



ADMINISTRATIVE

Developing a Season Plan



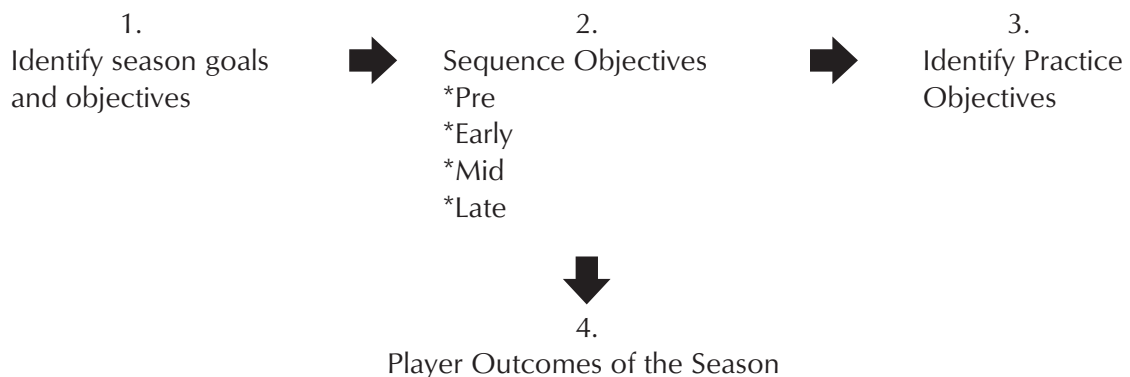
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OBJECTIVES

- To develop a season plan
- To identify the steps in season planning
- To develop short- and long-range goals
- To divide your season into sections

The organized coach realizes the importance of planning beyond the daily practice plan. To be effective and to ensure that both short- and long-range goals are accomplished, one must map out an overall season plan with a complete schedule that includes practices, competitions and training for the entire season.

SEASON PLANNING STEPS



Sequence the Season's Objectives

After you have selected the objectives most important to your players, you should divide these objectives into categories that you will attempt to achieve in the pre, early, mid and late season. If preseason activity is possible, it can save you valuable practice time. Many of the objectives pertaining to knowledge of the rules, strategies of team or individual play and some of those involving conditioning can be all or partially achieved before formal practice begins.

The early season should be devoted to teaching, re-teaching and practicing the season's objectives. The mid-season continues with a heavy focus on teaching, but should also devote a lot of time to executing and refining skills within game-like drills or controlled scrimmages. The late season should focus on the maintenance and refinement of early and mid-season skills, and refining team offensive and defensive play. Figure 6-1 provides an example of the worksheet that can be used to sequence the season's objectives.

Deciding what objectives should be achieved in pre, early, middle and late season is the basis for all subsequent planning.

player in a safe and efficient manner. This could include learning the basic rules, infractions, penalties and strategies; obtaining appropriate equipment; and developing strength and aerobic fitness.

Preseason

Objectives should be placed in the preseason when they involve skills, knowledge or attitudes that can be achieved independently (all or in part) by the

Early Season

Objectives should be placed in the early season if they contain abilities that are prerequisite to attaining other identified objectives. For example, players

SEASON PLAN WORKSHEET					
Goals & Performance Areas	Objectives	Season Division			
		PRE	EARLY	MID	LATE
	(1) _____				
_____	(2) _____				
	(3) _____				
_____	(4) _____				
	(5) _____				
_____	(6) _____				
	(7) _____				
_____	(8) _____				
	(9) _____				
_____	(10) _____				
	(11) _____				
_____	(12) _____				
	(13) _____				
_____	(14) _____				
	(15) _____				
_____	(16) _____				
	(17) _____				
_____	(18) _____				
	(19) _____				
_____	(20) _____				
	(21) _____				
_____	(22) _____				
	(23) _____				
_____	(24) _____				
	(25) _____				
_____	(26) _____				
	(27) _____				
_____	(28) _____				
	(29) _____				
_____	(30) _____				

Figure 6-1. Example of a season plan worksheet.

must be able to skate before they can be expected to skate and stickhandle, or skate, stickhandle, and shoot. This attention to the sequence of skills is particularly important for the inexperienced player, who should spend more time on learning skills.

Mid- and Late Season

Generally, you should focus on individual skills in the early season, skill combinations in the mid-season and combinations of both within systems of play in the latter portion of the season. There are no hard and fast divisions among these three phases of the season. In fact, they should blend or overlap into good transitions. However, you should have them clearly in mind as you view the entire season in terms of what you wish to accomplish and the time in which it must be done.

Identify Practice Objectives

As you place objectives into season divisions and adjust the number of weeks assigned to each division, typically you will find that you have chosen to cover more objectives than your available practice time will allow. A good guide in such situations is to devote sufficient time to the instruction and practice of each objective so that the majority of players are able to make significant improvements. Reviewing the amount of practice time spent on objectives included in the plan may reveal why many athletes did not substantially improve on some of the skills “taught.”

Select, teach and practice objectives that are essential to the game at your level of play.

Merely exposing your team to many skills without sufficient time for them to be learned results in frustration for both you and the players. The players must sufficiently master the objectives so that they can be used in a game situation. Rather, select, teach and practice only the objectives that are essential to the game at your level of play. You can always add objectives to your plan as it is implemented, but you cannot recover time wasted on objectives that are not achieved.

Generally, the allotment of time to an objective should be based upon the following instructional

needs and should be distributed across several practices. You should allow time:

1. to introduce the objective (tell the players what you want them to learn and why it is important)
2. for the players to try the skill and for you to assess their levels of performance
3. to teach the key elements of the skill and for the players to practice these elements
4. for skill refinement and automation so that the skill can be used in a game situation

Place the Objectives on a Season Calendar

Integrating the results of your planning decisions into a season calendar will give you a master plan of everything you need to effectively manage your coaching activities. The season calendar will convert your plans to practice outlines. It is the guide from which specific practice plans can be developed. Items that should be included on the calendar are listed in Figure 6-2.

SEASON CALENDAR ENTRIES

1. registration
2. team rosters
3. equipment distribution
4. game days and times
5. practice days and times
6. practice objectives
7. parent orientation
8. tournament dates
9. recognition banquet
10. special events

Figure 6-2. *Items to include on a season calendar.*

The most important part of developing a season calendar is the decision you make about what objective to teach and how much practice time you devote to each objective on a practice-by-practice basis. Using your season plan worksheet, select three to six objectives listed in the early season division that you wish to work on during your first practice and enter them in the space labeled “Practice #1” on your season calendar. This process should be repeated for your second, third and subsequent practices through the early, mid and late

season divisions. A season calendar worksheet you can reproduce is included on the last page of this chapter.

The two most important decisions in planning the season are deciding what objectives to teach and how much time you should spend teaching them.

You will spend less time in planning your season if you use the approach suggested here than if the task is done practice-by-practice throughout the season. The recommended process will also help you verify which skills you believe are most important as you run out of available practice time and are forced to either omit objectives from your plan or find ways to achieve them outside of the normal practice time.

In addition to the good feeling and confidence that comes with completing a season calendar, you will have developed the base necessary to systematically change your plans as unexpected events develop. More importantly, you will know before the mid to late portions of the season whether or not your

initial practices allocated too much time to some objectives in the early season, which left insufficient time for equally important objectives later on. A completed plan that has been implemented and refined is also an invaluable resource for next year's coaching assignment or for new coaches coming into the program.

SUMMARY

Your role as a coach can be most appropriately filled through the leadership and instruction you provide within the context of practices and games. Clearly, those coaches who are most effective in facilitating their players' achievement of appropriate skills, knowledge, fitness and attitudes are those who have clear objectives that pertain to these achievements. Organization of the season by selecting and then teaching objectives in an appropriate order, and for an appropriate amount of time, is a major step toward helping players enjoy the benefits of hockey. This same planning effort is an essential step in reducing some of hockey's unwanted costs.