



FAQs – Introducing 3x3 Ultimate Hockey

1) What is 3x3 Ice Hockey?

3x3 ice hockey is a fast, exciting version of hockey played with three skaters per team instead of five. The smaller teams mean more open ice, more speed, more creativity - and more goals! It's similar to traditional hockey but played on a smaller ice rink, with less players and simplified rules to be easy to follow and fun to watch for newcomers.

2) How is the game played?

3x3 ice hockey features three skaters and one goalie per team, with players rotating quickly to maintain high energy and speed. The game is typically played on a smaller surface—such as half-ice, cross-ice, or occasionally full ice with wider zones—making the action more open and fast-paced. Because players aren't locked into traditional positions like forwards or defence, everyone moves fluidly between attacking and defending. This smaller, simplified setup creates a fun, high-tempo environment that is easy for new fans to follow and exciting to watch.

3) What is the format and timing of a typical game?

3x3 ice hockey is designed for fast, entertaining, easy-to-follow action, featuring simple and innovative rules that stay true to traditional ice hockey while emphasizing speed and clarity.

Each game lasts 24 minutes (two x 12-minute halves), making it possible to play multiple games per day. Play begins with a single opening faceoff, and after every goal, the action resumes immediately - no faceoff - with the scoring team retreating to allow a quick transition. Penalties are no longer served in a penalty box; instead, each infraction results in a penalty shot, where the shooter is chased by all other players starting from behind the goal line, creating a dynamic and pressure-filled moment.

Physical contact is limited to areas along the boards and in front of the net, with open-ice hits banned to reduce injury risks. To elevate the fan experience, music is played throughout the game, adding energy and atmosphere.

4) What is the typical rink size for a 3x3 ice hockey game?

The typical rink size for a 3x3 ice hockey game is a rink designed to encourage fast, high-paced action. In the Ultimate Hockey League, rinks range from a minimum of 17 × 34 meters to a maximum of 25 × 45 meters, with specialized ice markings to speed up play and guide player movement.

For the promotional "Breaking the Ice" Tour, the standard rink size is set at 20 × 40 meters, providing a consistent, compact surface that maximizes excitement and scoring opportunities.



5) What is the “Ultimate Hockey - Breaking the Ice Tour”?

The Breaking the Ice Tour (BTI) is a partnership between the IIHF & ProOxy AG. It is the first major global tournament for 3x3 ice hockey. Launching in March 2026, the tour brings the new, fast-paced 3x3 format directly into iconic urban locations—starting in one major city and expanding to up to six cities in its first year.

Instead of traditional arenas, BTI events take place in public, high-visibility spaces, making hockey accessible to new fans and creating a festival-style atmosphere with music, live entertainment, and non-stop action.

6) What is the Ultimate Hockey League (UHL)?

The UHL is the new IIHF-backed league built specifically for 3x3 ice hockey. Launching in Europe in 2027 and globally in 2028, it aims to create the fastest team winter sport and bring hockey into urban and rural communities year-round.

- Purpose: Inspire people through the fastest team sport on ice
- Vision: Transform hockey into a global urban movement
- Mission: Establish 3x3 as a year-round action sport

7) What are the BTI and UHL key facts?

Players on the field: 3 players + 1 goalie

BTI rink: 20 x 40m; UHL rink: 17x34m to 25x45m

Format: Faster pace, more interaction

Rules & Regulations: Adapted to generate more action and clutch moments

Play time: 2 x 12 minutes (+ 3-minute intermission)

Media: Closer to the sport, more data for fans, players become influencers

Entertainment: Live acts, music during the games, etc.



8) Who is eligible to participate and how will the teams be formed?

An open approach is intended to encourage maximum participation and to allow teams from all Member National Associations to join the competitions. Two basic requirements will apply.

1. Players must hold a valid passport from the country they wish to represent and
2. Players cannot have previously competed for another country's 3x3 team in an official Ultimate Hockey competition.

The responsibility for selecting the players or teams that will represent each respective country in the 3x3 Ultimate Hockey competitions lies with the IIHF Member National Associations. National associations have full discretion in determining how their teams will be selected and are free to decide on the criteria they wish to apply for player or team selection.

This gives each national association the flexibility to choose the best approach for selecting their representatives, ensuring the process reflects their unique priorities, player development programs, and competition structures. The IIHF encourages national associations to focus on fostering local player development and providing opportunities for a diverse range of participants.

Non-licensed players, such as those from university teams or other pathways, can also participate in the 3x3 Ultimate Hockey competitions, provided they do so under the supervision of their respective MNA. This allows MNAs to engage a broader pool of talent and encourages participation from players who may not be involved in traditional or licensed leagues.

In case organizations have limited resources, the participating MNAs are entitled to market the registered team(s) externally under their own conditions, similar to the F1 or Baller League approach. Nevertheless, MNAs are obliged to assist in all related sporting matters and in conjunction with the 3x3 Ultimate Hockey regulations.