



To: Clubs/Schools
From: Joe Piggott – Community Participation Manager
Date: 15/05/24
Subject: Under 18 Representatives – Player Workload Management

Background

It is no secret that the overload on our U18 athletes is an ongoing concern. In this age group, many of the players are involved with both club and school teams, and along with their studies, have a huge commitment during terms two and three. Realistically, if these players were to attend every training session and game for their respective teams, they could be attending up to eight to ten sessions per week, a shocking total of 64-80 hockey contacts throughout an 8-week representative campaign.

Revised Representative Schedule

After reviewing the modifications made last year, in 2024, Canterbury Hockey will continue with the following adjustments to the representative calendar to assist with this issue:

1. Programme reduced to 8-weeks total.
2. Monday evening regular training slot to separate from weekend school/club fixtures.
3. Second team training reduced to alternating weeks (a total of 11 contacts throughout the 8-week campaign).
4. Recovery week introduced following Mainland Cup, with all U18 teams having no training sessions.

2024 Workload Framework

Information from Hockey New Zealand shows that senior athletes within the high-performance programme are advised to participate in a maximum of 5 hockey contacts per week. To ensure that we align with these guidelines, Canterbury Hockey will enforce the rule that all U18 athletes within the representative programme must abide by a **maximum of 5 hockey contact limit per week**.

If followed correctly, this rule will reduce the total number of contacts to 40 throughout the 8-week period.

[For clarity, a hockey contact is any organised practical hockey session and includes the likes of a team training, penalty corner training, or a hockey game (regardless of minutes played).]

One **key modification in 2024**, is the allowance of one additional gym-based team session per week. The purpose of this session **MUST BE** strictly injury prevention, strength, or mobility. This cannot be substituted for an aerobic based fitness or conditioning session. Examples of appropriate implementation may include a basic strength workout, pilates, yoga, bodyweight functional movement exercises etc.

Important point to note – on the weeks where a representative team has two contacts in a week, the players will have no training contact for either their Club or School (eg) 2 x representative contact + 1 x Club match + 1 x School match + 1 x Club or School training = 5 contacts.



How will this be managed?

A significant amount of trust and honesty will be required to ensure that the rules are followed. CHA alongside U18 coaches will clearly outline the rules and consequences to all representative players at their training. Parents will also play a significant part in the process to ensure that the process followed correctly, while also being aware of the framework.

If there is a breach of the 5-contact limit the following process will be followed:

1. Athlete suspended from next match for the team that breached contact limit.
2. If breached again, athlete will be suspended from the next Canterbury fixture.
3. If breached again, team responsible for contact limit will be docked competition points.

Other considerations/recommendations?

The following are various recommendations we wish to provide players/parents/coaches as other ways they can manage their workload throughout this period.

- Where possible avoid multiple hockey contacts on the same day (e.g., club training & representative training within the same evening)
- At a minimum, the athlete must have at least 2 x rest days per week (including one day over the weekend)
- Work with individual athletes to factor in down weeks following Mainland Cup (Kings Birthday) and the week prior to U18 National Tournament
- Where a clash of contacts may occur, the representative contact takes priority.

For U18 representative athletes that only play for one of club or school hockey, they should also ensure they do not breach the recommended hockey contacts of 5 per week.

Thanks in advance for your support to protect the wellbeing and best interests of these athletes.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Joe Piggott
Community Participation Manager