



Canterbury Hockey Junior Coaching Handbook





This document is produced to assist Junior Club Captains, School hockey coordinators, and coaches of junior's teams playing in competitions that fall under Canterbury Hockey's Junior Winter Competitions.

Any rule related matter that is not covered in this document requires reference to the "[Canterbury Hockey \(CHA\) Competition Rules and Regulations 2022](#)" document; this document is available for download from the Canterbury Hockey website.

It should be noted that the CHA Competition Rules and Regulations document authorizes appropriate operational committees to administer, interpret and give dispensations in certain instances, to the rules and regulations. Any Club or School that has issues complying with the requirements of CHA competitions, should contact the Junior Advisory Committee (via joe@hockeycanterbury.co.nz) to establish whether dispensation can be sought for a certain rule or regulation.

Canterbury Hockey Junior Competitions Structure Explained:

Canterbury Hockey's junior hockey competitions are nationally aligned to Hockey New Zealand's Small Sticks hockey framework. Players are generally introduced to the sport in the 6 or 7 a-side playing format, which provides a number of benefits such as more opportunity for skill execution and higher levels of player engagement (please refer to 'why small-sided games' below for more detail). In 2022, the year 7&8 Kwik Sticks grade will complete its transition from the 11 to 7 a-side format. There will however be an opportunity for clubs and schools to opt-in to a year 7&8 11 a-side introduction programme during school term 3, should they wish to do so.

Please see below a breakdown of each grade, the rule variations, and some coaching guidelines. Please note, Fun Sticks coaching guidelines are not included in this document as they are covered in the [Hockey New Zealand Fun Sticks delivery manual](#).

Fun Sticks (Year 1-2's)

Club/School based programme
Fundamental skill focus

Mini Sticks (Year 3-4's)

6 a-side competition (no GK)
1/4 sized turf

Kiwi Sticks (Year 5-6's)

6 and 7 a-side competition (GKs)
1/2 sized turfs

Kwik Sticks (Year 7-8's)

7 and 11 a-side competition (GKs)
1/2 and full-sized turf



Key Concepts for ALL Junior Grades: (Mini, Kiwi and Kwik Sticks)

- **Fun and Safety** – Clubs, schools and coach's top priority in all junior grades should be creating a safe environment that promotes participant enjoyment. Hockey New Zealand's Small Sticks program has the goal of getting children 'Hooked for Life'. Something which will likely only happen if children feel safe and enjoy their hockey experience.
- **Development Focused** – Although the idea of junior teams focusing on winning or performance is appealing to some players, coaches, parents and clubs/schools, long term player participation and development holds a higher level of importance regarding what both Canterbury Hockey and Hockey New Zealand are striving to achieve.
- **Teamwork** – It is important for all coaches to emphasize and develop the concept of teamwork from a young age. This includes working together for a common goal, sharing responsibilities, playing fair and having fun as a group.
- **Character Development** – Coaches are encouraged to coach their team members as 'People' and not just 'Players'. Character strengths such as committed, hardworking, resilient, respectful, honest, and caring are examples of traits that coaches can help young hockey players develop during both trainings and matches.
- **Essential Skills** – Throughout all junior grades, essential (often referred to as basic) skill development should be a key focus for all coaches. The effective teaching of core skills including passing, receiving, ball carrying, tackling and goal scoring, both stationary and on the move, will help set a strong foundation of skills for all young athletes.
- **Understanding the Rules** – Whilst it might sound obvious, it is important that our athletes learn the rules of hockey and it is the coach's job to teach these. Try to incorporate this teaching during both training sessions and match play to ensure a basic understanding of the rules is just as much a priority as skill development.
- **Playing Time** – It is recommended that all junior athletes are given equal amounts of game time. With the development of all individuals being a primary focus in junior hockey, coaches are encouraged to maximize development opportunities for all athletes and not just their stronger/more experience players.
- **Positional Rotation** - It is encouraged that coaches rotate players around multiple playing positions. It may be appropriate to keep players in one position for a period (i.e. 3-4 weeks) whilst they're learning basic positional concepts, but whenever possible junior players should be given the opportunity to try out a range of positions.

Year 3-4 - MINI STICKS (6 a-side)

Concept: The year 3-4 grade (Mini Sticks) serves as athlete's first competitive hockey experience in a 6 a-side playing format with no goal keepers. Enjoyment and safety are the most important elements in this grade, whilst the young athlete get the chance to experiment and learn from their first experience in live game situations.

Rules Variations:

Field Size – Games are played on artificial surfaces which are approximately 1/4 of full-sized turf

Game Duration – 2 x 18-minute halves with a 2-minute halftime.

Team Size – Six (6) players (on the field at any one time). Rolling substitutions are encouraged with a recommended team size of 8 players.

Goalkeepers – Goalkeepers are not permitted.

Penalty Corners – No penalty corners – instead, a free hit is awarded 1 meter outside of the circle. Where no circle is present, the free hit is to be taken from a position that is a notional 5 meters from the base line.

Long Corners – Anytime the ball goes over the baseline off a defender's stick, whether deliberate or not, will result in a free hit to the attacking team from half-way in line with where the ball crossed the baseline.

Raised Ball – Raised ball above the knee is deemed dangerous – including shots on goal. Umpires will use discretion for a raised ball below knee height. Danger will hold a different interpretation at this level than it does at other levels of competition.

Umpires – Each team must supply one umpire. This may be a coach, manager, or parent.

*Please note, for full competition rules, please refer to 'CHA rules and regulations 2022' on the Canterbury Hockey website

Coaching: In addition to the guidelines on page 2, coaches in the Year 3&4 (Mini Sticks) grade are encouraged to focus on the following.

- Essential Hockey Skills – grip, push passing, receiving, ball carrying, tackling and hitting/sweeping. The fundamental skills of hockey should be a key focus for these athletes. Athletes are likely to find it easier to execute these skills whilst stationary, however, once the fundamentals of these skills are understood coaches should encourage athletes to do these 'on the move'.
- Positional Concepts – the concept of positions should be introduced, with athletes having a go at all of them. Teaching should focus on spreading out to create space and taking on a simple role. E.g. Defender – *"plays closer to their own goal, looks to pass the ball forward to their team mates and defends their goal"*. For more information on recommended positional concepts please refer to [Canterbury Hockey's 6/7 a-side principles document](#). Please note, this document is more relevant for experienced year 5&6 (Kiwi) and year 7&8 (Kwik) 6/7 a-side teams, so simplified principles/concepts should be taught to year 3&4 athletes.

KIWI STICKS – Year 5-6 (6 a-side and 7 a-side)

Concept: The KIWI STICKS grade serves as the first competitive hockey experience for some, whilst for others it is another step in their hockey journey. Divisions 1-5 mainly cater for athletes who have played in the MINI STICKS grade, or are naturally strong hockey players, playing with 6 field players and 1 goalkeeper (compulsory). Divisions 6 and below mainly cater for new or less experienced players playing with 6 field players and no goalkeeper. Enjoyment and safety are again extremely important in this grade as young athletes gain further experience in small, sided games, encouraging a high number of touches on the ball and time engaged with play.

Rules Variations:

Field Size – Games are played on artificial surfaces which are approximately 1/2 of full-sized turf.

Game Duration – 2 x 20-minute halves with a 2-minute halftime.

Team Size – Six (6) players on the field at any one time. Rolling substitutions are encouraged with a recommended team size of 8-9 players.

Goalkeepers – For Divisions 1-5, seven (7) players on the field at any one time, one (1) of which must be a goalkeeper. **Note:** In any instance where there is no goalkeeper, for whatever reason, then only six (6) players may take the field at any one time. For Divisions 6 and below, six (6) players are allowed on the field at any one time. Goalkeepers are not permitted.

Penalty Corners – Penalty corners are played. Four (4) defenders, inclusive of the goalkeeper if applicable, will take their position behind the baseline as per 11-a-side hockey rules. All other players in the defending team must be in the opposite circle and must remain there until the penalty corner injection has been made.

Long Corners – Any time the ball goes over the base line off a defender's stick, other than deliberately, will result in a free hit to the attacking team from half-way in line with where the ball crossed the baseline.

Raised Ball – For Divisions 6 and below a shot on goal can be a raised ball, however the umpire is to use discretion in interpreting danger for anything above the knee. For the sake of clarity, for Divisions 1-5 normal hockey rules apply.

Umpires – Umpires are supplied by the club/school managing the facility or Canterbury Hockey.

*Please note, for full competition rules, please refer to 'CHA rules and regulations 2022' on the Canterbury Hockey website

Coaching: In addition to the guidelines on page 2, coaches in the KIWI STICKS grade are encouraged to focus on the following.

- Essential Hockey Skills – Executing passing, receiving, ball carrying, tackling and goal scoring techniques both stationary and on the move should be a major focus. Emphasis can be put on carrying out these skills on both the forehand and reverse as well as having the ability to execute them under pressure from an opposing player.
- Introduction to set plays – Penalty corners are introduced in the Kiwi Sticks grade, so it is important that coaches help the athletes to develop an understanding of the rules and skills required. It is encouraged that set plays are kept as 'simple' as possible.
- Positional Concepts – The concept of positional play should be developed, with athletes playing a variety of positions. Creating height and width in play should be encouraged to create space for free flowing passing and ball carrying, whilst defensive principles such as protecting key areas and minimizing space are also important. For more information on recommended positional concepts please refer to [Canterbury Hockey's 6/7 a-side principles document](#).
- Grades with Goalkeepers – In this grade it is encouraged that all players have a go at playing the goalkeeper position. Key coaching points for keepers include: Keeping hands up, feet shoulder width apart with weight forward, kicking with inside of foot (not toe) and being brave. For more information on goalkeeping skills and techniques, please refer to the [Canterbury Hockey Goalkeeper skills resource](#).

KWIK STICKS – Year 7-8 Super 7's (7 a-side)

Concept: This grade is designed for both new and experienced athletes to focus on developing a strong foundation for full-field hockey before transitioning into the 11 a-side in our platinum (youth grade) or secondary school competitions. By playing 7 a-side, it allows players and their coaches to put further focus on core technical skills and tactical concepts, in a simplified but fast paced playing format.

Rules Variations:

Field Size – Games are played on artificial surfaces which are approximately 1/2 of full-sized turf.

Game Duration – 3 x 15-minute halves with 2-minute intervals.

Team Size – Seven (7) players on the field at any one time. Rolling substitutions are encouraged with a recommended team size of 10 players.

Goalkeepers – Goalkeepers are compulsory. **Note:** Goalkeepers playing in the Kwik Sticks 11 a-side grade may be used in a field position for this grade. Field players in the Kwik Sticks 11 a-side grade may be used in the goalkeeper position of this grade.

Penalty Corners – Penalty corners are played. Four (4) defenders, inclusive of the goalkeeper, will take their position behind the baseline as per 11a-side hockey. All other players in the defending team must be in the opposite circle and must remain there until the penalty corner injection has been made.

Long Corners – Any time the ball goes over the base line off a defender's stick, other than deliberately, will result in a free hit to the attacking team from half-way, in line with where the ball crossed the baseline

Umpires – Umpires are supplied or allocated by Canterbury Hockey.

*Please note, for full competition rules, please refer to 'CHA rules and regulations 2021' on the Canterbury Hockey website

Coaching: In addition to the guidelines on page 2, coaches in the KWIK STICKS 7 a-side grade are encouraged to focus on the following.

- Essential Hockey Skills – Executing passing, receiving, ball carrying, tackling and goal scoring techniques both stationary and on the move should be a major focus. Emphasis can be put on carrying out these skills on both the forehand and reverse, as well as having the ability to execute them under pressure from an opposing player. Basic penalty corner skills included injecting, trapping, and hitting should be developed.
- Requirements and execution of set plays – Penalty corners are introduced in the Kiwi Sticks grade, so it is important that coaches continue to help the athletes develop an understanding of the rules and skills required. It is encouraged that set plays are kept 'simple', and that skill execution is the focus.
- Positional Concepts – The concept of positional play should be developed, with athletes playing a variety of positions. Creating height and width in play should be encouraged to create space for free flowing passing and ball carrying, whilst defensive principles such as protecting key areas and minimizing space are also important. For more information on recommended position concepts please refer to [Canterbury Hockey's 6/7 a-side principles document](#).
- Goalkeepers – In this grade it is encouraged that all players have a go at playing the goalkeeper position, however if there is a player who wants to become a 'full time' goalkeeper it may be appropriate to have them play this position for a majority of the season. Key coaching points for keepers include: Keeping hands up, feet shoulder width apart with weight forward, kicking with inside of foot (not toe) and being brave. For more information on goalkeeping skills and techniques, please refer to the [Canterbury Hockey Goalkeeper skills resource](#).

KWIK STICKS – Year 8 (11 a-side)

- Concept:** This programme will run for five weeks in school term 3 and serves as an introduction to 11 a-side hockey for year 8's players. Tactical concepts must be kept simple and should be supported by a strong focus on continual basic skill development.
- Rules Variations:** **Game Duration** – 2 x 25-minute halves with a 2-minute halftime. (TBC)
Goalkeepers – Goalkeepers are compulsory. **Note:** in any instance where there is no goalkeeper, for whatever reason, then only ten (10) field players may take the field at any one time.
Umpires – Umpires are supplied or allocated by Canterbury Hockey.
- *Please note, for full competition rules, please refer to 'CHA rules and regulations 2021' on the Canterbury Hockey website
- Coaching:** In addition to the guidelines on page 2, coaches in the KWIK STICKS 11 a-side grade are encouraged to focus on the following:
- Expansion of Hockey Skills – Executing passing, receiving, ball carrying, tackling and goal scoring techniques both stationary and on the move are still major focuses at this age. Performing the above-mentioned skills in a stationary position should become more consistent. Emphasis can be put on carrying out these skills on the move on both the forehand and reverse as well as having the ability to execute them under pressure from an opposing player.
 - Requirements and execution of set plays – Penalty corners are played following standard FIH rules, so it is important that coaches help the athletes to develop an understanding of the rules and skills required. Executing an accurate injection, consistent trap and strong shot at goal should be developed before adding in variations such as layoffs, deflections etc.
 - Positional Concepts – The concept of positional play should be further developed, with athletes playing a variety of positions. Utilizing the 'whole field' and creating space for others should be encouraged. Again, height and width in attacking play should be promoted to create space for free flowing passing and ball carrying, whilst defensive principles such as protecting key areas and minimizing space are important. It is encouraged that athletes play multiple positions throughout the season to develop a better overall understanding of the game and the skills required.
 - Recommended structure – the recommended structure for teams playing in this grade is 1-4-3-3 (1 goalkeeper – 4 defenders – 3 Midfielders – 3 strikers). **Please note** goalkeepers must be fully kitted-up and cannot be replaced with 'kicking backs' anymore. This is a common 11 a-side structure that many teams in New Zealand play. The structure provides opportunity to play down the 'sidelines', through the 'middle' or 'end to end', with a balance of players spread out across the field
 - Goalkeepers – Goalkeepers in this grade should be looking to develop their understanding of the position, including utilising communication skills and shot-saving techniques. Key coaching points for keepers include: Keeping hands up, feet shoulder width apart with weight forward, kicking with inside of foot (not toe), focusing on saving the ball wide or to safe places, and being confident in goal. For more information on goalkeeping skills and techniques, please refer to the [Canterbury Hockey Goalkeeper skills resource](#)

Small Sticks: Why Small Sided Games

We often get asked why our young hockey players are playing small side games and why moving to a full field to play 11 a-side early on is not best for an athlete's development. Below is a list of some key factors to consider with small sided and why it is so important to a young hockey player's development:

THE BENEFITS OF

SMALL SIDED GAMES

SMALL SIDED GAMES VS TRADITIONAL FULL FIELD GAMES

2x	MORE METRES RUN	5x	MORE GOAL SHOTS	4x	MORE GOALS SCORED
4.5x	MORE PASSES MADE	4.5x	MORE PLAYER TOUCHES		

* NOW Small Sided Games Study

DEVELOP
SKILLS

GAME
AWARE

ENGAGE =

ENJOY


Players are **more involved** because; the structure encourages **more decision making**. They get **more touches** & **they run more!**

▶ ESSENTIAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- Passing
- Receiving
- Leading into space
- Recognising space & opportunities

▶ BENEFITS OF SMALL FIELDS

- 1 Coaching made easier with positioning and structure
- 2 Help children develop a;
 - Give & Go Assist methodology
 - Strong foundation for full-field game
 - Positive style of play



For further information visit hockeynz.co.nz/about-us/hockey-is-changing

The Good Sports Spine is a tool to help parents, coaches, teachers, and sport administrators understand how they impact children/youth's sport experiences. The two different 'climates' should be seen as opposite ends of a continuum. To support children to have positive sporting experiences, coaches should aim to create environments that align to the **Climate of Development**.

