



TWHA U9 PROGRAM INFORMATION

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 (novice) 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 when and how many 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 that of other age categories.

WHAT'S CHANGING IN U9 FROM U7?

Here's a quick summary of major differences between U7 and U9 Community program. More details on these are provided in the below sections.

	U9 Community	U7
Evaluations	Likely 4-6 ice times over course of approx. 2 weeks starting with a timed group skate Players will be assigned a pinnie with number to wear	2 evaluation skates on one weekend
Team formation	Teams tiered according to skill level of players as ranked during evaluations: Tier 1 = most skilled players and Tier 4 = less proficient players	Balanced teams usually with older and/or most skilled on Senior teams and younger/less proficient on Junior teams
Goaltender position	All players rotated in position Goalie gear provided except helmet/pants/skates	Players rotate if interested Wear own equipment but provided goalie stick
Practice schedule	3-4 times per week – will be any day of the week	2 times per week – fixed schedule Fri-Sun or Sat-Mon
Regular Season League Games	Weekends only; scheduled by Hockey Calgary Half Ice format with a referee	Weekends only; scheduled by Hockey Calgary Cross-ice format with coach as referee
Game Jerseys	Home (white) and Away (red) Trails West Wolves jerseys provided & expected to be returned at end of season One set of black games socks are provided (to be kept)	One team coloured jersey is provided & expected to be returned at end of season One set of same coloured socks are provided (to be kept)

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 registered in. Note the community program continues to U18 with Trails West but House League is only offered at Trails West 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>.

A detailed comparison chart of West Calgary House League and Trails West Community U9-U11 programs is available by [clicking here](#). 2023-2024 specific details for the West Calgary House League are available on our website under [Programs-West Calgary House League](#).

TRAILS WEST U9 PRE-SEASON CAMP

- Trails West offers registered U9 players an option to register in a pre-season camp that typically takes place at the end of August
- Details and registration information are available on our website under [Members-Registration-Pre-Season Camps](#)

SUMMER CAMPS

- Hockey Alberta offers summer camps for U9 players. Details can be found on their website (look under "Super Skills" tab): <https://www.hockeyalberta.ca/players/hockey-alberta-skill-camps/>

EVALUATIONS & TEAM FORMATION

- Evaluations usually start after the September Labor Day long-weekend beginning with a timed skate for all players. Once players are placed in a group based on that timed skate, players will participate in other evaluation skates. More information on evaluations is available on our website under [Members-Evaluations](#)
- It is important players attend ALL evaluation skates they are assigned which could be 4-6 sessions
- Players will be assigned a pinnie to wear for the course of the evaluations of which the number will be referred to for all assigned skates posted on the above website
- U9 teams are tiered where players are assessed during the evaluation process so players are grouped with similar skilled players
- U9 teams tiers are 1 through 4 with tier 1 teams comprised of the most skilled players in the age division and tier 4 comprised of players who are less proficient
- As U9 teams are tiered based on skill, friend requests cannot be accommodated
- U9 teams begin practices within a few days after U9 evaluations have finished



PRACTICE SCHEDULE

- No set schedule – will vary week to week during the season, usually between 2-4 times per week and take place on weekdays and weekends
- Weekday (Monday to Friday) times can start as early as 4:00pm and weekend (Saturday & Sunday) times, while on occasion start as early as 6:30am, are usually 7:00am or later. Typically practices will be in the morning but can be scheduled to end as late as 8:00pm on a weekday or weekend
- 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

GAMES/TOURNAMENTS

- Exhibition games and tournaments are arranged and scheduled at the team level
- All Hockey Calgary sanctioned games are half ice format at arenas that utilize half-Ice boards, such as Flames Community Arenas or Optimist (see [Coaches-Resources-Half-Ice Rink Divider System](#))
- Details of U9 Season Structure and Game Play are outlined in [Hockey Calgary's Introduction to Hockey Resources Guide 2022-2023](#)
- 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
- Each half ice game is officiated by one Referee in training and assigned by Central Region’s Community Referee Assignor for the arena the game is played at

GOALTENDER POSITION

- All players are rotated into the goaltender position
- Trails West provides two sets of goaltender equipment for each U9 team for use during the season (note: players who dress as goaltender 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 hand/blocker is left hand) 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 range from \$100-\$300 per player
- 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 Trails West volunteers, usually a parent of the players on the team and we could not run our programs without them!
- U9 teams are permitted 5 coaches per team
- U9 teams must, at 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 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
- A minimum of two coaches per U9 team must have the Safety qualification with one coach with Safety qualification in attendance at every ice time
- Coaches have access to the programs necessary to receive their Coach qualifications through [Hockey Canada's National Coaching Certification Program \(NCCP\)](#)
- Trails West will reimburse clinic/course fees for all rostered coaches
- More information is available on our website under [Coaches-Qualifications](#)

OTHER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- There are various opportunities at the Association level with roles usually coming available during the spring when planning for the upcoming season. Visit our [Board & Volunteers](#) page for a list of association volunteer & board of director roles
- Volunteer roles are also available at the team level every season and can include manager, treasurer, safety coordinator, tournament coordinator, social coordinator, game-sheet coordinator to name a few

PLAYER EQUIPMENT

- Trails West will provide every U9 player two game jerseys (Home is red and Away is white) and one pair of black game socks
- Players can keep the socks every year however the game jerseys must be returned (in good shape) at the end of the season
- Jersey replacement cost is \$125 per jersey – acknowledgement of care & payment if necessary is required during registration
- Hockey Calgary's equipment & care information:
<https://www.hockeycalgary.ca/resources/equipment-care>
- New and used hockey equipment can be purchased at Play It Again Sports in Westhills
- New equipment can be purchased at various sports/athletic stores however, Adrenalin Source for Sports located at 9309 Macleod Trail South is Trails West's approved apparel provider.



TEAM EQUIPMENT

- Trails West 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)
- 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

ADDITIONAL IN SEASON PLAYER/GOALTENDER DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

- Trails West also provides several optional player and goaltender development sessions throughout the season for a nominal cost. All members will receive notification of any sessions that will open for registration. Information on these sessions is available on our website under [Members-Programs for Players](#)

RESOURCES

- Trails West's website under [Programs-Age Divisions-U9](#)
- Hockey Calgary's website under [Programs- U9 Development Program](#)
- Trails West's [Information & Important Dates for the 2023-2024 Season](#) (link on home page)

CONTACTS

Registration Questions

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Coaching Questions

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U9 Program Questions

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