

Youth Hockey Coaching Guide

Practice Plans:

Youth hockey is different than our other sports leagues, as the program is run via stations with all coaches and all players on the ice at the same time. Practice plans will be posted on the ice rink walls, typically 6 stations. Those practice plans are available to look at [online](#) ahead of time, to know what will be posted that night. These are taken from USA Hockey, where there are also additional [lesson plans](#).

Equipment:

Practice equipment is available behind the benches: cones, balls, pucks, tires, and ringettes. The primary set up needed to start practice is putting out the blue divider pads along each blue zone line and let the Zamboni driver know how many nets should be left out. Rink staff will fill water bottles and have them at the desk to take them on ice.

Pre-Practice Meeting:

It is always a good idea to do a quick coach huddle before starting practice while kids are warming up. That way you can decide on which stations to run and see how many kids will be in each one, depending on coach and player attendance that night. The blue divider pads are used to separate and identify each station.

Station Assignments:

It is up to coaches which station they want to run. Coaches can either stay at one station the whole night and have player groups rotate through, or each coach can stay with a small group and rotate through each station together.

Festivals:

Festivals are scheduled with Vail Rec District—typically 3 per session. All parents will be notified of dates during the season. Typically, there are 2-3 cross-ice games going at a time. As it pertains to coaching, we ask that you divide up teams evenly for these scrimmages based on who shows up! For away festivals at Vail, we will need one coach to take the quick-change goalie gear bags to use.

Other notes:

- Always make sure player ice skates are laced up tightly and their helmets are secured correctly.
- Helmets are required for coaches.
- Children of coaches are only allowed out on the ice if they are registered for the program.