



Medina Hockey (U16)

Player Development Structure



Train to Train (Ages 12-16)

The objective of this stage is to further develop sports specific skills, begin to introduce competition, and start to emphasize support training to continue development of speed, strength and stamina while maintaining flexibility.

Key focus for this stage:

Build the physical engine – endurance, speed and core strength

- Develop strong technical skills
- Begin to become more specialized in hockey later in this stage

Age-Appropriate Training

This is a window of accelerated adaptation to aerobic, speed and strength training, and for maximum improvement in skill development. As well, good training habits are developed during this stage. While formal competition is included, the focus remains on learning the basics through training, with competition being of secondary importance.

Skill Development

Players at the highest level of hockey continue investing countless hours honing the skills required to be effective at that level. High school age players too must continue honing the skating, stickhandling, passing, and shooting skills needed to be an effective player. The ability to execute these skills at higher rates of speed, in smaller areas, and under game conditions is important for the continued development of each player.

Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) Window of Opportunity

Peak Height Velocity (PHV) is the period where maximum rate of growth occurs. It is the onset of PHV that is the best determiner of when to increase the training focus on aerobic and strength development.

Note that both aerobic and strength trainability are dependent on the maturation levels of the athlete. For this reason, the timing of training emphasis differs depending on whether athletes are early, average, or late maturers. Monitoring for PHV is crucial as almost all participants will move through their major growth spurt during this stage.

Nutrition

Players should learn:

- **Proper Hydration** – Players should learn the importance of proper hydration before, during, and after all games and practices.
- **Good Eating Habits** – Players should be encouraged to eat good meals and refrain from eating candy and other foods that lack nutritional value.
- **Recovery Drink** – Players should learn best post-workout recovery methods and optimal recovery windows after training.
- **Eating and Energy** – Players should learn the importance of eating healthy foods, and begin to learn and understand the *USA Hockey 3 Step Nutrition Poster*.





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Physical Development

Stabilization and Foundation Building:

Proper and regular monitoring of physiological adaptation to training is essential. Continue monthly monitoring for PHV. PHV is the reference point to begin a strength training program, the average age for boys reaching PHV is 14.

Continue participation in complementary sports for:

- Skill
- Speed
- Endurance
- Lifestyle

Introduce Specific Fitness Framework

Early in stage, off-ice training focuses on the following:

- Introduce free weights
- Injury prevention exercises (high reps, low intensity, focus on execution)
- Core and stabilizer strength
- Explosive arm and leg power
- Maximize speed development
- Introduction to physical testing and functional assessments

Further in stage:

- Maximum strength
- Strength endurance
- Power/speed endurance
- Build a level of fitness that allows the athlete to maintain high volume, high quality training
- On-ice and off-ice training to develop endurance
- Maximize stamina/aerobic capacity window of trainability for recovery, regeneration and training capacity
- Monitor training for high volume, low intensity sessions

Throughout the stage:

- Provide variation in off-ice and on-ice activities to avoid over-use injuries
- Emphasize flexibility and stretching exercises to manage the effect of rapid growth
- With rapid growth and changes in body proportions, athletes may need to re-learn some skills that were previously refined (adolescent maintenance).

Technical Development

- Continue to refine skating skills
- Introduce position specific skills
 - Forwards
 - Defenseman
 - Goalies
- Continue to develop deceptive skills





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Tactical Skills

- Playing the off-wing or off-side defenseman positions
- Offensive/defensive support concepts
- Introduce basic team systems of defensive zone coverage and aggressive forecheck
- Introduce active read-and-react penalty killing
- Introduce power play concepts without specific individual positions, encourage interchangeability
- Emphasize transition play – offense to defense and defense to offense
- Emphasize quality playing habits
- Introduce adaptations to various overall team strategies

Ancillary Skills

- Athletes in this stage should be responsible for doing a proper warm-up and cool-down as part of practice.
- Athletes should also be developing a competition warm-up procedure.
- Athletes should be aware of the importance of proper nutrition and hydration for competition days.

Effective Player Development

Players at this stage will make a conscious decision – *do you really want to become a great player?* They will decide if hockey is just a game or is it a passion?

- **Adopting a growth mindset** – a growth mindset is someone who believes that their basic abilities can be developed, they believe that talent is just a starting point. A growth mindset creates a love for learning, improving and sense of resilience that is essential for significant development.
- **Purposeful practice**
 - Goal setting – choose a skill you struggle with and set a goal to improve, it should be reasonable and not unattainable so as to discourage.
 - Self-evaluation – as you're carrying out the skill during practice, focus on what you're doing and why you're doing it the way you are.
 - Ask for feedback – as a player it's important to ask for feedback whenever necessary as well as not get emotional about the feedback. Constructive criticism is all part of the learning process, and a growth mindset welcomes all forms of feedback.

Life Style

Optimize training and education in:

- Cultural and lifestyle habits
- Smoke and tobacco free environment
- Alcohol free environment
- Drug-free sport
- Wearing proper safety equipment
- Care and maintenance of equipment
- Proper nutrition, hydration and recovery
- Self-management
- Taking responsibility for actions





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- Respect for others
- The USA Hockey Code of Conduct
- Athlete assumes responsibility for his behavior as a representative of the Medina Hockey Club and USA Hockey.

Psychological Development

Provide training and competition opportunities that focus performance on a preferred position. Mental skills learned in the previous stage of athlete development should continue to be practiced and incorporated into all types of training and competitive situations. The athlete should:

- Take personal responsibility for training, preparation, performance and recovery.
- Bring consistent effort to training and competitions.
- Become involved with coaches in decision making (e.g. goals, position specific development, training plan)
- Identify “what works” in the ideal performance state.
- Be coachable – accept constructive criticism and work with other coaches or athletes.

Sports Psychology

Continue basic mental skills development:

- Coping strategies, goal setting, imagery, self-awareness.
- Be introduced to the idea of self-reflection after training or competitions.
- Have a training log/diary.
- Athletes in this stage are ready to learn how to focus. They can understand that what they feel and think affects their performance, and learn how to develop control over these feelings and thoughts.
- Effective goal setting becomes more important in this stage and is related to outcomes, process and performance.
- Introduce athletes to breathing and relaxation skills.
- Teach athletes how to communicate effectively with coaches and how to ask for feedback.

Character Development and Life Skills

Players must learn:

- The importance of honesty and integrity in and away from the arena.
- To accept responsibility for their actions and athletic performance.
- Coping strategies to deal with peer pressure and other adversity.
- To balance family, school, sports, social activities, etc.
- To develop a sense of team commitment.
- About adversity and begin developing strategies to deal with it.

