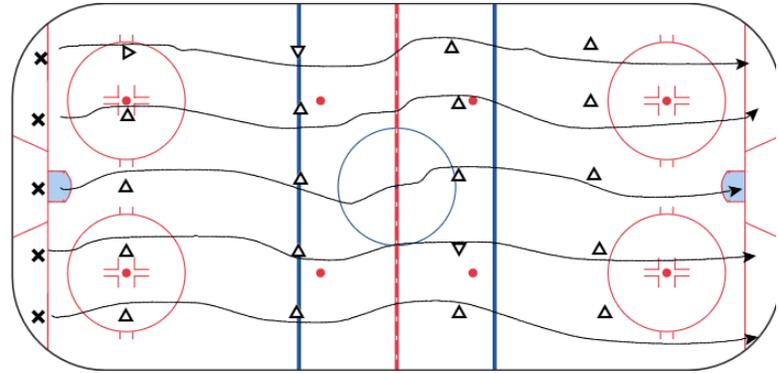
**3. Transitions**

-Have them skate straight down ice forward, at the blue lines transition from forward to backward, backward to forward. Focus on knee bend, stick on ice, having chest up, and staying low throughout transitions. NO PUCKS



#### 4. Agility/Weave

- Have them skate straight down ice forward, focus on knee bend, stick on ice, having chest up, stay low throughout.
- Go in and out of 6,7,8 cones down the ice.
- NO PUCKS



#### 5. Forward Up Downs

- Have them skate straight down ice, focus on knee bend, stick on ice and having chest up.... When they hit the blue lines and red line, drop to both knees, get back up. NO PUCKS

#### 6. Forward Inside Edge (Hold edge, not a race)

#### 7. Forward Outside Edge

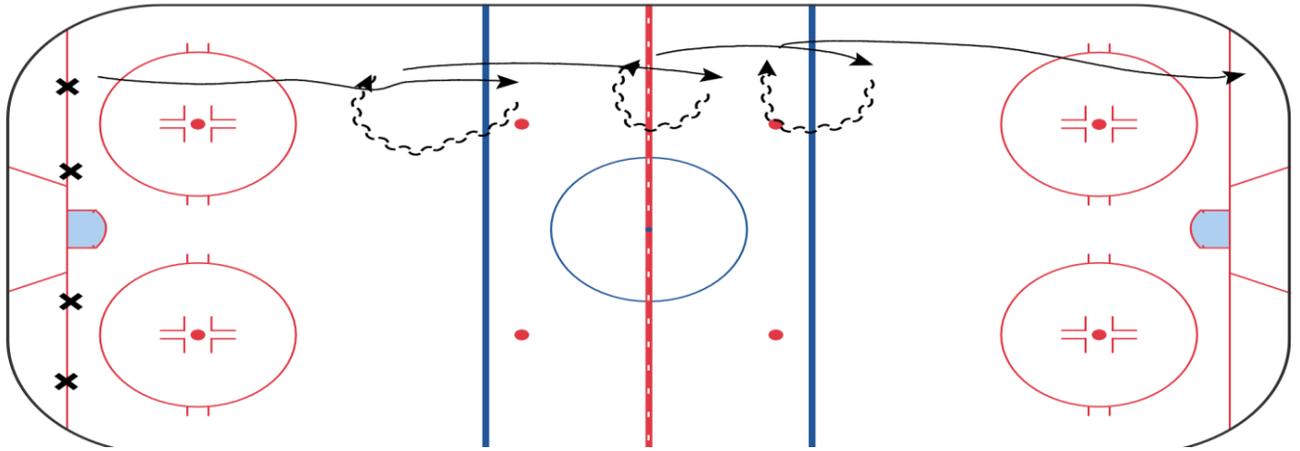
#### 8. Backward Inside Edge

#### 9. Transitions at Bluelines/Redline (Face Far End the whole time)

- Have them stay low throughout transition, good knee bend, chest up, stick on ice in front of them.
- Try to keep body/chest facing up ice when transition skating forward – backward, backward – forward.
- NO PUCKS

#### 10. Same set up as Transitions, except have players crossover in a tight circle at Bluelines/Redline.

- Have them stay low throughout crossovers, good knee bend, chest up, stick on ice in front of them.
- Tight circles, crossovers trying to cut laces and push with under leg.
- NO PUCKS



# Optimal Challenge Theory

The Optimal Challenge Theory is a process in which we help athletes learn best by creating a **level of challenge that is suitable to each child.**

The first step in optimal challenge theory is to find the appropriate level of difficulty for each individual to engage in. If an activity is too hard for an individual to perform, they will get frustrated and quit. However, if it is too easy, the individual will get bored and will not grow. You need to create activities, drills, and games that are appropriately challenging and encourage athletes to want to improve.

The second step in the optimal challenge theory is to recognize when your athletes are ready for a new challenge and when you can add to the challenge. When the athletes get better you make the challenge a little more difficult through modifying rules or tasks they need to perform that will enhance your intention of the activity. This will help athletes to continuously progress through an engaging pathway.

Activities that are appropriately challenging are physically literacy enriched, and will provide physical, social, and psychological benefits simultaneously. When youth realize that talent is all about progressing, and when they realize that they are working towards development, they will become motivated.

From USA Hockey