



PHILOSOPHY

The U9 program is part of Hockey Calgary’s U9 Development League. It focuses on skill development and the fundamentals of hockey for kids aged 7 and 8. The purpose of this league is to address the need for more skill development in the U9 age category. Our goal is to provide a positive environment for learning the fundamentals of hockey and to stimulate interest and desire to continue playing the game of hockey. The U9-DL is a league in which we promote coach, parent, official and player education during the season. Each player will be evaluated fairly and placed on a team where they are best suited. Teams are limited to the number of games they can play. As a result, players will practice more and play fewer games to increase their skills before playing full ice games in U11 and up, compared to those of other age categories.

For further questions, please contact the U9 Age group Coordinator at u9@springbankhockey.com

WHAT’S CHANGING IN U9 FROM U7?

Here’s a quick summary of the major differences between the U7 and U9 programs. More details on these are provided in the sections.

	U9	U7
Evaluations	Likely 5-6 ice times over the course of approx 3 weeks, starting with the Pathways Pre-Skates	2-3 evaluation skates on one weekend
Team formation	Teams are tiered according to the skill level of players as ranked during evaluations: Tier 1 = most skilled players, and Tier 4 = less proficient players	Balanced teams usually have older and/or most skilled players on Senior teams and younger/less proficient players on Junior teams
Goaltender position	All players rotated in position Goalie gear provided except helmet/pants/skates	Players rotate if interested and Goalie equipment is not permitted at this level
Practice schedule	2 or more times per week (Mon – Sun) – will be any day of the week	2 times per week (Mon-Sun) – fixed schedule
League Games	Weekends only; scheduled by Hockey Calgary Half Ice format with a referee.	Weekends only; scheduled by Hockey Calgary Cross-ice format with the coach as referee
Game Jerseys	Home (white) and Away (dark) Springbank jerseys provided & expected to be returned at the end of the season	Sponsored by the Tim Horton’s program, jerseys are provided & expected to be returned at the end of the season. One set of the same-coloured socks is provided (to be kept)



Player Pre-Skates (Aka Hockey Canada's Pathways Program)

- SMHA must offer open, no-cost pre-evaluation skates for all players as a part of Hockey Canada's Long-Term Player Development Model called Pathways.
- This program is designed to create a positive experience and to allow all players equal access to pre-evaluation ice times to prepare for SMHA's Player Placement Program (PPP) (evaluations).
- These pre-skates are optional, and all players are sorted into groups the week prior to PPP. These are planned sessions where the player will experience and practice the drills used at our PPPs
- At no time during these sessions will our players be evaluated.
- Please visit the Springbank Website under the Registration tab to see the program timeline
- Note: no ice times will be booked over the Labour Day long weekend (Friday to Monday)

SMHA Player Placement Program: PPP (aka Evaluations) & TEAM FORMATON

- U9 PPPs usually start after the September Labour Day long-weekend. Unless the season starts with a late Labour Day and PPPs could start late August, no ice times will be booked over the Labour Day long weekend
- Please visit the Springbank Website under the Registration tab to see the program timeline and more information
- SMHA relies on volunteers to run our evaluations. We will be seeking many roles to be filled, and this is a great opportunity to meet people and get involved.
- Players must attend ALL evaluation skates they are assigned.
- The player will be assigned 5-6 sessions
- Players will be assigned a pinnie to wear and are required to check in at every session to receive it
- U9 teams are tiered, where players are assessed during the evaluation process, so players are grouped with similarly skilled players
- U9 teams are tiered 1 through 4, with tier 1 teams comprised of the most skilled players in the age division and tier 4 comprised of less proficient players
- U9 tiers usually have two teams per tier, "sister teams". The Hockey Calgary Grid dictates this tiering system in accordance with individual Association registration numbers, and a balancing game will be hosted prior to team announcements to ensure sister teams are balanced against each other
- As U9 teams are tiered based on skill, friend requests cannot be accommodated
- U9 teams begin practices within a few days after U9 PPPs have finished – usually mid-September

PRACTICE SCHEDULE

- No set schedule – will vary week to week during the season, usually between 1.5 to 2 hours per week and take place on weekdays and weekends
- Weekday (Monday to Friday) times can start as early as 4:00 pm.
- Weekend (Saturday & Sunday) times, while on occasion starting as early as 6:30 am, are usually 7:00 am or later, typically always in the mornings.
- Curfew for this age group to be off the ice is 8:00 pm week and weekend nights
- The general ice scheduling rule is that the younger age groups receive the earlier ice times and the older age groups receive the later ice times



- There are many factors involved in ice scheduling, and we do our best to release the team schedules as far out as possible during the season
- U9 teams will share the ice with one other U9 team for the entire practice time – full ice practices can occur, but not often
- Practices are scheduled at Springbank Park for all Seasons primarily, but can also be scheduled at the Edge and surrounding City of Calgary arenas

GAMES/TOURNAMENTS

Games

- All Hockey Calgary-sanctioned games are half ice format at arenas that utilize half-Ice boards, such as our Home Arenas at the Park for All Seasons.
- U9 are only permitted to play a certain number of games, including league, exhibition and tournaments. The manager and the head coach are to manage this accordingly.
- U9s are scheduled on weekends only for their league games, and they can expect to be scheduled at least one of these days, or both Saturday and Sunday from time to time, depending on the scheduling pool provided by Hockey Calgary.
- Home games are scheduled at Springbank Park for all Seasons primarily.
- Details of the U9 Season Structure and Game Play are outlined on the Hockey Calgary website under the Programs tab <[U9 Development League](#)>
- U9 games are subject to Hockey Calgary game amounts as outlined in the annual [Hockey Calgary Season Structure and Game Play Guidelines](#)
- Games are played “split squad,” where a team is split in half, with one half playing on one side of the arena and the other half playing on the other side of the arena and are typically scheduled on the weekends
- Each half ice game is officiated by Referees in training and assigned by the Central Region’s Community Referee Assignor for the arena where the game is played at
- SMHA U9 teams are in the North quadrant. Hockey Calgary has divided its member clubs into two quadrants, North and South, this is to assist in travel time for their members

Tournaments

- Springbank provides all U9 teams with a home tournament to host in March, where there are sister teams they are to co-host together
- Away Tournaments are arranged and scheduled at the team level

GOALTENDER POSITION

- All players are rotated into the goaltender position
- Springbank provides two sets of goaltender equipment for each U9 team for use during the season (note: players who dress as goaltenders will still wear their own helmet, hockey pants and skates). All goaltender equipment should be kept in the designated team goaltender bags. The goaltender stick must not be cut. Gear provided is full right-handed (catcher is right-handed/blocker is left-handed), but left-handed gear is also available upon request.

TEAM CASH CALLS



- Requested by the team on a team-by-team basis
- Usually at the beginning of the season
- Average ranges from \$200-\$350 per player (but not limited to)
- The purpose is to cover team-related expenses such as exhibition games, tournaments, dryland training, team social events, team apparel, additional coaching equipment (pucks, pylons), etc.
- If affordability is a concern, please talk directly, in confidence, with your coach/team manager to work through options and/or a payment plan

COACHES

- Coaches are all Springbank volunteers, usually a parent of the players on the team, and we could not run our programs without them!
- U9 teams are permitted 6 coaches per team
- “On-ice help” is not allowed; only rostered coaches are permitted on the ice with the team
- U9 teams must, at a minimum, have 1 qualified coach per 10 players; therefore, U9 teams are required to have 2 qualified coaches per team
- Assistant Coaches must have at a minimum a valid Respect in Sport- Activity Leader certification and a valid Criminal Record Check (Police Information Check)
- Head Coaches are required to have the above-noted minimum qualifications in addition to the Hockey Canada Coach 1 certification
- All SMHA coaches must have the Hockey Alberta Safety qualifications, as per our internal policy
- All interested coaches must fill out an SMHA coach application form found on the Springbank website under the Coach tab.

OTHER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Volunteer roles are also available at the team level every season and can include manager, treasurer, tournament coordinator, jersey parent, social coordinator, and official box coordinator, to name a few
- Note: “On-ice help” is not allowed; only rostered coaches to your player’s team are permitted on the ice with the team.

PLAYER EQUIPMENT

- Hockey Calgary’s equipment & care information:
<https://www.hockeycalgary.ca/resources/equipment-care>
- Used hockey equipment can be purchased at Play It Again Sports in West Hills
- New equipment can be purchased at various sports/athletic stores; however, Adrenalin Source for Sports, located at 9309 Macleod Trail South, is Springbank’s approved apparel provider and provides Springbank families with a discount

TEAM EQUIPMENT



SMHA U9 PROGRAM INFORMATION

- Springbank will provide every U9 player two game jerseys (Home and Away), and players will need to receive one set of SMHA matching socks each season – additional or replacement socks can be purchased if needed
- All SMHA jerseys
 - Are SMHA property, and no name bars are allowed
 - NOT to be worn at practices
 - Are for games only
 - The Jerseys are to be handled by a parent volunteer, “Jersey Parent,” where they are handed out at the beginning of each game and retrieved at the end of each game.
- Jersey replacement cost is \$125 per jersey – acknowledgement of care & payment if necessary is required during registration
- Springbank provides all U9 teams ‘blue’ pucks to use, which must be used for all U9 games (these are lighter in weight than the standard black pucks)
- SMHA U9 goalie equipment is provided (2 sets) for every team
- Most arenas have smaller nets available for U7/U9 teams
- Bumpers are available at many arenas to be utilized during practices to split the ice, and where available, half-ice boards are expected to be used for all Hockey Calgary-sanctioned games

COMMUNITY VS HOUSE LEAGUE

For U9-U11 (ages 7-10 years old), you can choose either the community stream program or the West Calgary House League program to register in for each season. If the player registered in one program this season, they could register in the other program the next season. However, registration for the current season cannot be changed once community stream evaluations have begun, regardless of which program was registered in. Note the community program continues to U18 with Springbank, but House League is only offered until U11. Should your player want to continue in U13 and beyond but not join the community program, they can move to [Rec Hockey](#) with Hockey Calgary.

Hockey Calgary has a document that might be helpful for you to determine which program is right for your player: <https://www.hockeycalgary.ca/hockey-programs/what-program-is-right-for-me>.

For specific details on the West Calgary House League, please visit the [West Calgary House](#) League tab on the Springbank Website.