



# CEP Level 1 Manual

*A Publication Of The USA Hockey Coaching Education Program*



The USA Hockey Coaching Education Program is Presented By



ROLE OF THE COACH

AMERICAN  
DEVELOPMENT MODEL

PREPARING FOR  
THE SEASON

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

RISK MANAGEMENT

APPENDICES



# USA Hockey Coaching Education Program

## Level 1 Manual

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# Preface

Throughout the United States, the sport of ice hockey has grown in interest and participation. With an attempt to meet the coaching education demands of all our volunteer coaches, USA Hockey provides a comprehensive Coaching Education Program. Since 1974 the Coaching Education Program has been evolving on an ongoing basis, and during that time USA Hockey has concluded the following:

1. Quality coaching is the single most important factor in the development of our athletes as well as the sport itself.
2. The experience a player will gain through participation in ice hockey is directly influenced by the coaches' qualifications as well as their coaching education background.
3. The curriculum, materials, and manuals of the coaching education program must be kept simple, practical, age specific, and user friendly.

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# This is USA Hockey

USA Hockey provides the foundation for the sport of ice hockey in America; helps young people become leaders, even Olympic heroes; and connects the game at every level while promoting a lifelong love of the sport.

USA Hockey's primary emphasis is on the support and development of grassroots hockey programs. In January 2009, the organization launched the American Development Model, which - for the first time ever - provides associations nationwide with a blueprint for optimal athlete development. Always a leader in safety, USA Hockey furthered the enhancement of those efforts by advancing the USA Hockey SafeSport Program in June 2012.

While youth hockey is a main focus, USA Hockey also has vibrant junior and adult hockey programs that provide opportunities for players of all ability levels. The organization also supports a growing disabled hockey program.

Beyond serving those who play the game at the amateur level, USA Hockey has certification programs for coaches and officials to ensure education standards are met that coincide with the level of play. In September 2011, USA Hockey became the first youth sports organization in the U.S. to offer its coaches online, age-specific coaching education modules. Furthermore, a large focus is put on parent education with equipment needs, rules of the game and parental roles in youth sports among common topics.

Members of the organization are entitled to many benefits, including a subscription to *USA Hockey Magazine*, the most widely circulated hockey publication in the world; excess accident, general liability and catastrophic insurance coverage; access to USAHockey.com; and opportunities to participate in USA Hockey National Championships, as well as player development camps.

As the National Governing Body for the sport of ice hockey in the United States, USA Hockey is the official representative to the United States Olympic Committee and the International Ice Hockey Federation. In this role, USA Hockey is responsible for organizing and training men's and women's teams for international tournaments, including the IIHF World Championships and the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Closer to home, USA Hockey works closely with the National Hockey League and the National Collegiate Athletic Association on matters of mutual interest.

USA Hockey is divided into 12 geographical districts throughout the United States. Each district has a registrar to register teams; a referee-in-chief to register officials and organize clinics; a coach-in-chief to administer education programs for coaches; a risk manager to oversee liability and safety programs; and a skill development program administrator to facilitate learn-to-play programs for youth players and their parents.



# USA Hockey

## Coaching Education Program

### COACH REGISTRATION

All ice hockey coaches as well as instructors of USA Hockey programs shall be registered for the current season (before the start of the season) in order to be eligible to coach/instruct in any regular-season activities (practices, clinics, games, tournaments, tryouts, etc.); state, district or regional playoffs; national championships; or in the USA Hockey Player Development Programs. There will be an annual fee to register the coaches (head and assistants) and instructors. Coaches who also play on a USA Hockey registered team are required to pay this registration fee only once per year. Coaches may register as participants online at USAHockey.com or through a local association/member program (refer to Section I Participant Registration). Junior coaches shall register with and through their teams with the junior registrar.

**Note 1:** All USA Hockey Coaching Education Program Instructors and National Player Development Camp coaches will be exempt from the annual participant registration fee, but must complete the participant registration process.

**Note 2:** The head coach of each disabled hockey team must complete the required CEP registration (including attending a Level 1 clinic) and complete the online disabled hockey module(s). Assistant coaches and student coaches of each disabled hockey team must register as a coach with USA Hockey, and are strongly encouraged, but not required, to attend a Level 1 coaching clinic and take the online disabled module(s). Those volunteers or employees who assist with helping disabled hockey teams (i.e. interpreters, pushers, on-ice mentors, etc.) must be properly registered with

USA Hockey as volunteers, but are not required to attend a CEP clinic and otherwise comply with these rules and regulations.

All ice hockey coaches and instructors of registered USA Hockey Youth 18 & Under and below, high school, girls'/women's 19 & under and below, and disabled programs must properly wear an approved ice hockey helmet during all on-ice sessions, including practices, controlled scrimmages and all Coaching Education Program clinics and/or workshops.

### COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

#### Required Coaching Education Program Levels for Ice Hockey

USA Hockey requires that all affiliates and/or districts shall establish the following requirements without modifications for all coaches (head and assistant).

All coaches must have the required certification level by January 1 of the current season.

- All coaches must enter USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program at Level 1, and must continue their education with a coaching clinic each year until, at a minimum, they achieve Level 3, except that coaches of **ONLY** 8U or younger players may remain at Level 1 or other certification level, even if expired, until such time as they are coaching any older age level of play. A coach may attend only one certification clinic per year (not including age-specific requirements). Coaches who do not coach in continuous years must re-



enter the program at the next level when they resume coaching responsibilities. Once Level 3 is achieved, periodic renewal [as outlined in Paragraph (c) below] is required for coaches who have not achieved Level 4. Coaches of national tournament bound teams (Tier I 14U, 16U and 18/19U and Tier II 16U and 18/19U) must complete Level 4 in their fourth season of coaching or first season of eligibility regardless of expiration date. Coaches who attain Level 4 certification are not required to attend any further certification clinics but must adhere to the age-specific requirement as outlined in Paragraph (b) below.

- In addition to the training in Paragraph (a) above, coaches must also complete age-specific training components specific to the level of play they are coaching, if they have not already taken that component. This requirement applies to all coaches at all levels, 1 through 5. Coaches may complete more than one age-specific component in any given season.
- Coaching certification at Level 3 is valid for two (2) seasons, as indicated by the expiration date on the Level 3 sticker.
  - A coach whose Level 3 is due to expire must take the online Level 3 Track 1 Recertification curriculum or they may move up to Level 4. Level 3 Track 1

Recertification is valid for two (2) seasons.

- A coach whose Level 3 Track 1 recertification is due to expire must take the online Level 3 Track 2 Recertification curriculum or move up to Level 4. Level 3 Track 2 Recertification is valid for two (2) seasons.
- Coaches whose Level 3 Track 2 Recertification is due to expire must attend a Level 4 clinic prior to the expiration of their Level 3 Recertification.
- Coaches must complete the online recertification program in order to recertify their Level 3 certifications. Attending a clinic or workshop is no longer valid for recertifying any certification level.
- **Grandfather Clause**  
For coaches who enrolled in the Coaching Education Program prior to May 1, 2011, their entry into the above program will be at their current certification level. Level 1 and 2 coaches must adhere to Paragraphs (a) and (b) above, effective May 1, 2011. Current Level 3 coaches must adhere to Paragraph (b) and (c) above; effective with the season their Level 3 expires. Any previous Level 3 certifications in excess of one will count toward the maximum of two Level 3 recertifications.

This chart outlines the progression for a new coach. Coaches with pre-existing certifications will enter the new program at their current certification level and must adhere to Paragraphs 1 (a) and (b) above.

YEARS OF COACHING	CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS
Year 1 (ex: 2011-12)	Level 1 clinic + age-specific component
Year 2 (ex: 2012-13)	Level 2 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 3 (ex: 2013-14)	Level 3 clinic (expires Dec. 31, 2015) + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 4 (ex: 2014-15)	No Level certification required (for non-national tournament bound teams) but can attend a Level 4 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level. Coaches of Tier I and Tier II



	(national tournament bound) 14U, 16U and 18/19U teams must complete Level 4 in their fourth season of coaching.
Year 5 (ex: 2015-16)	Complete the online Level 3 Track 1 Recertification (expires Dec. 31, 2017), or attend a Level 4 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 6 (ex: 2016-17)	No Level certification required but can attend a Level 4 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 7 (ex: 2017-18)	Complete the online Level 3 Track 2 Recertification (expires Dec. 31, 2019), or attend a Level 4 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 8 (ex: 2018-19)	No Level certification required but can attend a Level 4 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 9 (ex: 2019-20)	Must attend a Level 4 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 10 and beyond	No Level recertification required but must complete age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level. Coaches are highly encouraged to attend a continuing education course every two years.

### Evidence of Level

All USA Hockey coaches will possess a USA Hockey Coaching Education Program card with valid certification stickers, or printout from the USA Hockey online certification list.

It is the responsibility of the local association to identify those coaches who do not meet the certification requirements. All coaches have until December 31 of the current season to attend a USA Hockey coaching clinic and complete the online playing level component to become properly certified.

Prior to the start of all games throughout the season all coaches are required to indicate their current certification status on the scoresheet, regardless of their certification level. All coaches (except for juniors) must legibly print their USA Hockey Coaching Education Program (CEP) card number, their CEP level (levels 1-5), their online playing level component and the year their CEP level was attained. If a coach cannot produce his/her current

USA Hockey Coaching Education Program card prior to the start of the game, it must be noted on the official game scoresheet.

Beginning January 1 of the current season, prior to the start of each game, all coaches present are required to sign the designated area of the scoresheet in order to verify the accuracy of the playing roster, as it appears on the scoresheet, for that game.

### Penalty and Enforcement

All coaches must have current certification and online component verification beginning January 1 of the current playing season. Any coach not in possession of these requirements will be ineligible to coach for the remainder of the season. Districts and/or affiliates are required to uphold this penalty. It will be the responsibility of the local association registering the team to enforce the national policy.

Non-compliance penalties for junior coaches will be determined by the Junior Council.



## UNDER-AGE COACHES

### Student Coach

A player age 13 through 17 who is currently properly registered with USA Hockey may serve as a Student Coach.

### Qualifications

- Must attend a training session conducted by the local hockey association or audit a Level 1 clinic (not required to pay nor will they receive certification credit).
- Must always be under the supervision of a carded, screened adult coach during all practices, clinics, tryouts and in the locker room.
- May help out at practices, clinics, tryouts only. (May not participate as a player in scrimmages or games when acting as a student coach).
- May not act as a head coach or an assistant coach during practices or games.
- May be on the bench during games with an adult. The student coach will count as one of the maximum of four Team Officials allowed on the bench.
- Must wear a helmet with full face shield, gloves and skates while on the ice. Must wear helmet during games while on the bench.
- May only work with players at least one full playing age level below the student coach (e.g., a Bantam age player may act as a student coach at the Pee Wee, Squirt or Mite level).
- The organization that is using the student coach must provide a form indicating on the team on which he/she is participating as a student coach, and, if applicable, what team he/she is properly registered/rostered as a player. A model form is available on USAHockey.com.
- Upon reaching the age of 18, the student coach must comply with the USA Hockey Screening Program and meet the USA Hockey Coaching Education Program requirements which will qualify him/her to act as an assistant or head coach.



## Section 1

# Role of the Coach





# Chapter 1

## Role of the Coach

### OBJECTIVES

- To identify the primary roles of youth hockey coaches (head and assistants)
- To understand the benefits that ice hockey offers its participants
- To understand the value of quality coaching and leadership and its effect on players' experiences
- To have an awareness of the diverse roles involved in coaching
- To maximize the utilization of the assistant coach's skills and talents

### USA HOCKEY THANKS YOU

First, if no one has said THANK YOU, let us express to you the thanks from the players, their parents, and your association for volunteering to be a youth hockey coach.

Regardless of your background, your knowledge of hockey, or your ability to teach young people, when you took the title of "coach" you became the most powerful person on your team. You now have a wonderful opportunity to make the season a very positive experience for your young players and those around them. We hope this chapter will be especially helpful to you in establishing a philosophy about your role as the coach that will ensure a positive experience for you and those you influence during the hockey season.

John Wooden, the great UCLA basketball coach, had this to say about coaches:

*"We who coach have great influence on the lives of the players we teach and the lives we lead will play an important role in their future. It is essential that we regard this as a sacred trust and set the example that we know is right. We must try to prevent the pressures for winning scores from causing us to swerve from moral principles!"*

### INTRODUCTION

The coach's qualifications, education, and competencies have a direct influence on the experience an athlete will gain through the participation in ice hockey. Strong leadership during practices, games, and special events encourages each athlete to nurture and develop individual strengths physically, psychologically, and socially.

We live in a world of constant change with many challenges and confrontations. The sports world is no exception, and the key person who is in the center is the coach. Consequently, quality coaching is the single most important factor influencing the growth and development of athletes as well as the sport itself.

While it is impossible to provide a completely perfect experience, as a hockey coach it is your responsibility to ensure that the experiences are positive, a good learning environment is provided, and the athlete's self-esteem is built up. To accomplish this, you must know and understand the multi-dimensional roles of a coach.

### Benefits of Participation

A player will benefit from an ice hockey program when the coach creates a positive environment and



sets appropriate objectives. However, if the coach sets inappropriate goals, this will create a negative environment, and problems may result.

A well educated, caring youth coach helps players to:

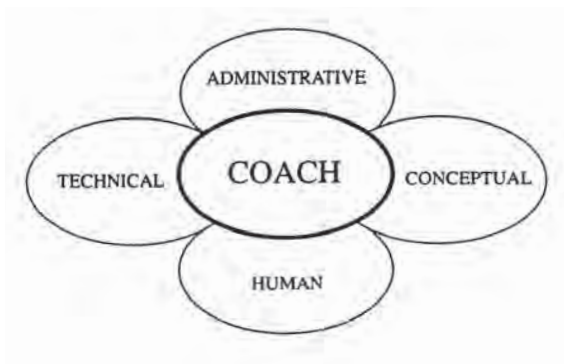
- Develop appropriate skills
- Establish goals
- Develop athleticism
- Develop fitness
- Develop a realistic and positive self-image
- Develop a lifetime pattern of regular physical activity
- Develop respect for rules and fair play
- Develop skills to interact with other people
- Develop sportsmanship
- Develop teamwork
- Develop self-esteem
- Develop age-specific motor movement skills
- Develop the correct concepts of playing ice hockey
- Develop future participation in ice hockey or other sports

---

*To maximize the benefits of ice hockey and improve the quality of coaching, you must understand your multi-dimensional role as a hockey coach and provide quality leadership.*

---

### Principle Areas of Coaching



#### Administrative

This comprises organizing, scheduling arrangements, budgeting, long-range planning, understanding special needs and other managerial activities.

#### Human

This encompasses the concern for the well-being of your athletes and assisting in the total development of the person.

#### Technical

An aspect which refers to the components of skill development, training, techniques, and the biomechanical elements of the sport.

#### Conceptual

The development and teaching of the strategical and tactical elements of the game.

*“Those who want to leave an impression for one year should plant corn.*

*Those who want to leave an impression for ten years should plant a tree.*

*Those who want to leave an impression for 100 years should educate a human being.”*

Chinese Proverb

### COACH AS A ROLE MODEL

It seems well accepted that youngsters from the age of 6 to 15 years are especially interested in seeking a “role model”—a person they want to be like. How fortunate that you have that opportunity to be their role model! Incidentally, there are responsibilities that go with the title—the responsibility to be a positive, morally correct example. These young players see and hear everything you do and say, and they do it “because coach does it,” or they say “because coach says it.”

If you, as a coach, can make those things happen that are mentioned in the Benefits of Participation section, then you will be successful beyond your dreams. So what can you do to make it happen?

#### Be a Good Teacher

This is so important that a separate chapter is devoted to this subject. You become a teacher of:

- how to select proper equipment
- the game of hockey
- rules
- discipline
- hockey skills



**Be a Good Counselor**

Players are looking to you for guidance. Remember, to them, a coach is all-knowing. In a counseling role:

- athletes come to you with concerns about home, school or the team
- players need special care
- players will turn to you when hurt physically, emotionally, and socially

**Be a Good Leader**

You, as the coach, are “in charge.” Hopefully, you will lead and establish principles for the operation of your team in a reasonable fashion and can easily be accepted by all. Also in leading:

- players look to their coach as being all-knowing or one who knows best
- players look to their coach to establish goals
- coaches must develop leadership abilities in their athletes

**Be a Good Friend**

Sometimes young children do not know how to be friends, especially with adults. But with a little effort children make good friends. As their friend, young players look for someone to:

- share experiences with
- laugh with
- work with
- trust
- turn to
- care

**Be a Good Communicator**

As a coach, being able to communicate verbally and visually is important as well as being a good listener to:

- players
- parents
- the community
- the organization
- the volunteers

**Be a Sincere and Sensitive Coach**

A positive attitude is highly infectious and contagious—once you catch it, it soon spreads to all the people who come in contact with you. Keep a positive attitude for:

- sportsmanship
- expressing a passion for the game of hockey

- a lifestyle
- keeping your composure
- expressing compassion

**Be a Good Administrator**

Keeping things organized will help everything run more smoothly. Pay particular attention to:

- scheduling
- planning and developing practices
- making travel arrangements
- organizing and planning team meetings

**Be a Good Guardian**

As a coach you are the guardian of:

- the integrity for each individual
- the integrity for the sport of ice hockey
- good sportsmanship

**HUMANISTIC ASPECTS OF COACHING**

The following are a few elements dealing with the humanistic aspect of coaching:

1. Deal with your players on an individual basis. Public ridicule of another human being accomplishes nothing.
2. You have a responsibility to teach all of your players regardless of ability, background, or personality.
3. There is a difference between giving time and giving attention. Attention is giving quality time that shows you care.
4. If your players genuinely feel you care about them as a person, they will play for you and give you their best effort.
5. You as a coach have a greater impact on the lives of athletes than you will ever know. Treat this responsibility with respect.

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*It is not how much you know,  
rather how much you care.*

---

**GOALS FOR THE COACH**

As a coach, it is important to:

1. effectively teach the individual techniques, rules, and concepts of the game in an orderly and enjoyable environment.
2. appropriately challenge the cardiovascular and muscular systems of your players through active practice sessions and games.
3. teach and model desirable personal, social, and psychological skills.



Winning is also an important goal for the coach and participants, but it is one you have little control over because winning is often contingent on outside factors. If you concentrate on the three areas mentioned above and become an effective leader, winning becomes a byproduct.

The degree of success you attain in achieving these goals is determined by the extent to which you make appropriate choices and take correct actions in organizing and administering, teaching, leading, and caring.

### Organization and Administration

Effective coaching relies heavily on good organization and administration. Organization involves clearly identifying the goals and objectives that must be attained if you are going to create a beneficial experience (with few detriments) for the participating youth. Steps necessary to organize the season so it can be efficiently administered include:

- identifying your primary purposes as a coach
- identifying goals and schedule for the season
- selecting and implementing the activities in practices and games that lead to achievement of the objectives
- evaluating the effects of your actions

### Protecting and Caring

Coaches may minimize the potential for injury from their minds, but it is important for them to (a) plan for injury prevention, (b) effectively deal with injuries when they occur, (c) meet their legal responsibilities to act prudently, and (d) protect the integrity of the individual athlete.

## WHY I COACH: DEVELOPING YOUR PHILOSOPHY

A philosophy is a set of guidelines to govern your actions. They are developed from:

- ideas formed from your experience
- opinions gained from the knowledge you have gathered
- your desires for the future

In developing a successful coaching philosophy, you need to explain the following and search for answers.

- Why do you want to coach?
- Why do children participate in athletics?
- Who are some of the people I want to use as models?
- How can I communicate my philosophy to others?

### Why Do I Want to Coach?

Consider the following reasons:

- To contribute to the overall growth of others.
- I enjoy the contact with people.
- I enjoy the recognition.
- I want to be a winner.
- I like to see others having a good time.
- I like the control factor in coaching.
- I enjoy being a teacher.
- I want to make a difference.
- I want to give something back to the sport.

### Why Do Children Participate in Athletics?

It is vital for coaches to consider why children want to participate in sports programs. If this is done, there is much less likelihood of there being misunderstandings in the future.

Reasons children participate in athletics:

- fun
- feeling of belonging
- feeling of direction
- making friends
- being part of a group
- for the thrill
- to succeed

### What Do Parents Expect from a Sports Program?

- fun
- a safe environment
- total family involvement
- build up child's self-esteem
- success for their children
- fair play

Having considered the kinds of things the athletes, parents, and, of course, you wish to get out of the athletic experience, you must then formulate common goals so that everyone can focus their efforts in the same direction.



In establishing these goals, you should consider the following characteristics:

1. All goals must be measurable.
2. All goals need to be observable.
3. Goals need to be challenging and inspiring.
4. Goals need to be achievable as well as believable.
5. Finally, they should be goals of short term and long term.

To be an effective coach, you need to develop a philosophy and continue to develop it on an on-going basis.

## ROLE OF THE ASSISTANT COACH

As the game of hockey continues to become more complex and demanding, the role of the assistant coach is more important than ever.

An effective assistant coach can be a very positive influence on both the players and the coaching staff. However, if the expected duties are not done well, the assistant can have a negative effect on the team and create unnecessary problems on and off the ice.

Here are some suggestions for the entire coaching staff on how to best define the role that the assistant coaches should play throughout the season, as well as to get the most out of their coaching abilities.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ASSISTANT COACH

### Pre-Season Meeting

The role of an assistant coach should begin in a meeting with the head coach prior to the season. In this forum, the head coach and assistant coach can discuss such issues as: What the head coach will expect from the assistant over the course of the season; the responsibilities and duties he/she will be charged with; and the time commitments that must be made. This meeting should also include a detailed outline of what coaching assignments the assistant will receive in both practices and games.

The head coach should explain his/her hockey and coaching philosophies. It is also an opportune time for the assistant coach to explain what he/she would like to see accomplished or achieved during the season, both as a team and personally.

This time spent by the head coach and assistant sharing ideas and concepts will help lay the groundwork for open communication that should last throughout their relationship together.

### Instruction

Without question the most important role the assistant coach will have during the course of a season is as a teacher. Above all else, the assistant must be a good teacher and tactician of ice hockey. The assistant has a duty to improve his/her knowledge whenever possible. This includes attendance at coaching clinics, symposiums, and seminars. These forums teach not just ice hockey-related coaching skills, but also non-sport specific techniques. These are invaluable in teaching today's young athletes.

### Loyalty

The assistant must display loyalty to the team, the players, the association, and, most importantly, to the head coach at all times. It is very rare that the head coach and assistant will agree on all decisions. Disagreement can actually strengthen a coaching staff. However, those disagreements must go no further than their private discussions. If an assistant makes public his/her distaste with a particular decision, it can have disastrous results for the team, as well as destroying the coaches' respect and trust for each other. When a decision is made, the assistant coach, regardless of personal feelings, must work hard to see that it succeeds.

### Dependability

A head coach must be able to depend on the assistant to perform many duties efficiently and promptly. The assistant must complete these tasks without the head coach spending valuable time double-checking to see if they have been accomplished. The tasks may not often be glamorous, but they are important to the success of the team, as well as the athletes. The head coach must be able to have complete confidence in the assistant. The assistant must be reliable and dependable at all times.

### Player/Assistant Coach Relationship

Rapport with the players can be a crucial role of the assistant coach. First, the assistant spends much of his/her time instructing small groups of players compared to the whole team at once. Therefore, it



is important for the assistant to establish good relationships with the players in order to earn their respect and trust.

Second, the players will often avoid going to the head coach with their concerns or problems. In this situation, the assistant can be a valuable go-between. If the assistant coach feels it is necessary, he/she can then bring the problem to the attention of the head coach.

### **Suggestions for Coaches**

1. Head coaches should clearly define the role that the assistant will play throughout the season. This includes responsibilities, duties, and expectations.
2. Always remember that the assistant coach's main concern should be to help young athletes get the most from ice hockey. Teaching and instruction are first and foremost.

3. The assistant coach is an important factor in a team's success. Accordingly, he/she should always be given the respect and courtesy that has been earned.

### **SUMMARY**

Your primary purpose as a youth hockey coach is to maximize the benefits of participation in hockey while minimizing the detriments. To achieve this, you must organize, teach, model, and evaluate effectively. Your players learn not only from what you teach but from what you consciously or unconsciously do. You are a very significant person in the eyes of your players. They notice if you are organized and fair, are a good coach, know the rules, are interested in them or the win/lost record, know how to control your emotions, know how to present yourself, and treat others with respect. The choices you make and the actions you take determine how positive the experience is for them.



# Chapter 2

## Leadership

### OBJECTIVES

- To understand the different leadership styles and how they affect the way in which a coach is received by the players
- To understand and be aware of effective leadership qualities and techniques
- To understand what motivates coaches and players to participate in hockey
- To handle problem situations that may arise in your program

### LEADERSHIP

Your primary role as a coach is instructing the basic skills of hockey to beginners. This means that you will be a leader, not only of the children but of the other adults or parents who volunteer to help out. It is therefore important for you to have a basic idea of what is expected of you in the leadership role.

### LEADERSHIP STYLES

There are three main leadership styles:

1. Autocratic
2. Democratic
3. Laissez-faire

**Autocratic** — the autocratic leader is one who:

- is the “only authority”
- is a strong disciplinarian
- leads by force
- is usually inflexible
- usually communicates one way

**Democratic** — the democratic leader is one who:

- seeks input from participants
- usually flexible in approach
- leads using accepted methods
- discipline is enforced once rules have been decided
- listens to reason

**Laissez-faire** — the laissez-faire leader is one who:

- keeps a very loose rein on participants
- does not normally follow a set pattern
- is very “laid back”
- has little interest in discipline
- seeks leadership help from others

**Is there one “best” method or leadership style to be used by a coach?** Probably not. Leadership style is largely situational in nature. Sometimes you must be the authority figure; the democratic approach is appropriate at others and when dealing with a mature group, the laissez-faire style may be okay. Each of you most likely has parts of each style that go to make up your own unique leadership style. The important thing is to recognize that there are different styles and which one is effective in what situation.

Your leadership role with the players at the younger levels will be primarily autocratic in nature. This should not be seen as a negative factor. You have superior knowledge, you are the authority figure and you must be in control of the group at all times. In order to maximize learning, minimize opportunities for injuries and accidents to occur and to provide the necessary structure required in the program, this is the leadership style most suited to



the head coach position. Of necessity, your approach to assistants and parents will be more democratic in nature, but you must always be in control of the program and its participants.

**What leadership style would you say would be appropriate in the following instances:**

1. The first ice session of the year?
2. Discussion among fellow coaches about the progressions to be followed in teaching a new skill?
3. A “fun” game at the end of an ice session?
4. Talking to parents about your plans for the year?

## EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP QUALITIES & TECHNIQUES

Some recommended leadership qualities and techniques associated with being a good coach:

### Qualities

- has patience
- communicates well
- allows for individual differences
- provides a good example
- is willing to listen to suggestions
- motivates players

### Techniques

- using your influence as a role model effectively
- knowing and being yourself—being aware of your strengths and weaknesses
- attending to individual differences and needs
- encouraging independence, responsibility, exploration and growth
- mastering the art of communication

## PARTICIPATION MOTIVES

### Coach's Motives

People become involved in hockey instruction for many reasons. These reasons determine how they interact with their players and the type and amount of impact they have on their players.

To have a positive and lasting impact on the players you instruct, it is necessary that your primary reasons for instructing be consistent with meeting the needs of your players. Your reasons for being involved should reflect the optimal physical,

psychological and social development of players. To achieve these goals you need to be an effective leader, teacher and organizer; encourage and support players; instruct enthusiastically and express genuine concern for the players' total development and well-being.

As pointed out in the “opening word” above, you significantly affect your players' motivation toward the achievement of their personal goals and the benefits and enjoyment they receive from participating in hockey. Your players' decisions about long-term participation in hockey and sports in general are largely determined by the impact you have on them.

Your reasons for instructing become very important when you consider that the tremendous impact you may have on your players extends well beyond the contact you have with them in hockey.

### What are the reasons that you are involved in instructing basic hockey skills?

The three main approaches to coaching/ instructing are:

1. self
2. task
3. social

**Self Approach** — Sam is a self-oriented coach. Sam is mainly interested in getting recognition for himself and is more concerned with fulfilling his own needs than those of whom he instructs. He instructs for personal praise and glory, and to be looked up to, rather than for the satisfaction of coaching, instructing and helping others grow.

**Task Approach** — Fred is a task-oriented coach. He is mainly concerned with achieving the goals of the group, whatever they may be. He strives to be effective in teaching skills and to be knowledgeable about the game. Fred focuses on ensuring that each lesson is covered in its entirety.

**Social Approach** — Arnold is an affiliation oriented or social coach. He is concerned with forming friendships, sharing things with others, providing the security of belonging, and helping develop strong interpersonal relationships. In instructing, Arnold emphasizes having fun and working cooperatively. He's easy to talk to, always friendly and loves to be with the kids.





### Player's Motives

The majority of players are there because their parents want them there. However, as they begin to develop skills and knowledge of hockey, they will begin to have their own reasons for participating. These reasons can usually be expressed in the following main categories:

1. excellence
2. affiliation
3. sensation
4. success

**Excellence** — Players for whom excellence is important want to be very good at playing hockey. They want to master the skills of hockey and be competent in the sport. These players want to:

- improve their hockey skills
- learn new hockey skills
- excel at hockey

**Affiliation** — Players for whom affiliation is important want to develop and maintain close interpersonal relationships with other players and coaches. They want to be accepted as a member of the group, appreciated by other players and to have fun with other players. These players enjoy:

- making friends
- participating with their friends
- social gatherings

**Sensation** — Players for whom sensation is important want hockey to provide them with exciting sensory experiences. They want to experience novelty and variety, competition and uncertainties as to what will happen next in ice sessions. They like:

- the excitement of close competition in relays and fun games
- doing new drills
- the feelings of skating smoothly and fast

**Success** — Players for whom success is important want to receive recognition for the attainment of skills. They want to receive external or extrinsic rewards and be well known. These players like:

- recognition from coaches
- recognition from parents and spectators
- to receive awards or badges for participation

Excellence and affiliation are the two most important reasons for participation by players in hockey although sensation and success are also relatively important. Although external rewards are an important reason for participation, caution must be exercised by coaches in overemphasizing the use of extrinsic rewards as they may decrease the intrinsic (excellence, sensation) interest of the players for participation. External rewards should be provided as a meaningful reward for the attainment of specific, important goals and not as a continuous natural part of participation. Thus, extrinsic rewards should not be given out too frequently or for unimportant reasons.

It is important for the coach to understand the reasons why players are participating in hockey and provide opportunities for the players to satisfy their reasons for participating. If players are provided with the experiences they are seeking from their hockey participation, then the players will attain improved personal satisfaction from participation and will remain enthusiastic about participating in sport for a long period of time.

### GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING COMMON SITUATIONS ENCOUNTERED BY COACHES

Research conducted with athletes shows that if they have coaches who follow the guidelines listed below, the athletes generally:

- enjoy playing more
- like their teammates more
- rate their coaches as more knowledgeable
- have a greater desire to continue playing in the future



Look at the guidelines carefully and put a (p) next to the ones you currently use as a part of your instructional style. Put an (o) next to the ones that you need to emphasize more.

**1. How to be more positive:**

- ☐ Give a lot of positive feedback
- ☐ Have realistic expectations
- ☐ Give positive feedback for desirable behavior as soon as it occurs
- ☐ Praise effort as much as you do results

**2. How to react to mistakes:**

- ☐ Give encouragement immediately after a mistake
- ☐ If the player knows how to correct the mistake, encouragement alone is sufficient
- ☐ When appropriate, give corrective instruction after a mistake, but always do so in an encouraging and positive way
- ☐ Avoid punishment
- ☐ Avoid giving corrective instruction in a hostile or punitive way

**3. How to maintain in order and discipline:**

- ☐ Maintain order by establishing clearly what is expected
- ☐ Strive to achieve a balance between allowing freedom and maintaining enough structure

**4. How to get positive things to happen:**

- ☐ Set a good example of desired behavior
- ☐ Encourage effort, don't demand results all the time
- ☐ In giving encouragement, be selective so that it is meaningful
- ☐ Avoid giving encouragement in a sarcastic or degrading manner
- ☐ Encourage players to be supportive of each other and reward them when they do so.

**5. How to create a good learning atmosphere:**

- ☐ Set realistic goals
- ☐ Always give instructions positively
- ☐ When giving instructions, be clear and concise
- ☐ Show the correct techniques when demonstrating

- ☐ Be patient and don't expect or demand more than maximum effort
- ☐ Acknowledge and reward effort and progress

**6. How to communicate effectively:**

- ☐ Ask yourself what your actions have communicated
- ☐ Encourage two-way communication between coaches and players
- ☐ Be sensitive to individual needs
- ☐ Communicate at the time when the player is most receptive

**7. How to deal with individuals who are disruptive:**

- ☐ Give them additional responsibilities
- ☐ Appeal to their sense of courtesy
- ☐ Be positive, not punitive
- ☐ Discuss their behavior with their parent(s)

**8. How to gain respect:**

- ☐ Establish your role as a competent and Willing coach
- ☐ Be a fair and considerate leader
- ☐ Set a good example
- ☐ Earn the respect of your players ... don't demand it

**AN INSTRUCTIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

An instructional philosophy is built on experience, knowledge and abilities you have acquired over the years. This is based on the development of a personal philosophy of leadership style and of the game of hockey itself. To be able to demonstrate and express a sound instructional philosophy, you must be able to:

- be an effective teacher
- be an effective leader for your players
- be a model of cooperation and fair play
- share responsibilities with players, e.g. picking up pucks and putting pylons away
- develop in your players a respect for other participants
- develop self-respect and self-discipline in your players

To have a significant, positive effect on the players you instruct, it is necessary to establish both in your mind and in your behavior a sound, personal instructional philosophy.



## SUMMARY

1. Three common leadership styles are autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire.
2. The main approaches to coaching/instructing are self, task and social.
3. The desire for excellence, affiliation, sensation and success are the main reasons why players participate.
4. One of the keys to becoming a good leader/coach is developing an effective personal philosophy.



# Chapter 3

## Communication

### OBJECTIVES

- To understand the principles appropriate to effectively communicate with players
- To understand that effective communication is both verbal and non-verbal
- To identify and practice listening techniques as one component of effective communication
- To understand the way in which the use of feedback contributes to effective communication with players

### PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Good instruction is a result of clear, concise and meaningful communication. When you influence players, whether it be teaching skills, correcting errors, solving problems, or explaining a new drill, it is done through communication. That's why it is important for coaches to have good communication skills.

As a hockey coach, it will be necessary to communicate with your players as a large group, as a smaller sub-group (e.g. a small group practicing a particular skill) and as individuals. Regardless of the number of players you are communicating with at one time, the same principles apply to communicating effectively.

**Be enthusiastic** — Your enthusiasm as a coach will be contagious. Be the enthusiastic leader of your group. Your enthusiasm will affect your players' enjoyment of the game of hockey.

**Be positive** — Interact with your players in a positive manner. Set a good example of desired behavior. Give constructive criticism frequently and keep your voice at a reasonable and understandable level.

**Be demanding but considerate** — Clearly establish what is expected of the players. Your expectations of the players should be based on their abilities and experiences. Don't expect more than is reasonable and realistic.

**Be consistent in communicating with your players** — Communicate in a consistent manner from one situation (explanation of a drill or teaching a new skill) to another and with all of your players (try to avoid playing favorites). Try to keep your temperament on an even keel; this will enable you to communicate more effectively and will enable the players to know what to expect from you.

**Treat all players as individuals** — It is important to be sensitive to individual needs and allow for individual differences, to show all players that you care for them as individuals. Make an effort to talk to all players individually at each session and get to know their first names as soon as possible.

**Communicate in the same manner with your child as with other players** — Parents who instruct their own children often put unrealistic expectations on them. If you instruct your children, remember to treat them as you do the other players and don't demand more of them than you do of the others.



**Be patient** — Particularly with the beginning players, the coach's best virtue will be patience. Remember that coordination is not yet fully developed and that the activities must be practiced over and over again to produce even the most minor of improvements. Give recognition and praise at every opportunity and your patience will pay off.

## NON-VERBAL AND VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Communication can be both verbal and non-verbal. "The coach is in a good mood today" or "The coach is angry because we didn't do the drill correctly." How did you communicate that? Coaches communicate many messages to players by their actions, facial expressions, use of arms and hands, body position, posture, touching behaviors as well as voice characteristics. Effective communication, both verbal and non-verbal, with your players is affected by how well you use your voice and body.

### Non-Verbal

Your players often learn their most memorable lessons by watching what you do. The coach's non-verbal behavior should reflect what is verbally communicated to the players. Act in a way which shows that you are consistent with what you say. For example, if you ask that your players be punctual for sessions, then your behavior should reflect this request.

What you communicate non-verbally to your players can be as important as what you verbally communicate. A positive example of non-verbal communication is illustrated by a coach who acknowledges the successful completion of a skill drill with a smile and a pat on the back. It is important to be aware of the message you are sending to your players.

The following are suggestions for using your body effectively:

1. Make an effort to gain eye contact at an eye-to-eye level with all players you are addressing. This will add to the sincerity of your instructions and will help you to determine whether players hear and understand your instructions.
2. Move about your players when they are practicing a skill so that they feel you are spending time with each of them.

3. Use variations in facial expressions (smile often!), positions of the arms, legs and body to change the mood you are trying to convey. Be aware of what these movements and positions convey to your players.

### Verbal

Effective verbal communication, which should compliment and support your non-verbal communication, involves good use of your voice. The following are suggestions for your using your voice effectively:

1. Avoid lengthy and complicated explanations when demonstrating and explaining a skill or drill.
2. Use language that is easily understood by the age and skill level of the players you are instructing. Watch for reactions from the players that indicate whether or not they understand your explanations.
3. Use a voice that is only slightly louder than a normal speaking voice except for the few times it is necessary to project your voice a long distance, (e.g. in an arena). Speaking unnecessarily loud encourages players to make noise themselves and is hard on the nerves of all concerned. Many coaches are able to settle players down by lowering their voices so that close attention is required to hear. Try it!
4. Speak clearly and move your eyes about the group of players as you speak. Periodically, look carefully at those who are farthest away from you. Can you see clear indications that they can hear? If there is any doubt, ask them.
5. Use inflections or changes in the tone of your voice to communicate varying moods (e.g. energetic, patient, serious, concern).

It should now be obvious to you that the correct combination of verbal and non-verbal communication is the most effective method of getting your point across. There are all kinds of lessons being learned by your behavior, by your actions, by your gestures, by your facial expressions and by the way in which you use your voice—all the ways you communicate to your players. It is therefore very important to try to ensure that your words and actions are as consistent as possible. You



can use your voice and body to gain the attention of your players by doing the following:

### Gaining Attention

- Have a regular spot or place where you usually begin.
- Use a signal (e.g. a raised hand, point to yourself, etc.) to indicate attention is needed.
- The whistle should normally be used only to signal for all players to stop what they are doing and look to you for instructions. In the team teaching situation, only the head coach should use the whistle.
- Ask firmly but politely, “May I have your attention, please? We are ready to begin.”
- If all but one or two are paying attention, politely ask them for their attention by using their name(s).
- Once you have their attention without showing a lot of impatience or annoyance, say something like “thank you,” “that’s better” or “it is necessary to have your attention so that we can learn this.”
- In the extreme case where a player insists on being disruptive, try saying, “this is important Bill, you’ll have to pay attention

... (without sarcasm).” In some cases, you may have to add “if you do not pay attention, you will have to leave” or “I will not continue until everyone is paying attention.” In rare cases where this fails to work, have the individuals remove themselves from the group and talk to them later, privately.

- Be careful not to punish those who have been paying attention after dealing with those who have not been attentive. Continue in a pleasant and positive manner.
- Make sure you reward people when they do become attentive rather than just singling them out when they are inattentive.

### Re-gaining Attention

If at first players are attentive and then their attention begins to wander, first ask yourself:

- Am I talking too much?
- Have the players been in one position for too long?
- Am I communicating in a clear and direct manner?
- Can all players see and hear well?

### FOR THE COACH

Using the following chart, assess how effectively you communicate with your players. For each statement, circle the letter which best describes you.

As a coach I:	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
1. Show enthusiasm	A	O	S	N
2. Act in a positive manner	A	O	S	N
3. Am not too demanding	A	O	S	N
4. Communicate in a consistent manner	A	O	S	N
5. Listen well to my players	A	O	S	N
6. Provide effective feedback	A	O	S	N
7. Recognize the contribution of each player	A	O	S	N
8. Treat all players as individuals	A	O	S	N
9. Instruct my child the same as the other players	A	O	S	N
10. Know what messages my non-verbal behavior communicates	A	O	S	N
11. Ensure my body language and words communicate the same messages	A	O	S	N
12. Use my voice and body effectively	A	O	S	N



**If the Problem Does Not Lie in the Above**

- Stop talking, look directly at the inattentive person(s), and move closer to them if possible.
- If this doesn't work, politely but firmly ask for attention using the inattentive person(s) name.
- If several are causing a disruption, consider breaking up the group so they are not together.
- In the final analysis, the best way to keep players' attention is to keep them active.

**Effective Listening**

One important component of effective communication is listening. How good a listener are you? How much of what your players say to you do you actually hear? Listening to players tells them that you are genuinely interested in their feelings, thoughts and suggestions.

Good listening is a difficult communication skill to learn well. Like all skills, it takes practice to be a good listener. The following techniques can be used to improve your listening skills:

**Attentive Listening** — Listening starts by the coach being attentive to the player. This is demonstrated by your facial expressions and gestures and by being quiet. Eye contact with the players, and at the same level, is important. These actions all indicate to players that you are ready to listen to what they have to say.

**Paraphrasing** — You repeat in your own words what it is you think the player said in order to determine if that is what the player meant. Paraphrasing allows you to see if you have a complete understanding of what the player said to you and provides the player with feedback as to whether the coach interpreted the meaning correctly. Any areas of misunderstanding can then be explained by the player.

**Active Listening** — You verbally indicate that you are following and understanding what the player is saying by the use of bridging words such as, "I see," "Yes" and "Okay."

**Restating** — The coach repeats the last phrase or few words of what the player said without changing anything.

**Inviting Clarification** — The coach requests that the player clarifies or expands on something that the player has said. In seeking clarification, the coach words the question to ask about a specific comment made by the player that was not understood. Inviting clarification shows interest in the player by the coach.

After a session on the ice is a good time to spend a few minutes listening to your players. Get some feedback on areas that went well and areas that the players and/or coach need to work on.

**Questions That Could Be Asked**

- What did you do today that you really enjoyed?
- What was one good thing that happened today?
- What is one thing you learned today?
- What did you think you did well?
- What is one thing you would like to do at the next session?
- What are you going to tell your parents you did today?

**Effective Feedback**

Verbal feedback (talking to the players about how and what they are doing) gives information that can help them learn and develop in a positive and effective way.

Effective feedback is essential for your players' motivation, learning and self image. It is an important key to successful instruction, as your feedback can turn a player off or on.



## SIX ASPECTS OF EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

1. Specific
2. Constructive
3. Sooner, Not Later
4. Checked for Clarity
5. Positive and Informative
6. Directed at Changeable Behavior

### Specific

Specific feedback contains precise information about what the player should try to do in order to solve or correct a problem.

#### Example:

##### ***Specific (and effective):***

- “When you turn to your left, you seem to be out of control. Try to lean more toward the center of the turn and bend your inside leg more.”

##### ***General (and ineffective):***

- “You are not turning correctly.”

### Constructive

Constructive feedback recognizes aspects of your players’ behavior and suggests positive steps for improvement. It should deal with observable behaviors. It should not deal with inferences about the player’s personal characteristic.

#### Example:

##### ***Constructive (and effective):***

- “When you pass the puck, you are doing everything correctly, however, when you receive a pass, you are letting the puck hit your stick. As the puck arrives, try to draw your stick back a bit to cushion it.”

##### ***Destructive (and ineffective):***

- “You pass the puck okay, but you can’t receive a pass worth a darn!”

### Sooner, Not Later

Effective feedback is given sooner not later. It is given as soon as possible after the player does something. Your player then has a clearer memory or “feeling” of what has taken place and is in a better position to learn from your feedback.

#### Example:

If you want to encourage shooting the puck in a certain way, you should say something positive immediately after the individual performs the skill. And if your players can “try out” your constructive, corrective feedback immediately after you have given it, they are much more likely to be able to perform the skill correctly the next time they try.

### Checked for Clarity

To make sure that your feedback has been clearly understood, check it out with the player.

#### Example:

Ask your players to tell you what they think you said or what they think you want them to do. If they have it right you can reinforce the message (“Yes, that’s right”). If they have it wrong, you can clarify the message (“That’s not what I meant. What I meant was ...”).

### Positive and Informative

Effective feedback has two main components. It is generally positive and informative. It reassures the player. It also gives the information needed to correct a problem or error. Negative feedback in itself provides little, if any, precise information on how to correct a problem.

### Directed at Changeable Behavior

Feedback based on this principle helps the player focus on a change that is within reach. It does the player absolutely no good to be told by the coach that he or she is “too small” or not strong enough since this is something the player cannot usually change. Rather, the feedback must focus on some aspect of the skill being performed that can be improved.

### TO SUM UP

Effective feedback has three main messages. It tells the individual:

1. “You’re OK as a player.”
2. “Here’s what you are doing well.”
3. “Here’s what you need to do to correct your error or improve your performance.”



Effective feedback usually provides more information than does negative feedback and, if used over time, it also leads to better coach-player relations.

### ACTIVITY – THE “PROBLEM” PLAYER

Think of a poorly skilled or “problem” player that you either instructed or knew and determine what you can do (or could have done) in order to make the person feel better and perhaps improve his or her skill.

- What is (was) the problem as you see it?
- What is the cause of the problem?
- What new approach could you use to solve it? Using feedback?
- How would you know if you were successful?

### SUMMARY

1. An effective coach:
  - is enthusiastic
  - is positive
  - is demanding but considerate
  - is consistent
  - treats all players as individuals
  - communicates in the same manner with his/her own child as with others
  - is patient
2. Non-verbal communication means how you say something and often means more than what you say.
3. Effective use of your voice contributes to clear and effective instruction.
4. Communication involves listening.
5. Listening techniques include: attentive listening, paraphrasing, bridging, restating and inviting clarification.
6. Feedback helps players when it is:
  - specific, not general
  - constructive, not destructive
  - sooner, not later
  - checked for clarity, not left misunderstood
  - positive and informative, not negative and useless
  - directed at behavior that is changeable



# Chapter 4

## Building Self-Esteem

### OBJECTIVES

- To identify the primary processes that influence the development of an athlete's self-esteem including social acceptance, social reinforcement and social comparison
- To develop techniques through the use of these processes to assist players in the development of high levels of self-esteem

An athlete's personality can be defined as the sum total of those attributes that make the individual unique. Self-image and self-esteem are two important components of each athlete's personality.

**Self-Image:** How one perceives or views oneself

**Self-Esteem:** How one feels about oneself

The key difference between the above two components of a player's personality is that self-esteem brings into play self-evaluation or self-appraisal.

Upon completion of this chapter, you will be better prepared to:

- Identify the primary processes that influence the development of an athlete's self-esteem
  - social acceptance
  - social reinforcement
  - social comparison
- Develop techniques through the use of these processes to assist players in the development of high levels of self-esteem.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF SELF-ESTEEM

- A high level of self-esteem is characterized by positive feelings about oneself.
- Self-esteem is learned. It is acquired through personal experiences and feedback from important people (e.g., parents, peers, and coaches) in one's life.
- Self-esteem can be changed.
- Self-esteem is extremely important as it affects one's motivation, learning, performance, personal relationship, and life satisfaction.

### HOW DOES SELF-ESTEEM DEVELOP?

Young hockey players receive feedback through constant interaction with their physical and social environment that provides them with information about what they are capable of doing and how others view them. The individuals in an athlete's life who are most important in shaping a player's self-esteem are parents, teachers, coaches, and peers.

The three main processes that influence the development of one's self-esteem are social acceptance, social reinforcement, and social comparison.



## SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE

Social acceptance is the extent to which other people make athletes feel they are accepted as important persons.

Coaches can make athletes feel accepted by:

- showing a genuine interest in how they are getting along in situations outside of hockey (e.g., at school, work, or home)
- warmly greeting the players each time that you see them
- talking with each athlete individually at every practice and game
- joking with them (but do not be a clown to them)
- asking their advice in certain areas (e.g., warm-ups)
- listening attentively to what the athletes have to say
- being willing to help the players solve personal problems

As a coach, you can do a lot to assist athletes in the development and acceptance of high levels of self-esteem by demonstrating a genuine interest in each athlete as a person and a hockey player.

## SOCIAL REINFORCEMENT

Social reinforcement refers to the positive or negative feedback that an athlete receives from other people.

- Feedback consists of the information that individuals transmit to an athlete by what they say and do.
- Young athletes are constantly seeking information about how well they are doing. Their coaches', peers', and parents' comments and gestures are important sources of such information.
- Positive reinforcement (praise or encouragement) will usually help the development of a positive self-esteem, whereas constant criticism or lack of interest in players will have a negative effect on the development of their self-esteem.
- Remember, praise is the highest form of motivation.

As a coach, try to use a lot of positive reinforcement to help players build high levels of self-esteem.

## POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

Positive reinforcement consists of any form of praise or encouragement that indicates approval of what an athlete is doing.

- Praise should be provided for good effort as well as good performance.
- Praise should be specific rather than general.
- Following a mistake in a game, a coach should show patience and explain to the player exactly what the error was and how to correct the error. Play the individual on the next shift to show your confidence in the athlete.
- Encouragement should be provided when athletes are working on new skills, especially after mistakes or setbacks.
- Use gestures such as a pat on the back, a smile, a wink, a nod of the head, or a thumbs-up sign to indicate approval.
- Encourage teammates to give one another positive feedback.
- Provide constructive feedback that will help the player improve performance.
- Do not use too much positive reinforcement or it will lose its effect. Make sure your positive feedback is sincere and meaningful.
- Set goals for each player that are specific, measurable, and attainable.
- Make sure that players feel that they have important roles on the team. Define the role for each athlete in a specific manner.

## NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT

Negative reinforcement consists of any type of criticism or punishment that indicates disapproval of what an athlete is doing.

- If you must use criticism, make sure it is directed at a specific, undesirable action that you want to eliminate. It should not be interpreted by an athlete as a comment on their worthiness as a person.
- Negative comments should always be accompanied by specific corrective information.



**For Example:**

Never just say “Don’t do that.” Instead, you should:

- explain to the players what they have done correctly
- explain to the players precisely what they have done wrong
- offer clear, corrective advice which shows them how to carry out the desired behavior
- offer encouragement

As another example:

If the center on a line is a right-hand shot and has a tendency to use a forehand pass (rather than a backhand pass) to the right winger, you should not just say “Don’t use a forehand pass, use a backhand pass.” Rather, you should explain that:

- by turning to the forehand to pass to your right winger, you are taking too long to execute the pass and are telegraphing your intentions, thereby giving the opposing player time to intercept the pass
- by using a backhand pass, you will be able to execute the pass more quickly and thus increase the chances of success
- players at all levels make this basic mistake and must practice their skill

Remember, following a mistake, offer corrective feedback and encouragement.

**SOCIAL COMPARISON**

Social comparison is the process by which athletes constantly compare themselves with others in order to conduct self-evaluations.

- Athletes discover through social comparison how well they are doing in the areas of physical, social, and mental abilities.
- Through their hockey experiences, players get answers to the following questions:
  - How effective am I?
  - How effective are my skills in, for example, skating, passing, shooting, and stick handling?
  - How strong am I?
  - How well-liked am I by my teammates?
  - How smart of a player am I?

As a coach, you should be aware that players are constantly comparing themselves with their teammates, peers, and significant others.

The rating that players give themselves is an important determinant of their self-esteem.

For athletes with a low level of self-esteem, the coach should make a strong effort to point out positive events in the physical, social, or mental areas. Examples may include:

- “You’re a good team player.”
- “You’re very unselfish.”
- “You showed a lot of hustle.”
- “You showed a lot of discipline by not retaliating.”
- “That was a smart play.”

You should also explain to players their specific and overall roles within the team. For example, if specific players have good defensive skills, the coach should emphasize the importance of their contribution to the team that otherwise may go unnoticed. Defensive skills, such as blocking shots, freezing the puck when a change is needed, or taking faceoffs, are necessary for the overall success of the team.

**BODY IMAGE**

Players’ perceptions of their body and their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their physical make-up are also important factors influencing the development of their self-esteem.

- Young athletes who have experienced a growth spurt may be gangly and uncoordinated and have a poor body image.
- Likewise, young athletes who are very late maturers may have a poor body image because of their small size.
- In both cases, poor body image may lead to low levels of self-esteem.
- A coach who recognizes a player who seems to have a poor body image due to being an early or late maturer should show patience with the athlete. The coach should also explain that many players pass through this growth pattern and eventually they all grow out of it. The coach should try to help the low self-esteem athletes realize the positive attributes they possess (e.g., hard worker, disciplines, unselfish, and honest).



# Chapter 5

## Effective Teaching

### OBJECTIVES

- To define what the coach must know in order to be an effective teacher
- To understand what guidelines the coach should follow when teaching young athletes
- To understand the characteristics of a good practice
- To identify qualities of a “good” drill
- To understand what the coach must know in order to conduct safe practices and games
- To identify the seven components of risk management that are required of all youth ice hockey coaches

### INTRODUCTION

The modern day youth ice hockey coach is called on to fill many roles, but none is more important than that of being a good teacher. In fact, if the coach is not a good teacher, all of the other roles will be diminished, too. The coach’s effectiveness as a counselor, substitute parent, role model, friend, and mentor is increased if the coach is a good teacher.

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*Good teaching is the foundation  
for successful coaching.*

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- be consistent and systematic in teaching young athletes
- be able to alter lesson plans and game strategies on the basis of how effectively objectives are being met

In the following section each of these guidelines will be discussed in more detail.

#### Communicate Clearly

The results that a coach expects young ice hockey players to obtain can be placed into three categories:

**Physical:** pertaining to the skills of skating, passing, checking, puck control, shooting and possession, as well as the physical conditioning that permits players to do these tasks without undue fatigue.

**Mental:** relating to the concepts, rules and responsibilities of the young athlete as a team member.

**Social:** referring to the personal characteristics of players, such as loyalty to a common cause, supporting team members, respecting opponents, officials and spectators, listening to the coach’s instructions, and conducting oneself as a responsible citizen.

### EFFECTIVE TEACHING GUIDELINES

There are many ways in which you, as a coach, can impart information to young athletes. There are also many styles or methods that have been shown to be effective. Despite the variety of styles that coaches use, certain rules or guidelines are common to all good instruction.

To be an effective teacher a coach must:

- clearly communicate what is to be learned
- be able to evaluate the athletes’ abilities
- use a coaching style that fits the needs of young athletes



**You, as a coach, are responsible for identifying precisely what is to be learned by the athletes within each of the previously identified categories. Players will not learn desirable skills, values, and attitudes simply by exposure or by having adults wish that certain fundamental laws of good citizenship will be acquired. Learning requires instruction, practice and progression under realistic situations, corrective action and then more practice. This cycle must be repeated until the desired outcome is attained.**

Coaches must be certain that their definitions of what is to be learned are pertinent to the developmental levels of their athletes. Hence, some young players may be advanced with regard to social skills and be delayed regarding their physical skills. Others may be advanced or delayed in all aspects of the agenda that a coach wishes to teach during the season. For this reason, clearly stated objectives by you as the coach are essential prior to the time when you initiate any instruction. Failure to define your objectives will lead to confusion during your instruction.

### Evaluation of Athletes' Abilities

The coach must be able to assess the abilities of **all** youth players **prior to** determining the instructional objectives for the year. The accurate assessment of the players' abilities determines a coach's instructional strategies, as well as the expectations and goals that can be set for the season.

Assessment must include each player's status in the areas of physical, mental, and social skills. For example, a player with excellent physical skills, but who has a bad attitude, could cause major disruptions on the team if the coach does not address the deficiencies in the player's social skills. Conversely, players who have excellent social and mental skills will not be able to realize their potential as team members if they are unable to translate these abilities because of underdeveloped physical skills.

The assessment of players' abilities is essential to a good beginning in the ice hockey season, but assessment by the coach must also occur practice-by-practice, throughout the season. In fact, accurate assessment of players' needs is one of the most essential components of good teaching. All good bench coaches have the ability to assess a situation and then take corrective action during the teachable moment when instruction has the greatest chance of being effective.

## Assessing Needs and Taking Corrective Action

### Physical Skills

Coaches can learn much about their players' physical skills by observing them in drills and scrimmages. The assessment of physical skills depends on:

- knowing the correct way to perform a skill
- knowing the sequence of actions that result in the correct performance of the skill
- being able to detect your players' correct and incorrect actions
- being able to tell your players how to correct their faulty performance

Once again, the judgment of the coach is the key to improving your athletes' performance. If you are inexperienced in the analysis of skills you should review the outstanding videos on skill development that are available from USA Hockey. Demonstration of the essential physical skills in slow-motion will assist you in observing the essential components when the skill is performed at its normal speed. The explanations provided by these videos can also be used as you instruct your players.

There is no substitute for experience when you attempt to identify errors and correct the physical techniques of your players. However, inexperienced coaches have learned that the process of observing and correcting mistakes can be enhanced by the following guidelines:

- Choose a vantage point so that you can see the entire skill being performed.
- Observe the entire skill before dissecting it into its parts, then have the player attempt to correct only the one part or segment that is most important to success. When this segment has been corrected, proceed to the next most important segment.
- Have the player practice the essential component until the correct motor pattern has been achieved.
- Be ready to encourage the player while the new pattern is being learned. Remember that the speed and total coordination with which the old pattern was performed will be reduced while the player is learning the adjustments.

### Assessing Mental Needs

Young ice hockey players will learn the rules and concepts of ice hockey most effectively by having



you, the coach, anticipate what is to occur during games and then ensuring that you construct identical situations in your practices. The “sixth sense” that some young players possess comes from having been in similar situations before, then recognizing the options available to them and choosing the correct course of action under the circumstances. Only if young players have experienced an identical situation in previous games and practices can you expect them to make the correct decision. Therefore, your teaching in practices must be based on the situations that you expect them to encounter in games. How they resolve these dilemmas will be directly related to their understanding of similar situations in practice and games.

### Assessing Social Needs

The interaction among your players will provide you with an indication of their social needs. Often, the most skillful players are also the most popular. Their social needs are likely to be met by the recognition that they receive from teammates, parents, and fans because of their playing abilities. The coach must ensure that the recognition for skillful play must not overshadow the need to acquire the social skills of good citizenship. Too often skillful players are treated as though the rules of the team and society do not apply to them, only to find that they are societal misfits when their sports skills no longer shield them from the application of equal treatment.

Coaches should be particularly alert to the special problems of social development that are often present in immature players whose skill level is consistently below the average of his/her team and age level group. These underdeveloped players face the constant challenge of being unable to compete on an equal basis in the drills and, perhaps equally as important, they are frequently excluded from the comradeship that develops within a team.

Coaches need to get to know their players and their backgrounds. Children come to practices and games with all kinds of “baggage” from outside ice hockey. A coach must be sensitive to the feelings and emotional status of her/his players based on what is going on outside of hockey.

**The coach is the essential promoter of social development within a team and is the one who must recognize the contributions of the immature, underdeveloped players by praising their**

**successes and placing them in situations where they are likely to succeed. When players recognize that the coach values the contributions of all team members, then the leaders of the team are also more likely to accept those whose contributions to team goals are not consistently evident.**

### GUIDELINES TO GOOD TEACHING

Although there are many ways to instruct young ice hockey players, the inexperienced coach will find the following sequence easy to use and effective in teaching and refining skills. **As you begin your instruction, it is best to remember that young players learn best by participating.** They do not learn well by sitting and listening to coaches lecture about topics that too often seem abstract, but which adults think are concrete. **A good rule is, “When I speak, I want you to stop what you’re doing and listen.”** Do not violate your own rule by continuing to talk when players are not paying attention.

Prior to your instruction:

- make sure you are prepared to teach and have a lesson plan for practice
- be sure you have the attention of all players
- use clear and simple language to communicate precisely what you want them to learn; do this in one minute or less, preferably with a physical demonstration of the skill
- have players practice the skill while you observe them and provide feedback
- have players come back to a group setting and discuss the adjustments that are needed for improvement
- place the players into groups by ability; continue to practice and provide feedback
- repeat the last two steps as frequently as needed until the desired level of competence is achieved

The following 10 steps to good teaching have been shown to be effective in a variety of settings, including the teaching of young athletes.

### Be Realistic About Your Players’ Abilities

Players will respond to realistic and challenging expectations. Conversely, expectations that are beyond their achievement will decrease the motivation of even the most skillful players. Set short-term goals on an individual basis and adjust



them when they are achieved. Players tend to achieve according to their coaches' expectations if the expectations are realistic.

As a coach you should expect to significantly improve the skills, knowledge of rules and strategies and attitudes of each of your players during the course of the season. Make a commitment to help each of the players realize these goals.

### Structure Your Instruction

Your players' progress will be directly linked to how clearly you communicate and teach toward your intended outcomes. This means that every practice must have well-defined objectives and a systematic plan of instruction. The critical steps to a structured lesson are:

- Select the essential skills, rules, and concepts from the many options available.
- Clearly identify elements of acceptable performance for each skill you include in practice.
- Organize and conduct your practices to maximize the opportunity your players have to acquire the skill(s) by using the effective teaching techniques contained in this chapter.
- Players must experience success to improve.

### Establish an Orderly Environment

The achievement of objectives by coaches is directly related to the learning that takes place in a safe, orderly, and business-like environment, with clear expectations of what is to be accomplished at each practice. Players must be held accountable for being on time and coming to the practice ready to learn. Young players do not learn effectively in long, boring practices that involve drills that do not relate to their understanding of the game. Keep your practices organized, personalized, and pertinent to the needs of your team.

### Maintain Consistent Discipline

You will find that keeping control of your team is much easier than regaining control once problems with misbehavior have disrupted your authority. Thus, your role is much easier if you can prevent the types of misbehavior that arise when coaches do not anticipate and avoid problems with discipline.

### Preventing Misbehavior

Although threats and lectures may prevent misbehavior in the short term, they create a hostile and negative atmosphere and, typically, their effectiveness is short-lived. Moreover, this type of relationship between a coach and team members does not promote learning the game of hockey nor does it motivate the players to accept the coach's instructions.

Sound discipline involves two steps that must be in place before misbehavior occurs. They are:

1. defining how players are to behave and identifying misbehavior that will not be tolerated
2. identifying the consequences for individuals who do not behave according to the rules

**Children want clearly defined limits and structure for how they should behave.** This can be accomplished without showing anger, lecturing the players or threatening them. As the coach, it is your responsibility to have a systematic plan for maintaining discipline before your season gets underway. Coaches who have taken the time to establish rules of conduct will be in a position to react in a reasonable and fair manner when children misbehave.

### Defining Team Rules

The first step in developing a plan to maintain discipline is to identify what you consider to be desirable and undesirable conduct by your players. This list can then be used to establish relevant team rules. A list of potential items to consider when identifying team rules is included in Table 5-1.

### Enforcement of Rules

Not only are rules needed to maintain discipline, but enforcement of those rules must be carried out so that reoccurrences are prevented. Rules are enforced through rewards and penalties. Players are rewarded when they abide by the rules and penalized when they break the rules. The next step, therefore, in developing a plan to maintain discipline is to determine the rewards and penalties for each rule. Your players should be asked for suggestions at this point because they will receive the benefits or consequences of the decisions. When determining rewards and penalties for rules, the most effective approach is to use rewards that are meaningful to



## EXAMPLES OF DESIRABLE AND UNDESIRABLE CONDUCT IN HOCKEY

### Desirable Conduct

Attending to your instructions  
Full concentration on drills  
Treating opponents with respect  
Giving positive encouragement to teammates  
Avoiding penalties  
Being prompt to practices and games  
Helping to pick up equipment after practices  
Bringing all of his/her equipment to practices  
Respect for coaches, teammates, opponents, and referee

### Undesirable Conduct

Talking while you are trying to give instructions  
Inattentive behavior during drills  
Fighting with opponents/teammates or using abusive language  
Making negative comments about teammates  
Intentionally committing penalties during the game  
Being late or absent from practices and games  
Leaving equipment out for others to pick up  
Forgetting to bring a part of his/her equipment or uniform to games and practices  
Disruptive behavior

**Table 5-1.** Items to consider when defining rules for your team.

your players and appropriate to the situation. Withdrawal of rewards should be used for misconduct. A list of potential rewards and penalties that can be used in hockey is cited in Table 5-2.

***The best way to motivate players to behave in an acceptable manner is to reward them for good behavior.***

Remember that penalties are only effective when they are meaningful to the players. Typically, the types of penalties that are used for rule violations are ineffective because they are not important to the players. Generally, they do not leave room for positive interactions between you and your players. Examples of ineffective penalties include showing anger, embarrassing players by lecturing them in the presence of team members or adults, shouting at players, or assigning a physical activity (skating laps, extra pushups). Assigning a physical activity for certain misbehavior may develop a negative attitude toward that activity. Avoid using physical activity as a form of punishment; the benefits of hockey, such as learning skills and gaining cardiovascular fitness, are gained through activity.

***Children should not associate activity with punishment.***

Although threats, lectures and/or yelling may deter misbehavior in the short term, the negative

atmosphere that results reduces long term coaching effectiveness. A more positive approach to handling misbehavior is to prevent it by establishing, with player input, clear team rules. Use fair and consistent enforcement of the rules, primarily through rewarding correct behavior, rather than penalizing unacceptable behavior.

### Group Your Players According to Ability

Your ice hockey team will most likely have players at various levels of ability. For effective learning, the players must sometimes be divided into smaller groups. The critical consideration for grouping players effectively is to have them practicing at a level that is needed to advance their playing ability.

The general guidelines to effectively group players are:

- When a new skill, rule, or strategy is being taught that all your athletes need to know, use a single group instructional setting.
- As you identify differences in ability, seek to place players of similar ability in smaller groups.
- When a skill, rule, or strategy is being practiced in which individual athletes are at several levels of ability (initial, intermediate, or later learning levels), establish learning stations that focus on specific outcomes to meet these needs.



EXAMPLES OF REWARDS AND PENALTIES THAT CAN BE USED IN HOCKEY	
Rewards	Penalties
Being a starter	Being taken out of a game
Playing a desired position	Not being allowed to start
Leading an exercise or activity	Sitting in the penalty box for part of practice
Praise from you	1. until ready to respond correctly
Decals	2. for a specific number of minutes
Medals	3. for the rest of practice
	Dismissed for
	1. next practice
	2. next week
	3. rest of season

**Table 5-2.** *Example of rewards and penalties.*

Organize the groups so that there is a systematic order in which players take turns. Each group must know precisely what is to be learned. Supervise each group by rotating and spending short periods of time with each. Avoid the temptation of spending all of the instructional time with one group. If any group is favored during small group instruction, it should be those players who are the least skillful because they are also the ones who are least able to diagnose and correct their own errors.

### Maximize Your Players' On-Task Time

Progress in skill development is directly related to the amount of time that players spend practicing these skills in game-like situations. Practices provide the opportunity to attempt a specific skill repeatedly under guided instruction. Coaches should anticipate game situations and then conduct their practices to simulate game situations, while still being able to adjust the environment to meet the developmental levels of the various athletes. **Practices are the most effective learning environment for perfecting physical and mental skills.** In order to ensure that practices are conducted wisely you should consider the following time-saving techniques:

- Reduce the number of athletes who are waiting in line by using small groups in your drills.
- Provide sufficient equipment so that players do not have to wait for their turn to use it.

- Schedule your drills so that one leads into the next without major set-up time.
- Clearly outline and/or diagram each portion of practice and communicate as much of that information as possible before going on the ice.
- Complete as many pre- and post-warmup/cool down activities off the ice as possible.
- Recruit aides (parents and older players) to help you with instructional stations under your supervision.

### Maximize the Players' Success Rate

Successfully achieving a desired outcome and the motivation to continue to refine the desired outcome are highly related. Therefore, coaches must structure their practices so that players are successful in lessons to be learned. This relationship between **attempts** and **successes** mandates that coaches structure their practices so that players will succeed on a high proportion of their early attempts. The following hints have been used by successful youth ice hockey coaches:

- Reduce each skill, rule, or strategy into achievable sub-skills and focus instruction on those sub-skills.
- Provide feedback to the student such that, on most occasions, something that they did is rewarded, followed by specific instructions about what needs more work, ending with an encouraging, "Try again."



### Monitor the Players' Progress

Players learn most effectively during practices that are accompanied by meaningful feedback. In youth hockey, the meaningful feedback is most frequently provided by the coach or assistant coaches. The old cliché “Practice makes perfect” is only true if athletes are practicing appropriate skills in the correct manner. If left to their own agendas, young players may practice inappropriate skills or they may practice pertinent skills inappropriately. As their coach, you must be sure that the practices are conducted with the correct balance of feedback and independent learning.

### Ask Questions of the Players

Young players generally enjoy their relationships with their coaches. Asking them questions is an ideal way to build the coach/athlete relationship. Questions should be designed to provide insight into why the player is involved in ice hockey, who the significant persons are in his/her life, what his/her goals are for the season and what parts of the game are personally satisfying or depressing. Coaches who know their players are most likely to be able to meet their needs by placing the players into situations that will enhance their self-esteem.

### Promote a Sense of Control

Coaches must be in control of their teams, but control is not a one-way street. Players, too, must feel that they have some control over their own destiny when they attend practices and games. They must feel that they will be rewarded for hard work, that their goals will be considered, and that their role on the hockey team is valued and essential to the welfare of the team. As a coach you can promote a sense of control by:

- organizing your instruction to result in many successful experiences (i.e., opportunities to provide positive feedback)

- teaching your players that everyone learns various hockey skills at different rates.
- teaching young players to use effort and their own continuous progress as their primary guide. They should avoid comparing their skill level with that of other players
- encouraging individual players to put forth their best effort. Reward such effort with a comment, pat on the back, thumbs-up sign, or other means that will communicate your approval
- involving them in the selection of drills or activities, when appropriate

## PROTECTING THE SAFETY OF PLAYERS

In addition to providing effective instruction, the coach has the responsibility of ensuring that all practices and games are conducted in a safe environment. Therefore, the coach's primary responsibility can be summed up in this statement: **Teach for improved competence and safety every day.**

For over a decade, courts, lawyers and professional associations have been establishing the legal responsibilities of the youth sports coach. These responsibilities include providing adequate supervision, a safe environment, proper instruction, adequate and proper planning, adequate evaluation for injury or incapacity, appropriate emergency procedures and first aid training, adequate and proper equipment, appropriate warnings, and adequate matching of players and competitors. These duties are to be met by the coach while he/she is involved in any supervisory situation related to his/her coaching responsibilities.



# Chapter 6

## Skill Performance:

### Observing, Analyzing and Demonstrating

#### OBJECTIVES

- To instruct coaches on how to observe players and analyze their skill performance
- To help coaches develop an observation plan to offer practical feedback to athletes
- To assist coaches in developing skill progressions

#### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, you will be introduced to a procedure for observing performance, and interpreting those observations. You will be taught how to give practical feedback to the players and will be given a process of progressively teaching skills.

#### OBSERVATION

One of the most important roles of a coach is that of an observer. The ability to plan and coordinate practices alone is only one element of a good coach. A coach must be able to observe performances, evaluate them, and give practical feedback so the player's skills can develop and improve.

Observations occur in many different settings and in many different ways. It may occur during competition, at practice, during off-ice activities, during team-related activities or during individual-related activities. Whichever the setting of observation, it is very important that the coach understands the process.

In trying to improve skill technique, coaches must not observe performances like a spectator, giving feedback such as: "bad shot," "bad pass," or "great save." This kind of feedback is negative and does not

give the player sufficient information to analyze and act upon.

Another error youth ice hockey coaches make in analyzing skill techniques is that they only make a symptomatic analysis. That is, merely pointing out a fault without discussing the reason for it.

Coaches should have a well thought-out plan to help them analyze the skills of their players and the knowledge to understand what causes poor performance, and be able to act upon this information.

There are three main stages to observing performance. They are:

1. The planning stage.
2. The observation stage.
3. The analysis stage.

#### Planning

In this stage, the coach must break down the skill being observed into parts. It will be easier to focus on particular phases of a skill to be analyzed.

Once a skill has been broken into parts, the coach can identify the key components of each phase that affects the final outcome. The parts must be observable and the coach must be able to think of them in terms of the skills' mechanical movements.



At this stage, the coach must know what to look for and where to look. The good coach will develop a plan for observing skill execution that will assist in making a sound observation.

This plan must include the coach deciding what phase of the skills to focus on, the key elements to be observed, and the best possible position from which to view the skill to get the best information.

### Observation

The following are some tips that should aid you in observing:

- View the athlete performing the skill from various angles so that you see different things.
- Get a general idea of the entire skill by making a few broad observations before breaking down the skill.
- Be patient with your observation as well as your player. Do not correct just on the first observation. Watch a number of executions to be sure a problem really exists.
- A useful technique is to describe to yourself what you see.
- Video is a useful tool in helping the coach break down a skill.

### Analysis

Once the coach has observed the athlete's performance(s), the information that is gathered through correlating observable movements with the outcome of the performance must be analyzed. From this, a coach will be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the player's performance and give simple as well as practical feedback to the player.

### DEMONSTRATION AND PRACTICE

To improve in the area of skill development, as well as the conceptual aspect of hockey, athletes need to know what to do and how to do it. The aim of proper demonstration and practice is to produce a model for the required element to be perfected. Athletes need to form the proper mental image of what is to be performed that will guide them through the subsequent actions.

Before practice, it is not only important to plan what is to be taught, but also to plan the demonstration to be given and the main points to be made.

It is important to demonstrate all components of practice, skills, and concepts to ensure the proper results.

The following is a breakdown on how to teach a skill, drill, or concept in a progressive manner:

1. When teaching a complicated skill, show the player the skill in its entirety.
2. Break the skill down into teaching and learning components.
3. Allow the player to move slowly through each component, which will enable him/her to learn, comprehend and master each movement.
4. Once all of the components of the task are taught, have the player execute the skill in its entirety. Allow him/her to move slowly at first, to gain confidence, and to ensure proper technique. Then gradually accelerate the rate of execution.
5. Once the skill is mastered, encourage execution at top speed.
6. Create fun game-like drills that will allow the player to practice and use the skill they have just been taught.
7. The final phase is to create game situations with resistance where the player needs to execute the new skill under pressure (i.e. reduced time or space).

### SKILL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

Feedback to the athletes is very important so they may develop their skills. Teaching is an interaction between the coach and the athlete, and the following elements are important to remember:

1. You, as a coach, must understand the process of learning.
2. To be an effective coach you must be an effective observer.
3. It is important to know all of the components of a skill and be able to analyze them when an athlete is performing.
4. Be able to demonstrate or teach an athlete how to perform a particular skill or movement.
5. Be able to analyze and evaluate a performance and provide simple and practical feedback to the athlete.



# Chapter 7

## Establishing a Good Relationship Between Coach and Parents

### OBJECTIVES

- To obtain the information and help needed from parents to do a good job
- To identify the coach's responsibility to the parents of the players on the coach's team
- To assist the coach in enlisting the support of parents in team and program activities
- To identify the responsibilities of the players and their parents within this program

### INTRODUCTION

Support and assistance from parents can be very helpful. Some parents, however, through lack of awareness, can weaken the effects of your coaching, and thus reduce the benefits hockey can provide to their children.

These negative influences can be minimized if you tell parents:

- what your roles are as the coach
- the purpose and objectives of the ice hockey program
- the responsibilities they and their children have in helping the team run smoothly

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*Some parents, through lack of awareness, can weaken the effects of your coaching.*

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The most effective way of communicating the purposes and needs of your program is through an orientation with the parents. It can be used to:

- teach parents the rules and regulations of ice hockey so that they understand the game
- provide details about the season
- provide a setting for collecting and distributing important information

At the parents' orientation meeting, you have the opportunity to ask for their assistance and discuss other items that are specific to the team. A meeting for parents is also an excellent way for them to get to know you and each other. A face-to-face meeting and a few short remarks go a long way toward uniting coaches and parents in a cooperative endeavor that benefits the players. Many potential problems can be eliminated by good communication that begins before the first practice.

### GETTING PARENTS TO ATTEND AN ORIENTATION MEETING

After you have received your team roster and, if possible before the first practice, you should make arrangements to schedule a parents' orientation meeting. If you do not personally have sufficient space to accommodate the parents, a room in a neighborhood school or community building usually can be scheduled free of charge for an orientation meeting.

Before scheduling the time and date for the meeting, the parents should be asked about the times at which they could attend. This information, as well as items of parental concern for an agenda, can be obtained through telephone conversations



and emails with the parents. Once the time and date have been determined, the parents should be notified about this information by telephone or email.

If an email is sent, the agenda for the meeting should be included. If possible, this notification should occur about two weeks before the meeting and should be followed by a courteous telephone reminder on the night before the meeting.

In your communication with the parents, you should stress the importance of the meeting and the need for each family to be represented at the meeting.

### ORGANIZING THE PARENTS' ORIENTATION MEETING

If you are well-prepared and organized, conducting a parents' orientation meeting will be an enjoyable and useful event. Before this meeting, you should complete the agenda and write down key points that you plan to communicate under each item. Next, assemble the handouts that will be distributed at the meeting. At the very least, the handouts should include an agenda for the parents to follow.

Other suggested handouts and forms for distributing and collecting information include:

- Information on common ice hockey injuries.
- A medical examination form (if provided by your program).
- An accident insurance form and information (if provided through your program).
- An athletic medical information form.
- A medical release form.
- A description of proper equipment.
- A list of team assistants and responsibilities.
- A season schedule.
- A telephone tree, email addresses and player/parent roster.

### CONTENT OF A PARENTS' ORIENTATION MEETING

Parents usually have a number of questions concerning their child's hockey program. With proper preparation and an outlined agenda, you should be able to answer most questions. A sample agenda is provided. This agenda can be supplemented with items you and/or the parents believe to be important.

#### SAMPLE AGENDA

1. Introductions
2. Goals of the team and program
3. Understanding the sport of ice hockey
4. Dangers and risk of injury
5. Emergency procedures
6. Equipment needs
7. Athletes' responsibilities
8. Parents' responsibilities
9. Season schedule
10. Question and answer period
11. Coaches' responsibilities
12. The chain of command within the organization for complaints or any problems involving the team

#### Introductions

Parents should be informed about who administers the ice hockey program. They should become acquainted with the coaches and the parents of the other players. As the coach, you should introduce yourself, briefly describing your background, coaching experience, and reasons for coaching.

The parents should also introduce themselves, identify where they live, and perhaps indicate how long their children have been involved in the program. Learning who the other parents are makes it easier to establish working relationships for specific tasks and to initiate sharing of responsibilities (carpooling, bringing refreshments to games, etc.).

Finally, the purpose of the meeting should be explained to communicate important information about each agenda item. If handouts are available, they should be distributed at this time. We suggest that at least one handout (the agenda) be distributed to provide order to the meeting, a sense of organization on your part, and a place for parents to write notes.

#### Goals of the Team, the Program and Coaching Philosophy

The goals of the sponsoring organization, as well as your personal goals, should be presented. Parents then will be able to judge whether those goals are compatible with their beliefs regarding what is appropriate for their child. Goals that have been



identified by young hockey players as most important are:

- to have fun
- to improve skills and learn new skills
- to be on a team and to make new friends

Most educators, pediatricians, sport psychologists, and parents consider these to be healthy goals that coaches should help young athletes achieve. Parents should be informed of the primary goals of the team and the amount of emphasis that will be placed on achieving these goals.

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***Parents should be informed of the primary goals and coaching philosophy.***

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Other areas that should be addressed are your policies on eliminating players, the consequences of missing practices, and recognizing players through awards. You may be asked to answer many questions about how you will function as a coach. Some examples are:

- Will players be allowed to compete if they missed the last practice before a game?
- Will players be excluded from contests or taken off the team if they go on a two-week vacation?
- Will players receive trophies or other material rewards?
- Are the rewards given only to good performers or are they given to all participants?

### **Understanding the Sport of Ice Hockey**

Many times spectators boo officials, shout instructions to players, or contradict the coach because they do not know the rules of the game. This is particularly true if the rules of play have been modified for younger age groups. Informing parents about basic rules, skills, and strategies may help those who are unfamiliar with ice hockey and will prevent some of this negative behavior.

The information may be presented in the form of a video, brief explanation, demonstration of techniques, and/or rule interpretations. If you'd rather not use the meeting to cover this information, you could invite parents to attend selected practice sessions where a demonstration and/or explanation of positions, rules, strategies and standard of play will be presented.

### **Dangers and Risk of Injury**

Parents should be told what they can expect in terms of possible injuries their child may incur in ice hockey. Failure to inform parents of potential injuries is the most frequent basis for lawsuits involving coaches and players.

Tell them, for example, that generally the injuries are confined to sprains, bruises, and contusions, but that there is a possibility for broken bones, concussions, and other serious injuries. Let them know if a medical examination is required before their child's participation. If so, what forms or evidence of compliance is acceptable, to whom it must be provided, and when it is due.

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***Parents should be told what they can expect in terms of possible injuries in youth hockey.***

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Tell the parents what will be done to prevent injuries and assure them that the playing/practice area and equipment will be checked to help keep players safe and free from exposure to hazards.

Lastly, the program's policy of accident insurance should be described. Inform parents if the program maintains athletic accident coverage or whether parents are required to provide insurance coverage for injuries that happen during their child's athletic participation.

### **Emergency Procedures**

Have the parents provide you with information and permission necessary for you to function during an emergency. The Athlete's Medical History Form (from your club registrar) was designed for these purposes. You should have the parents complete this form and keep it with you at all team functions. This form will provide you with information to guide your actions in an emergency.

### **Equipment Needs**

Explain what equipment the players need and where it can be purchased. Advice on the quality of particular brands and models and an indication of how much parents can expect to pay for specific items is also welcomed by the parents.

If an equipment swap is organized, tell them where and when it will be held. A handout describing proper equipment should be provided. A list and guidelines for the selection of hockey equipment



can be found in Chapter 18. This could be reproduced and used as a handout to the parents for properly outfitting their child.

### **Athletes' Responsibilities**

The "Bill of Rights for Young Athletes" (Martens and Seefeldt, 1979) reminds adults that the child's welfare must be placed above all other considerations. Children and their parents must realize, however, that along with rights, they must meet certain responsibilities. Young athletes must be responsible for:

- being on time at practices and games with all of their equipment
- cooperating with coaches, teammates and officials
- putting forth the effort to condition their bodies and to learn the basic skills
- conducting themselves properly and living with the consequences of inappropriate behavior

### **Parents' Responsibilities**

Parents of young athletes must assume some responsibilities associated with their child's participation on the hockey team. This should be discussed at the parents' orientation meeting. We have identified a number of parental responsibilities. You may wish to cover all or a portion of the following responsibilities in the parents' orientation meeting:

- Parents should learn what their child expects from ice hockey.
- Parents should decide if their child is ready to compete and at what level.
- Parents should help their child understand the meaning of winning and losing.
- Parents are responsible for disciplining their child and ensuring that their child meets specific responsibilities for participating on the hockey team.
- Parents should not interfere with their child's coach and should conduct themselves in a proper manner at games.

Parents should also be sensitive to fulfill the commitment they and their child have made to the team. This often requires that parents displace other important tasks in order to get their child to practice on time, publicly support the coach, encourage players to give their best effort, reward players for desirable efforts, and participate in the social events

of the team. Below is USA Hockey's Parent's Code of Conduct:

- Do not force your children to participate in sports, but support their desires to play their chosen sports. Children are involved in organized sports for their enjoyment. Make it fun.
- Encourage your child to play by the rules. Remember, children learn best by example, so applaud the good plays of both teams.
- Do not embarrass your child by yelling at players, coaches or officials. By showing a positive attitude toward the game and all of its participants, your child will benefit.
- Emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit your young athlete. De-emphasize games and competition in the lower age groups.
- Know and study the rules of the game and support the officials on and off the ice. This approach will help in the development and support of the game. Any criticism of the officials only hurts the game.
- Applaud a good effort in both victory and defeat, and enforce the positive points of the game. Never yell or physically abuse your child after a game or practice – it is destructive. Work toward removing the physical and verbal abuse in youth sports.
- Recognize the importance of volunteer coaches. They are important to the development of your child and the sport. Communicate with them and support them.
- If you enjoy the game, learn all you can about hockey – and volunteer.

### **Season Schedule**

Fewer telephone calls and emails will be needed later in the season if you prepare and distribute a schedule of events for the season at the orientation meeting. The most efficient way to provide parents with the entire season schedule is with a handout.

The schedule should inform the parents about the length of the season; the dates, sites, and times when practices and games will be held; lengths of practices and games; number of games; number of practices; and other events for the season. Maps and/or instructions about where team events will occur are often helpful.



## FOLLOW-UP ON THE PARENTS' ORIENTATION MEETING

After having conducted the parents' orientation meeting, you should contact the families who were unable to attend and briefly inform them about what was discussed. They should be given the handouts that were distributed at the meeting, and you should collect whatever information is needed from them. Once your records are completed, you may compile additional handouts (e.g., telephone tree or email addresses).

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***Keep the lines of communication open between you and the parents. Use the 24-hour rule: wait 24 hours after the situation to see if it is still as bad as it originally seemed.***

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No matter how many questions you answer at the parents' orientation meeting, it will not solve all of the problems. Thus, it is important to keep the lines of communication open. You should indicate your willingness to discuss any problems that were not discussed at the first meeting. This might be done with a telephone call or at a conference involving the coach and parent, or the coach, parent, and athlete. Immediately before or after a practice is often an appropriate time to discuss major issues with parents. You could even have another meeting for parents midway through the season to provide an update on the team's progress, to discuss any problems, or to listen to parents' comments. By inviting parents to talk with you, they will become a positive rather than a negative influence on the players and the team.

## SUMMARY

Parents can be an asset to your program, but some parents can have a negative influence on your program. Communicating to parents about how you perceive your role as the coach, the purpose of the hockey program, and the responsibilities that they and their children have to the hockey program can minimize these negative influences. The most effective way to communicate this information is through a parents' orientation meeting. The time and effort you put into developing a well-organized meeting will save you considerably more time and effort throughout the season.

In a parents' orientation meeting, you have the opportunity to explain to parents that they have responsibilities to you and the team, such as deciding if their child is ready to compete, having realistic expectations, disciplining, and not interfering with coaching or playing. Children's responsibilities of promptness, cooperation, commitment, and proper conduct can also be outlined for parents.

In addition, other agenda items can be discussed and information can be gathered at a parents' orientation meeting that may make your job run more smoothly throughout the season. Be sure to discuss such items as danger and risk of injury, equipment needs, emergency procedures, and the season schedule.

The agenda items outlined in this chapter may not cover all the issues you need to address with the parents of your players. Therefore, you must organize a specific meeting that meets the needs of your team.



## Section 2

# American Development Model





# Chapter 8

## American Development Model

### OBJECTIVE

- To understand USA Hockey's American Development Model

### INTRODUCTION

The American Development Model (ADM) is a nationwide initiative that provides local associations across the country with a blueprint for optimal athlete development that focuses on age-appropriate training utilizing long-term athlete development principles.

Recommendations have come from experts in ice hockey, child development, physical education and cognitive and emotional development. The ADM is about designing, implementing and committing to continual improvement of a world leading, age-appropriate training and competition model for kids. The ADM is about raising the bar for our players, coaches and administrators. We want our young players exposed to world class coaching at every level.

### A PLAN FOR LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

The ADM was endorsed by the USA Hockey Board of Directors at its 2009 Winter Meeting and has also been endorsed by the National Hockey League. The ADM furthers our growth and development efforts as it will provide our member associations, for the

first time ever, an optimal development blueprint for youth players that will lead to a better experience for our current players and also help attract new players to our sport.

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*It's hard to put into words the excitement and buzz that has been and will continue to be generated by this new initiative. It will take time for local associations around the country to educate their constituents on the merits of adopting the American Development Model, but there's no doubt that the principles of the program are right for kids."*

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**— Ron DeGregorio, USA Hockey President**

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As Americans, we are a competitive people and our country places a tremendous importance on winning. In some cases it is to our detriment, but there can be no doubt that our society rewards and cherishes excellence. In ice hockey, we have grown from our seat at the kids' table to one with the grown-ups. As a hockey nation we are now competitive at every event that we enter. Yet for Americans, second best has never been good enough. Our enrollment numbers are the second most among all hockey-playing nations and yet we have not grown into our full potential.



The developmental system in the U.S. has evolved over time. Our current structure is not one that was planned; it is one that evolved into a multi-faceted organization with many different avenues. While diversity is one of our great attributes as a nation, a clear pathway to excellence has never been defined by USA Hockey. Over a decade ago, to address some of the issues within our system, USA Hockey took a bold step with the creation of the National Team Development Program (NTDP). The NTDP has raised the bar on elite player development within the United States. Ten years ago one rarely heard the word “development” within the hockey community, but now it is the buzz word. The NTDP has played an important role as we have grown into a challenger at each event. However, as Americans we are not content with second place and it is now time to move from challenger to champion.

Change is the only path that will move us towards our goal. As the old saying goes, “If you always do what you have always done, then you will always get what you have always got.”

### **Rationale Behind the American Development Model**

USA Hockey started with a review of research that has taken place in child and athletic development around the globe. Elite performance studies from multiple sport bodies, governments as well as other endeavors such as music and the arts were evaluated. Through the review of current research, it was quickly concluded that to truly address player development, a completely new way of looking at USA Hockey’s structure must be undertaken. Critical development begins at a very early age. As children mature, they each progress during the same developmental stages through the growth and maturation process. Along this path, certain aspects of these stages must be addressed at the appropriate time intervals. Without developing skills and certain physical and mental attributes at the proper time, the long-term prospects of becoming a truly elite athlete are diminished.

Research has shown that we cannot just focus on a few older players; an encompassing strategy must be followed. As we evaluated the current research, variations of Istvan Balyi’s long-term athlete development (LTAD) principles are being employed around the globe by more than 100 government health ministries and sport National Governing

Bodies. Within hockey, there is no doubt that countries like Sweden, Finland and the Czech Republic produce high-end NHL players. Their numbers are especially impressive when one considers the populations and player numbers from those countries. In each of those countries, long-term athlete development principles are at the core of their development model.

Long-term athlete development is a generic, conceptual framework for athlete development in sport that can be used as a basis on which to ‘re-align,’ or make more consistent, existing systems and structures. It has been developed by Istvan Balyi, an internationally recognized coach educator, and is based upon a consensus of evidenced research about how young people develop sporting ability, linking more closely the coaching and development of players to their physical and psychological growth.

The ADM is a long-term athlete development plan for the sport of ice hockey. It takes into consideration the guiding LTAD principles that are widely accepted around the globe. Consistent with LTAD, the ADM:

1. integrates training, competition and recovery programming with relation to biological development and maturation
2. offers equal opportunity for recreation and competition
3. is participant/athlete centered; coach driven; and parents, officials, administration, sport medicine & sport science supported

It should be recognized that much of LTAD is nothing new. The majority of the research on which it is based is widely accepted, and has been used to underpin physical education teaching for many years. The difference that LTAD brings is a ‘packaging’ of this theory for mass understanding and a mechanism for applying the theory to better integrate whole sports development systems (i.e. coaching, training, playing, competition, etc). It is also important that our USA Hockey membership understand that it is not just our hockey people that endorse a LTAD plan, but that sports science and development experts from around the globe endorse this model and are adopting this methodology for their own sports.



All young people follow the same pattern of growth and development, although there are significant differences between individuals in the timing and magnitude of these changes. In relation to physical activity, there are seven key phases of growth and development. The relevant 'stage' of the LTAD hockey model for each phase of growth and development is described below.

### LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT HOCKEY MODEL

PHASE	STAGE	AGE
Early Childhood	Active Start	Male 0-6 years Female 0-6 years
Late Childhood	FUNDamentals	Male 6-9 years Female 6-8 years
Adolescence Early Puberty	Learn to Train	Male 9-12 years Female 8-11 years
Adolescence Late Puberty	Train to Train	Male 12-16 years Female 11-15 years
Early Adulthood	Learn to Compete	Male 16-18 years Female 15-18 years
Early Adulthood	Train to Compete	Male 19-23 years Female 18-21 years
Adulthood	Train to Win	Male 19+ years Female 18+ years

*Chart adopted from Canadian Sports Centers (2006)*

### LTAD Foundation of Research, Principles and Tools

Long-term athlete development has at its foundation 10 different elements of sport science and child development research. When considering the structure of any athlete development program, these elements must also be considered.

#### 10 Year – 10,000 Hour Rule

It takes years of organized practice to become an expert performer. Research shows this is true of developing any skill, such as learning to play an instrument or playing sport. This is sometimes referred to as the '10 year – 10,000-hour rule' relating to the need to practice for three hours a day for 10 years. Many researchers believe this is just a minimum. The bottom line is that it takes an enormous amount of work and time to become an elite athlete. This is done through a diverse sports movement and sports skills background. Once this

foundation is laid, it takes years of deliberate practice to develop an elite performer at the highest level.

A significant number of players that play in the NHL were never drafted. This means that, at 18 and 19 years of age, nobody was even willing to take a late-round chance on their potential to make it. Hockey is not an early specialization sport and our programs must include a long-term developmental pathway that provides opportunities for our elite players into their early 20s. This is why USA Hockey endorses the college hockey path, as it provides the widest range of developmental opportunity over time. Many players don't reach their potential until their early to mid-20s.

### FUNDamentals

All sports begin with basic fundamental movement and core sports skills. The ABCs of movement include agility, balance, coordination and speed, while core sports skills include running, jumping, skating and throwing. It has been shown that children who have a strong, broad-based foundation in the fundamental movements and sports skills from a variety of sports increase their potential for future success in sports. Whether this is confidence to lead a healthy and active life in sport or to become an elite athlete, this strong foundation in the fundamentals will help children reach their full potential. Without this foundation, children may never reach their genetic capacity.

### Specialization

Sports are classified as either early or late specialization sports. An example of an early specialization sport is women's gymnastics in which, due to growth, girls are potentially retiring from their sport at 14, 15 or 16 years of age. As with other contact/collision sports, ice hockey is classified as a late specialization sport. Hockey players don't reach their full potential until after full growth maturity. Specialization at an early age limits children from acquiring a broad spectrum of athletic movements and skills that may limit or put a cap on their overall athletic potential. When players specialize too early they can create imbalances in musculature, increase the potential for burn out and limit their athletic potential by not developing a broad base of athletic movement skills.



*“Young athletes who participate in a variety of sports have fewer injuries and play sports longer than those who specialize before puberty. Well-rounded, multi-sport athletes have the highest potential to achieve.”*

— *Journal of American Academy of Pediatrics*

### AAP Guidelines:

- Encourage athletes to strive to have at least one to two days off per week from competitive athletics, sports specific training and competitive practice (scrimmage) to allow them to recover both physically and psychologically.
- Encourage the athlete to take at least two to three months away from a specific sport during the year.

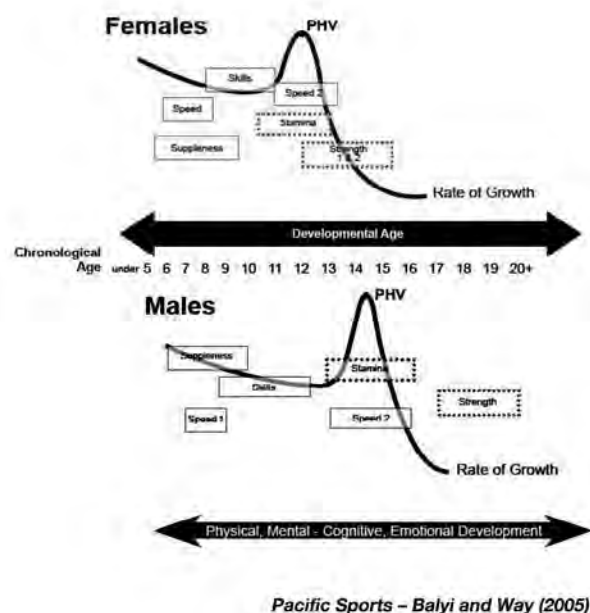
### Windows of Optimal Trainability

There are identifiable stages during a child's physical and psychological development that offer optimum opportunities to develop particular attributes, such as basic movement skills (agility, balance, coordination and speed), basic sports skills (running, jumping, throwing, skating and striking) and physical capacities (flexibility, endurance, and strength). Missing these optimum opportunities has been shown to significantly affect a child's ability to reach his or her full potential.

In our current system, training in early years focuses on outcomes (winning) rather than the developmental process (optimal training). As Balyi states, “Damage done between ages 6-10 and 10-16 cannot be fully corrected (players/athletes will never reach their genetic potential) and national training or sport centers receiving mediocre athletes, regardless of funding and expertise, cannot recover from the ‘damages’ of earlier training.”

Elite player development and a sound structure at the 12 & Under level for broad-based skill development are not mutually exclusive. What do we currently produce in the U.S.? We have an over abundance of average players and very few truly elite players at the highest levels (NHL), especially when our numbers are taken into consideration. This is due to a lack of the proper focus on training through the appropriate ‘windows of optimal trainability.’

Diagram 8-1 illustrates windows of optimal trainability for male and female athletes. These critical windows provide accelerated adaptation to training and, if skipped or missed, decrease a child's chance to reach his or her full potential. It must be kept in mind that all systems are always trainable, yet with smaller degrees of adaptation to training over time. In our current system, the window of opportunity on skills development (9-12) for male players is missed through over-competition and under-training.



**Diagram 8-1.** Windows of optimal trainability.

These critical periods vary between individuals as each child is unique in his or her genetic makeup. While these critical periods follow general stages of human growth and maturation, scientific evidence shows that humans vary considerably in the magnitude and rate of response to different training stimuli at all stages. Some players may show potential for excellence at age 11, while others may not indicate their promise until age 15 or 16. Consequently, a long-term approach to player development is needed to ensure that players who respond slowly to training stimuli are not ‘shortchanged’ in their development.

The five trainable physical capacities and windows of optimal trainability are:

- **Stamina (Endurance):** The optimal window of trainability occurs at the onset of peak height velocity (PHV). This is more



commonly known as the adolescent growth spurt. Aerobic capacity training is recommended before athletes reach PHV. Aerobic power should be introduced progressively after growth rate decelerates.

- **Strength:** The optimal window of trainability for girls is immediately after PHV or at the onset of the menarche, while for boys it is 12-to-18 months after PHV.
- **Speed:** For boys, the first speed training window occurs between the ages of 7 and 9 years and the second window occurs between the ages of 13 and 16. For girls, the first speed training window occurs between the ages of 6 and 8 years and the second window occurs between the ages of 11 and 13 years.
- **Skill:** The window for optimal skill training for boys takes place between the ages of 9 and 12 and between the ages of 8 and 11 for girls.
- **Suppleness (Flexibility):** The optimal window of trainability for suppleness for both genders occurs between the ages of 6 and 10. Special attention should be paid to flexibility during PHV, due to rapid growth.

Additional capacities have been identified that must also be considered throughout an athlete's development and, in addition to the five physical capacities, make up a holistic approach to training.

- **Structure/Stature:** The height of a person before, during and after maturation can be utilized by a coach or parent. Tracking growth as a guideline for developmental age can allow for planning to take advantage of the critical 'windows of optimal trainability.'
- **Psychology:** Sport is a physical and mental challenge. The ability to maintain high levels of concentration, yet remain relaxed with the confidence to succeed, is a skill essential to long-term performance in sport. This skill also has the potential to transcend sport and affect our everyday lives. To develop the mental toughness for success at the highest levels, training programs are required that address the specific gender and LTAD stage of players. The training programs should include key mental components identified by sport psychologists: concentration, confidence,

motivation and handling pressure. As a player progresses through LTAD stages, the mental training aspect will evolve from having fun and respecting opponents; to visualization and self-awareness; to goal setting, relaxation, and positive self-talk. To master the mental challenge of sport, these basic skills are then tested in increasingly difficult competitive environments. Ultimately, the planning, implementation and refining of mental strategies for high-level competition will have a large impact on elite performance. Consequently, the mental training program is critical at all stages of LTAD, as dealing with success and failure will determine continuation in the game and physical activity in general.

- **Sustenance:** This category refers to all aspects of replenishing the body for sports and general health. It covers a wide range of topics from nutrition and hydration to rest and recovery. Fatigue, whether it comes from a single practice/competition or builds up over time through a lengthy schedule, can be combated through a proper lifestyle. Whether our children become elite athletes, or we look for better performance in school or just to lead a healthier life, we will all thrive with better education and following a plan that replenishes our physical and mental needs.
- **School:** Sports schedules must consider the demands placed upon children from an academic perspective. Education must be emphasized, and the demands of sport should complement the academic schedule, not conflict with it. The stress of class work, examinations, boyfriend and girlfriend issues, and school peer groups play a role in the fatigue and stress levels on our athletes. Coaches and parents must monitor these factors to balance the sports schedule to allow for maximum development both on the ice and in the classroom.

### Biological Age vs. Chronological Age

Biological age should be considered through our development and identification process. As an example, one only need look at the number of early month birth dates that make up our Under-17 and



Under-18 National Teams. Our current system forces players into a compete-to-win, 'peak by the weekend' system that rewards early maturing players who may not have the ability to be elite performers. Late developing players are excluded and cut, consequently leaving the sport or being segregated to a recreation program that limits their training opportunities. These late developers may have huge long-term potential but are eliminated from our system.

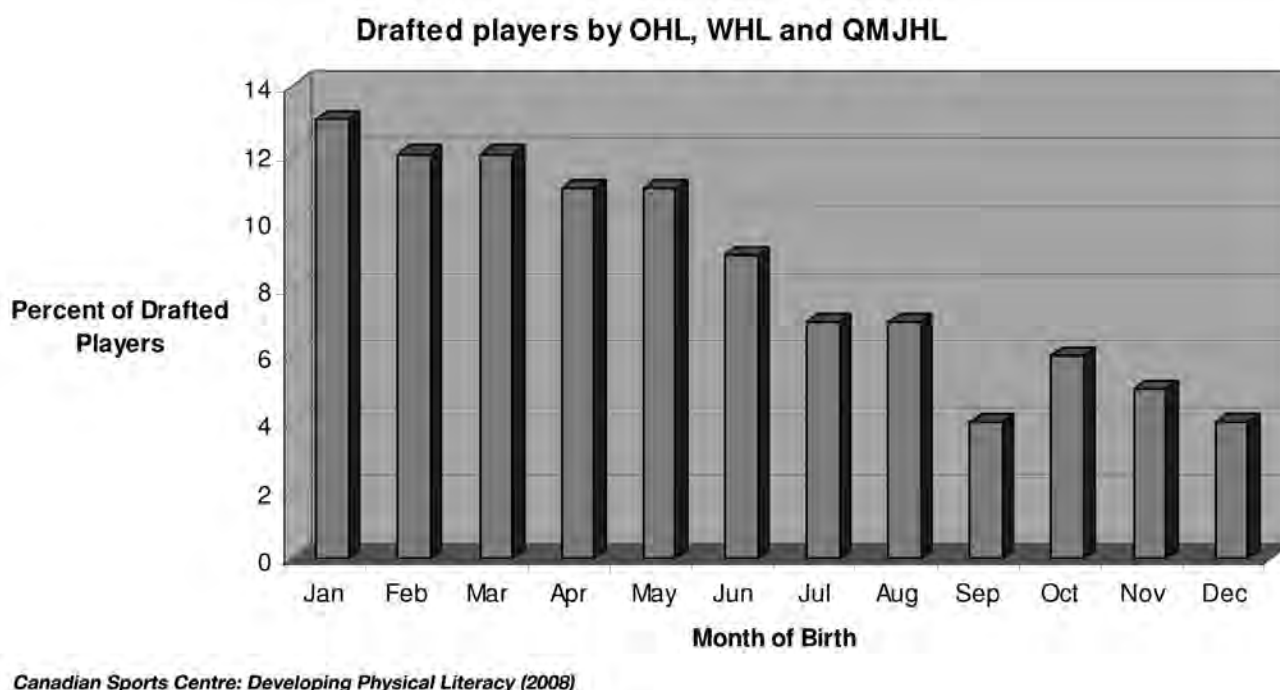
Currently, most athletic training and competition programs are based on chronological age. However, athletes of the same age between ages 10 and 16 can be four-to-five years apart developmentally. Thus, chronological age is a poor guide to segregate adolescents for competitions. Because hockey is a contact sport, early maturing players are favored within our youth structure. The late developer is eliminated when he or she may possess better long-term athletic ability.

Looking at Diagram 8-2, it is obvious that in the Canadian developmental system and ours, potential late month birth date players have been excluded from the high-performance track. It is highly unlikely that there are fewer players with long-term athletic

potential born in the last quarter of the year than in the first quarter.

**"Training Age"** refers to the age at which athletes begin planned, regular, serious involvement in training. The tempo of a child's growth has significant implications for athletic training because children who mature at an early age have a major advantage during the Training to Train stage compared to average or late maturers. However, after all athletes have gone through their growth spurt, it is often later maturers who have greater potential to become top athletes provided that they experience quality coaching throughout that period (see Diagram 8-3).

Not all players have the potential to become elite players. The American Development Model recognizes this by offering two levels of content from the Train to Train stage forward. The high performance content is aimed at those players who have been identified and who choose to attempt to be potential elite performers, while the standard content offers a reduced level of commitment more appropriate to the majority of players who will form the basis of club teams of the future. The split between the levels of content at the early part of the



**Diagram 8-2.** Drafted players in the Canadian Developmental System.



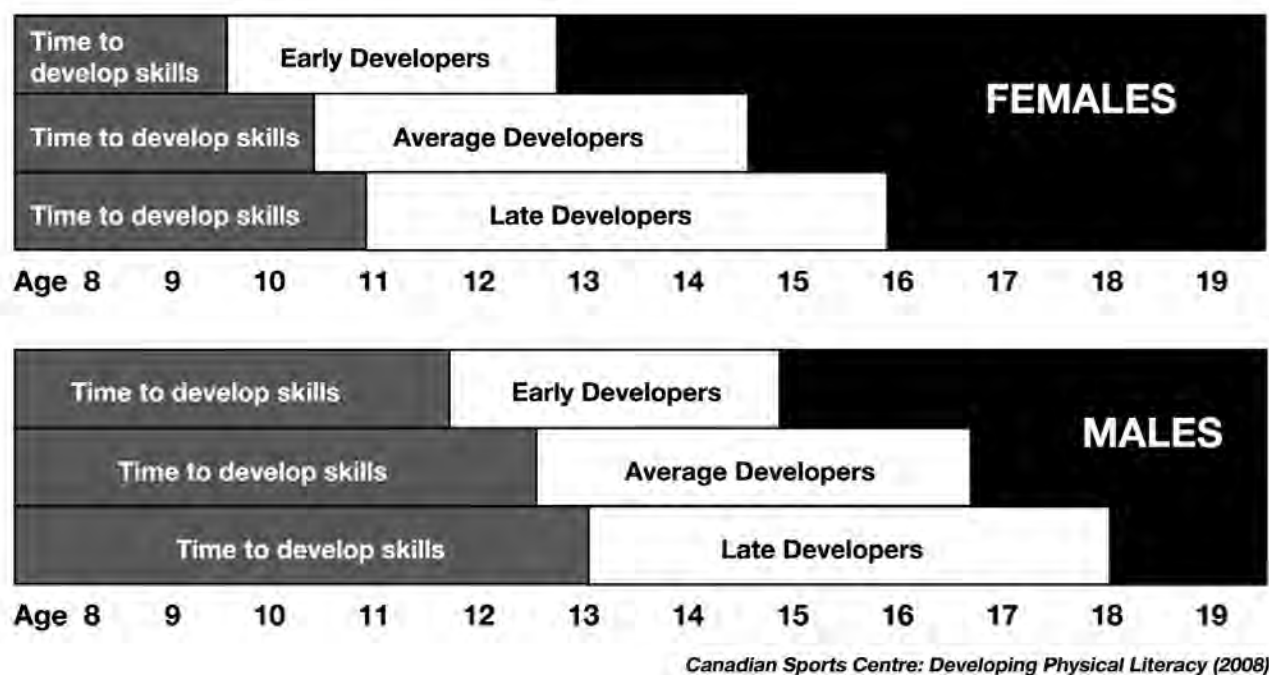


Diagram 8-3. Training age.

Train to Train stage are relatively small as it is deemed to be such an important stage in developing a broader base of potential elite players. However, the differentiation between hockey and other sports may necessitate the divergence at this stage. It is important to note that research suggests that there can be numerous players who follow the standard track through the Train to Train and into the Train to Compete stages who will have the potential to become elite performers. This is especially true if they have a diverse sports movement background through playing multiple sports during the FUNdamental and Learn to Train stages.

### Periodization

Periodization is the practice of segmenting the calendar year into appropriate time intervals for preparation, competition and rest and recovery. Athletes at different stages of their development require different training plans to optimize their development through their growth and maturation. The science behind periodization has been used on the international stage with great success in many, many sports. Unfortunately, sometimes a sport's traditions are placed in front of the athlete's needs when planning a periodization schedule. This has an impact on maximizing the player's development.

### The Great One's Message to Parents: Let Your Kids Have Fun

"In youth hockey, in most cases, it's really important for kids to play other sports, whether it's indoor lacrosse or soccer or baseball. I think what that does is two things. One, each sport helps the other sport. And then I think taking time off in the off-season - that three or four month window really rejuvenates kids so when they come back at the end of August, they're more excited. They think, 'All right, hockey's back, I'm ready to go.'" — Wayne Gretzky.

Gretzky was a multi-sport athlete himself growing up, as he also excelled in baseball and lacrosse, quoted from "Great One's Message to Parents: Let Your Kids Have Fun" (*Globe and Mail*, 9/26/2008 – Eric Duhatschek).

### Training to Competition Ratios

Through a child's growth and maturation, the athletic development model needs change through different stages. The appropriate training-to-competition ratios need to be adhered to in order to maximize a player's time and potential. When a heavy emphasis is placed on competition at an early age, two situations occur. First, ice time is directed toward games, which reduces the amount of quality deliberate practice time. And second, the focus



becomes more outcome based (winning) and less process driven (learning the game). There are all kinds of arguments put forth as to why we must allow the imbalance in our training-to-competition ratios to continue, and certainly the one-to-one ratio has its place within the recreational Hockey for Life track. However, for our Tier I, Tier II and high performance players that are part of our elite development path, the correct ratios must be adhered to at the appropriate ages.

### System Alignment

The framework for long-term athlete development is influenced by many factors. We have clubs, schools and ice arena facilities all with varying interests. To maximize a player's development needs, it is important those entities work together and become mutually supportive as each has its part to play in advancing our game. Players will best develop in a system that is clearly defined, logically structured and based upon consistent principles. We need a structure that is athlete centered and looks at the individual player's development.

In a team sport, it is appropriate to look at the collective whole and to provide the direction and lessons that only a team sport can provide. However, we must always consider that each individual is at a different point through the stages of his or her development (early maturer or late maturer, for example). The goal is to define our sports system with a pathway that addresses the needs of each individual and maximizes their development as they progress through our system. The LTAD principles show us that at the earlier ages, both the Hockey for Life group and the ones that end up as high-performance player, should initially be held to the same pathway. Our current sport system mistakenly allows for the separation of the perceived Hockey for Life group and the perceived high-performance group before any reliable determination can possibly be made. To maximize each player's potential, we need the major parties to re-evaluate current practices and base new practices on current legitimate research instead of commonly held beliefs in sports myths and the old "that's the way it has always been done" attitude.

### Physical, Mental, Cognitive and Emotional Development

Training should consider the mental, cognitive and emotional development of the athlete, in addition to

the physical, technical and tactical (including decision making skills) components of development.

A major objective of LTAD is a holistic approach. This includes ethics, fair play and character building through the various stages. Programming should be designed to consider the athlete's cognitive ability to address these concepts.

### Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement is a key underlying principle of long-term athlete development. This ensures that we are always evaluating our sport and are readily able to respond and implement new sports science innovations and observations. LTAD provides a continuously evolving vehicle for change for all emerging facets of physical education, sport and recreation to ensure systematic and logical delivery of programs to all ages.

### Long-Term Goals for USA Hockey and the ADM

USA Hockey has a core goal to grow the game of ice hockey within the United States. We believe that the ADM will provide a pathway to excellence for those who have the ability, as well as a greater overall hockey experience for all of our players. The LTAD principles on which our model is founded address the core needs of all of our players.

Along with the National Hockey League, USA Hockey has the mutual goal of seeing more American players compete at the highest level of the game.

### LTAD Stages for the American Development Model

See the individual LTAD stages of development for specifics to the American Development Model.

- Active Start
- FUNdamentals
- Learn to Train
- Train to Train
- Learn to Compete
- Train to Compete
- Train to Win
- Hockey for Life

**Special acknowledgement goes to LTAD expert, Istvan Balyi and Canadian Sport For Life. The two have been the principal developers of LTAD.**



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**STAGE BREAKDOWNS**

Although there will be significant differences between individuals, all young people follow the same patterns of growth and development. The stage breakdowns that follow will provide an overview of each developmental stage. This includes (but is not limited to) vital information related to physical development, psychological development, USA Hockey's key focus, stage components, LTAD window of opportunity, training and competitive environment, coaching considerations and technical development.

The Level 1 manual focuses on the two introductory stages of long-term athlete development: Active Start and FUNdamentals. The Level 2 manual will focus on the Learn to Train phase of development. This phase is for players between the ages of 8 and 12. The Level 3 manual features the Train to Train, Learn to Compete, Train to Compete, and Hockey for Life stages. As a coach, it will help you to be familiar with all phases of development. This will provide a base of knowledge as to where these athletes are coming from and where they are headed in relation to overall athletic development. For detailed information on the other stages of development, please visit [admkids.com](http://admkids.com).

**ACTIVE START****Ages 0-6 females • Ages 0-6 males**

Starting at infancy, parents must provide opportunities for children to be physically active every day in a safe, fun environment. Physical activity through play is an essential part of a child's development. Activity should utilize fundamental movement skills in the four environments of that lead to physical literacy:

- In the water – swimming
- On the ground – athletics
- In the air – gymnastics
- On ice and snow – sliding (skiing, skating)

**Physical Development**

- Provide physical activity every day regardless of weather conditions.
- Starting at infancy, provide infants, toddlers and preschoolers with opportunities to participate in daily physical activity that promotes fitness and movement skills for a minimum of 60 minutes a day.
- Encourage play, as it is an essential part of physical and mental development.
- Develop basic gross motor skills and coordination with large muscle groups through unstructured activity.
- Develop basic movement skills such as running, jumping, twisting, kicking, throwing, catching, swimming, wheeling and skating that form the base of physical literacy. These motor skills are the building blocks of more complex movement and help lay the foundation for lifelong physical activity and athletic development.

**Psychological Development**

Activity is essential for development; among its benefits, physical activity enhances:

- development of brain function
- social skills
- emotions, attitudes and imagination
- confidence and positive self-esteem
- stress reduction by quality of sleep

Design activities that help children to feel competent and comfortable participating in a variety of fun, challenging sports and activities.

**The LTAD window of opportunity for this stage is the initiation of movement skills, running, jumping, kicking, throwing, catching, swimming, sliding, etc.**

**Programs**

USA Hockey member clubs offer 6 & Under (Mite) programs as well as a first-year participant Learn to Play program.



### USA Hockey's Key Focus for this Stage

- Help ensure our participants gain physical literacy.
- Develop a passion for hockey in all children.
- Encourage daily physical activity.
- Provide the opportunity to explore a new surface (ice) and mode of locomotion (skating).
- Develop on-ice balance, coordination and agility.
- Introduce basic skating movement skills through a Learn to Skate program, preferably without the use of a hockey stick.

### Training and Competitive Environment

- **Training/Competition Ratio:** No formal competition. Activity games and small area games should be incorporated in every ice session.
- **Training Volume:** One to two times per week, with hockey session lengths no longer than 50 minutes at Learn to Play and 6 & Under (Mite) levels.
- **Training Year:** Four weeks per month, four months per year.
- **Team Composition:** Teams should consist of a maximum of 9 to 13 skaters. The goaltender position is excluded during this stage of development.
- **Team Structure:** Players can be grouped into teams of like abilities, with the overall focus on evenly distributing the player ability pool across all teams.
- **Competition Format:** No formal competition.

USA Hockey recommends that parents guide their children to be physically active in building a base of physical literacy.

- structured and unstructured free play
- activities include swimming, running, jumping, balance, agility, gliding, etc.

## FUNDAMENTALS

### *Ages 6-8 females • Ages 6-9 males*

The objective of the FUNdamentals stage is to refine fundamental movement skills and begin to acquire basic sports skills. This is the time when a foundation is laid for future acquisition of more advanced skills.

### General Description of the FUNdamentals Stage

- This is the stage in which children learn physical literacy, or the interrelationship between movement skills and sport skills.
- The skills that children acquire during this stage will benefit them when they engage in any activity, regardless of their level of participation.
- Bypassing the acquisition of 'basic and specialized movement' and 'sport skills' during the FUNdamentals stage is detrimental to a person's future participation in physical activity and sport (ABCs = Agility, Balance, Coordination, Speed; gymnastics, swimming, running, gliding; throwing, striking, kicking, etc.).
- Basic sport skill development in this stage should be well structured, positive and done in a FUN and social environment.
- All programs should be structured with proper progression and monitored regularly by trained certified coaches, volunteers and parents.

### USA Hockey's Key Focus for this Stage

- Help ensure our participants gain physical literacy.
- Develop a passion for hockey in all of our children (keep kids and families in the game).
- Encourage participation in a variety of complimentary sports to help our children maximize their ability to reach their genetic potential in hockey.
- Develop on-ice balance, coordination, agility and speed.
- Introduce basic puck control skills.

### Programs

USAH Hockey member clubs offer 8 & Under, and 6 & Under (Mite) programs, as well as a first year participant Learn to Play program.

### Monitoring

Children have not yet begun their growth spurt. It is helpful to keep track of annual height measurements to provide a baseline for future growth.

### Coach and Instructor Recommendations

Coaches must progress through the Coaching Education Program in accordance with the rules



effective with the 2011-12 season, and complete the online age-specific module(s) that corresponds to the age-level of play they are coaching. Coaches need a sound knowledge of child growth and development principles for this age group and have an understanding of physical literacy through LTAD. Competency at teaching basic skills is also a key component for coaches at this stage.

### LTAD Window of Opportunity

- first window for speed development at ages 6-8 for girls, ages 7-9 for boys (agility, quickness and change of direction)
- suppleness and flexibility throughout the stage
- movement skills throughout

### Components of the Hockey FUNdamentals Stage Physical Development

- Practice and master fundamental movement skills before sports specific skills are introduced (running, swimming, gliding/skating, gymnastics, etc.).
- Emphasize the overall development of the athlete's physical capacities, fundamental movement skills and the ABCs of athleticism: agility, balance, coordination and speed.
- Bilateral balance must be well developed in this stage though sliding, skating and gliding sports (skating, rollerblading, two-ski water skiing, alpine and cross country skiing).
- Provide opportunities for physical activity daily (formal and informal).
- Teach appropriate and correct running, wheeling, jumping and throwing techniques using the ABCs of athleticism.
- Introduce flexibility exercises
- Emphasize motor development to produce athletes who have a better trainability for long-term development.
- Ambidextrous sports help develop refined motor skills:
  - athletics, gymnastics and swimming for the ABCs (agility, balance, coordination, speed and suppleness)
  - soccer, hockey, basketball, tennis, baseball and lacrosse for developing catching, passing, kicking and striking

- biking, skiing and dancing for developing speed, balance and coordination
- Utilize movement in three planes of balance (linear, lateral, spatial and aerial).
- Provide initiation to physical training (warm-up and cool-down).

### Focus

- Introduce basic flexibility exercises.
- Develop speed, power and endurance using activity-based games and small area hockey games (cross-ice games).
- Encourage participation in a wide range of sports.
- Develop linear, lateral and multi-directional speed with the duration of repetitions lasting less than five seconds.
- Include strength training using the child's own body weight as well as medicine ball and Swiss ball exercises.

### Psychological Development

- Develop reasoning skills through various sports and activities.
- Provide opportunities for activities that:
  - are FUN, positive and motivating
  - are exploratory and allow for self-discovery
  - build confidence through a high rate of success
  - promote individual and group participation
  - maintain a "no excuses" atmosphere
  - introduce participants to simple rules and sport ethics (fair play)
- Ensure that games focus on participation.

### Training and Competitive Environment

- **Training/Competition Ratio:** No formal competition.
- **Training Volume:** Play hockey two times per week, with session lengths no longer than 50 minutes in the Learn to Play program. A third session at the 8 & Under level can be held for an informal competition (cross-ice/half-ice games).
- **Training Year:** 4 weeks per month, 5 months per year
- **Team Composition:** Teams should consist of a maximum of 9 to 13 skaters. The



goaltender position is rotated among team members.

- **Team Structure:** All players should be evaluated as:
  - advanced = top 33%
  - intermediate = middle 33%
  - beginner and less skilled = bottom 33%

Teams should be divided into three groups of equal abilities for half-ice/cross-ice competition purposes (top 1/3; middle 1/3; beginner and less skilled 1/3). Players should be grouped into teams of like abilities.

- **Competition Format:** All competitions are held cross-ice/half-ice, with the focus on skill development and not outcomes. At 8 & Under, the occasional jamboree can be held as a third ice touch for the week.
- **Overall Activity Ratios:** 25% hockey, 75% other sports and activities

#### 8 & Under (Mites)

- 9-13 skaters per team
- no full-time goalies
- 2-3 ice touches per week
- 50-minute ice sessions
- 20 weeks per season
- 50-60 ice touches per year
- minimum of 16 cross-ice or half-ice games and 34 practices
- maximum 20 cross-ice or half-ice games and 40 practices

At this stage it is important to create an environment where participants want to play hockey. They need to enjoy being at the rink and learning basic skills. Play lots of fun, competitive games. Lessons must be varied, interesting and fun so participants want to come back to the rink. End each session with a game, with the goal of having everyone leave the ice with a smile on their faces. It is important to build interest in our sport and to provide self-confidence and the enjoyment of performing. Keep in mind that early specialization in a late specialization sport such as hockey will not lead to greater performance later.

#### Coaching Considerations

- Create a positive, fun and safe environment for the players.
- Encourage active participation by all players.

- Be clear and precise in communication and use terminology appropriate for the age.
- Limit the amount of technical or tactical information to what is appropriate for the age.
- Physical demonstration of basic sports skills must be done accurately to provide the proper imagery for players.
- Ensure that the ice surface size is in proportion to the age (cross-ice/half-ice games).
- Ensure that the players have the appropriate equipment when on the ice under your supervision.
- Have a well structured plan for each ice session.
- Provide some opportunities that guarantee success for all participants.
- Become knowledgeable with regard to the physical and mental capacities and LTAD model for the age category.
- Encourage all forms of creativity.
- Encourage parents and players to explore a wide range of other sports to assist in their long-term hockey development.
- Include planned coordination exercises within training sessions both on- and off-ice.

#### Equipment

Proper sizing and fit of all equipment is essential for player safety and playing effectiveness.

- skates – must fit properly; used are fine
- helmet and mask
- gloves
- wooden stick – cut at the nose when standing on skates
- shin pads
- elbow pads
- undergarment layers
- protective cup
- hockey socks or sweat pants
- garter belt or shorts with velcro to hold up socks
- hockey pants
- shoulder pads – small and light weight
- jersey

#### Technical Development

##### Skating

- ready position
- forward stride



- two-foot glide
- forward turns
- controlled stop
- forward crossover
- agility, balance and coordination
  - two-feet and single-foot skating
  - high-knee run, multi-directional
  - full-body coordination; somersaults, rolls, jumps, etc.
  - upper and lower body separation; skating with shoulder rolls or exaggerated hand slides
- forward start

### **Puck Control**

- lateral puck handling
- forward-to-backward puck handling
- diagonal puck handling
- accelerating with the puck

### **Passing and Receiving**

- forehand
- receiving – stick position, use of skates
- eye contact

### **Shooting**

- wrist shot

### **Body Contact**

- body positioning in confrontational situations
- angling skills
- poke check
- lift the stick check

### **Tactical Skills**

- Participants should learn how to listen and follow simple instructions.
- Participants should engage in deliberate play and should learn basic decision making skills through activity games like tag and small area hockey games.
- Competition at the puck: 1-on-1 battles and loose puck races for body positioning.
- Participants should learn basic appropriate behavior within a team setting, such as how to support others and appropriate behavior in a locker room setting.

### **Ancillary Skills**

- Hold off-ice training activities that provide several stations of purposeful games or activities.
- Encourage participation in other sport activities (e.g., gymnastics, public skating, alpine skiing, soccer, lacrosse, swimming)
- Participants, parents and support persons should be well informed about proper equipment for practice (equipment sizing, how to dress for training, water bottles for hydration, skate sharpening, etc.). Children should be able to dress themselves by the time they move into the 10 & Under (Squirt) age category.

### **Life Style**

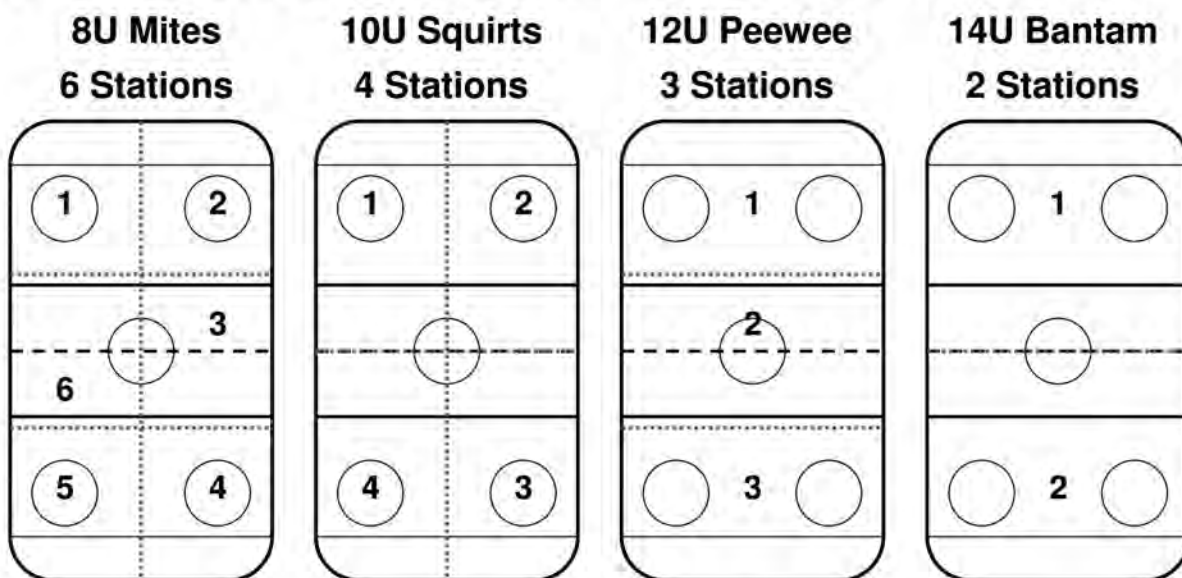
- Key Concepts:
  - fun
  - safety
  - social interaction
  - creating a love of all sporting activities
  - positive introduction to hockey
- Participate in hockey two to three times per week as long as there is participation in other sports four to six times per week to help insure future excellence.
- Because girls tend to be less active than boys, ensure that activities are gender neutral and inclusive so that active living is equally valued and promoted for all.
- Ensure that activities revolve around the school year and are enhanced by multiple sports though the spring, summer and winter holidays.
- Healthy eating habits should be promoted.
- Promote adequate sleep (American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 10 hours/night).

## **PRACTICE PROGRESSION ICE UTILIZATION**

Diagram 8-4 shows some of the recommended methods for dividing the ice into stations. Station work will help your players get more puck touches and the necessary repetitions to continually develop and refine basic skills. Ice time is your most valuable resource as a coach and skill-based practices featuring small area games and a variety of stations will help you run efficient practices with a high energy level.



## Practice Progression – Ice Utilization



Older age groups can incorporate stations breakdowns from younger groups

Diagram 8-4. Recommended ice utilization.

### LEARN MORE

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. (*Internet access is required*).

- [www.admkids.com](http://www.admkids.com)



## Section 3

# Preparing for the Season





# Chapter 9

## Lesson Organization

### OBJECTIVES

- To properly plan and prepare for a lesson
- To organize teaching stations depending on the number of players you have
- To understand the concepts of team teaching
- To use equipment and space effectively
- To group players effectively
- To correct on-ice communication techniques
- To understand how and when to use drills and games

### PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Although you have at your disposal a very comprehensive and complete set of lesson plans to guide and assist you with your ice sessions, a certain amount of planning is necessary to ensure a successful lesson. In order that 100% of your ice time is put to good use and your goals and objectives for each lesson are met, the following guidelines are provided:

- Primary and secondary objectives of the lesson must be clear in your mind.
- After determining that the lesson content is appropriate for the skill(s) to be taught, review all the teaching points to ensure your own familiarity with the content.
- Review the lesson with respect to time allotment for each section or sections to be covered.
- Ensure that you have a copy of the lesson for periodical on-ice reference (a clip-board or book is recommended).
- Ensure that the necessary teaching aids are in place.

- Ensure that your teaching assistants are aware of their specific duties as well as the overall lesson content.

Factors relating to skills teaching sessions that will lead to a faster rate of acquisition of motor skills for beginners:

1. Keep explanations very brief.
2. Break skills down into the smallest possible component parts.
3. Keep practice sessions brief.

When planning ice sessions it is important to get off on the “right foot” with your players. Here are a few ideas:

- Arrive well ahead of the scheduled start time so as to be available for coach discussions, to arrange equipment, and to do a safety check.
- Greet your players by name.
- Project a good mood.
- Use idle chatter to create a feeling of ease.
- Conduct a group, close-together activity early in the warm-up phase so as to generate a feeling of togetherness.



- Keep your starting activities fairly consistent so as to set up a routine. Progress from simple, familiar routines to difficult, unknown ones.
- Use good-natured humor as a way of “breaking the ice” and for building up coach/player relationships.
- Look for early signs of improvement in your players’ performance and try to say something positive.

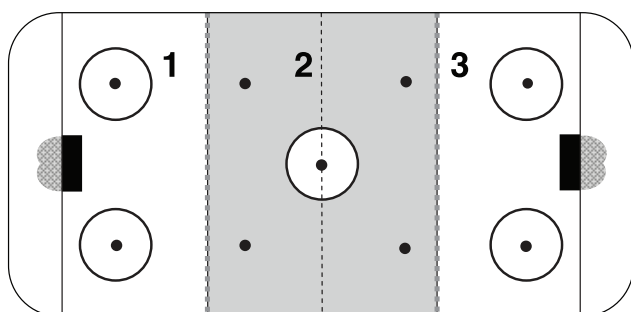
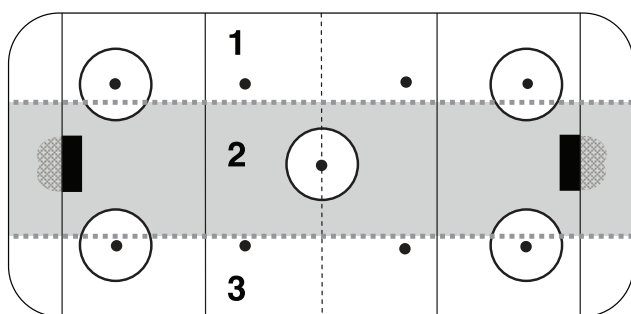
## TEACHING STATIONS

The most effective way to teach the basic skills of hockey is to divide your total group of players up into smaller, manageable groups. The number of smaller groups you will be able to use depends upon:

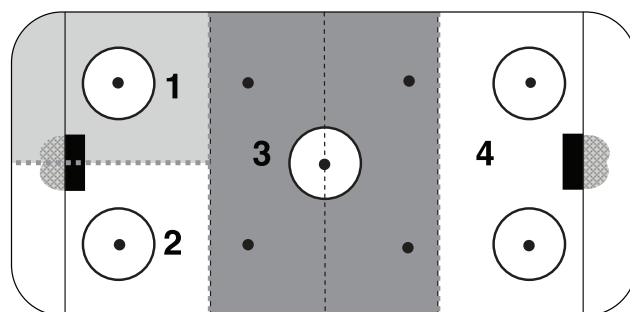
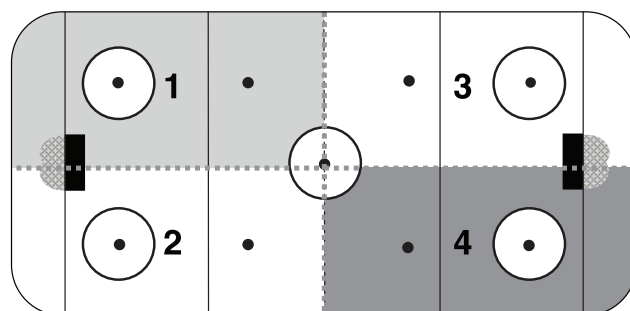
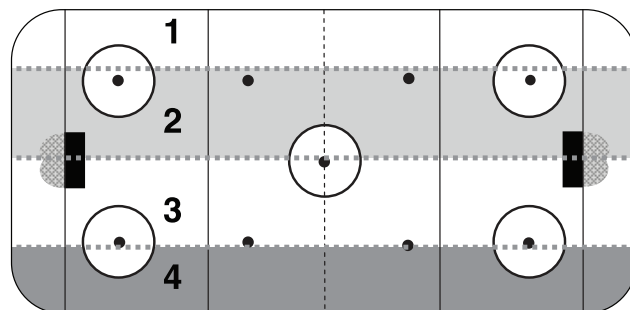
1. the total number of players (try to divide them evenly)
2. the different levels of skill of the players
3. the number of assistant coaches you have working with you
4. the number of different skills or components of each skill you intend to teach
5. the amount of ice available for your use

The following diagrams are suggestions for dividing the ice into suitable areas for skills instruction, depending upon the number of groups you have.

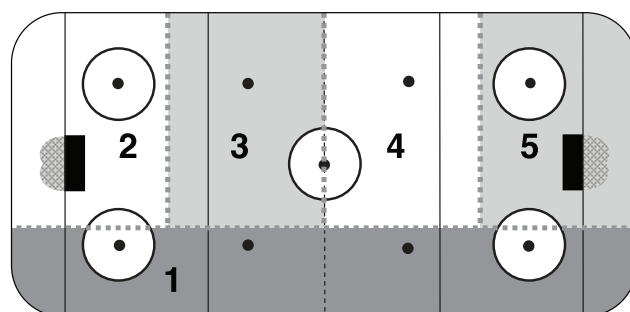
### 3 GROUPS



### 4 GROUPS

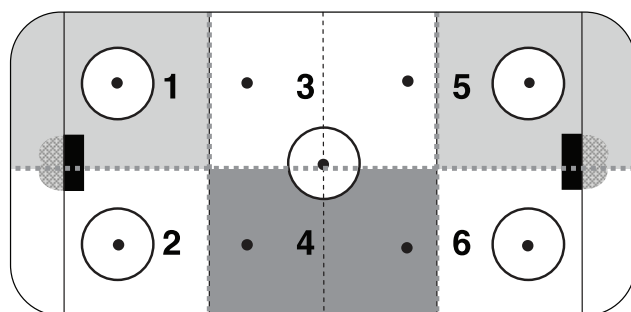
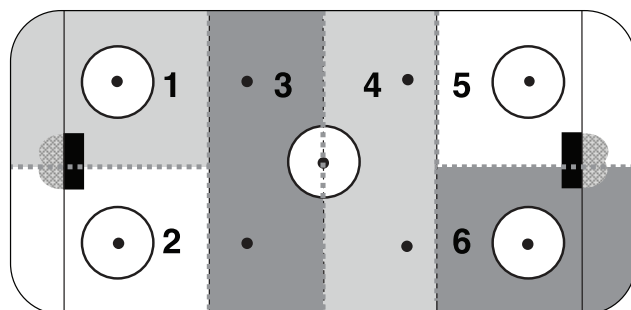
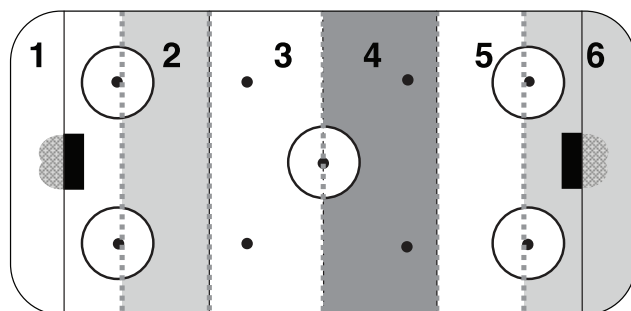


### 5 GROUPS





## 6 GROUPS



Once groups have been formed and the teaching stations established, there are a number of basic rules that should be observed:

1. Players should face away from distractions i.e. spectators, other groups.
2. Coaches must be visible to all players.
3. Coaches should try to maintain eye contact with players.
4. Try to keep players stationary (kneeling in front of the coaches).
5. Deal with a minimum number of teaching points (maximum of 2-3 at a time).
6. Formations must allow for a quick and smooth transition to the drill.
7. Ensure that prearranged signals for movement from one station to the next are known by all players and coaches.

## TEAM TEACHING

To ensure a smoothly operating and efficient ice session that involves a number of different stations, a team teaching approach is essential. This requires the designation of a head coach and a number of assistant coaches to make up the team. Teamwork is a necessity if the concept is to work properly.

The following guidelines are recommended for assistant or group coaches:

1. Listen to the head coach to ensure understanding. If you are not certain of your responsibilities, ask!
2. Assist with the set-up/organization of any total group drills and be prepared to move quickly into your group activity.
3. Provide individual instruction through error correction.
4. Keep players well spaced and spread out to ensure that drills are being performed correctly and that there is sufficient room to view possible errors.

Things for the coach to avoid:

1. Skating around aimlessly.
2. Shooting pucks.
3. Passing pucks with another coach.
4. Talking to players or other assistants while the head coach is talking or demonstrating.

The head coach is the one “in charge” of the ice session and has the responsibility of ensuring a smoothly conducted practice. One of his/her prime tasks is to help the assistant coaches carry out their duties. The head coach should:

1. provide and organize the necessary equipment for your group as required in the lesson.
2. assist in error detection and correction for teaching individuals in your group for short periods.
3. briefly take over your group for clarification of a drill or to reinforce teaching points.
4. be responsible for the timely and efficient conduct of the lessons by the various coaches.



## ORGANIZATION OF EQUIPMENT AND SPACE

Two of the coach's most important resources are equipment and teaching aids. Without these, lessons are much less effective, as usually without variety and often become dull and boring. Performance of some skills, particularly at the basic level for beginners, is virtually impossible to perform without equipment and the necessary teaching aids.

The list is virtually limitless, but you should not be without the following:

- pylons
- chairs
- pucks
- tennis balls
- sticks
- whistle(s)
- clipboard(s)

Also nice to have:

- dry erase board (with rink markings)
- magnetic board
- street hockey nets
- rink dividers for reduced-size ice use

## GROUPING OF PLAYERS

At the beginning of the year, one of your first tasks as a coach, particularly if you are the head coach, will be to divide the group into more manageable, smaller groups. This will normally take place during and after the first ice session, once you have had the opportunity to view the players' abilities, etc. Adjustment to initial grouping may be necessary as sessions progress.

There are a number of factors to consider in grouping your players:

1. the number of assistants you have
2. the amount of ice available
3. the age range of the players
4. the level of ability of the players

Ideally, the coach-to-pupil ratio should be kept as low as possible (1:1 is perfect but unrealistic). A good ratio is 1:4 or 1:5; the maximum should be 1:8 or 1:10 for effective control and instruction.

Coaches must also guard against "bombarding" a player with feedback and corrections. Avoid having more than one coach giving help to the same player.

## DRILLS AND GAMES

Using a variety of skill drills and fun games and/or relays will go a long way toward making your ice sessions educational and fun. Use these types of activities to break up difficult drills or skills, to relieve boredom, to add variety, and to finish off a session on a high note.

Your lesson plans contain a wide variety of drills and games such as:

- British Bulldog
- red light, green light
- scatterball
- freeze tag
- pond hockey
- cops and robbers
- exchange game
- relays
- rope skipping
- soccer

## SUMMARY

1. Adherence to the principles of preparation and planning will ensure that a good lesson is presented.
2. Effective use of the ice will result if carefully thought-out teaching stations are used.
3. Use of team teaching techniques will maximize use of ice and coaches.
4. Sufficient and appropriate equipment is a necessity for a good ice session.
5. Grouping of players according to age, ability, space, and resources is a decision to be made by the head coach
6. Use of games and fun activities is a necessary part of every lesson.

### LEARN MORE

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. *(Internet access is required).*

- [www.usahockey.com/coaches/practice\\_plans.aspx](http://www.usahockey.com/coaches/practice_plans.aspx)



## Section 4

# Skill Development





# Chapter 10

## Teaching Skills

### OBJECTIVES

- To understand the basic principles of human growth and development as they relate to the teaching of basic skills
- To understand the factors affecting learning and some techniques to improve the learning environment
- To understand the basic teaching progressions to follow and how to plan explanations and demonstrations of skills
- To understand the whole – part – whole method of skill instruction

### GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

You will be dealing with very young players so it is important to realize that the teaching of basic hockey skills must be tempered by the age of the players, their early stage of physical development and the amount of work they are equipped to handle.

What this means is that instructional sessions on the ice should contain the following three things to ensure your players' bodies work properly:

1. a good warm-up
2. a positive, non-threatening atmosphere that avoids high tension and anxiety
3. work appropriate to the strength and muscular development of the players

There are two different types of changes that are happening in the body of the younger player:

1. changes due to normal physical growth
2. changes due to the demands made from physical activity

Here are a few assumptions and sport specific implications related to growth and development in childhood years:

### PHYSICAL GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

ASSUMPTIONS	IMPLICATIONS
Basic movement patterns are already learned yet in most children are not very refined. Development at this stage is instrumental for all other levels.	Use simple activities that continue to develop basic fundamental skills with a minimum of pressure on performance. Provide instruction to refine skills.
Aerobic capacity is adequate for most activities.	Provide lots of opportunity to participate.
Right/left handedness is determined at this stage.	Encourage the use of the non-dominant side.

### MENTAL GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

ASSUMPTIONS	IMPLICATIONS
Reasoning skills in concrete situations are improving.	Play simple games with simple rules and strategies – avoid complicated rules.
Attention span is increasing but is still short.	Give short, clear and simple instructions. Use demonstrations. Drills and activities should be changed frequently within one practice but repeated over consecutive practices until players experience success.



## SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

### ASSUMPTIONS

### IMPLICATIONS

Players are easily hurt by criticism.	Be positive in comments and provide realistic, practical opportunities to develop skills.
Sex differences are not of great consequence at this age.	Organize groups so that boys and girls can play together; encourage cooperation.
In the desire to succeed, the player is often impatient with learning fundamentals.	Help the player to recognize the importance of learning small steps toward larger goals.
Acceptance by peers is often related to motor ability.	Ensure that the worth of the individual is not linked entirely to skill level. Look for positive feedback for each participant.
Role models and heroes are emulated by the players.	Be sure to act responsibly if you are a role model for the players.

### The beginning hockey player needs to:

- have fun and enjoy hockey and physical development
- refine basic motor patterns
- experience activities that are challenging and ongoing
- receive reinforcement and experience success to build positive self-concept
- try, experiment, play and pretend in unstructured activities and adapted game situations
- be introduced to the concepts of cooperation and sportsmanship

**NOTE:** Although later in the growth cycle male/female differences become obvious, there are no physiological limiting factors that should prevent boys and girls from learning hockey skills at the same rate. The only limiting factors will be social in nature.

## FACTORS AFFECTING LEARNING

The factors that affect the way in which an individual learns skills can be viewed from a variety of different perspectives. The main ones are:

1. the learning environment
2. coach traits
3. other factors which influence learning

### The Learning Environment:

- should be completely under the control of the coach
- should have rewards for success given at every opportunity
- should provide encouragement to assist in the improvement of skills
- should focus on the players' ability, not their personality
- should focus on the correction of errors, not criticism of the individual; correct major errors at once
- should provide free time to experiment with new skills in self-teaching mode

Factors that often inhibit learning include excessive enthusiasm, negative attitude, poor equipment and poor teaching aids.

### Coach Traits

Some of these may seem familiar to you after having completed the section on leadership. Many good leadership qualities also are good coach traits. They are important enough to repeat:

- knowledge of the game, the components of the basic skills and how and when to introduce them
- ability to express the knowledge that you have at the players' level of understanding and in a manner that will motivate and challenge them
- ability to relate to the players in a friendly, courteous and respectful manner
- ability to identify learning limits, the skill level and level of interest of the players
- ability to capture and hold the players' attention and to emphasize the "do" of learning
- knowledge of the level of tolerance of the players so that the learning demand is not more than they can handle
- being prepared, creative and enthusiastic

### Other Factors

- Guide and monitor the learning process. Be aware of progressions in learning – work from the simple to the difficult



- New skills should be introduced on a solid basis, for example at the beginning of a lesson. They should be built on previous lessons and should be emphasized until mastered.
- Ice sessions should be planned around the level of competence and interest of the players, their ability to understand instructions and their attention span and capability to learn new skills as well as master old ones.
- Repeat drills for short periods of time over a large number of ice sessions and, wherever possible, praise good performance.

## TEACHING PROGRESSIONS

Teaching physical skills and technique involves a chain of events. There are four main links in this chain:

1. **Select the Skill** – Select a basic skill to be learned and identify what you want them to learn.
2. **Plan the Demonstration** – Plan the explanation and demonstration; determine what to say and how to say it.
3. **Plan the Practice** – Plan how the players will practice the skill.
4. **Provide Feedback** – Provide feedback during practice; make constructive corrections and help the players maintain realistic goals.

## SELECT THE BASIC SKILL TO BE LEARNED

Basic skills are not always simple to learn. In hockey, the basic skill is skating but it is a complex and difficult skill. Passing or shooting the puck is actually easier, but skating is the more basic skill.

### Plan the Explanation and Demonstration

This is the planning you do to organize what you want to teach. Although most of this has been done for you in the lesson plans, it is important you understand the sequence of events to follow in conducting a lesson.

### STEP 1– Select a skill and write down why it is important.

Name the skill and, if possible, explain briefly and in simple words what the name means – how the

skill is used in the sport, and where and when it is used. Keep the explanation simple and brief. Total time for the demonstration should be 30-45 seconds duration.

### STEP 2 – Select four or five main teaching points to emphasize.

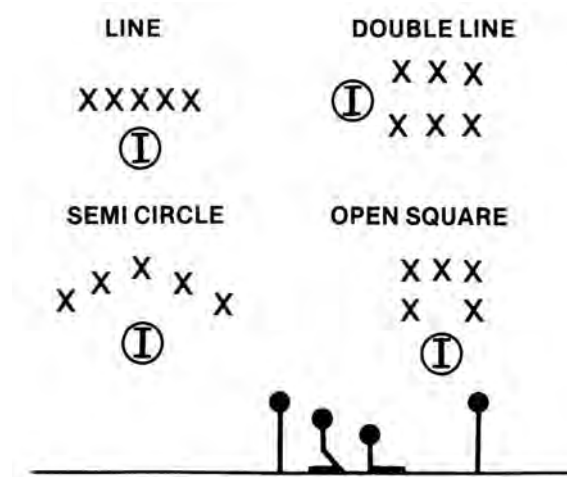
Each may be made up of two or three closely related ideas. If your participants are young, inexperienced, or have special learning problems, then select only one or two teaching points and keep the points as simple as possible. Select short, descriptive key words or phrases to highlight the teaching points during the demonstration. Rehearse the demonstration and use the key words until you know them well. Don't overload the learner by giving too many key words at the same time.

### STEP 3 – Decide if an aid would help.

An aid is a chart, diagram, model of some kind, picture or video. Do not use an aid unless you feel it will add something important to the demonstration. Good aids are most useful if they are posted on a wall or bulletin board so players can refer to them after the skill has been taught. Aids will help them recall details of the demonstration. If an aid is to be used, rehearse with it until you feel comfortable.

### STEP 4 – Select an effective formation.

Consider the number of learners present and decide in what formation to put them where all will be able to see and hear clearly.



These basic formations may be expanded to larger groups by having one row sit or kneel and a second



row of players stand behind them. The players should be placed with their backs toward any distractions such as glare from windows or the sun, parents, other groups, etc. For this age group, the most effective formation is probably a semi-circle or open square with all players kneeling down. This eliminates most extra movement and focuses attention on the coach.

With large groups it is important to try to have players in a formation as close as possible to one from which the practicing of the skills will begin. Otherwise there will be unnecessary confusion and lost time re-arranging groups when the demonstration is over.

#### **STEP 5 – Decide on what view or views players should see.**

Mentally check out the best angles for viewing the demonstration. Plan to repeat the demonstration as many times as necessary, rotating 90° or 180° each time to ensure that all players see it from the best angles. Remember, total time for the demonstration and explanation should be no more than 45 seconds from beginning to end. If it goes longer, it will have been repeated too often or too much detail will have been given.

#### **STEP 6 – Decide on who demonstrates.**

Having decided what is to be done, decide on who should demonstrate. Being asked to demonstrate is rewarding. Many members of the group should be called on to do it.

Coaches often demonstrate a skill several times themselves and then ask a player to step out and try it under their guidance. In the case of simple demonstrations, use an ordinary member of the group—it does not have to be a top performer. Most players identify with average performers and learn best from them. Beginners do not remember fine details to start with and they sometimes find the best performers discouraging to watch.

Some individuals do not like to get up in front of their peers to demonstrate. A coach should respect these individuals' feelings by asking them before the practice if they would mind taking part in the demonstration.

#### **STEP 7 – Call for questions to conclude.**

To make sure that players understand, ask if they have any questions. Answer those which are related closely to the skill, but politely refer questions not to the point to a later time to avoid getting sidetracked.

All questions should be answered with respect, even if they have been covered during the demonstrations. If players are shy in the beginning, pose questions yourself and answer them yourself.

Novice athletes have difficulty doing a sport skill if they don't know exactly what it is supposed to look like. Check to see that what you describe is what they picture in their minds when they are trying to do it.

#### **A Word of Encouragement**

At first, these steps will take quite a bit of time to follow. But if you use them frequently you will soon be able to go through them with only the briefest of notes. Experienced coaches recall details of a demonstration and how to stage it simply by recalling the name of the skill.

#### **Plan How the Players Will Practice the Skill**

The next link in the teaching chain is organizing a group to practice a skill that has been demonstrated. This is quite separate and distinct from planning and organizing the demonstration. The following steps will help you to plan effectively:

#### **STEP 1 – Take stock of the practice environment.**

Answer the following questions as a basis for your planning:

- How many players are there?
- How much area is there available in which to work?
- How much fixed equipment is available?
- How much small equipment is available?
- What special dangers exist in the practice area that must be guarded against?

#### **STEP 2 – Maximize activity.**

The object is to use as much of the space and as much of the time as possible. Plan the practice activity so there is as little unnecessary waiting time as possible.

Use your best judgment to answer the following questions in planning the practice activity:



- Will it be best to start participants working alone, in pairs or in small groups?
- Do learners need to be moving or can they practice in one place? If they are moving, where should they start from so there will be enough clear area in which to move?
- Should players be paired off or grouped by size, experience or aggressiveness in order to minimize chances of injury and equalize competition among and between learners?
- Will players have to be grouped and take turns sharing because there is not enough area or fixed or moveable equipment?
- How can you make the groups as small as is practical and as active as possible?
- How can dangers in the area be removed, covered or otherwise decreased or avoided by careful placing of players and their patterns of movement?

Some breaks in activity can be constructive—here are a few reasons:

- if time is needed to rest in vigorous practice
- when space available is too small for all to be active
- when the amount of equipment is limited
- when it is not safe for everyone to be active at the same time
- if time is required to correct, re-teach or give further instruction

### **STEP 3 – Plan to move learners into practice activity quickly.**

Where possible, the formation used to observe the demonstration should be as much like the practice formation as possible. If groups or squads are to be used regularly, then players should be assigned to specific groups. Membership of the groups should be changed from time to time.

The coach must take care to maintain the attention and control of learners during the time between the demonstration and the beginning of practice.

Require attention, give simple, clear instructions and plan a simple, efficient method of distributing equipment if that is necessary.

### **STEP 4 – Use clear, precise instructions.**

As soon as players are in position and ready to begin the practice of the demonstrated skill, explain simply what is to be done. Watch their faces for signs that

they understand or are puzzled. Re-explain in the same or different words as necessary.

Use simple key words or key phrases to drive home the main points of instruction. Repeat one or two key words at appropriate times during and after demonstrations.

Carefully point out any special safety precautions and pause to see that your orders have been heard and understood.

### **STEP 5 – Check and correct the practice pattern first, then check technique.**

When practice begins, your attention should be on the pattern of activity. That is, are groups spaced properly so they have enough room? Are they skating far enough and turning at the place you asked them to? Are safety precautions being observed? Did they understand the instructions?

If any of these things need attention, correct them as the players practice. If this is impossible, stop the group, get their attention and make corrections.

Once the practice pattern is well established, begin to check technique and details of the skill as players perform. This is an extremely important point. Get the practice pattern going smoothly first. Then and only then, begin to check the technique of players. Stand or move around so you can see or scan the whole group. If all is going well, let them proceed for a while.

### **Provide Feedback During Practice**

Feedback during learning involves feeding back information to the players about their efforts to learn. It serves three important functions in learning:

1. to guide improvement
2. to measure progress
3. to provide encouragement

### **Give Feedback to Guide Improvement**

Learning skills can be very confusing. There are many things to think about. First the player needs to know what is being done correctly so that he or she will know what parts of the skill are under control. This is not a matter of being nice to the learner by being positive. This is based strictly on sound principles of skill learning.

If players are not clear on what parts of the skill are being done correctly, they may change some of



those things for the worse as they try to correct other parts of the skill.

### ***Use Feedback as a Measure of Progress***

If an athlete knows that his/her list of questions about how to do a skill is getting shorter, it will be easy for him or her to recognize improvement.

Often a player will recognize increased skill as a new feeling of naturalness and smooth action that replaces stiff, unnatural action (“it feels much better now”), and this is another kind of important evidence or improved quality.

### ***Use Feedback as Reward or Punishment***

While knowledge of improvement rewards us, so does approval or recognition: words of encouragement from people important to us, family members, friends and coaches in particular. “Well done!”, “Yes, excellent.”; “Good work.”; “Charlie, I’m proud of you.”

Punishment is the opposite of reward.

Physical punishment is not acceptable nor is extra strenuous, physical work an advisable form of punishment.

## **TWO TEACHING APPROACHES**

There are two approaches commonly used in teaching simple skills:

- 1) imitation
- 2) demonstration/explanation followed by practice and feedback

### **The Imitation Method**

Simple imitation is often the best way for players to learn. It requires them to focus on what is to be imitated or copied. “Watch this ... Try it.” Often the imitation is as accurate as it needs to be. You should then confirm it: “Yes. That’s it. Now remember that.” If necessary, have it practiced several times.

When minor corrections are required, point them out in a clear, matter-of-fact way. If players have trouble picking up the correct action or movement,

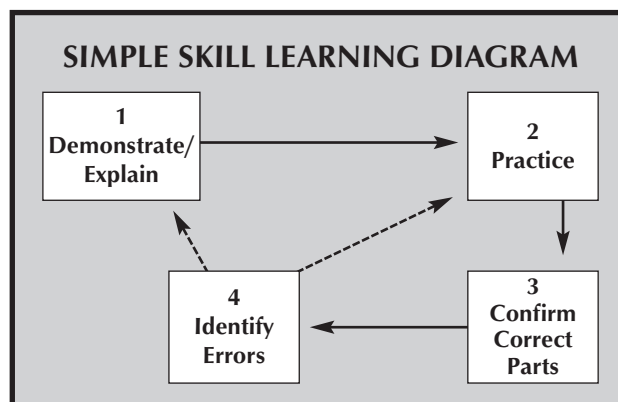
then you should realize that, for some reason, it is not as simple as expected.

### **The Demonstration/Explanation/ Practice/Correction Method**

This method is used extensively. It involves these steps:

- Demonstrate first with minimal explanation: “Watch this. Be careful to stand like this, and then shoot the puck. Try it.”
- Allow for practice. Observe carefully, looking for correct features and common errors.
- Provide feedback while practice continues, if possible. If you must, stop practice and confirm correct actions and, if necessary, make suggestions to correct errors.
- Allow further practice and correct in more detail, if necessary.

This may be illustrated with the following diagram:



## **QUESTIONS TO PONDER**

1. Recall three teachers who had a great influence on you. What did you learn from the way these people taught that you could apply to instructing?
2. Can you make up a catchy three or four word sequence to use as an aid in explaining and demonstrating a skill?
3. If you were given \$1,000, what could you do to improve your practice environment?
4. What do you feel is your greatest strength as a teacher?



## EXAMPLES OF INEFFECTIVE LISTENING



**Player:** "Mr. Brown, I'm a bit worried about the skill we are going to be learning today."

**Coach:** "Okay guys, let's get ready for warm-up."



**Player:** "I'm worried about learning how to ..."

**Coach:** "Don't worry, Johnny ..."



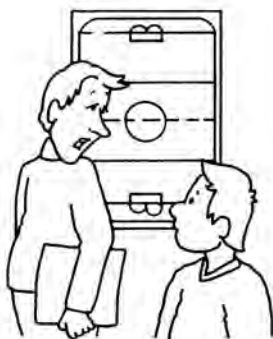
**Player:** "Mr. Brown, I'd like to talk ..."

**Coach:** "Okay guys, let's go."



**Player:** Silence

**Coach:** "Okay guys, let's get out there."



**Player:** "Mr. Brown, could I ..."

**Coach:** "What is it?"



**Player:** "Mr. Brown, I'm a bit worried about the skill we are going to be learning today."

**Coach:** "I see." (bridging)





**Player:** "Yeah, I have a scared feeling since I talked to some of the guys."

**Coach:** "The guys?" (restating)



**Player:** "Thanks, Mr. Brown. I feel a bit better now."

**Coach:** "Good, I know you'll be okay Johnny ... Okay guys, let's get ready for the warm-up."

## SUMMARY

**There are four links in teaching skills:**

1. Select a basic skill to be learned.
2. Plan the explanation and demonstration.
  - a. Select a skill and write down why it is important.
  - b. Select four or five main teaching points and key words.
  - c. Decide if an aid would help.
  - d. Decide on what views a player should see.
  - e. Decide on who demonstrates.
  - f. Call for questions to conclude.
3. Plan how the players will practice the skill.
  - a. Take stock of the practice environment.
  - b. Maximize activity.
  - c. Move the learners into practice quickly.
  - d. Use clear, precise instructions.
  - e. Check and correct practice pattern first, then check technique.
4. Provide feedback during practice.
  - a. Give feedback to guide improvement.
  - b. Use feedback as a measure of progress.
  - c. Use feedback as reward or punishment.



# Chapter 11

## Skill Analysis

### OBJECTIVES

- To understand what skill analysis is
- To understand what principles of movement are and how they relate to hockey
- To understand correction methods to use in skill analysis

### WHAT IS SKILL ANALYSIS?

A coach is a judge of hockey skill. To be a good judge of these skills, the coach must be able to:

- break complex skills down into simple parts
- separate the good parts of technique from the bad parts
- focus on the important parts of technique and not be distracted by ones that are less important
- find a way to correct technique
- put the whole technique back together to form the whole skill

### PRINCIPLES OF MOVEMENT

Experts have discovered ways to assist you in developing your skills in the analysis and correction of performance. These experts are sports scientists who have applied some of the basic ideas of physics to the analysis of sports skills and have determined that:

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*“There are a few principles of movement that explain how all sports skills are done.”*

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These principles are ideas that are true for hockey as well as for other sports. They explain how the different parts of the body should be used in skating, stickhandling, passing, shooting, and all the other skills in hockey. If you can understand and apply these basic principles, you can become a hockey skill analyst.

Before skill analysis was used in sport, coaches tried to:

- memorize all the details of each skill
- correct errors in performance by demonstrating a series of poses for players
- use expressions such as, “Skate hard,” “You’re not trying,” and “Put more wrist into your shot,” which were not specific enough to give the player something to change

These methods do not work effectively.

All the principles of movement are based on how forces are made by or act on the player’s body. The action of the muscles of the body produce forces at the joints that, in turn, produce movements of certain speed, acceleration or momentum, and these properties of a player’s movements in turn determine the quality of the skill.



The two basic principles of movement that will be covered are:

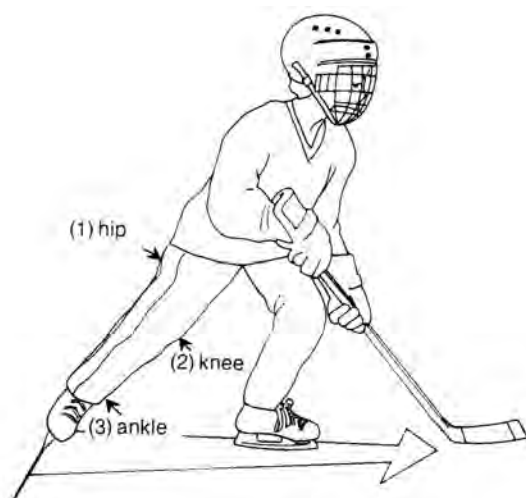
1. use all the joints that can be used (summation of joint forces)
2. use each joint in order (continuity of joint forces)

Both of these principles apply specifically to power skills such as skating, passing, and shooting in which the player is trying to create as much force as possible.

### PRINCIPLE #1 – Use All the Joints that Can be Used

Since most sport skills are done by using the muscles around several joints, the first principle tells us how many joints should be used.

The forces from each joint must be combined to produce the maximum effect. This is best done when all joints that can be used are used.



This principle means that every joint that could be involved in a skill movement does play a role in either contributing to good performance or hindering performance.

The important thing to remember is that every joint must be used to get the most speed, power or acceleration out of the movement.

### EXAMPLES

<b>Skill:</b>	skating
<b>Fault:</b>	stiff-legged
<b>Violation of #1:</b>	not using knee and/or hip joints

**Skill:** shooting

**Fault:** weak shot

**Violation of #1:** not using elbow and/or shoulder joints

### EXERCISE

Pick out some common errors in beginners' hockey skills that may be caused, in part, by leaving out a joint that should be used.

### PRINCIPLE #2 – Use Every Joint in Order

When several joints are used in doing a skill, their sequence and timing are important. This principle tells us when the joints should be used.

Joints that have large muscles and are in the center of the body should be used before joints that have small muscles and are found at the ends of the arms and legs. The resulting motion should be fast and continuous.

Movement should begin with the large muscle groups and move out through the progressively smaller ones. This movement through the body must happen in proper sequence, without any breaks in flow, if the skill is to be performed correctly.

Watching players performing skills, your job is to ask two questions:

- Did they use all of the joints they should have used?
- Did they use the joints in the correct order without gaps or breaks in the movement?

Use the chart on the next page to help you answer these questions.

### CORRECTION METHODS

If your players violate either principle, i.e., they don't use a joint that they should or use a wrong sequence or have gaps in joint movement, how do you fix it?

There are two main correction methods:

1. check for preliminary movements
2. teach whole-part-whole



### Check for Preliminary Movements

Have you ever noticed that before you jump up, you have to crouch down? Before you skate forward, your leg has to go back? Before you shoot a puck, you have to “cock” your wrists? Most preliminary movements are opposite to the pay-off movements that follow. Muscles are arranged in opposite pairs – so preliminary movements help stretch the muscles that do the pay-off movements. In this movement, the stretched muscles contract or shorten. If your players are not using every joint, you can tell them what preliminary movement is missing.

### SUMMARY

1. There are a few principles of movement that explain how all sports skills are done.
2. Principle #1 is: Use all the joints that can be used.
3. The forces from each joint must be combined to produce the maximum effort.

This is best done when all of the joints that can be used are used.

4. Principle #2 is: Use every joint in order.
5. Joints which have large muscles and are in the center of the body should be used before joints that have small muscles and are found at the ends of the arms and legs. The resulting motion should be fast and continuous.
6. To judge a sport skill, the coach must be able to break down complex skills into simple parts, separate the good parts of technique from the bad parts, find a way to correct technique and put the whole technique back together.
7. To correct skill errors that violate the principles:
  - a. check for preliminary movements
  - b. teach whole-part-whole



# Chapter 12

## Skating

### OBJECTIVES

- To identify the important characteristics of executing each of the skating skills used in ice hockey
- To introduce skating skills in correct sequence
- To identify key elements of each skating skill
- To identify common errors young ice hockey players make when executing each of the skills of skating
- To learn to effectively use unique drills and activities in teaching specific skating skills

### INTRODUCTION

Ice hockey is a fast moving, physically demanding sport. The success or failure of a player is dependent on the ability to properly execute the skating skills included in this chapter.

Skating is the primary skill of ice hockey. The better a person can skate, the better that person will play the game.

In this chapter, we will build onto and refine the basic skating movements. Greater skating efficiency and more confidence will be gained by the players as they enter into competitive levels.

The following is a list of skills that the players should be exposed to:

1. proper fit of skates
2. edges
3. ready position
4. balance
5. agility
6. the T-push
7. gliding on 2 skates
8. gliding on 1 skate
9. edge control
10. scooting

11. glide turns
12. one o'clock stop
13. eleven o'clock stop
14. striding forward
15. moving sideways
16. backward stance
17. backward walking
18. backward C-cuts
19. backward V-stop
20. backward striding
21. agility and balance
22. two-foot inside edges stop
23. forward crossover pump
24. front one-foot inside edge stop
25. reversing direction
26. backward one-foot stop/T-push
27. backward push and glide
28. backward gliding on one-foot
29. pivot backward to forwards
30. pivot forward to backwards
31. tight turns
32. one-foot back outside edge stop

Good skating begins with good instruction. A good coach should know technique and be able to break down each skill into parts.



## TEACHING SKATING

1. The right way of skating is always the right way, no matter whether the skater grows from 5 feet to 6 feet or gains weight from 75 pounds to 175 pounds. Kids like to take shortcuts in their growing years.
2. Practice does not make perfect, only perfect practice does. You play the way you practice. If you practice poorly, the skill will not be learned properly.
3. Many skaters do not fulfill their destiny to become good skaters because of complacency.
4. "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit." — Aristotle
5. "The best teacher is repetition, day after day, throughout the season. It must be recognition and instant reaction." — John Wooden, They Call Me Coach
6. After developing a skill competency, you must do the skill with quality execution—fast, faster, then the fastest you can do it.
7. Speed is the test of great competency. Speed will disintegrate an inefficient skill.
8. If the skill is being done inefficiently, re-teach, re-demonstrate, use a different learning drill, or have a different coach teach until the skill is executed properly.

## READY POSITION

Good skating starts from the ready position. Go to any practice or skating session and take a quick look around. In a glance, you will be able to pick out the good skaters. Skaters look like skaters, hockey players look like hockey players. They all have one thing in common—good posture.

### Key Elements

- skates are shoulder width apart
- weight is on the inside edges of the skates
- knees are pushed out as far as possible over the toes
- back is straight, and the head, eyes, and chest are up
- shoulders are level and aligned over the knees
- hands are close together on the stick about eight inches apart
- stick is on the ice in front of the body, "Let the ice carry the stick."

- stick moves to the bent, balancing knee when moving, so the stick moves in "ready position" with the body

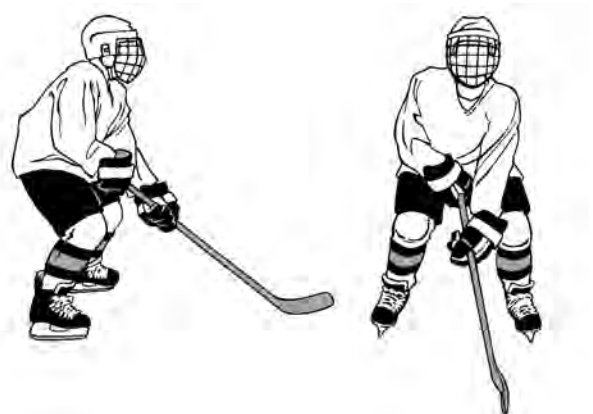


Figure 12-1. The ready position.

### Common Errors

- positioning the skates more than shoulder width apart (this limits the ability to move quickly)
- too much bend at the waist (this straightens the knees and reduces stability)
- positioning the skates less than shoulder width apart (this reduces stability and limits the ability to move quickly)

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*The "ready position" is the first ingredient of a great skater.*

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The closer a skater is to the ice, the more power, balance, and agility the skater will have. **The deeply bent knees are key factors.**

To move out of the "stationary ready position" into a "moving ready position," the player must shift all his or her weight onto an edge, balance, pushdown/pushout to a full extension with the other leg, and then recover. Most inefficiencies are caused by a poor "ready position" or improper weight shift.

If an inefficient skating style is practiced and not corrected, it will become engraved in that player's individual skating style. It will take a willing student many hours, many repetitions, and a patient coach to change.



### SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING

Refer to USA Hockey's *Skills and Drills for the Complete Player and Coach DVD* for specific skating drills. You can view drills designed specifically for the age range you are coaching and print instructions to take to practice. The DVD features actual game footage that demonstrates the drills.

### Suggestions for Coaching

You should be able to press down on the outstretched hands of your players in a ready position, and they should be able to hold much of your weight. A good position will allow them to hold your weight and be able to skate and push you backwards. In a poor position, players will fall forward.

### EDGE CONTROL

As illustrated in Figure 12-2, each side of the blade has an edge. The edges on the outside of the blade closest to the little toe are called outside edges, and those on the inside of the blade closest to the big toe are called inside edges. All of the skills of skating are controlled by using these edges in a precise way that results from familiarity and practice. **The ankles control the edges. Therefore, every player must develop skill in using ankle positioning in both stationary and moving situations.**

#### Key Elements

- ankles control the edges
- knee of glide leg is bent
- weight is on the correct edge (inside or outside)
- distribution of weight from the ball of the foot back to just in front of the heel



Figure 12-2. Inside and outside edges.

### Common Errors

- failure to roll the ankle
- transferring the weight and gliding on the edge
- insufficient knee bend

### Suggestions for Coaching

Drills are an excellent tool for becoming familiar with both the inside and outside edges. Generally, players should progress from stationary to moving and from inside to outside edges as they practice their edge control.

### FORWARD STRIDE

The forward stride begins with a thrust off the inside edge of the skate. **A full leg extension is necessary to obtain full power.** The length of the stride is determined by the amount of knee bend in the gliding leg.

At full extension, there should be an outward snap of the ankle which brings the blade off the ice to begin the recover phase. The head and eyes should be directed forward and the shoulders should be level. At full extension, the back is in a straight line with the extended leg.

**To help speed recovery, the skates must be kept low (next to the ice).** As one skate returns to the gliding position with the knee bent, the opposite leg is initiating the thrust off the inside edge.



Figure 12-3. The forward stride.

#### Key Elements

- For power, push down on inside edge and out to the side to full extension.
- To help speed recovery, the skate must be kept low and recover back under the hip with emphasis on full recovery.



- The knee is kept bent and weight over the glide foot.
- Keep a straight alignment of the trunk and thrust leg.



**Figure 12-4.** *The forward stride sequence.*

### Common Errors

- failing to place weight onto the glide leg
- not bending the knees sufficiently (this results in a short skating stride, i.e., “short stroker”)
- thrusting backward off the toe instead of outward to the side (“walker”)
- high kick on the recovery phase of the stride (“high kicker”)
- straightening the glide leg after each stride (the skater must replace one bent gliding knee with another, i.e., “bobber”)

### Suggestions for Coaching

You should begin the teaching process with stationary exercises that will enhance technique and then progress to drills that may be done at 1/2 to 3/4 speed. Remember, it is the quality of the technique that is most important to the ultimate success of your players.

### FORWARD START

The forward start begins from the ready position. It is most commonly used when already facing straight ahead. Turn the toes of the skate out at approximately a 45-degree angle and the heels in. Thrust off the inside edge of one skate and strive to attain maximum extension with the leg. The knee of the thrusting leg must be bent with the body weight on that leg. This enables you to have more power available for thrust.



**Figure 12-5.** *The forward start.*

As you thrust forward, your upper body or trunk will be in a straight line with your extended leg. The knee of the glide leg is bent out over the toe. **There should be no bending at the waist.**



**Figure 12-6.** *The thrusting leg extension.*

The thrusting leg should be extended fully and returned quickly to its original position; then continue by thrusting off the inside edge of the opposite skate, once again striving for full extension.



**Figure 12-7.** *Rapid leg recovery.*

Rapid leg recovery is vital to fast starts. Remember that each rapid, running stride should take you further than the preceding one. Spring forward. Be careful not to move in an upward direction; your height off the ice should be minimal. The first several strides tend to appear short because there is minimal glide. Long gliding strides minimize power and thrust. **Quick starts result from strong thrust, full extension, and rapid leg recovery.**



**Key Elements**

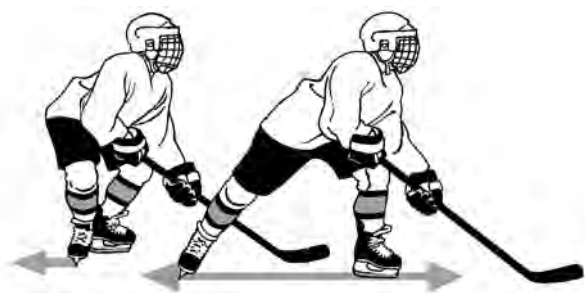
- Start on one skate with inside edge.
- Rotate chest and hips in intended direction of travel.
- Place skates in a heel-to-heel position.
- Thrust off the inside edge of the back skate while stepping forward with the front skate.
- Use full extension of the thrusting leg.
- Rapid, low leg recovery is essential.

**Common Errors**

- Failing to turn the toes out at a 45-degree angle.
- Failing to bend the knee of the thrusting leg.
- Failing to transfer weight to the glide leg.

**FORWARD START****Right/Left**

In order to properly execute the forward start to the right, the skater must rotate the chest and hips to the right, placing the skates in a heel-to-heel position and then thrusting off the inside edge of the left skate while pointing the right skate in the intended direction. The thrusting leg should be extended fully.



**Figure 12-8.** *The forward start left.*



**Figure 12-9.** *Execute the forward start to the left.*

As in the forward start, the ankles are turned in with the weight on the inside edges.

For a forward start to the left, reverse the process. Rotate the chest and hips to the left, bringing the skates to a heel-to-heel position pointing the left skate in your intended direction and thrusting off the inside edge of the right skate, extending the leg fully.

Once again, the key to proper execution is full extension and rapid leg recovery.

**Key Elements**

- Rotate the chest and hips in your intended direction.
- Place your skates in a heel-to-heel position.
- Thrust off the inside edge of the back skate while pointing the front skate in your intended direction.
- The thrusting leg should be fully extended.

**Common Errors**

- Failure to rotate chest and hips properly.
- Failing to point the front skate in your intended direction.
- Not extending the thrusting leg fully.

**THE CONTROL STOP****Stop in Ready Position**

The primary objective of the control stop is to come to a complete stop in the ready position. This allows free and easy movement in any direction without a transfer of weight or change in the basic body position.



**Figure 12-10.** *The control stop.*



When stopping, both skates are on the inside edges — the front or lead skate pushing against the inside edge and the back or trailing skate pulling with the inside edge. Set the edges of both skates at the same time.

An effective way to teach this technique is to break it into three phases.

### Phase 1

In two separate movements, pushing against the inside edge of the lead skate and pulling with the inside edge of the trailing skate.

### Phase 2

In a single movement, both legs are shuffled simultaneously using the inside edges of both skates in the same manner as in Phase 1.

### Phase 3

Practice this technique by taking one stride in either direction and stopping on both inside edges.



**Figure 12-11.** Breakdown of the control stop.

### Key Elements

- Stop on inside edge, both skates
  - front (lead) skate, pushing down on inside edge
  - back (trailing) skate, pulling with inside edge
- bend the knees
- skates shoulder width for stability
- majority of weight on front foot

### Common Errors

- Stopping with skates too far apart allows for stability but very little mobility.
- Stopping with skates too close together allows for mobility but little stability.

## TWO-SKATE “POWER” STOP

### Change Direction Stop

Hockey is a game that often demands quick stops and sudden changes in direction. The two-skate power stop is often used to accomplish this.

In order to properly execute this maneuver, the player must turn his or her body 90 degrees to his line of travel by rotating his shoulders and hips.



**Figure 12-12.** Two-skate power stop (front view).

The knees must be flexed with a slight body lean backwards, with weight on the inside edge of the lead skate and the outside edge of the trailing skate. Your skates should be shoulder width apart.



**Figure 12-13.** Two-skate power stop (side view).



From the stop you should be prepared to move quickly in the opposite direction by utilizing the crossover start.

Players should practice this stop to both the right and left.



**Figure 12-14.** *Forward one-foot stop.*

#### Key Elements

- Stop on right skate.
- Rotate hips to left.
- Bend knee of right leg.
- Plant inside edge of right skate firmly in ice.
- Pick up left skate and go “heel-to-heel” at right angle, to right skate.

#### Common Errors

- insufficient knee bend
- skates either too close together or too far apart

### CONTROL TURNS

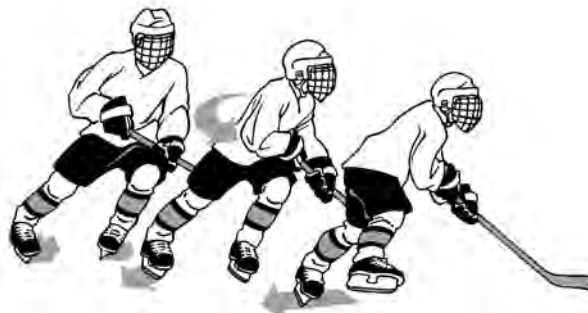
The primary objective of this maneuver is to change direction quickly by executing a tight turn.

Learning this turn may require assistance from the coach by supporting the ankles of a tentative skater. This will help him gain confidence in his edges.



**Figure 12-15.** *Angle movement.*

The control turn requires the skater to use the outside edge of one skate and the inside edge of the other at the same time. The skater must learn to transfer weight to the outside edge of the lead skate and thrust off the inside edge of the trailing skate. Thrust with the entire length of the blade.



**Figure 12-16.** *Control turn thrust.*

The skates are shoulder-width apart and the knee of the lead skate is bent out over the toe with the weight transferred to the outside edge. Thrust out with the inside edge of the opposite (trailing) skate and extend the leg fully. The stronger both edges cut into the ice, the tighter and quicker the turn will be. The skater's hips should rotate in the direction of the turn with the shoulders level and the back straight.



**Figure 12-17.** *The control turn.*

#### Key Elements

- direction changed quickly by doing a tight turn
- skates at least shoulder width apart
- lead skate has weight transferred to the outer edge



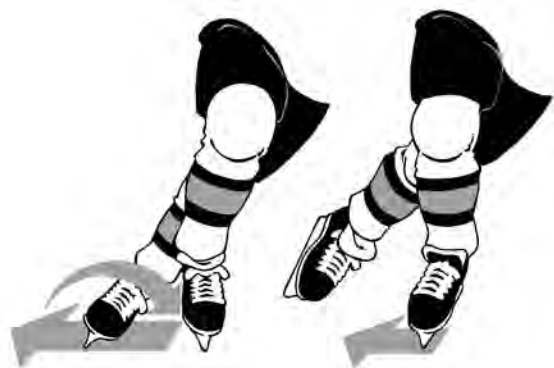
- knee of lead skate bent over skate
- trailing skate thrusts out with inside edge
- hips rotated in direction of turn
- Upper body is erect; no leaning in direction of turn
- crossunder push of lead skate behind trail skate coming out of turn to accelerate

### Common Errors

- weight back on the heels of the skates
- bending forward at the waist
- failure to keep the shoulders level

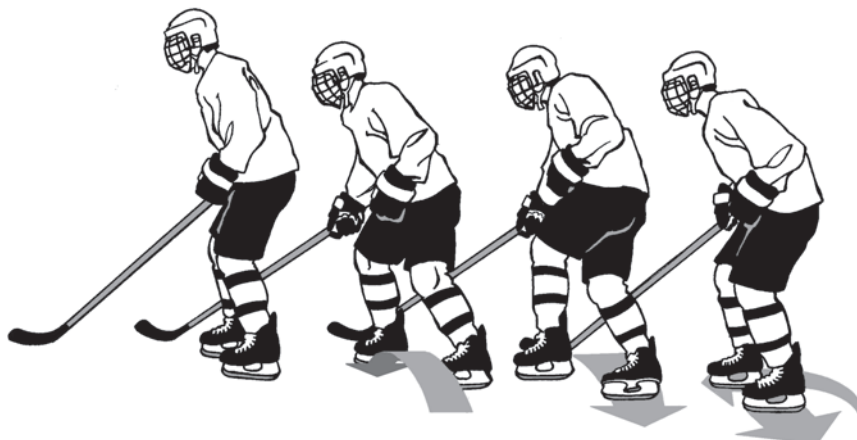
## FORWARD CROSSOVER

The forward crossover is a two-step maneuver. First, a crossover with the front leg is done with the inside edge. Second, the back leg pushes under with the outside edge.



**Figure 12-18.** *Forward crossover.*

This thrust should be out to the side rather than back and to full extension. Cross the left leg under and behind the right leg rolling the ankle under and pushing to full extension.



**Figure 12-20.** *Forward crossover sequence.*



**Figure 12-19.** *Crossover extension.*

Once again the thrust should be against the entire length of the outside edge of the blade. Be careful to push the blade through rather than back.

Immediately after thrusting to full extension with the left leg, return the left skate back to its original position parallel to the right skate. Keep the left skate close to the ice as it returns.

Less skilled players may need to walk through the crossing steps to build confidence and feel in both inside and outside edges.

### Key Elements

- Stress the importance of the skate driving underneath (crossunder).
- Using the outside skate, push off inside edge, then pick up skate and cross knee-over-knee with inside skate.
- Using the inside skate, push under with outside edge as outside skate crosses over.
- Bend knee of gliding leg.



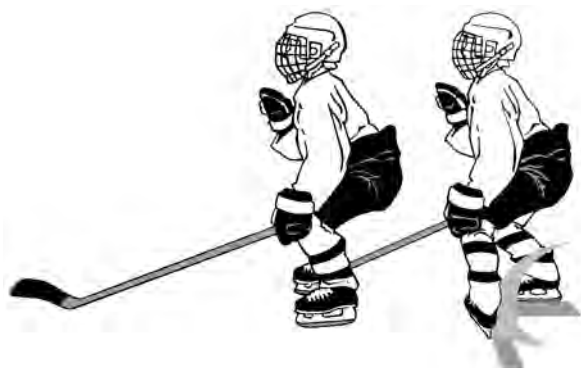
### Common Errors

- failure to roll the ankle and thrust off the entire length of the outside edge
- insufficient bend in the knee of the glide leg
- leaning into the turn by dipping the inside shoulder

### BACKWARD STRIDE

The ability to skate backwards with speed and mobility is an attribute that is important for all players to possess, not just defensemen. As in the forward stride, it is important to emphasize power that is achieved by effectively using your edges, legs, and body weight.

From a stationary (ready) position, push and extend one leg while bending the knee of the opposite leg. The thrusting skate must be centered under your body. The weight is transferred to the leg of the bent knee (glide leg).



**Figure 12-21.** Backward ready position and weight transfer.

Point the heel of the thrusting skate out and the toe in, pushing off the inside edge of that skate. Try to



**Figure 12-22.** Backward skating sequence.

make a half-circle (“C”) as you dig in and push with the inside edge of the extending leg. Cut the “C” with the front half of the blade of the thrusting skate. The final thrust should come from the toe of the blade.

Extend the pushing leg to its maximum, then return it to its original position by pivoting the heel inward. When the return is complete, your skates should be side-by-side and parallel to one another. The opposite leg, which has been gliding straight backward, now becomes the pushing leg and thrusts out in a semi-circular maneuver (“C”). Keep the skates on the ice, head up and stationary, hips square and facing straight ahead, and arm movement to a minimum.

### Key Elements

- Ready position:
  - bottom hand off stick
  - skates shoulder width apart
  - lower buttocks, head/shoulders erect
- inside edge thrusts with the one skate in a heel out, toe in arc
- full extension of the thrust leg
- bent knee of the glide foot
- recovers thrust skate to under hip

### Common Errors

- wiggling too much from the hips (this limits the thrust power of your legs)
- bending forward too much at the waist (throws the weight forward reduces the knee bend and limits thrust)
- skates too close together (limits stability)
- skates too far apart (causes a loss in maneuverability and power)



## BACKWARD STOP

This stop is used to stop quickly and efficiently when skating backward. It leaves the player in a position to move easily in any direction.

From the ready position, fan the toes of both feet outward. This turns the heels to the inside. Dig in with the inside edges of both skates by exerting pressure on the balls of your feet, and lean forward slightly.

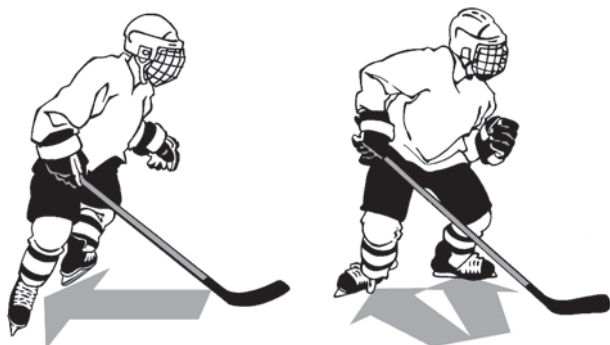


Figure 12-23. Backward stop.

### Key Elements

- both knees bent
- toes out, heels in
- weight on inside edges
- slight forward body lean
- hips, chest, shoulders facing straight ahead

### Common Errors

- inadequate knee bend
- not turning the toes out and the heels in
- placing insufficient weight on the inside edges
- leaning the body too far forward
- rotation of the hips, chest or shoulders

## BACKWARD CROSSOVER

For illustrative purposes, we will begin by traveling backwards in a clockwise direction.

The initial thrust must come from the inside edge of the outside (right) skate. This is accomplished by pivoting your right heel outward and the toe inward and pushing off the inside edge to full extension. This thrust is identical to the “C” movement used in the backward skating stride.



Figure 12-24. Backward crossover.

As you thrust with the right skate, weight must be transferred onto the left leg. **The knee of the left leg is bent out over the toe and the skate is gliding backward.**



Figure 12-25. Backward crossover sequence.

Bring the heel of the right skate across in front of the toe of the left skate and roll the ankle of the left skate underneath, thrusting off the outside edge to full extension. You must be careful to utilize the entire length of the outside edge.

To complete the crossover, reach back to the inside with the left skate.

To crossover in a counter-clockwise direction, simply mirror the procedure.

### Key Elements

- good knee bend
- shoulders level
- strong thrust from both the inside and outside edges



### Common Errors

- excessive leaning places your weight forward on your toes and puts you out of balance
- too much bend at the waist reduces your knee bend
- excessive swinging of arms from side to side

### BACKWARD POWER START

The fastest way to go backwards is to execute a series of backward crossovers.

Backward crossovers are very practical to a defenseman when he begins backing out of the offensive zone. He must accelerate quickly while avoiding turning his back on the play.

Rotate your hips and lower body 90 degrees or one-quarter turn to the right. Thrust off the inside edge of your right skate to full extension.

Cross your left skate under and behind your right skate, thrusting off the outside edge to full extension.

Return the left skate to its original position.

Players should practice their backward power start to both the left and the right. Many players will find that they get more power from this start than the straight backward start. However, in a game you

may find one to be more advantageous than the other, depending upon the situation.

For example, a backward power start immediately commits you to moving to one side or the other, thus opening a hole for the opponent to break through. Also, backward starts do not build up speed as quickly as the forward or lateral (side) start, which may mean that, in certain situations, when the opposing forward is approaching the defender rapidly, that it might be more useful to utilize a front start and then turn around backward.

### Key Elements

- Rotate hips and lower body 90 degrees.
- Thrust off inside edge to full extension.
- Properly execute crossover.

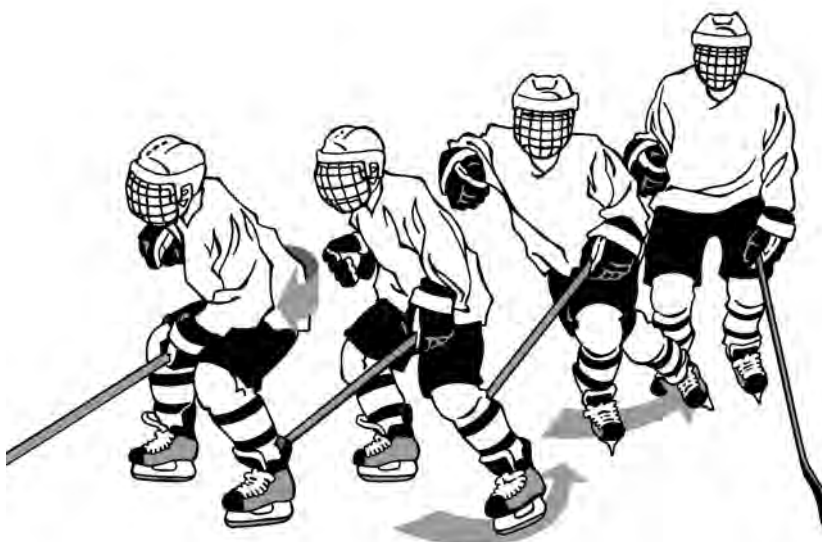
### Common Errors

- improper body rotation
- not thrusting off the inside edge to full extension

### BACKWARD ONE-FOOT STOP

The backward one-foot stop is similar to the backward stop discussed previously, except that only one foot is utilized to execute the stop.

For illustrative purposes, we will discuss this stop to the left. While gliding straight backwards, rotate the hips about one-quarter turn to the left which turns your left toe outward and the heel inward.



**Figure 12-26.** Backward power start progression.





**Figure 12-27.** *Backward one-foot stop.*

The knee of the stopping leg (left) must be bent out over the toe with the inside edge of the left skate firmly planted against the ice. Utilize the ball of the foot to exert pressure into the ice.

This maneuver is most frequently used in non-contact situations where you have a predetermined knowledge of your next move. This stop leaves you in an excellent position for a quick forward start because the stopping foot is already in the lateral start position, with weight on the stopping leg and your skates in a heel-to-heel position. All that must be done is to thrust off the inside edge of the back (or stopping) leg, pointing the toe of the front skate in your intended direction.



**Figure 12-28.** *Backward left one-foot stop (back view).*

#### Key Elements

- hip rotation one-quarter turn
- knee bent on the stopping leg
- inside edge of the stopping leg firmly planted

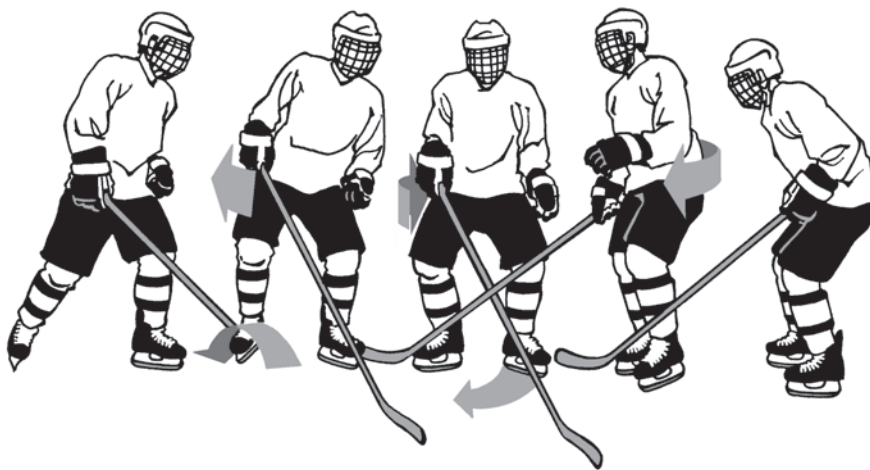
#### Common Errors

- hip rotation more than one-quarter turn
- knee of the stopping leg straightens
- skates too far apart

### FORWARD-TO-BACKWARD TURN

The forward-to-backward turn is most commonly used by defensemen, but a necessary skill for all players to master.

Begin by gliding forward on your left skate. Your right skate has just completed its thrust and is off the



**Figure 12-29.** *Forward-to-backward turn sequence.*



ice behind your body. Rotate the hips and chest to the right (or in the direction of your turn) placing the weight directly over the left skate.

Continue the turn by turning the right skate 180 degrees, so the toe is facing opposite the intended line of travel. Your skates are thus in heel-to-heel position.

Complete the turn by continuing to rotate your hips and chest a complete 180 degrees to face your back fully backward. Now place your right skate on the ice and continue skating backwards. You have completed the turn. It also can be done the other way.

### Key Elements

- Rotate the hips and chest 180 degrees.
- Turn the thrusting skate 180 degrees so the toe is facing the opposite direction of the intended line of travel.

### Common Errors

- over- or under-rotating the hips and chest
- skates too far apart

## BACKWARD-TO-FORWARD STEP OUT TURN

During a game, players frequently turn from backward-to-forward. This is particularly true when defensemen turn from backward-to-forward to cut off an opponent along the boards.

The player is gliding backward in the ready position and wants to turn to his or her right.

The player begins by rotating the hips, shoulders, and chest in the direction of the turn with knees bent. This places the weight on the inside edge of the glide leg.

The free skate is turned 180 degrees so that the toe is facing forward in the intended line of travel parallel to the glide skate.

As you step onto your right skate, thrust off the inside edge of your left skate and extend the leg fully to accelerate out of the backward-to-forward turn.

### Key Elements

- Rotate the hips, shoulders, and chest 180 degrees.
- Turn the thrusting skate 180 degrees so the toe is facing forward in the intended line of travel.
- Bend the knees.

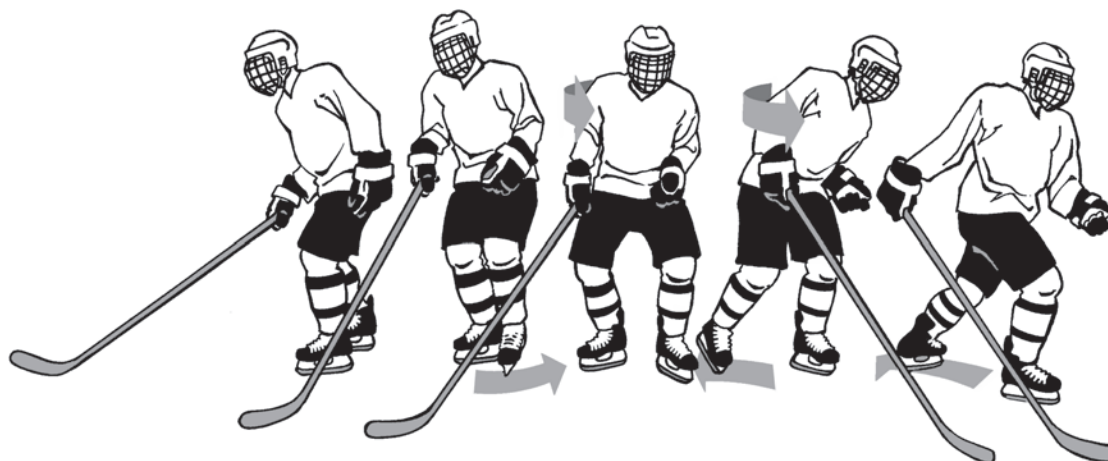
### Common Errors

- over- or under-rotating the hips, shoulders, and chest
- skates too far apart
- knees not bent

## BACKWARD-TO-FORWARD TURN

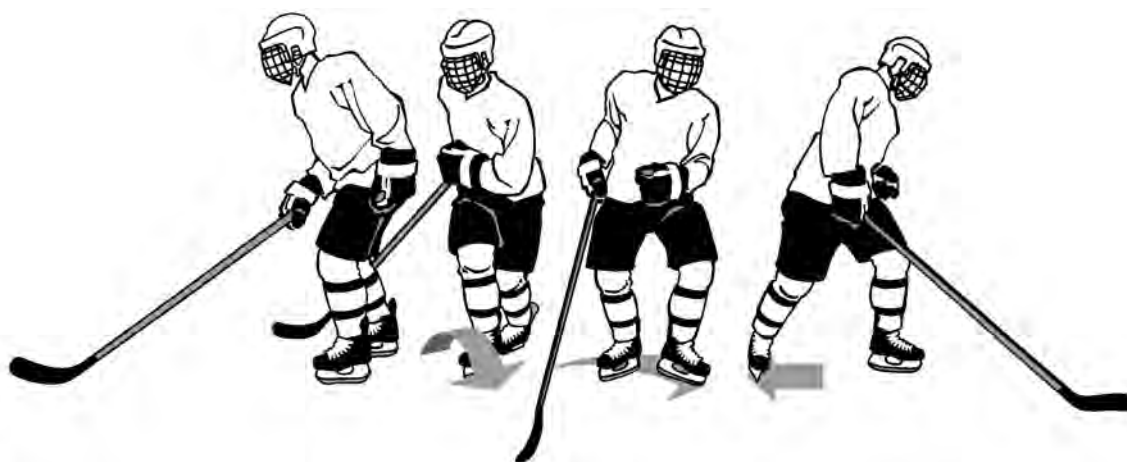
This maneuver is very similar to the backward-to-forward step out turn, but this turn also incorporates a backward crossunder.

Begin the turn gliding backward in the ready position. Start rotating the hips and chest and do a backward crossunder, thrusting your left skate behind and under the right using the outside edge.



**Figure 12-30.** Backward-to-forward step out turn sequence.





**Figure 12-31.** Backward-to-forward turn sequence.

Return the left skate close to its original position, except turned to point forward with the toe facing the intended line of travel. Your skates are now in a heel-to-heel position with weight on the glide leg.

Continue rotating the hips and chest 180 degrees to face fully forward. Thrust off the inside edge of the right skate to full extension and step out with the left skate in the direction of the turn.

#### Key Elements

- Rotate the hips and chest 180 degrees.
- Perform crossunder.

- Thrust off the glide leg.

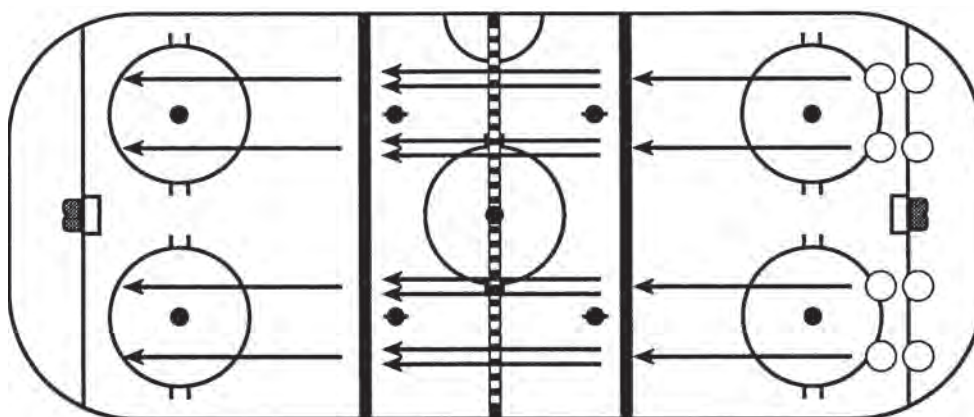
#### Common Errors

- lack of knee bend on the glide leg
- skates too close or too far apart
- poor weight distribution

#### SKILL DRILLS

The following skill drills are presented in a suggested progression. They progress from stationary to moving to simple to complex.

#### READY POSITION

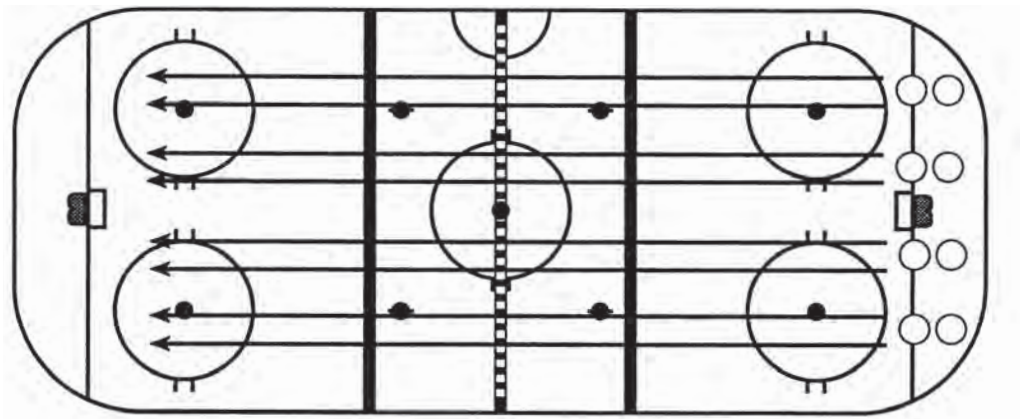


#### Glide in Ready Position

1. Skate to the near blue line.
2. Glide on two skates to the far blue line in the ready position.
3. Finish the drill at the goal line.
4. Stress two hands on the stick, and have the players keep their sticks in front of their bodies, with knees bent.



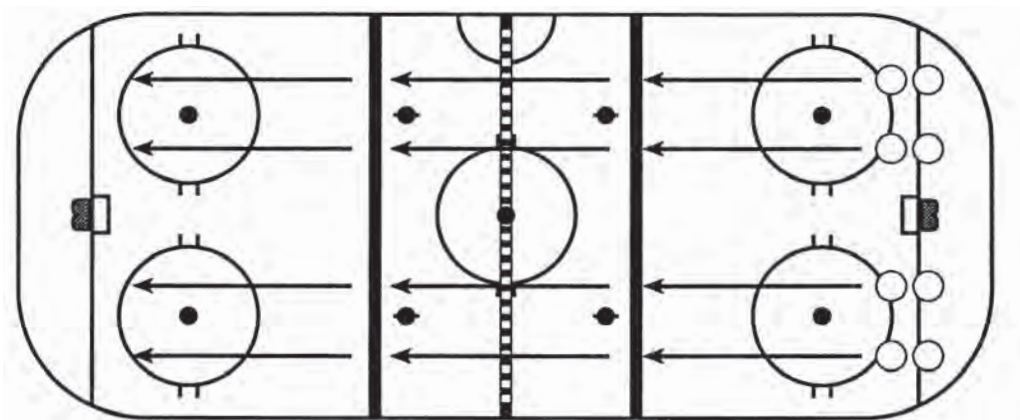
## STICK AND WEIGHT SHIFT



### Railroad Tracks

1. Form four lines.
2. First do stationary railroad weight shift moves, then go down the ice.
3. Skate forward for a while, then glide with both skates on the ice.
4. While gliding, shift the weight and stick, alternating between the right and the left leg.
5. Keep head and chest up.

## BALANCE

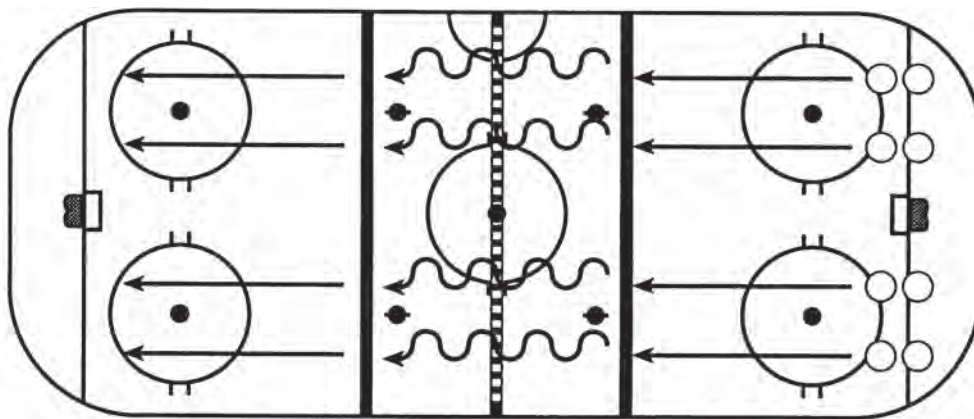


### One-Foot Glide

1. Skate hard to the near blue line.
2. Glide on one foot to the far blue line.
3. Emphasize bent knees.
4. The group can also come back from the other direction.

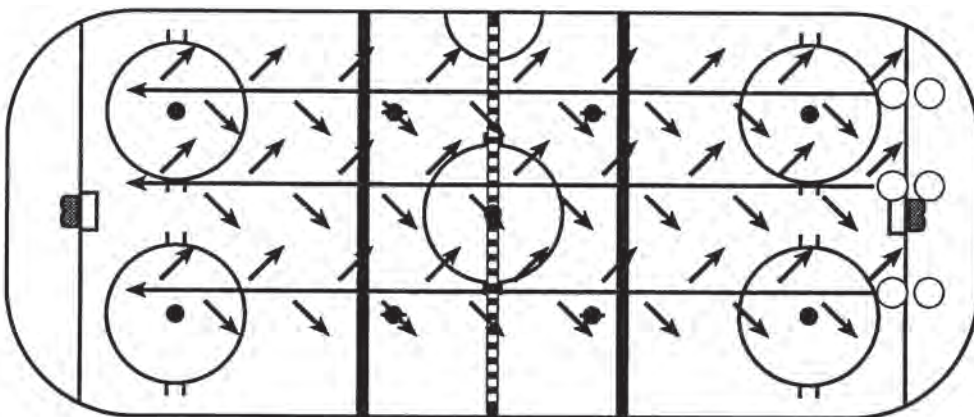


## BALANCE

**One-Foot Glide Weave**

1. Skate hard to the near blue line.
2. Glide on one skate, weaving side-to-side.
3. Players will start to feel their edges.
4. Keep knees well bent.
5. Alternate glide on different skates.

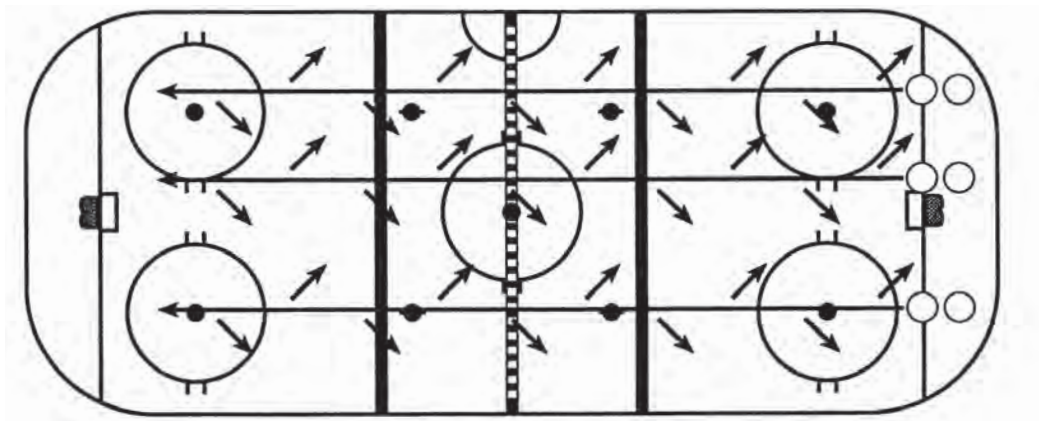
## FORWARD STRIDE

**Push-Touch-Coast**

1. Form three lines at one end of the rink.
2. Have players get into ready position.
3. Players push off with right skate to full extension.
4. Recover with right skate and touch it to the left skate.
5. Then coast in ready position.
6. Do the same sequence with left skates.
7. Continue alternating skates.



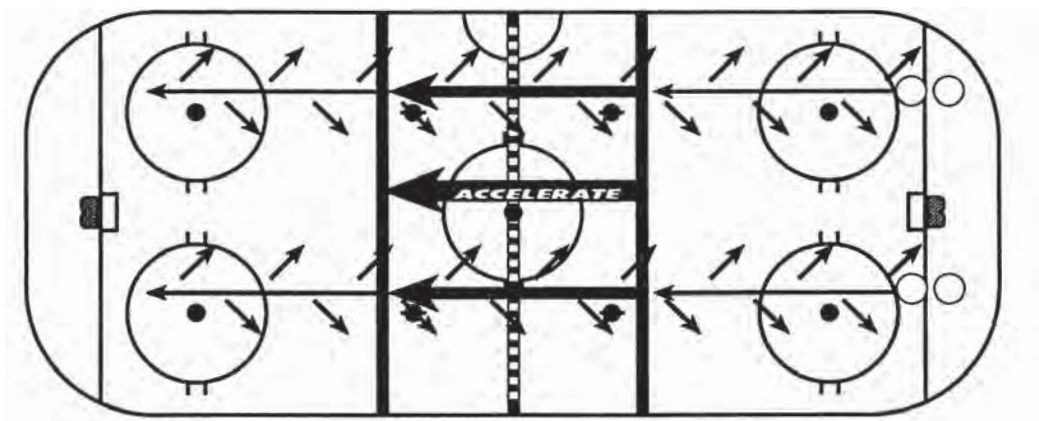
## POWER STROKES



### 10 Strokes

1. Line players up at one end of the rink.
2. Have them skate all the way to the other end of the rink using only 10 power strokes.
3. All strokes must have full extension and players in their power stance.
4. Have the players concentrate on good weight shifts.

## ACCELERATION STROKES

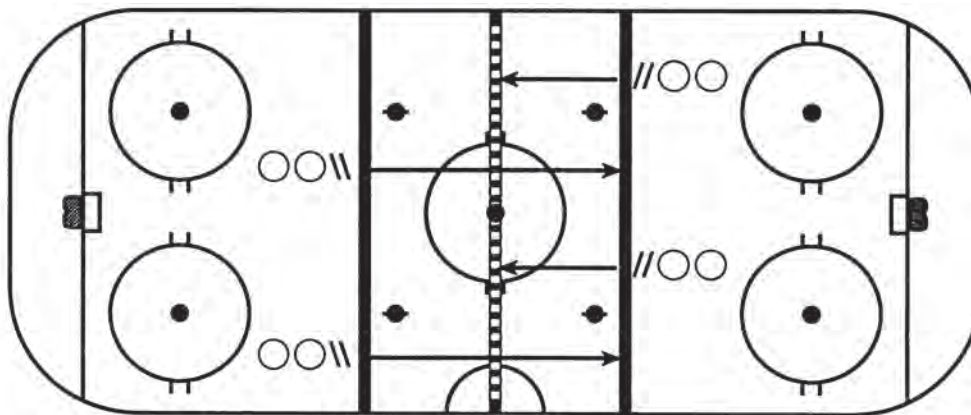


### Power Strokes to Acceleration

1. Line players up at one end of the rink.
2. Using a power stroke, skate to the near blue line.
3. Quickly accelerate between the blue lines.
4. Then power stroke to the goal line to complete the drill.
5. Stress full recovery with each stride.



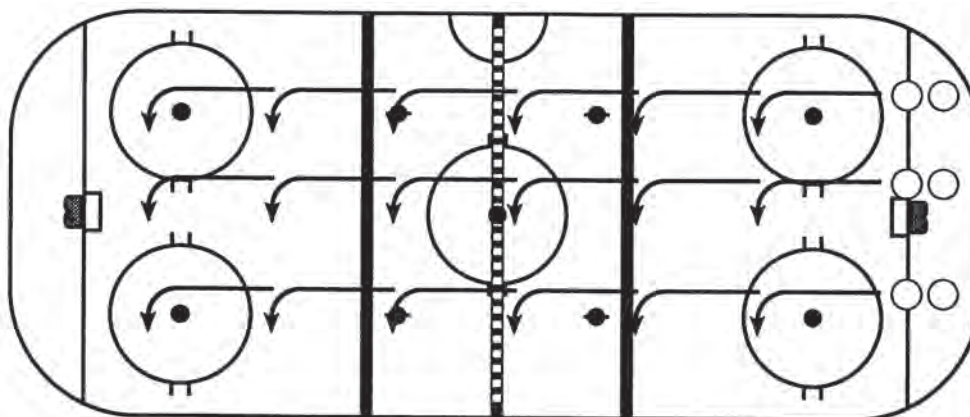
## FAST STARTS AND QUICK ACCELERATION



### Blue Line to Red Line/Blue Line to Blue Line

1. Have players in two lines at each blue line, facing each other.
2. One group will only be skating to the red line, then moving over to the other group.
3. The other group will be skating to the far blue line, then joining the other group.
4. At the whistle, the first player in each line starts and then quickly accelerates to their respective lines.
5. Stress explosive starts, quick recovery and full extension.

## FORWARD STOP

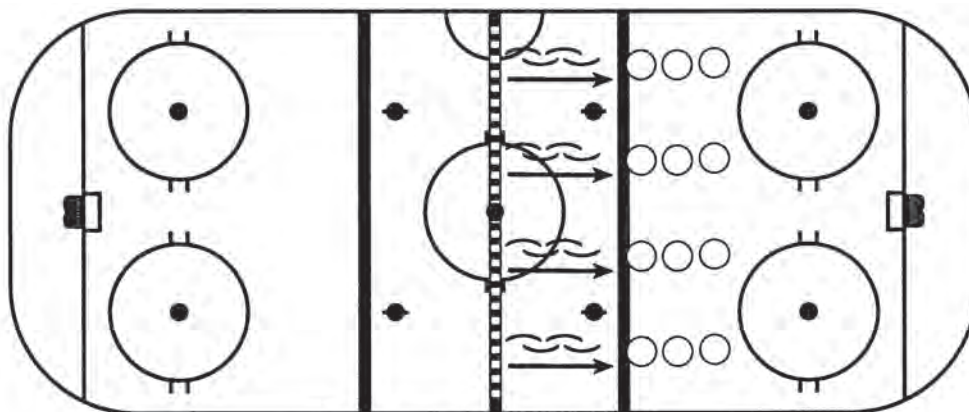


### Snap Forward Stop to the Ready Position

1. Form three lines.
2. The objective is to stop in the ready position.
3. Skate forward and stop every time the whistle blows.
4. Always stop facing the same direction.
5. When stopping, "snap" the hips quickly to one side.
6. Push down on the inside edges of both skates.
7. Stress knee bend, chest and head up and skates shoulder width apart.
8. Use the "L" start when starting every time.



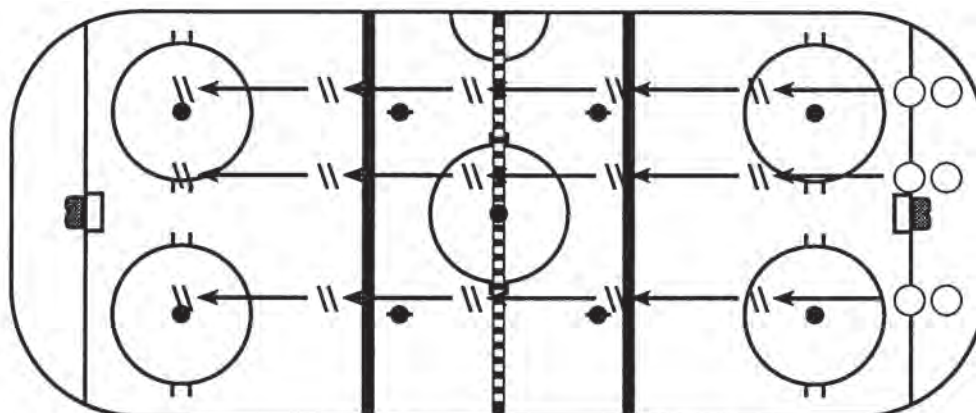
## BACKWARD STOP



### Red Line Backward Stop

1. Form four lines at a blue line.
2. The first skater in each line sprints to the red line, skating backward.
3. When the skaters stop at the red line, they sprint back forward to the blue line.
4. This drill can also be done also blue line to blue line.

## ONE FOOT STOPS AND "L" STARTS

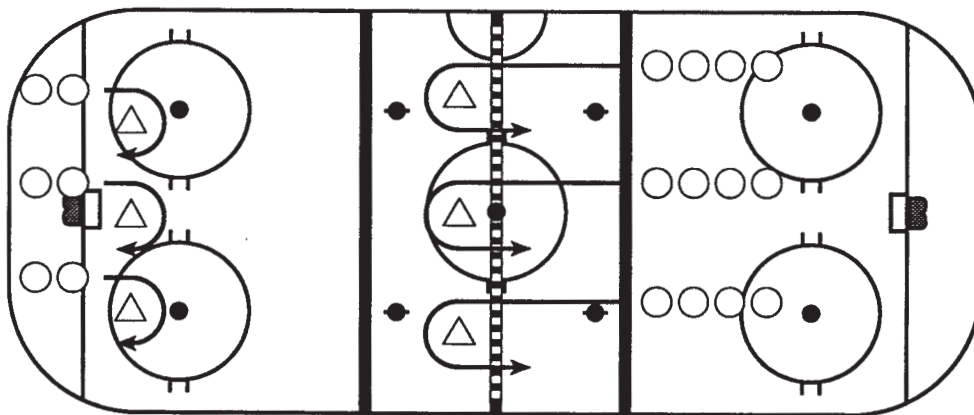


### Whistle Stops and Starts

1. Form three lines at one end of the rink.
2. Stop and start on the whistle.
3. Always stop facing the same direction.
4. Always stop on one skate, alternating skates with each stop.
5. Use the "L" start to begin skating again.



## EDGE CONTROL

**One-Cone Edge Control*****Inside Edge:***

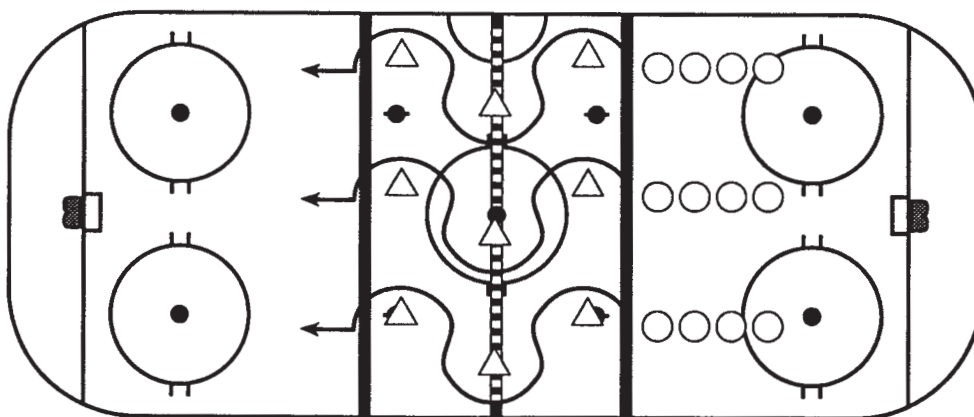
1. Players skate up to the cone, pick up the left skate and turn around the cone on the right inside edge.
2. Keep the right knee well bent, with two hands on the stick.

***Outside Edge:***

1. Players skate up to the cone, pick up the right skate and turn around the cone on the left outside edge.
2. Keep the left knee well bent, with two hands on the stick.

Start the drill with the cone five feet from the players, then move the cone gradually to thirty feet away.

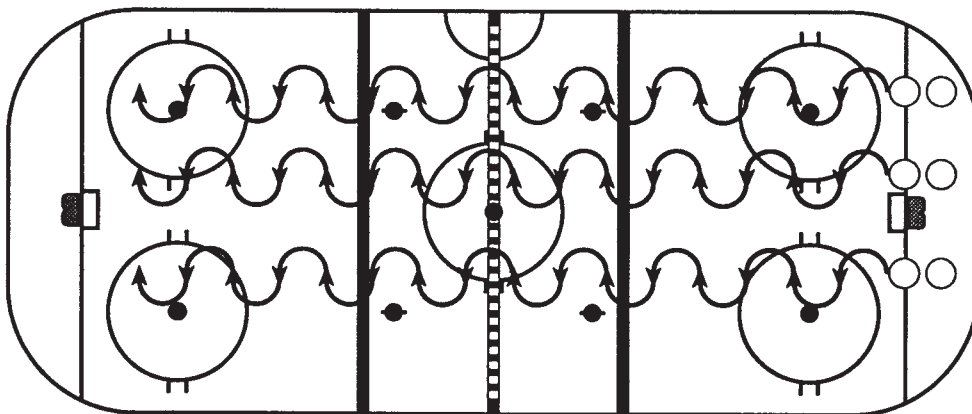
## EDGE CONTROL

**Three-Cone Inside and Outside Edges**

1. Form three lines.
2. Put three cones in a triangle about 15 feet apart.
3. Players skate up to the first cone and alternate inside/outside edges of the right/left skates at the cones.
4. Stress glide leg knee bend and two hands on the stick.

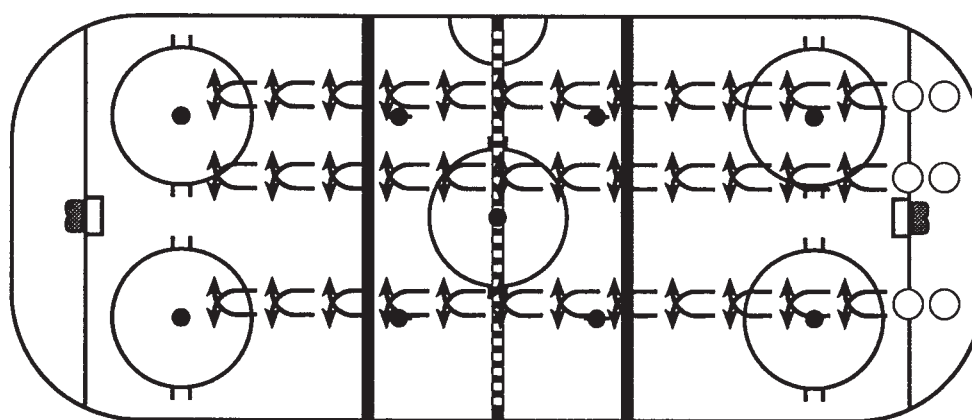


## EDGE CONTROL

**Big C Inside Edges**

1. Form three to five lines at one end of rink.
2. Start out by making a half circle with the inside edge of the players' right skates.
3. Then make a half circle with the inside edge of the players' left skates.
4. Continue down the ice alternating right and left inside edges.
5. Push the inside edges hard into the ice by having the knees well bent.

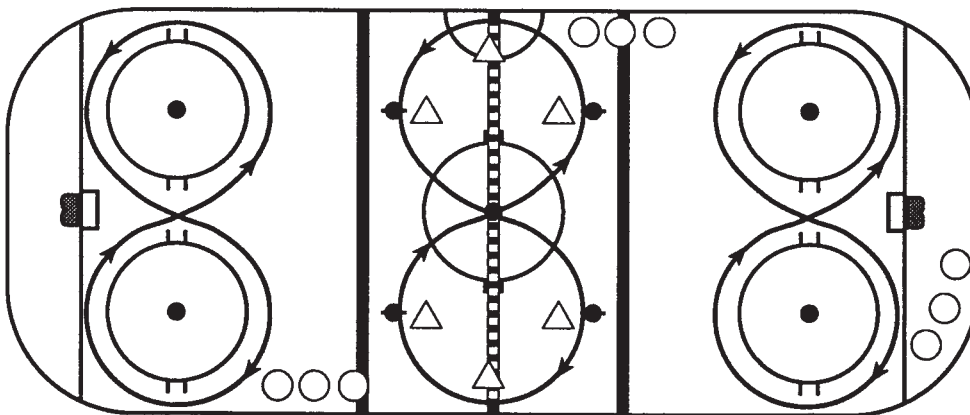
## EDGE CONTROL

**Exaggerated Forward Crossovers**

1. Form three lines.
2. Do constant forward crossovers straight down the ice to the other end.
3. Over-exaggerate the crossovers with a rhythm.
4. Emphasize knees bent.
5. Stay down in the power stance position.



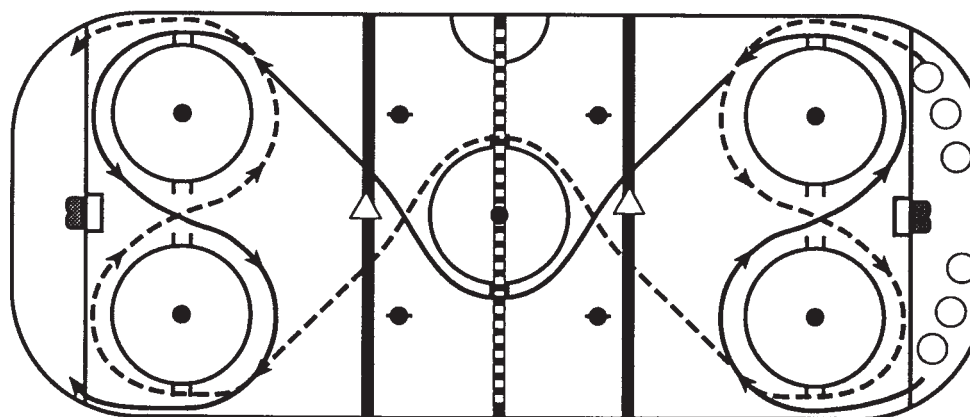
## FORWARD CROSSOVERS



### Three Zones Figure 8's

1. Have groups of players line up in each zone.
2. Allow two to three players go at a time, doing figure-8 patterns.
3. Players must go full speed.
4. Keep shoulders level.

## FORWARD CROSSOVERS

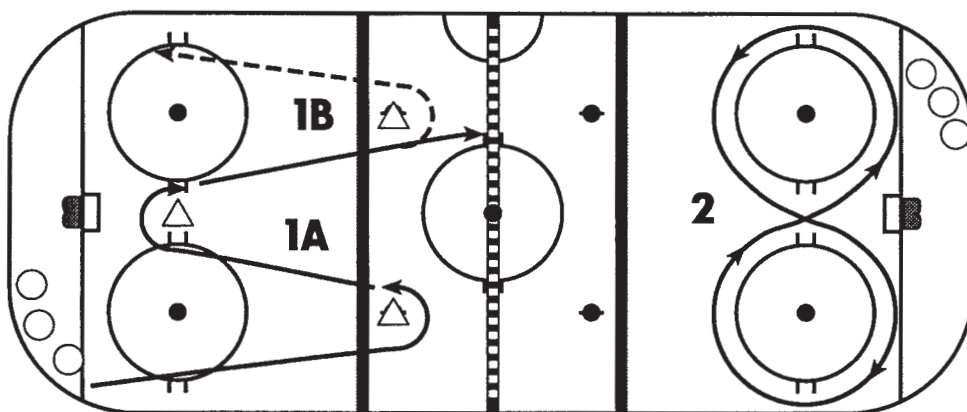


### Russian Circles

1. Form two lines, one in each corner on the same side of the rink.
2. At the whistle, the first player in each line goes at the same time.
3. Players skate their pattern at full speed, always moving their feet.
4. The next players go when the player in front of him or her reaches the blue line.
5. Remind all players to keep their head and chest up.



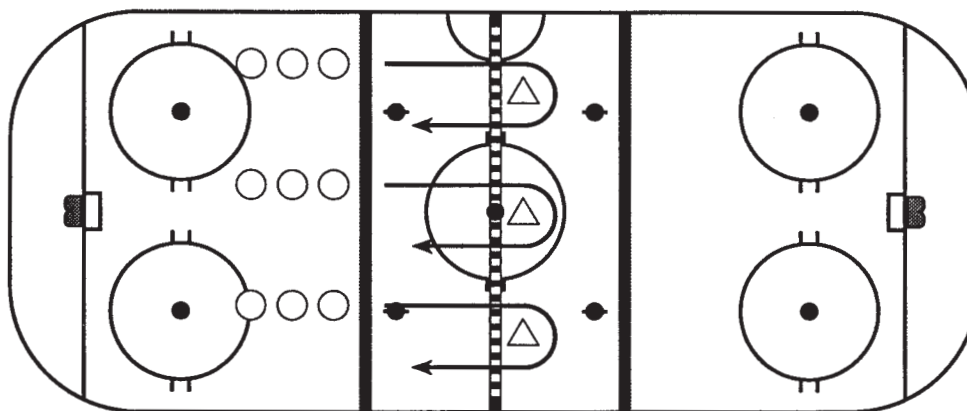
## FORWARD CROSSOVERS



### Two-Zone Agility Skating

1. Two drills running simultaneously.
2. Figure 8 at one end, three-cone drill at the other.
3. Three-cone forward crossovers, weave in and out of the pattern as quickly as possible.
4. At the other end of the ice, three players go at a time and skate a figure 8 around the circles for 20-30 seconds.

## HOCKEY TURN

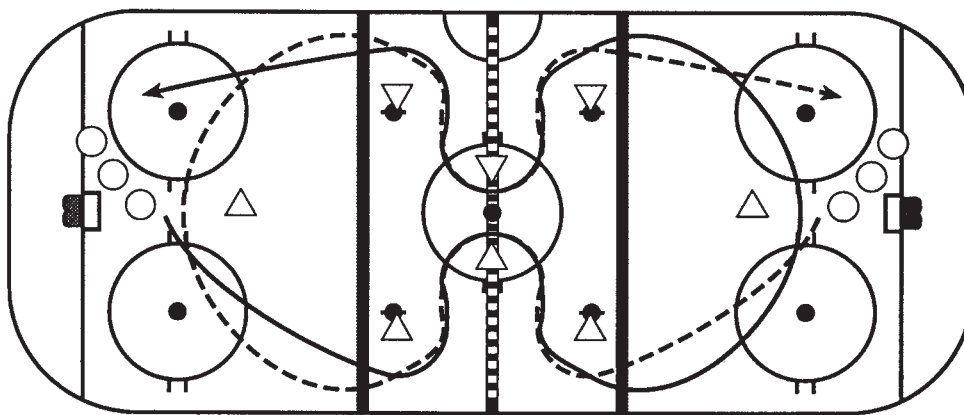


### Hockey Turn: One Cone

1. Have players turn left first.
2. Place left skate near the cone and bend the leg.
3. Throw the right skate out to the side with full extension.
4. Keep the upper body straight.
5. Stay down coming out of the turn and accelerate.



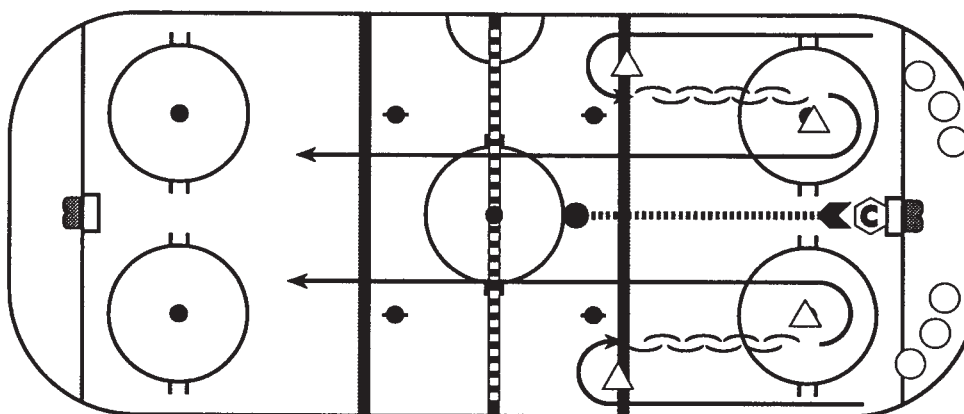
## AGGRESSIVE SKATING



### Peanut Drill: Two Groups

1. Form two lines, one at each goal line.
2. One group will go at a time.
3. Skate up to each cone using a crossover or a control turn.
4. Players try to go as fast as they can around the course pattern.

## AGILITY

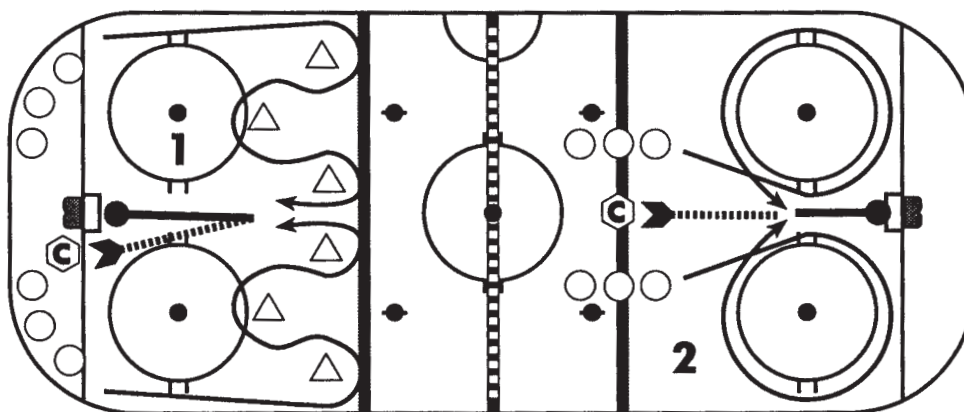


### Forward/Backward Step Out Race

1. Form two lines, one in each corner on the same side of the ice.
2. At the whistle, the first player in each line begins the drill.
3. Sprint forward around the first cone.
4. Skate backward to the faceoff dot.
5. Step out and skate forward, and sprint down the other end of the ice.
6. A coach can add a puck to the race. Pass a puck down the middle of the rink and players will race for it to score at the other end.

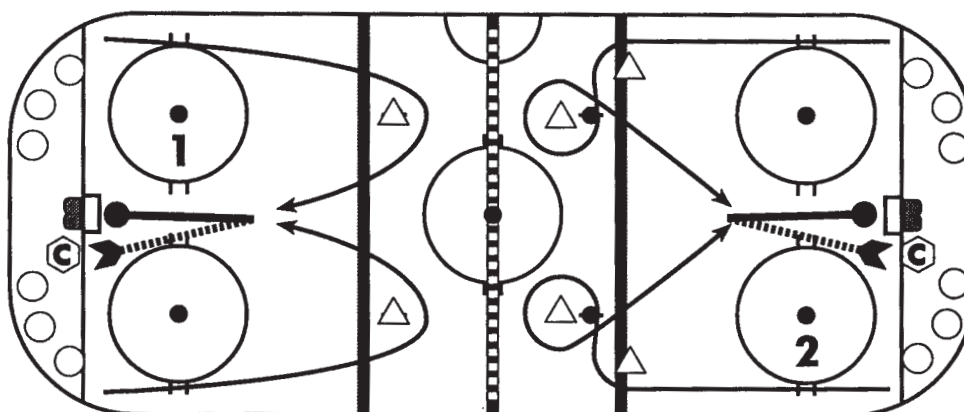


## COMPETITIVE AGILITY

**Two-Zone Puck Chase**

1. Two drills run simultaneously.
2. Circle Race and Shoot: Form two lines at the blue line. The first player in each line races around the faceoff circle to gain control of the puck. The first player to the puck tries to score.
3. Three-Cone Weave: Form two lines in each corner. The first player in each line races in and out of the three cones to gain control of a loose puck. The first player to the puck tries to score.

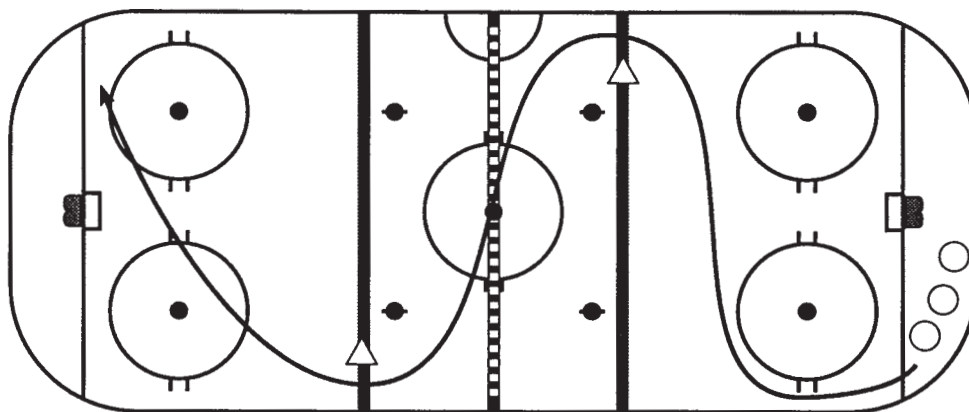
## COMPETITIVE AGILITY

**Two-Zone Puck Pursuit**

1. Two puck pursuit drills at each end.
2. One cone turn in: Form two lines in each corner. The first skater in each line races around his or her cone, drives to the net and takes control of a puck that the coach places between the two faceoff circles. The player who gets control of the puck tries to score.
3. Two-cone turn in: Form two lines in each corner. The first skater in each line races to his or her cones and weaves in and out as quick as he or she can. Both players drive to the net and try to control a puck the coach has passed between the two faceoff circles. The player who gets control of the puck tries to score.



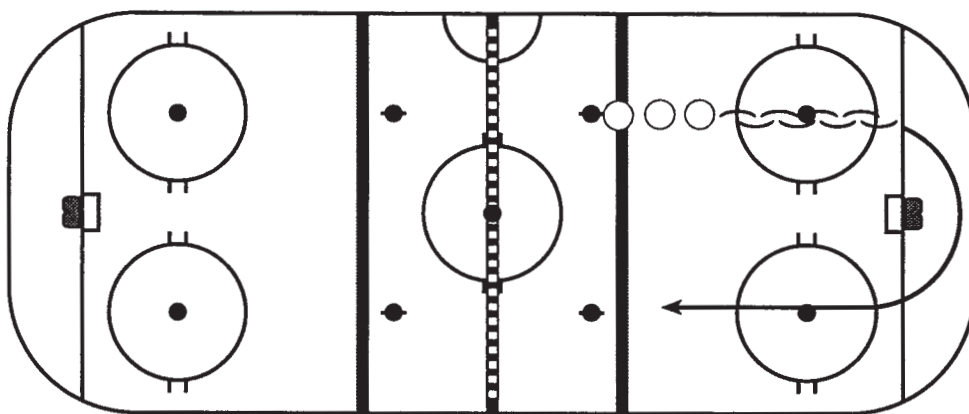
## SPRINT INTERVAL WORK



### Sprinting the Lines

1. Form one line in one corner of the rink.
2. At the whistle, one player skates the pattern as fast as he or she can.
3. Players will end up in the opposite corner.
4. The next player leaves when the skater in front reaches the blue line.
5. Do not start the drill again until all players receive a one minute rest interval.

## SPRINT INTERVAL WORK

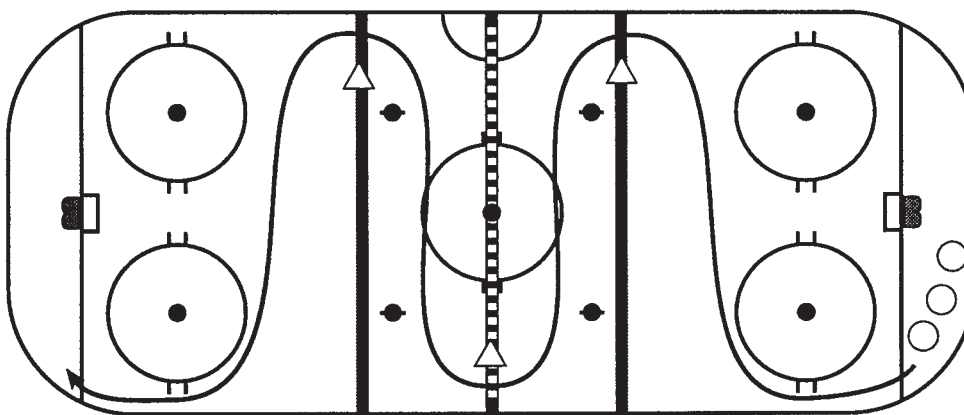


### Step Out Sprint Interval

1. Form one line at the top of the faceoff circle.
2. The first player starts off skating backward hard to the goal line.
3. The player steps out and skates forward hard around the net, sprinting to the near blue line.
4. Remind players to accelerate around the net.
5. The next player goes when the skater in front reaches the goal line.
6. Each player must have one minute rest interval before the next sprint.



## AGILITY SPRINT INTERVAL WORK



### The “M” Drill

1. All players line up in one corner.
2. At the whistle, the first player takes off and sprints through the course of three cones, and finishes at the opposite end.
3. The next skater goes when the player in front of him or her reaches the first cone.
4. Remind players to keep knees bent and feet moving.
5. Do not do the next drill until a one minute rest interval has occurred.

### LEARN MORE

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. (*Internet access is required*).

- [www.usahockeyskillsanddrills.com/index.html](http://www.usahockeyskillsanddrills.com/index.html)



# Chapter 13

## Puck Control

### OBJECTIVES

- To help coaches understand the various puck control skills used in ice hockey
- To introduce the skills and teach them in sequence
- To explain the key elements in all of the skills

### INTRODUCTION

Until players learn to control the puck, their ability to shoot, pass and receive the puck are severely limited.

There are different stages of developing the skills of puck control. Youth ice hockey coaches must continue to pay special attention to the development of this and other fundamental skills during the early years of a player's growth and development.

### FUNDAMENTALS OF PUCK CONTROL

To be a good puckhandler, it is essential that the player understands the importance of stick selection, stick length, grip, and basic stance.

#### Length of Stick

When standing on skates, the stick should be no longer than just under the chin and no shorter than the top of the shoulders.



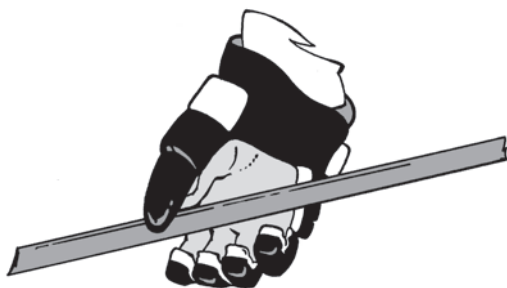
**Figure 13-1.** *Proper length of stick.*

#### Size of Shaft

It is very important that the fingers can grip around the shaft of the stick. Too many players start using an adult stick too early and have a difficult time controlling the stick. Pee wee and younger players



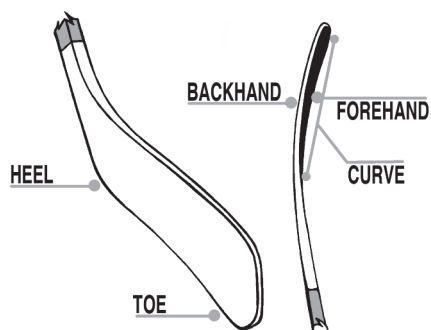
should use a junior shaft stick or have the shaft shaved down for a comfortable fit to their hand.



**Figure 13-2.** *Determining the size of the shaft.*

### Blade of Stick

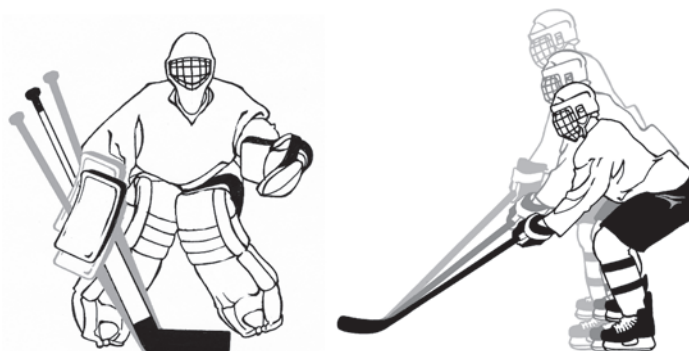
The length of the blade must be small enough for the youth player to control the puck without having to fight the length and weight of the stick blade.



**Figure 13-3.** *Blade of the stick.*

### Lie of Stick

Skating style of a youth ice hockey player determines the lie of the stick. If a youth player is erect from the waist up, it requires a higher number lie. If the youth player is more bent over at the waist, it requires a lower number lie.



**Figure 13-4.** *Lie of the stick.*

### Grip of Stick

One of the most important components of puck control is the positioning of the hands on the stick. The hands should be a “glove length” apart on the stick (6-12 inches). The grip is correct if the player can look down at the stick and see a “V” formed by the thumb and forefinger of each hand on the top side of the shaft.



**Figure 13-5.** *Proper grip.*



### Basic Stance

Players must hold the stick in front of the body. The elbows and arms should move freely as the puck is moved back and forth in front of the body. Knees are bent, with head, chest, and eyes up (ready position).



Figure 13-6. Basic puck control stance (ready position).

## FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS FOR STICKHANDLING

### Wrist Roll and Cupping The Puck

Every time the player moves the puck from side to side, it is essential to roll the wrist. It is this rolling of the wrists that will enable the blade of the stick to cup the puck, which results in increased puck control.

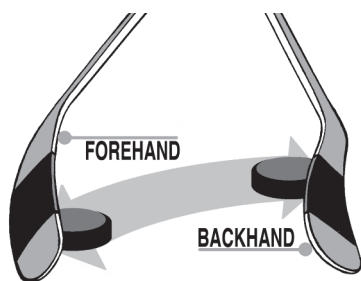


Figure 13-7. Cupping the puck.

### Split Vision

Split or peripheral vision refers to the ability to see the puck on the stick without looking directly at it. The player's eyes are up "reading" the play and what options are available. Indirectly, the player sees the puck out of the bottom of the eyes.

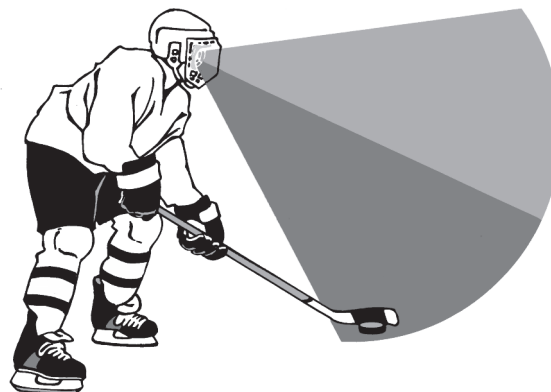


Figure 13-8. Split vision.

### Basic Stickhandling

Basic stickhandling is passing and receiving to oneself. Have the player concentrate on sliding the puck (don't slap the puck). Rolling the wrist and cupping the blade over the puck will result in the ability to control the puck better. The position of the puck on the stick is in the middle part of the blade. Have the players develop a "feel" for the puck by stickhandling 12 to 18 inches.

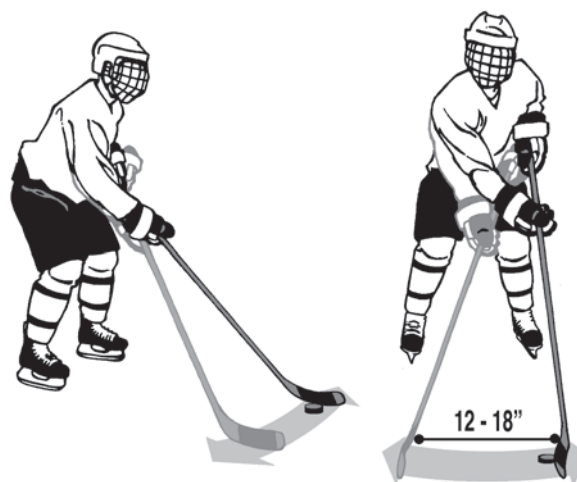
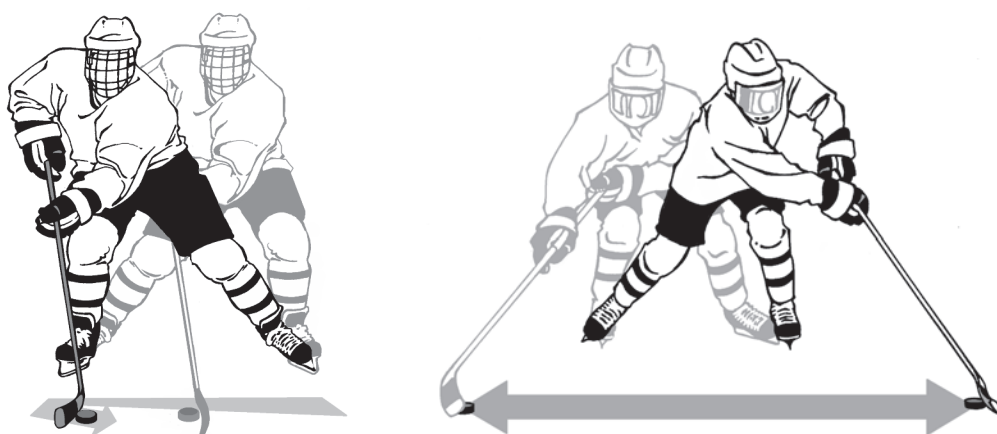


Figure 13-9. Basic stickhandling.





**Figure 12-10.** Lateral stickhandling and lateral stickhandling to full extension.

## DRILLS FOR THE BASIC SKILLS OF STICKHANDLING

### Grip, Wrist Roll, Cupping the Puck and Dribbling

- Players spread out in front of coach with gloves off.
- Players demonstrate the proper grip.
- Players move hands side-to-side while rolling their wrists.
- Players will move the puck side-to-side (12 to 18 inches).

### Split Vision — Count the Coach's Fingers

- Players spread out in front of the coach.
- Players perform a basic dribble movement with head and eyes up.
- Players call out the number of fingers the coach is holding up.

## BASIC STICKHANDLING MOVEMENTS

### Lateral Stickhandling

This is the most important stickhandling movement a player will develop. Begin work on the lateral movement (side-to-side) in a stationary position. Work on moving the puck as far to each side as possible. The following key elements must be mastered:

#### Key Elements

- Grip the stick six to 12 inches apart.

- Grip the stick with the fingers, not the palms.
- Cup the puck with the blade by rolling the wrists.
- Keep the arms out in front of body to get a full range of extension.

#### Common Errors

- slapping the puck, rather than sweeping the puck
- not having the "V" on top of the stick between the thumb and first finger
- arms held close to the body
- hands too far apart on stick
- not rolling the wrists when trying to cup the puck
- top hand on the hip, not in front of the body

## FORWARD-TO-BACKWARD STICKHANDLING

The forward-to-backward stickhandling move is particularly useful while skating toward a defensive player who is moving toward you. It can be used when setting up a fake shot and when pulling the puck to the side to take a sweep/wrist shot. The forward-to-backward move is difficult to learn while moving. Start your players in a stationary position and then gradually refine the skill at increasing speed. Stress that the puck must be moved forward on the skating line and brought backwards on the skating line.



**Key Elements**

- Keep puck motion at the side of the body.
- Keep puck motion parallel to the skate line.
- Roll the wrists, cupping the puck with the blade of the stick.



**Figure 13-11.** *Forward-to-backward stickhandling.*

**Common Errors**

- puck motion in front rather than at the side of the body
- puck drawn back into the skates (kick the back of the stick)

**Diagonal Stickhandling**

The diagonal stickhandling move is especially effective when combined with the lateral or forward-to-backward moves. Have your players place the puck to side of their bodies (as if about to shoot a forehand shot) and then bring the puck diagonally across to the opposite side of the body and as far forward as the player can reach. This move is very useful when in too close to an opponent's stick and you must pull the puck back diagonally across the front of the stick.

**Key Elements**

- Move the puck as far forward and then backward as possible on a diagonal line.
- Keep the hands close together.
- Roll the wrists to cup the puck with the blade.

**Common Errors**

- failing to cup the puck with the blade
- head down looking at puck

- slapping the puck
- not moving the puck fast enough on the diagonal line

## BEGINNING MANEUVERS

### ONE VS. ONE SITUATIONS

The concept of “one versus” situations (especially one vs. one) is the most important ability for young players to master. Considerable opportunity should be given for players to practice one vs. one situations.

Players should know when to stickhandle to beat an opponent and when to pass to beat an opponent. Generally, a player should attempt to stickhandle around a player when there is no teammate in position for a pass.



**Figure 13-12.** *Diagonal stickhandling.*

Always observe the defender's speed, direction, whether or not the defender is sweeping the stick, looking down at the puck, off balance, or lunging with his or her stick at the puck. Teach players after making a stickhandling move to quickly accelerate around the defender.

## BACKHAND FAKE — “PULL” TO FOREHAND

The forehand “pull” is one of the most important moves to teach your players when trying to stickhandle around a defender. It is very important that players learn the key words of “fake-pull-accelerate.” The forehand pull allows the player to move around the defender on his or her



forehand side, which gives the player the opportunity to pass or shoot immediately.

**Fake** — Teach the players to set up the move with a slight move to the backhand side (and/or head and shoulders fake to the backhand side). This move should be strong enough to get the defender to react.

**Pull** — As the defender reacts to the fake, move the puck quickly across the body (if in close to stick, “pull” puck slightly back diagonally to clear stick) to full extension on forehand side and thrust off of the “backhand side” leg. At the same time, slide laterally with the body. This puts the player’s body between the defender and the puck.

**Accelerate** — Upon completion of the pull, accelerate with three quick forward crossovers to get around and behind the defender.



**Figure 13-13.** Backhand fake – pull to forehand.

#### Key Elements

- Move the puck out front on a backhand side diagonal while using a head and shoulder fake.
- The puck must be “pulled” quickly across the front of the body to “full” forehand extension.

- Use the body as much as possible to protect the puck.
- Use speed upon completion of the “pull” to get around and behind the defender.
- Keep the head up.
- Key Words: “Fake-Lateral Slide and Pull-Accelerate.”

#### Common Errors

- slowing down when approaching the defender
- not using the body to shield the puck from the defender
- not “pulling” the puck across the front of body quickly enough
- not “pulling” to a full forehand extension
- not accelerating after the lateral slide and pull

#### FOREHAND FAKE — BACKHAND “PULL”

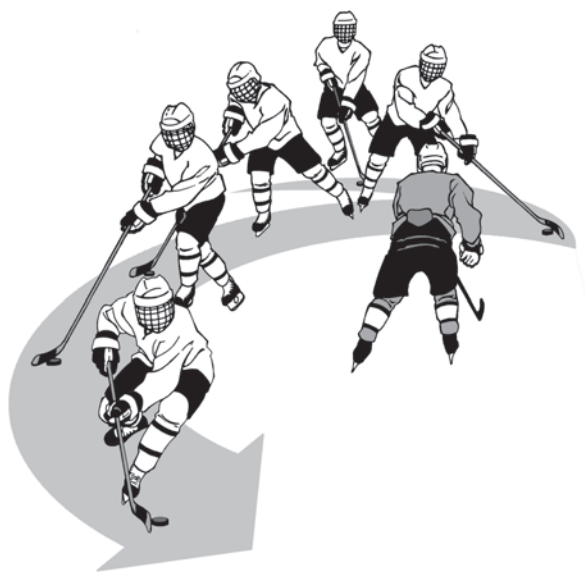
The backhand “pull” must be developed to compliment the forehand pull skill development. The disadvantage of the backhand pull is that the player is going around the defender with the puck on his or her backhand. When going around an opponent, the majority of the time the player will go to his or her backhand side.

The same key phrase is used as in the forehand “pull.” The only difference is that the “fake” is made to the backhand side.

#### Key Elements

- Move the puck out front on a backhand side diagonal while using a head and shoulder fake.
- The puck must be “pulled” quickly across the front of the body to “full” backhand extension.
- Use the body as much as possible to protect the puck.
- Use speed upon completion of the “pull” to get around and behind the defender.
- Keep the head up.
- Key Words: “Fake-Lateral Slide and Pull-Accelerate.”





**Figure 13-14.** Forehand fake – backhand pull.

#### Common Errors

- slowing down when approaching the defender
- not using the body to shield the puck from the defender
- not “pulling” the puck across the front of body quick enough
- not “pulling” the puck to a full backhand extension
- not accelerating after the lateral slide and pull

### SPECIAL SKILLS IN PUCK CONTROL ACCELERATING IN OPEN ICE

Controlling the puck while accelerating in open ice is another skill that needs to be developed. By dropping the lower hand off the stick and using only one hand (the top hand), players will skate with more speed and freedom.

#### Key Elements

- Drop the lower hand off the stick.
- By using only the top hand, players can skate with more speed.
- Bend the knees.
- Extend the arm and tilt the blade back pushing the puck well out in front of the body.

- When the puck starts to roll off the blade of the stick, rotate the wrist so the blade turns over the other way



**Figure 13-15.** Accelerating in open ice.

#### Common Errors

- keeping puck too close to the body
- not holding the very end of stick with one hand
- keeping the blade of the stick too upright

### “SHIELDING” THE PUCK

The technique of shielding the puck teaches the player to keep the puck away from the defender and place his or her body between the puck and the opposing player.

In order to accomplish this, a player must utilize the skill of “expansion of reach” with the skill of a control turn. This should be taught both to the forehand and backhand sides.

One arm may also be utilized to help ward off the defender. On the forehand side the top hand would be used, while on the backhand side the bottom hand would be used.

#### Key Elements

- Pull the puck to the side of the body away from the defender (full expansion reach).
- Place the body between the defender and the puck, use the “control turn” technique to protect the puck
- The blade of the stick is cupped over the puck.



- Take one hand off of the stick if needed to ward off the defender.



**Figure 13-16.** *Shielding the puck.*

#### Common Errors

- puck is between carrier and defender
- stick blade is not cupped over puck
- player is standing too erect

### OVERCOMING RESISTANCE

The puck carrier must learn to overcome resistance by accelerating in front of the defender. By doing this, you take the “angle” away from the checker. This puts the defender behind you and prevents the defender from playing your body.



**Figure 13-17.** *Overcoming resistance.*

#### Key Elements

- Accelerate when the checker has the “angle” by doing forward crossovers to get in front. This prevents stick/body checks.
- Continue to skate once in front of checker.

#### Common Errors

- puck carrier glides once in front of checker
- puck carrier doesn’t get directly in front of checker

### SKATE CONTROL

Skate control is an important part of puck control. A player must develop a great deal of balance and agility to use his or her skates for puck control. Some skills with skates that should be developed are:

1. Skate forward and kick up a loose puck with a skate to the stick.
2. Drop the puck back into the skates and kick it back up to the stick.
3. Foot drag – control the puck by kicking it out from behind the other blade.
4. Control the puck along the boards with the skates when being pressured.

#### Key Elements

- Balance and shift weight to one skate.
- The skate contacting puck is turned with toe out and heel in.
- Cushion the puck with the skate blade, as in stickhandling.

#### Common Errors

- not shifting weight and balance to one skate
- “kickin” puck instead of controlling puck



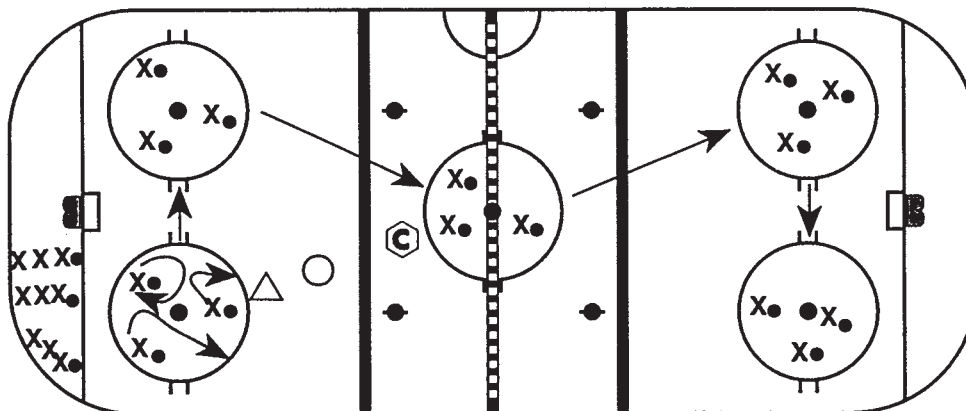
**Figure 13-18.** *Skate control skills.*



## SKILL DRILLS

The following skill drills are presented in a suggested progression. They progress from stationary, to moving, to simple, to complex.

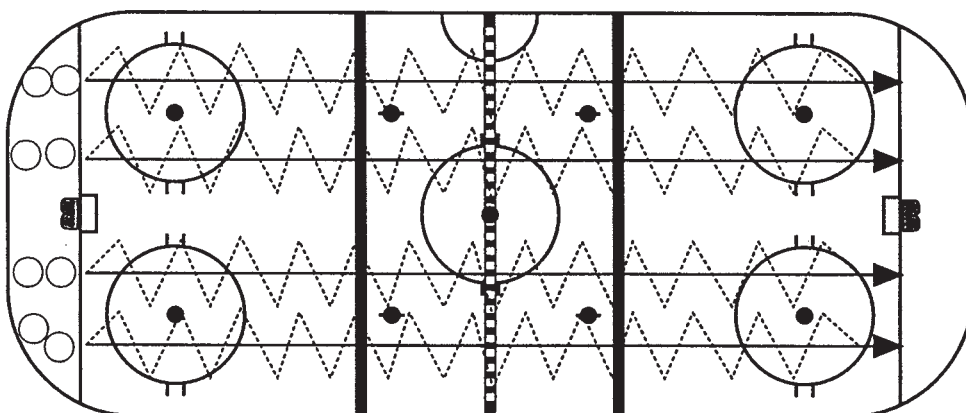
### PUCK CONTROL



#### Jam the Circle

1. Put players in three lines.
2. The first player in each line goes to a designated circle.
3. One player with the puck stickhandles around the circle, avoiding the other two players.
4. On the whistle, the first group of three players moves to the next circle and another group of three players moves into the first circle.
5. At each whistle, the groups advance to another circle.

### PUCK CONTROL

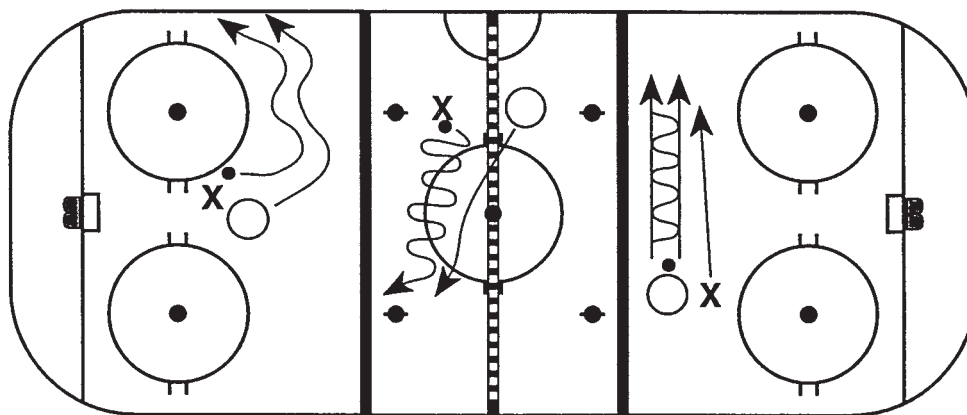


#### Pull Puck Wide

1. Players line up in four lines at one end of the rink.
2. On the whistle, the first player in each line skates down to the other end of the rink, "pulling" the puck as wide as possible on each stride.
3. Have the players do it at half speed.
4. Stress "wide pulls" and "quick hands."

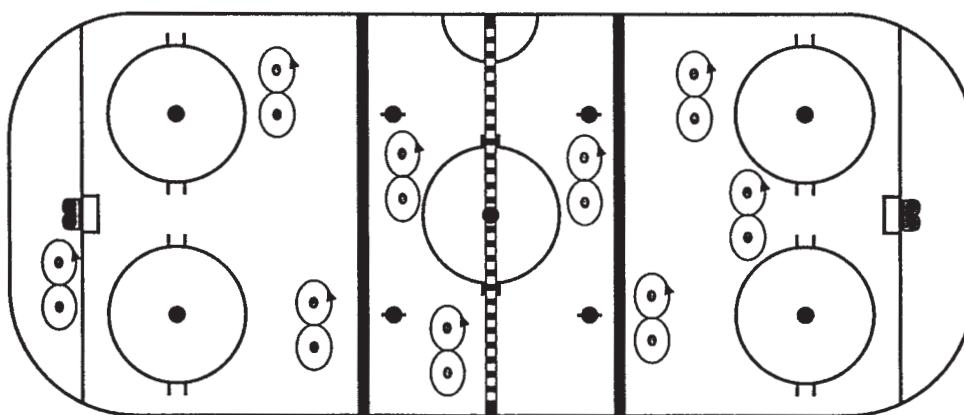


## PUCK CONTROL

**Keep Away**

1. Players pair up and go to different areas on the ice.
2. One player protects the puck by doing control turns, while his or her partner tries to take the puck away.
3. After 20 seconds, the players reverse roles.

## PUCK CONTROL

**Figure 8 Control Turn Around Gloves**

1. Put gloves on the ice four feet apart.
2. Do control turns around gloves with a puck.
3. Skate in a figure 8.
4. Keep the puck under control.

**LEARN MORE**

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. *(Internet access is required).*

- [www.usahockeyskillsanddrills.com/index.html](http://www.usahockeyskillsanddrills.com/index.html)



# Chapter 14

## Passing and Receiving

### OBJECTIVES

- To educate coaches to the passing and receiving skills necessary for players 10 years old and under
- To outline teaching progression for coaches
- To identify the key elements of each skill
- To identify common mistakes young players make while learning these skills

### INTRODUCTION

Although skating and puck control rank higher than passing and receiving on the hockey skills “emphasis scale,” it is important to devote considerable time to instruction in the fundamentals of passing and receiving.

*The skill of passing and receiving extends puck control from an individual to a team skill.*

Two important sets of skills are necessary — the delivery of the puck and the reception of it. Both are equally important.

The material covered in this chapter describes the skills that must be mastered to pass and receive effectively. The skills are presented in the suggested teaching progression for young players.

### FOREHAND PASSING

The forehand pass begins with the player in a solid, ready position. His eyes must be up and looking at his intended target. The blade of the stick must cup or “cradle” the puck. Start the passing action for the forehand pass from behind the back foot (Figure 14-1). The blade should be kept on the ice. **Encourage**

**the player to sweep rather than slap the puck.** The desired result is a sweep and follow-through toward the intended target with the blade of the stick kept low to the ice.



**Figure 14-1.** Forehand passing action.

The puck should begin near the heel of the stick and roll down the blade as the stick is swept forward. The resulting spin on the puck is necessary to keep it flat on the ice.

The accuracy of the pass is controlled by the follow through. The player should end the pass with the toe of his or her stick pointing at the intended target.



## Look-Slide-Guide-Point

### Key Elements

- The head is up with the eyes focused on the target.
- The blade of the stick should “cup” the puck.
- Use a sweeping (not slapping) action.
- The puck moves from the heel to the toe of the blade.
- Follow through low, pointing toward the intended target.

### Common Errors

- passer is looking at the puck, not the target
- the puck starts at the toe of the stick, not the heel
- the passer slaps the puck
- shortened or no follow-through

## BACKHAND PASSING

The backhand pass is similar to the forehand pass and the key elements listed above are the same. It is, however, a bit more difficult. The backhand pass involves looking at the target, using a sweeping action of the stick across the body to propel the puck, and a deliberate follow-through towards the target. If the intended target is in front of the passer, he or she must follow through by turning the wrists out, pointing the heel of the stick at the target. Figure 14-2 illustrates the beginning, middle, and ending phases of this pass. The puck begins on the backhand side. The hands are away from the body and the blade is cupped over the puck. Note that the shoulders are rotated toward the puck. The shoulders returning to a normal position, plus a pulling action of the lower hand, provide the sweeping action of the stick.

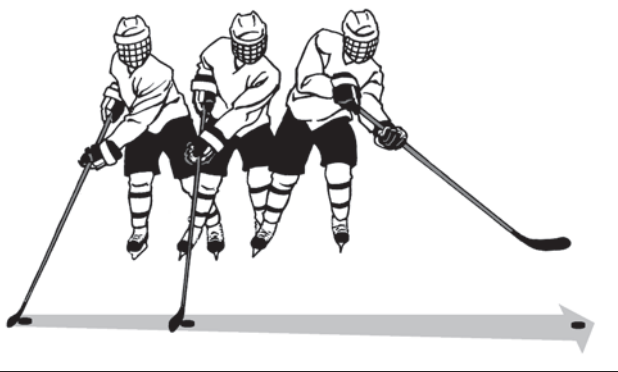


Figure 14-2. Backhand passing action.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR COACHING

Generally your coaching on passing should progress from stationary to moving targets and from slow to faster speeds. Emphasize that the pass must lead moving targets. Passing the puck softly to a target zone ahead of the receiver is a good passing technique.

## FLIP PASSING

The last pass that should be taught is the flip pass. This pass will prove to be most useful in a situation where some part of an opponent (stick, leg, etc.) is between the puck carrier and the target (see Figure 14-3).

The pass begins the same way as a forehand or backhand pass, adding a quick forward and upward motion of the wrists that causes the stick blade to raise quickly off the ice. This motion in turn also raises the puck quickly from the ice. It is important that the player attempts to spin the puck off the blade so that it will remain flat in the air and as it lands on the ice. Pucks that wobble through the air and do not land flat will prove to be very difficult for teammates to receive.

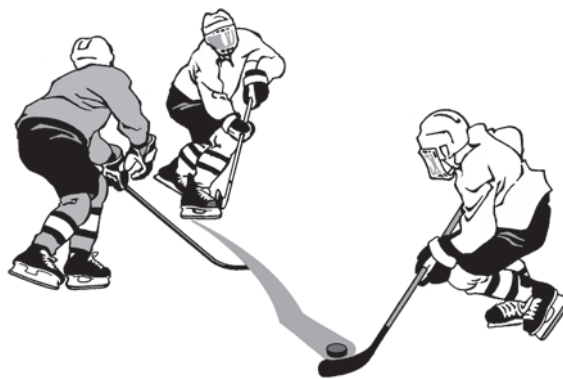


Figure 14-3. The flip pass.

### Key Elements

- a quick, forceful, forward and upward motion of the blade
- puck motion from the heel of the blade to the toe at release



### Common Errors

- inability to move the bottom of the stick blade in a quick forward and upward motion
- failure to impart spin on the puck to keep it flat

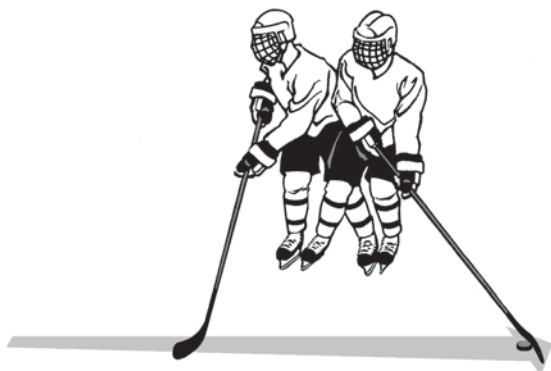
### SUGGESTIONS FOR COACHING

Coaches and players need to be especially patient in developing good passing techniques. **Coordinating the speed of the passer, the receiver, and the puck (in addition to the opposing players) is a difficult skill and often requires many hours of practice to master.**

### PASS RECEIVING

Being able to receive a pass is equally as important as being able to make one. There are three keys to successfully receiving a pass:

- right angle
- give
- cup



**Figure 14-4.** Forehand and backhand puck reception.

**The receiver must learn to move the blade of the stick out toward the puck in preparation for receiving the pass.** Just prior to (or at the point) of contact, move the blade in the same direction as the pass to allow the puck to gently come in contact with the stick blade.

When a pass comes to either the backhand or forehand side, the reception techniques are basically the same (see Figure 14-4). The player should keep his head up, watch the puck, and keep the stick on the ice. As the puck reaches the stick blade, the blade should be at a right angle to the line of the pass, cupped, and allowed to give by relaxing the wrists. This “giving with the puck” promotes control by allowing the momentum of the puck to be gradually absorbed.

### Key Elements

- The angle between the blade and the line of the pass should be 90 degrees.
- The blade must “give” to maintain puck control.
- The blade should be cupped over the puck as it glides along the ice.

### Common Errors

- The stick blade is not held perpendicular to the direction of the incoming puck.
- The blade of the stick is left open (top of blade angled away from the puck’s direction), allowing the puck to bounce over the stick blade.
- The player’s wrists are held stiff, causing the puck to rebound off the blade.
- The player fails to cup the puck.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR COACHING

In many instances, passes are ahead, or behind, the intended player. This takes a special effort to gain control of the puck. Here are some suggestions for how to solve this common problem.

When the pass is too far ahead, the player should extend the stick by dropping the lower hand and reaching out to the puck (see Figure 14-5).

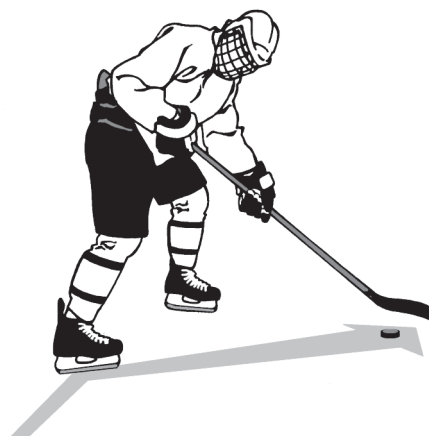


When a pass comes behind the player (see Figure 14-6), the skate must be used to gain control.



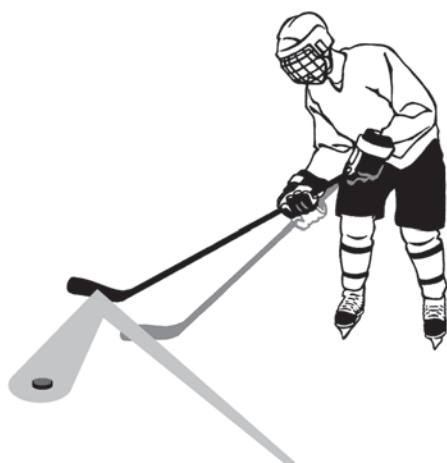
**Figure 14-5.** *Stopping a puck passed ahead of the intended target area.*

The skate closest to the oncoming pass should be placed flat on the ice and angled so that the puck will deflect from the skate blade to the stick blade. An individual who has become skilled at receiving a pass with his skate will prove to be a tremendous asset in keeping many plays alive.



**Figure 14-6.** *Controlling a puck passed behind a player.*

**Receiving passes in the air involves knocking the pass to the ice with the stick or the hand (see Figure 14-7).** In general, encourage using the stick to try and knock down passes below the knee and the bottom hand on passes above the knee. Be sure that the players do not close their hands and catch the pass.



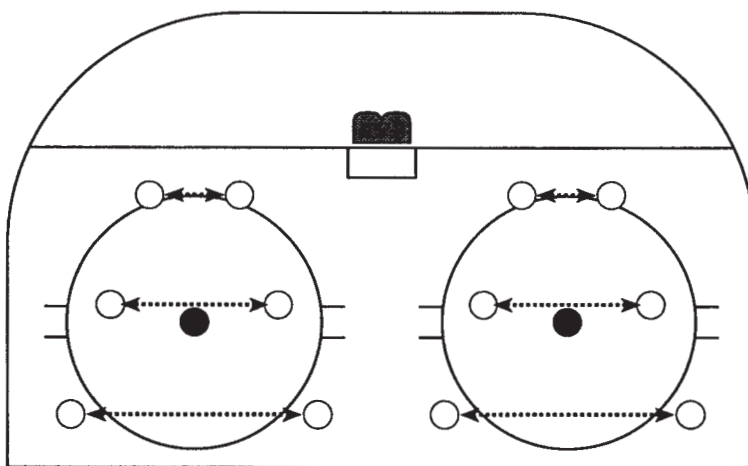
**Figure 14-7.** *Controlling passes in the air.*

### SKILL DRILLS

The following skill drills are presented in a suggested progression. They progress from stationary, to moving, to simple, to complex.



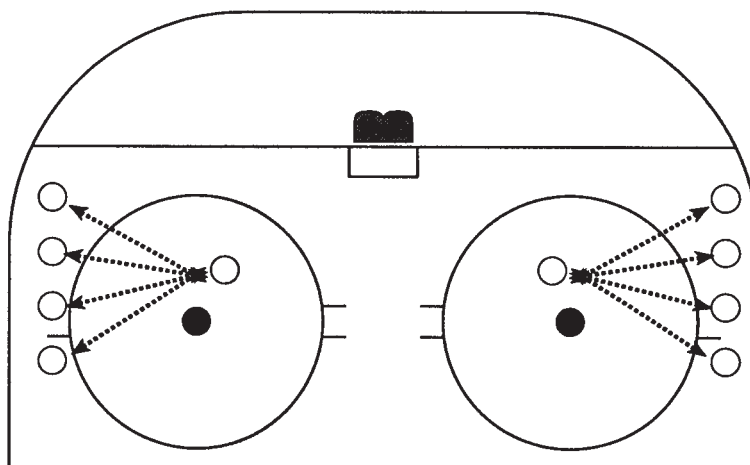
## PASSING AND RECEIVING



### Stationary Partner Passing

1. Have players pair up and stand three feet apart.
2. Players pass the puck back and forth, standing three feet apart, then 10 feet apart, then 20 feet apart.
3. Basic skill commands:
  - a. passing - "Look-Slide-Guide-Point"
  - b. reception - "Cup and Give"
4. Stress very slow technique at first.
5. Use forehand and backhand passes.

## PASSING AND RECEIVING

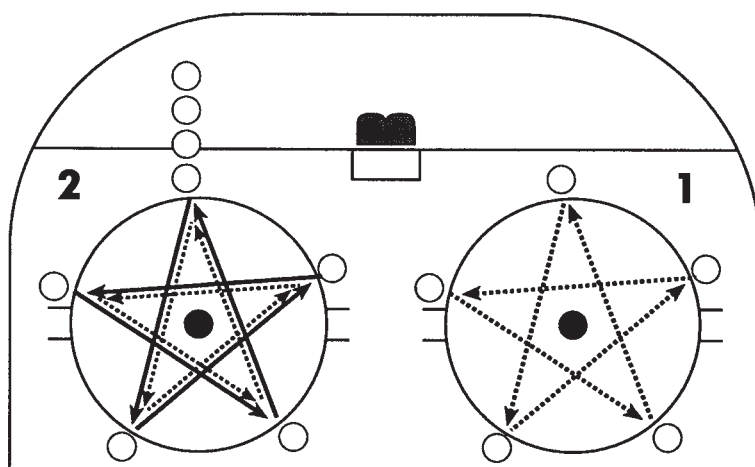


### "Pepper" Passing in Groups

1. Put players into groups of five with one puck.
2. Have one player move out and face the other four.
3. Pass to all players in the line twice, then the next player in line moves out and does the same thing.
4. Stress "sliding and gliding" the puck rather than slapping the puck.

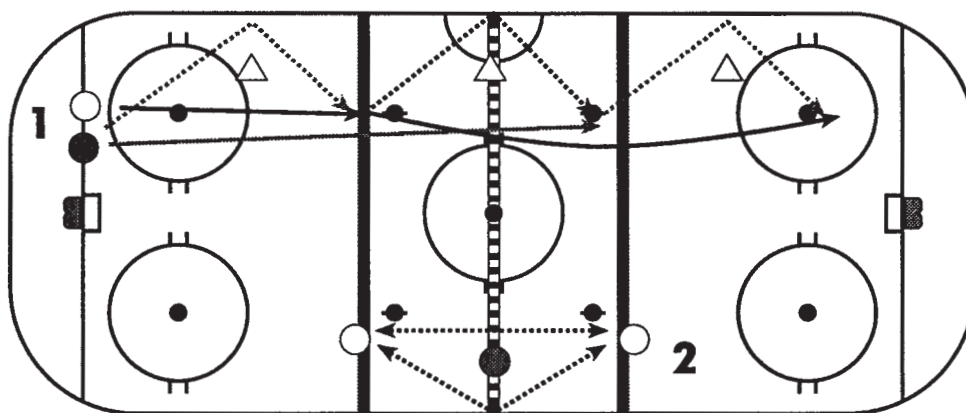


## PASSING AND RECEIVING

**Circle Passing Drills - Movement or Stationary**

1. Place five players around the faceoff circles.
2. Each player passes to the second player to their right. Pass hard and accurately.
3. You can add movement to the same drill.
4. After passing, the passer follows his/her pass to the position that they have passed to.

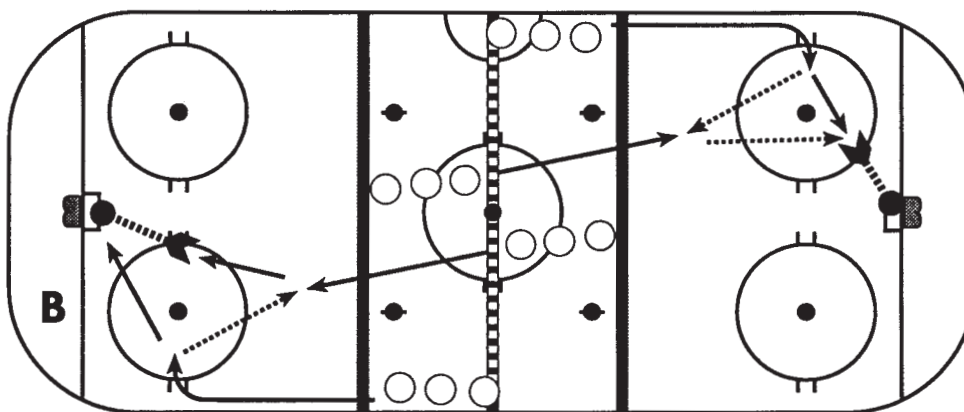
## PASSING AND RECEIVING

**Two-Area Passing Drills**

1. Three-Cone Bounce Pass Drill: Players line up at the goal line and skate down the ice, bouncing the puck off the boards to themselves at each cone. Skaters stay at the far end of the rink when they complete the course.
2. Keep Away: Place three players between the blue lines. One skater starts in the middle while the other two try to keep the puck away from the skater.

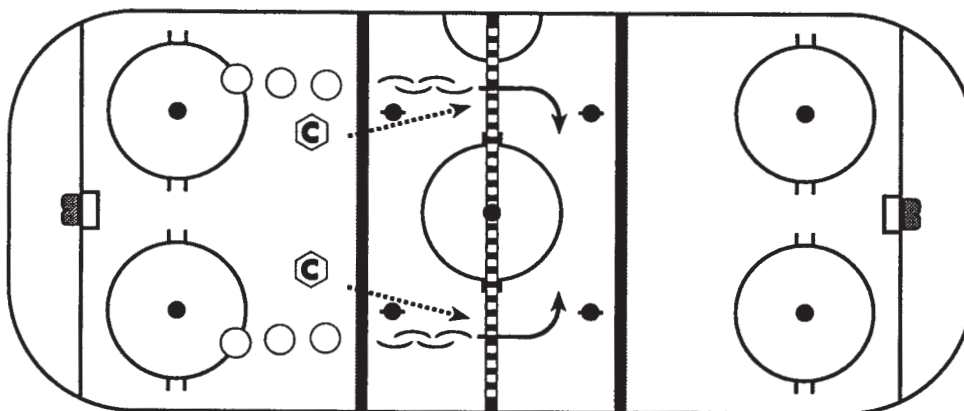


## PASSING AND RECEIVING

**2-on-0 Trailer From Center Ice**

1. Form four lines at center ice, two lines go in different directions.
2. One player skates the puck deep into the zone along the boards and below the hash marks.
3. The trailer stays high to support the puck carrier.
4. The puck carrier passes to the trailer, and continues to drive to the net.
5. The trailer receiving the puck has two options:
  - a. Shoot.
  - b. Return a pass to his or her partner, then move in for a rebound.

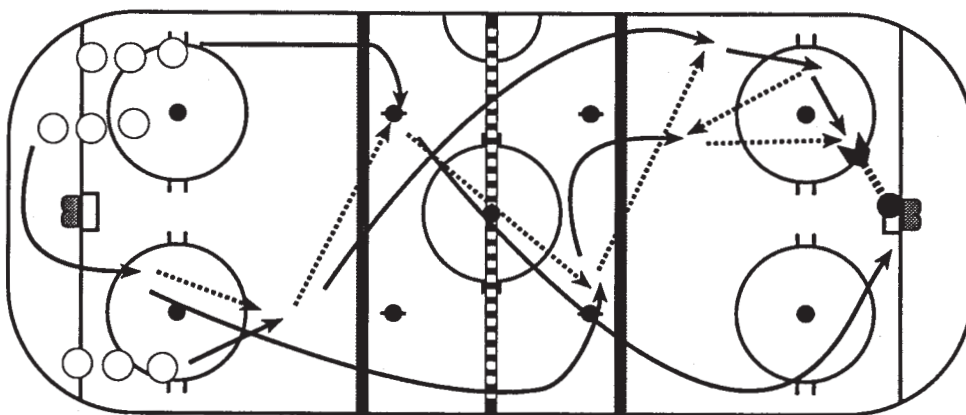
## PASSING AND RECEIVING

**Receive with Glove or Skate**

1. Form two lines at the blue line.
2. The first player in line skates backward to the center line.
3. The coach either passes the puck in the player's skates or up into his or her glove.
4. The player must control the pass, then make a return pass to the coach.



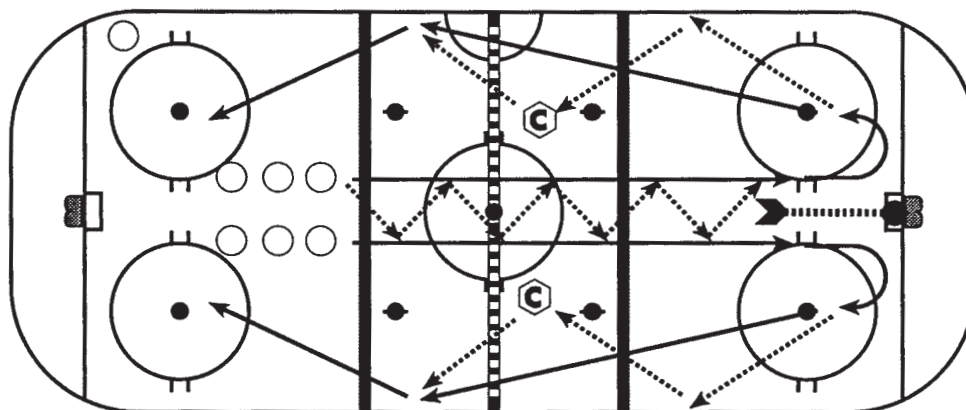
## PASSING AND RECEIVING



### 3-on-0 Weave

1. Form three lines at one end of the rink. The middle line will start with the puck.
2. The first three players in each line will go down the ice 3-on-0. The center starts the drill by skating with the puck behind the net and passing to the right wing.
3. After the pass is made, the player passing the puck skates behind the player he or she passed to, and fills that player's lane.
4. This pattern continues all the way down to the other end of the ice with the group completing three to four passes.
5. Ending with a shot.

## PASSING AND RECEIVING

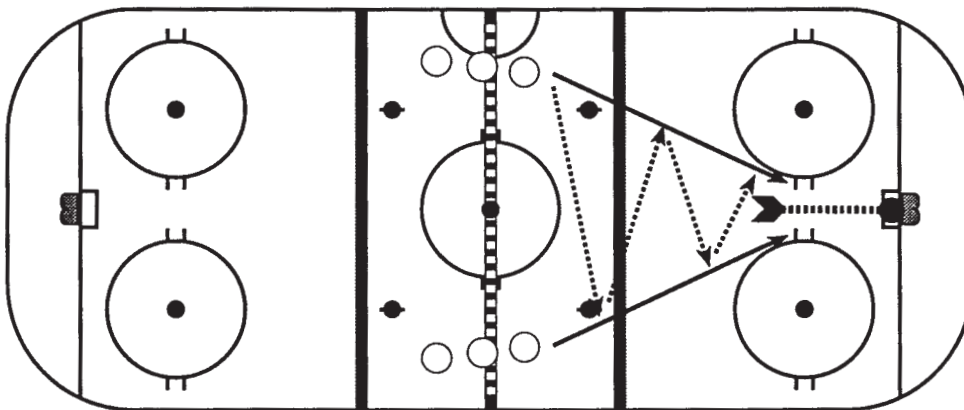


### 2-on-0 Wide and Close

1. Form two lines at one blue line, 10 to 15 feet apart.
2. The first players in each line skate half speed down the middle of the ice passing the puck back-and-forth as quickly as possible.
3. When they get to the tops of the circles, they can shoot.
4. The players turn back up ice and receive a return pass from a coach along the boards.
5. The players return to the end of the line to continue the drill.

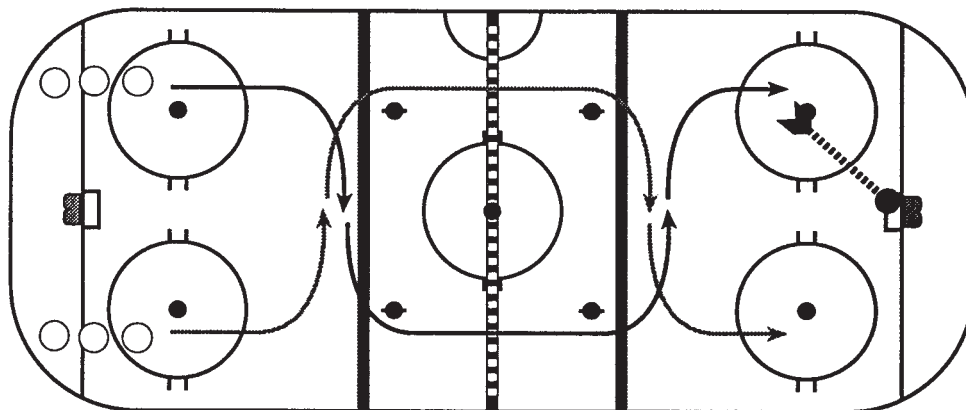


## PASSING AND RECEIVING

**2-on-0 Funnel**

1. Form two lines on either side of the red line.
2. The first players in each line skate on an angle toward the goal, passing the puck quickly back-and-forth.
3. The players can shoot when they reach the top of the circle.

## PASSING AND RECEIVING

**2-on-0 Drop Pass**

1. Form two lines in the corners of one end of the rink, with pucks located in the left line.
2. The player with the puck starts a crossing pattern, and his or her partner crosses behind the puck carrier.
3. The puck carrier drop passes to the receiver.
4. They continue down the ice, executing the drill twice before entering the zone. A shot is then taken while the other player moves in for the rebound.

**LEARN MORE**

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. *(Internet access is required).*

- [www.usahockeyskillsanddrills.com/index.html](http://www.usahockeyskillsanddrills.com/index.html)



# Chapter 15

## Shooting

### OBJECTIVES

- To identify the shooting skills used by young players in ice hockey
- To outline for the coaches the progression for introducing shooting skills
- To identify the key elements of all the components of shooting
- To identify common mistakes young players make while learning these skills

### INTRODUCTION

Shooting is the most practiced of all fundamentals. The purpose of shooting the puck is to score a goal. This leads to the single most important factor to stress to the players: **be sure the shot is on the net!** There are several components associated with becoming an effective shooter:

- **Head Up** — Players will have a better chance of hitting a spot on the net if they are looking at it.
- **Form** — Players must execute the shots using the key elements of correct technique if they are to develop the speed, consistency, and accuracy necessary to be an effective shooter.
- **Accuracy** — If the shot is not on the net, there is virtually no chance of scoring. Developing accuracy takes a great deal of concentration and practice by the player.
- **Quickness** — Time spent handling the puck provides opposing players with the time needed to position themselves for strong defense. When the situation dictates, players must be able to shoot the puck quickly.
- **Variety** — Shooting situations within the game vary greatly. The skillful player must, therefore, have a variety of shots that

match the opportunities that develop. The amount of time a player has, the location, and defensive player positioning require that different shots (or variations of the same shot) be used.

There are three types of shots discussed in this chapter. They are:

1. wrist shot
2. backhand shot
3. flip shot

Shooting, more than the other fundamentals, depends upon strength that is related to a player's physical maturity. Therefore, coaches of younger players are likely to find that, because of their age, they are unable to generate the speed and power desired to perform some shots such as the snap or slap shots. As players grow, develop and train for strength and power, their shooting will become more forceful.

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*For younger players, however, emphasis should be placed on the development of correct technique, particularly of the forehand and backhand wrist shots.*

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Without this attribute even the shooting ability of the strong, powerful player will be limited.



## FOREHAND WRIST (SWEEP) SHOT

The wrist shot is sometimes referred to as the “sweep” shot. Its attributes include speed and accuracy. Be sure that your players have mastered this shot before moving on to other types of shots.

**As the name implies, this shot involves sweeping the puck toward the target.** Power is supplied by the arms, wrists, legs and through proper weight transfer. The hands are held approximately 12 to 15 inches apart. The puck should be positioned at the side of the body, behind the back foot, with the player's weight evenly distributed on both skates. The shot is initiated by a transfer of the body weight to the skate closest to the target (front skate). The proper sequence is illustrated in Figure 15-1.



**Figure 15-1.** Execution of the wrist shot.

As weight is transferred, the arms and hands complete the forward motion of the stick toward the target while dragging or sweeping the puck on the blade of the stick. The puck should be positioned at about the middle of the blade and travel to the toe as the shot is completed. The correct arm action includes the top arm/hand pulling back toward the body while the lower arm/wrist sweeps forward.

**To accomplish this push-pull (wrist-sweeping) action, the player must exert maximal effort with the hands and arms.** Weight may be best utilized in the shooting action by driving off the rear foot and following through to the front foot. The follow-through of the stick usually will dictate the height and accuracy of the shot (low follow-through, low shot; high follow-through, high shot). The toe of the stick blade should be pointing at the target at the conclusion of the follow-through.

Review of Figure 15-1 shows that the top portion of the stick moves very little, while the blade has moved a great deal. It is the speed of the blade that creates the puck speed.



**Figure 15-2.** Follow through of the wrist shot.

Weight transfer is important for another reason besides initiating the movement. As the weight moves toward the target, the force application to the stick through the lower hand causes a bending of the shaft. The release of this bend adds further speed to the stick blade, which results in greater puck speed.

### Key Elements

- hands held approximately 12 to 15 inches apart
- shot begins with the puck at the side of the body and behind the back foot
- blade of the stick cupped over the puck
- weight transfer to the front skate
- height and accuracy of the shot dictated by the follow through
- puck movement from the middle of the blade to the toe

### Common Errors

- insufficient weight transfer (results in weaker shots and causes players to fall away from instead of moving toward the target)
- poor wrist action (results in slow movement of the stick blade, thus little force is transferred to the puck)
- top arm and hand are held too close to the body (limits movement)
- poor follow through (results in shots missing intended target)



### SUGGESTIONS FOR COACHING

1. Have your players practice the sweeping movement in a stationary position ensuring that the weight is transferred and the stick blade is moved quickly through the range of motion.
2. Use drills that allow the player to take at least 5 to 10 consecutive shots. Figure 15-3 shows two arrangements that work well for player practice.
3. The wrist shot involves a considerable amount of arm/wrist strength. Older players should be encouraged to improve their strength both off and on the ice. Younger players should concentrate on perfecting the technique for the shot. Shooting is easily practiced off-ice as well.
4. For young players, the technique of the shot may be better developed by using lighter pucks that are properly suited to their strength. The success this generates may go a long way to develop confidence through the satisfaction gained by shooting a crisp and accurate wrist shot.
5. Coaches should introduce shooting drills progressively, starting with stationary shooting, to shooting while moving, to situational drills simulating game conditions.



**Figure 15-3.** Practice arrangements for working on shooting.





**Figure 15-4.** Sequence for completing the backhand shot.

## BACKHAND SHOT

The backhand shot is one of the most difficult shots to perform. **Like the wrist shot, an important objective is to generate speed of the stick blade.** As illustrated in Figure 15-4, the backhand shot is initiated with the puck on the backhand side of the stick and the blade cupped over the puck. The puck should begin between the heel and the middle of the blade. The wrist of the bottom hand is flexed while the upper arm is close to, instead of away from, the body. The shot begins with a weight transfer toward the target. The bottom hand pulls the stick and the puck simultaneously forward toward the target in a sweeping movement. The bottom wrist snaps from a flexed to an extended position. The top hand follows the bottom hand (rather than opposing, as in the wrist shot) and the top wrist snaps from extended to flexed position. This causes the top arm and elbow to move away from the body. Once again, the height of the follow-through will determine the height and accuracy of the shot. At the conclusion of the shot, the toe of the blade should be pointing at the target. **Like the wrist shot, you should stress form and accuracy with your players before working on speed.**

### Key Elements

- hands held approximately 12 to 15 inches apart
- shot begins with the puck at the side of the body and behind the back foot

- blade of the stick cupped over the puck
- weight transfer to the front skate
- puck movement from the middle to the toe of the blade
- height and accuracy of the shot dictated by the follow through

### Common Errors

- poor sweeping action
- improper wrist action
- follow through goes toward ceiling instead of toward target

### SUGGESTIONS FOR COACHING

1. Have the players practice the sweeping movement, weight transfer, and quick movement of the stick blade in a stationary position.
2. The suggestions for coaching the forehand wrist shot are also useful for teaching your players the backhand.

## THE FLIP SHOT

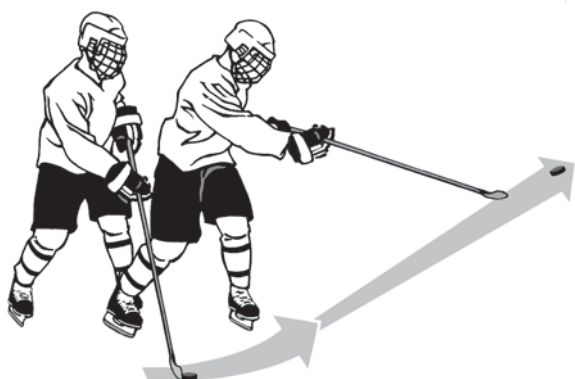
The flip shot is most commonly used when a player is attempting to relieve pressure by clearing the puck from a zone. It is also useful when there is a scramble around the net and the puck must be lifted quickly over an obstacle.

The flip shot is a much neglected but very effective shot. At all levels, but particularly with young players, the ability to flip the puck can make the



difference between a goal or a shot into the goalkeeper.

**When shooting a flip shot, the primary objective is to raise the puck high up off the ice. Very little emphasis should be placed on the velocity of the shot.** To execute the flip shot on the forehand, the hands should be in the same position as the wrist shot — approximately 12 to 15 inches apart. The task is to get under the puck and propel it upward. This shot, unlike others, is usually made from in front of the body with the puck on the toe of the stick blade (see Figure 15-5). The shot begins with the wrist of the bottom hand extended and the wrist of the top hand is flexed. A good flip shot requires a sharp, quick wrist snap, and a sharp, exaggerated upward movement of the stick blade. As illustrated in Figure 15-6, the blade of the stick should be opened rather than cupped at the end of the shot.



**Figure 15-5.** Puck position/shooting motion for the flip shot.



**Figure 15-6.** Cupped, straight and open stick blade positions.

The backhand flip shot is most often used in scramble situations in an attempt to shoot over a prone goaltender. With the backhand flip shot, it is helpful to draw the puck back slightly. The fundamentals of this shot are the same as those for the backhand sweep shot. The difference occurs at the follow-through. The wrists and blades should extend quickly toward the ceiling.

#### Key Elements

- hands held 12 to 15 inches apart
- initial puck position in front of the body on the forehand flip shot
- quick wrist snap that results in blade rotation from cupped to straight to open position
- exaggerated upward movement of the blade

#### Common Errors

- too much forward movement of the stick blade
- not enough upward motion of the blade
- starting the puck near the toe when executing the backhand flip shot

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR COACHING

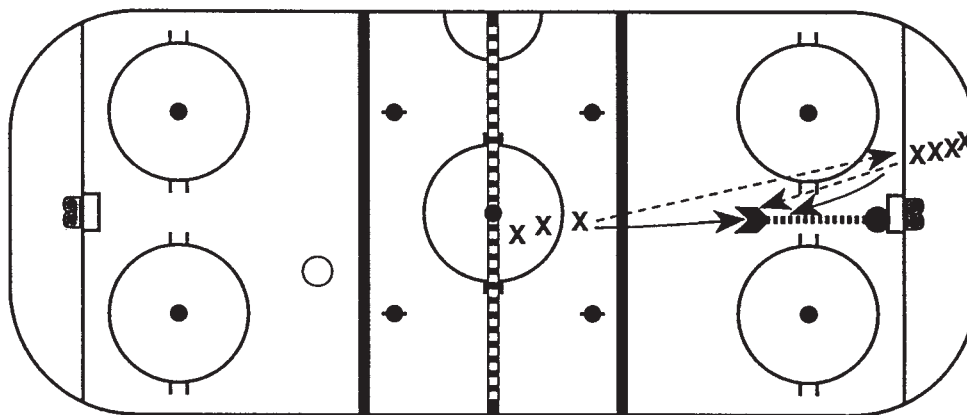
1. Teach and practice the shooting motion without pucks.
2. Place obstacles in front of the shooter, forcing the puck to be lifted into the air. Gradually increase the height.
3. Select or develop drills that will force the players to utilize the flip shot.
4. Progress from stationary to movement drills that will simulate game conditions.



## SKILL DRILLS

The following skill drills are presented in a suggested progression. They progress from stationary, to moving, to simple to complex.

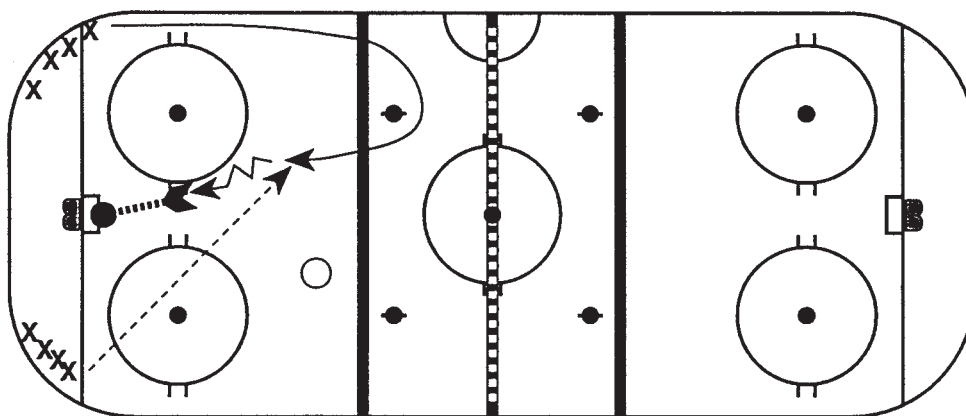
### SHOOTING



#### Give and Go

1. Form one line at the blue line and another behind the goal line, with pucks at the blue line.
2. The first player at the blue line passes the puck to the first player at the goal line then skates toward the net.
3. The player skating toward the net gets a return pass from the player behind the goal line and takes a shot on net.

### SHOOTING

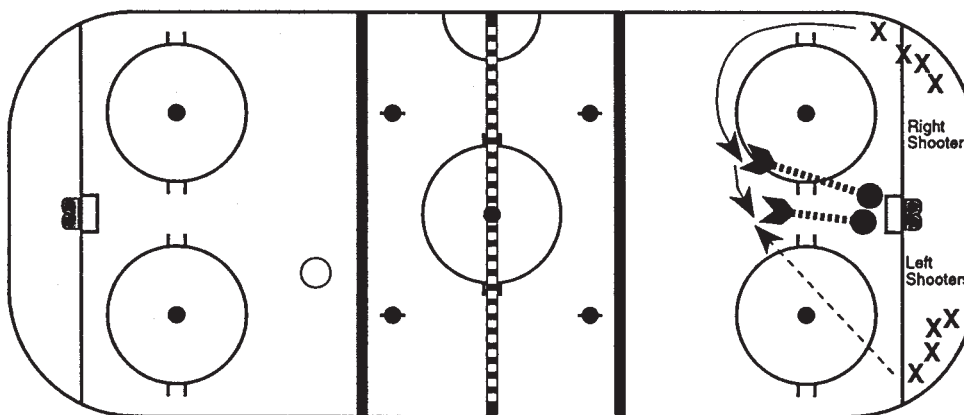


#### "Flyer" Pass-Receive-Shoot

1. Players line up in both corners on the same end of the rink, with pucks on both sides.
2. The first player in one line, skates around the top of the near circle, receives a pass from the first player in the other line, then takes a shot.
3. Alternate the drill from the other side after the shot has been taken.



## SHOOTING

**Top of the Circle Shooting**

1. Have players line up in two corners on the same side of the rink with pucks in both lines.
2. On the whistle, the first player in one line skates around the top of the near circle with a puck and takes a shot on net.
3. The first person in the other line passes a puck to the player who just took a shot. The first shooter takes another shot on net, then moves to the end of the opposite line.
4. After the second player passes the puck, he or she then skates around the top of the near circle, receives a pass and takes a shot. The drill continues, alternating sides.

**SUMMARY**

Since putting the puck into the net is the object of the game, shooting skill is very important to your players. Be sure to work with them to improve these skills. **Remember, however, that the end-over-ender that barely gets over the red line counts the same as the shot that rips the back of the net and, more importantly, it counts one more than the shot that just misses the corner and punches a hole in the boards!**

**LEARN MORE**

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. *(Internet access is required).*

- [www.usahockeyskillsanddrills.com/index.html](http://www.usahockeyskillsanddrills.com/index.html)



# Chapter 16

## Checking

### OBJECTIVES

- To identify the skills involved in the introduction of checking
- To identify key components of each phase of checking
- To identify a sequence to introduce these skills to young or inexperienced players
- To identify common mistakes young hockey players make when learning these skills

### INTRODUCTION

**Checking is as important to defensive play as stickhandling is to offensive hockey.** Implicit in this statement is the realization that the skating ability of your players must be adequate for the level of their competition. Coaches must provide a solid base of skating skills to their players before any checking skills will be useful.

Checking is a component of almost all forms of defensive play. It includes **stick checking, covering, body contact, and body checking**. Body checking will not be included in this chapter as it is currently not a legal part of hockey for players 10 and under.

Regardless of the type of check a player intends to use, there are several things that must be done in order to be successful:

- The player must consider how many opponents are coming with the attack and where they are before deciding to check.
- The player must attempt to gain proper position in relation to his opponent, thus increasing chances for success.

The important point to stress is that the checker must be able to recognize and evaluate the opportunities available to the opponent. These

opportunities are based upon the positioning of opponents and teammates. **It is the checker's responsibility to limit the opponent's options.** This may include containing the opponent by forcing a bad angle, and/or checking in open ice or along the boards.

### ANGLING

**The combination of skating skills and checking begins with angling.** Angling simply means forcing an opponent to go in the direction that you want. In defensive hockey, this usually means forcing the player towards the boards. This limits the player's options and effectively takes space away from him or her.

Angling is most utilized when approaching the opponent from the front and, occasionally, when trying to catch him or her from behind. It is important not to go directly at the puck carrier in a straight line, as this allows two options. Instead, the defensive player must skate parallel to or in an arc towards the opponent. When executed properly, this prevents the puck carrier from cutting back on the defender while continually forcing him or her toward the boards.





Figure 16-1. Angling.

The checker must remember to gauge his or her speed against the opponent's and to keep his stick down in anticipation of making contact with the opponent and trying to take the puck away.

#### Key Elements

- Skate parallel to or in an arc towards the opponent.
- Continually take away the opponent's space and options.
- Adjust speed to the opponent's.
- Keep stick on the ice.



Figure 16-2. Angling and keeping the gap closed.

#### STICK CHECKING

Stick checking is accomplished by using the stick to separate the puck from an opponent. All stick checking tactics should be executed using proper body position and balance. In other words, **if the stick check fails, the player must be in a position to continue to defend the opponent.**

#### POKE CHECK

The poke check is most often executed by a defender skating backwards against a rushing opponent. The defender should maintain proper balance while skating backwards, and have only the top hand on the stick. The defender must concentrate on the midsection of the opponent and use peripheral vision to see the puck. The stick should be kept back with the arm flexed so as not to let the opponent know the extent of the checker's reach. **When the opponent comes into range, the defender quickly extends the stick, knocking the puck off of the attacker's stick. This movement must solely be done with the arm, so that if the puck is missed, the defender maintains proper balance and body position.**

The poke check can also be used by a forward skating defender approaching the puck carrier from the front or side. Again, the extension of the arm is used to surprise the opponent, but proper body position and balance must be maintained for continued play if the check misses.



**Key Elements**

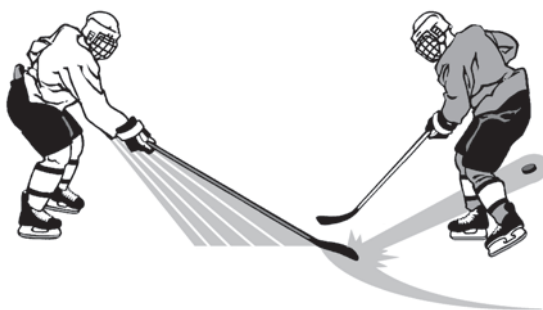
- top hand only on the stick, held close to side with the arm bent
- quick extension of the arm and stick when the opponent and puck are in range
- proper balance and body position in relation to the opponent

**Common Errors**

- The arm holding the stick is fully extended too early.
- The defender lunges at the puck, putting himself off balance, out of position and unable to complete the skill.



**Figure 16-3.** *Poke check ready position.*



**Figure 16-4.** *Execution of the poke check.*

**HOOK CHECK**

The hook check is most often executed from behind the puck carrier. The stick should be held with the top hand only and the shaft should be extended near to the ice with one knee bent. The blade is turned towards the puck and hooks the puck off of the opponent's stick. The hook check should only

be used when there is a great chance of success because, if the check misses, the defender is in poor body position to recover quickly.

**Key Elements**

- The stick shaft should be extended near or on the ice.
- The blade must be turned towards the puck and be flat on the ice.

**Common Errors**

- committing too early to the bent knee position



**Figure 16-5.** *Hook check.*

**LIFT THE STICK**

Lifting the stick is typically executed when approaching the opponent from behind or from the side. When close enough to the puck carrier, the defender skates in front of or with him or her, lifts the opponent's stick near the heel as quickly as possible and brings his or her stick down to take the puck away.

**Key Elements**

- Approach puck carrier from behind or from the side.
- Continue skating with the puck carrier.
- Lift the opponent's stick quickly and take the puck.

**Common Errors**

- Failure to continue skating makes it difficult to gain good position on the puck carrier.





Figure 16-6. Stick lift from behind.



Figure 16-7. Stick lift from an angle.

### STICK PRESS

The stick press is executed in close one-on-one battles. It may be used to prevent an opponent from receiving a pass, shooting, or retrieving a loose puck. The player places his stick on top of the lower shaft of the opponent's stick and presses down, preventing the opponent's stick from moving. Leverage and relative upper body strength are keys to young players successfully executing the stick press.

#### Key Elements

- used in close one-on-one situations
- stick placed over lower part of opponent's stick and pressed down hard

#### Common Errors

- The defender not placing the stick low on the stick shaft of the offensive player
- Not maintaining good body position on the offensive player



Figure 16-8. Stick press.

### SWEEP CHECK

The sweep check has similarities to the hook check and the poke check. It is executed from in front of the puck carrier. It can be executed from an upright position with the defender in the same position as if he or she is about to poke check. If the puck carrier is on the side away from the defender's stick, the defender sweeps the blade towards the puck, being careful not to overcommit the body. If the sweep misses, the defender must remain in sound defensive body position.

From a similar position, the defender can lower the stick close to the ice. The sweeping motion moves towards the puck with the curved area where the shaft meets the blade aiming for the puck. Caution must be used along with this check, as the defender is committing his or her body much more and is susceptible to the puck carrier cutting back on him or her.

#### Key Elements

- top hand only on the stick
- blade flat on the ice
- selective usage of the sweep check
- overcommitment of the body

#### Common Errors

- committing too early to the bent knee position





**Figure 16-9.** Sweep check.

### HIT THE STICK

This move is employed when you are even with the puck carrier and skating parallel to her or him. Hit the opponent's stick near the heel to force her or him to lose control of the puck.

#### Key Elements

- Be parallel with the opponent.
- Hit the heel of the opponent's stick.

### COVERING

In general, covering an opponent means maintaining a sound defensive position between the opponent and your own net. The defensive player should try to stay within one stick length of his opponent for effective defensive play.

#### Key Elements

- Skate with the opponent and stay within one stick length.
- Maintain a position between the opponent and your own net.

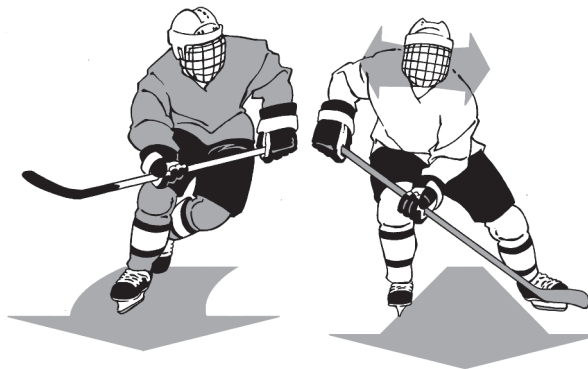
### BACKCHECKING THE OPEN MAN

When backchecking an open man, the defender should take an inside position and try to remain just ahead of the opponent. This position allows the defender to stay between the opponent and the goal and the opponent and the puck. The disadvantage is that the defender will have a difficult time watching both the opponent and the puck. Therefore, it is imperative that the defender maintain

the one stick length or less relationship to the opponent.

#### Key Elements

- Take a position inside and slightly ahead of opponent.
- Try to split vision between the puck and the covered player.
- Stay within one stick length of opponent.



**Figure 16-10.** Backchecking the open man.



**Figure 16-11.** Maintaining an inside position.

### BACKCHECKING THE PUCK CARRIER

When backchecking against a puck carrier, the defender must concentrate on the puck carrier's body and not on the puck itself. Too much emphasis on the puck will allow the puck carrier to utilize fakes or have enough room to escape the checker. The key element is to angle the opponent toward an area of the ice that will be more advantageous to the defender (most often toward the boards).



Players can also fall into the bad habit of approaching the puck carrier and hooking or slashing instead of continuing to skate and overtake the opponent.

### Key Elements

- Watch opponent's body, not the puck.
- Angle the puck carrier towards the boards.



**Figure 16-12.** Backchecking the puck carrier.



**Figure 16-13.** Skating a player off the puck.

### COVERING IN FRONT OF THE NET

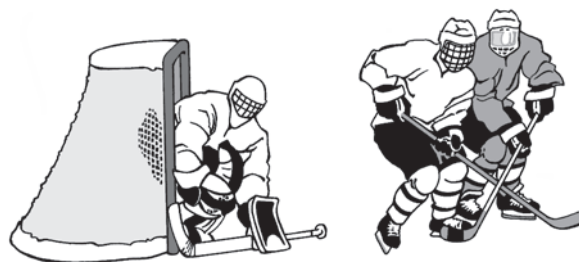
When covering a player in front of the net, the defender must be aware of the positioning of the puck as well as his opponent. It is, therefore, necessary to maintain contact with the opponent using either the body or the stick. As with other defensive situations, the defender should stay between the opponent and the net. Special

attention must be paid to the opponent's stick, particularly when the puck is about to arrive. Lifting the stick or the stick press can be utilized to prevent the opponent from controlling or tipping the puck.

It is also important not to overcommit to one player. If a defensive teammate loses his check, the defender in front may have to cover two opponents. Therefore, a checker cannot get tied up with one person to the extent that he or she cannot release to a new position if the situation changes.

### Key Elements

- Stay between the opponent and the goal.
- Maintain contact with the opponent's stick or body.
- Split vision and always know where the puck is.
- Don't get tied up with one player in case the situation changes.



**Figure 16-14.** Covering in front of the net.

### PROTECTING ONESELF FROM BODY CONTACT ALONG THE BOARDS

The best protection against any kind of contact is to maintain a strong skating position with feet shoulder width apart, knees bent and head up. Overall awareness of where opponents are on the ice is a key ingredient as well.

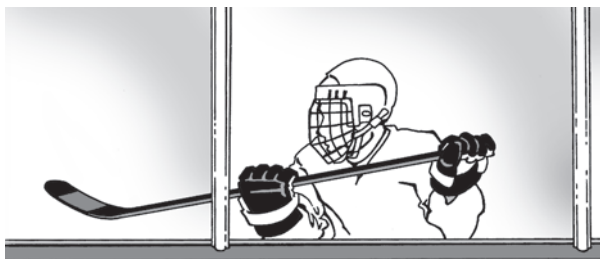
Even at younger levels of hockey, where body checking is not allowed, contact with the boards can happen. Players must learn to protect themselves when playing near the boards. They must always remember to maintain a strong hockey position with knees flexed and feet about shoulder width apart.

If contact with the boards occurs with the player facing them, the player should try to distribute the contact over as large a surface as possible. The stick



and forearms can absorb the contact for the upper body. The player should lean in slightly, keeping the skates about a foot away from the boards. If the feet get up against the boards, the player can lose balance upon contact.

When contact is going to occur with the boards at the player's side, he or she should use the upper arm to cushion the blow. A player should be careful to avoid absorbing the blow with the point of the shoulder.



**Figure 16-15.** Getting the stick and gloves up to absorb the force of any body contact.



**Figure 16-16.** Maintain a low center of gravity along the boards.



**Figure 16-17.** Avoid hitting the boards with your shoulder and head.

## SUMMARY

- Checking is an important skill to teach properly to your players.
- The main areas of checking are:
  - skating
  - angling
  - stick checking
  - ready for body contact
  - protecting yourself
- It is necessary to strictly apply rules pertaining to checking to significantly detour body checking from behind and stick infraction, then promoting safety and enjoyment of the game.

## LEARN MORE

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. (*Internet access is required*).

- [www.usahockey.com/coaches/checking\\_materials.aspx](http://www.usahockey.com/coaches/checking_materials.aspx)
- [www.usahockey.com/Body\\_Checking\\_Rule.aspx](http://www.usahockey.com/Body_Checking_Rule.aspx)



# Chapter 17

## Goaltending

### OBJECTIVES

- To understand the proper body positioning and stance necessary for a goaltender
- To understand the movements available to a goaltender and when to use them
- To understand the importance of the butterfly

### INTRODUCTION

Goaltending is a combination of sound structural technique and athleticism. This chapter will provide coaches with the tools necessary to successfully teach the position. It is important for coaches and goaltenders to consistently work on and practice the concepts they learn. Goaltending is a position of muscle memory, detail and habit. It is the responsibility of coaches and goaltenders alike to reinforce all fundamentals and practice with detail. A goaltender will operate in games in the same manner that he or she practices.

This chapter covers three areas of goaltending that goaltenders must first master in order to develop properly. The three areas of focus are stance, movement and butterfly. The order that is given is the order in which each aspect should be introduced to goaltenders.

### STANCE

The purpose of having a proper stance is to maximize net coverage and have the ability to move while maintaining balance.

### Body Position

- Feet – little more than shoulder's width apart, slight ankle bend with weight slightly on inside edges of the balls of feet
- Skates – parallel to each other
- Knees – forward, creating a slight bend that applies pressure to the balls of the feet
  - similar to a golf stance or batting stance
- Chest – up so shooter can see the logo of the jersey
  - allows balance to be slightly forward
  - increases net coverage
  - helps tracking high shots
- Shoulders – parallel to each other and level to maintain proper chest positioning
- Gloves – out in front of the body creating good balance. They should also be placed just outside the width of the goaltender's chest with elbows slightly outside of the body creating no double coverage
- Stick – 8 to 12 inches in front of the skates and resting on a slight angle, allowing for proper cushion on shots and coverage of the five hole
  - never hold stick perpendicular to the ice





**Figure 17-1.** *The goaltender's basic stance (front and side views).*

### Benefits of a Proper Stance

- allows goaltender to be balanced and under control
  - proper balance limits excessive and/or wasted movement
- more efficient movement and save selection

### Tendencies

- goaltenders have feet too wide (limits movement and save selection)
- goaltenders have feet too narrow (limits power in movement, lessens lower net coverage and decreases balance)
- poor glove positioning (leads to wasted movement and poor puck control)
- chest bent over (creates poor balance and trouble tracking high shots)

## MOVEMENT

Skating is very important for goaltenders. The following will cover three movements that goaltenders should learn when beginning to play the position:

### Parallel Shuffle

The purpose of the parallel shuffle is to make side-to-side short-distance movements. It helps the goaltender stay square to the puck while minimizing holes in the stance when moving.

### Terminology

- “Drive” Leg
  - the opposite leg of the intended direction
  - used to initiate side-to-side movement
- “Lead” Leg
  - the leg of the intended direction
  - used to balance and stabilize side-to-side movement
  - offers some resistance to control side-to-side movement

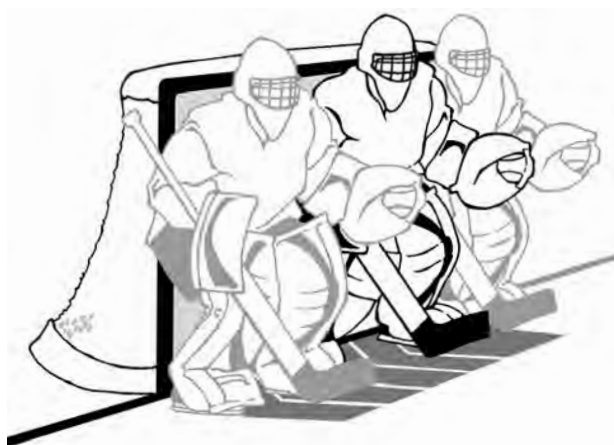
### Proper Use

- Used to stay square to the puck when the shooter is carrying the puck in tight or across the slot.
- When moving post-to-post, the parallel shuffle is always used.

### Technique

- In this stance the goaltender is square to the puck.
- Weight is on the inside edges of the balls of the feet.
- To start the shuffle, transfer weight to the ball of the foot on the inside edge of the “drive” leg.
- Bring the “drive” leg back to regular stance position.
- The “lead” leg maintains the stance position and stabilizes momentum.
- To stop, place weight on the inside edge of the lead skate and resist momentum.





**Figure 17-2.** *The parallel shuffle.*

### Lateral T-Push

The purpose of the lateral t-push is side-to-side explosive movement used to cover big areas of the crease. This movement allows the goaltender to set his or her feet in position ahead of the play in order to read the play and make a proper save selection.

#### Terminology

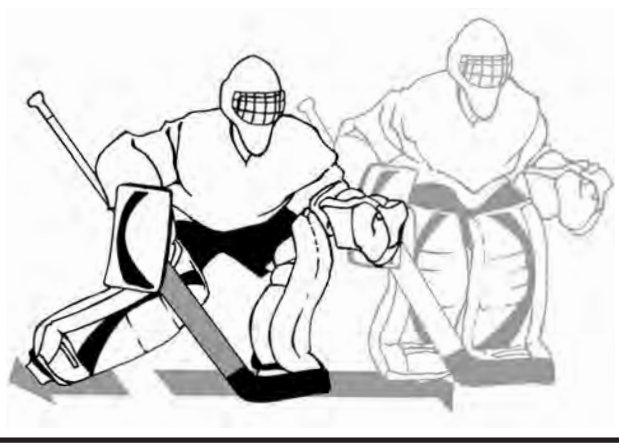
- “Drive” Leg
  - the opposite leg of the intended direction
  - used to initiate side-to-side movement
- “Lead” Leg
  - the leg of the intended direction
  - used to carry the momentum and weight in side-to-side movement

#### Proper Use

- Used to quickly gain ice in the crease and set the feet while following the play.
- Movement should be quick and explosive.

#### Technique

- Turn the head and eyes toward the intended direction and lead with the stick and gloves.
- The heel of the “lead” leg is brought slightly back toward the “drive” leg then pivots in the desired direction.
- Weight is placed on the inside edge of the balls of the “drive” leg skate.
- Lift the “drive” leg off the ice after the initial push.
- To stop, turn the inside edge of the lead leg skate and resist momentum.
- Set the feet in a stance square to the potential shot angle.



**Figure 17-3.** *Lateral t-push.*

### Small T-Push

The small t-push is a movement used when the play will result in an immediate shot. The goaltender will find this movement useful when the puck is rapidly moved in short areas inside of the zone. This movement allows a goaltender to move and be set before a shot is able to be taken.

#### Terminology

- same terminology as t-push

#### Proper Use

- Used to move in small areas at a rapid pace.
- Movement should be quick and explosive, with the feet regaining stance position quickly.

#### Technique

- Turn the head and eyes toward the intended direction and lead with stick and gloves.
- The heel of the “lead” leg is brought slightly back toward the “drive” leg, then pivots in the desired direction.
- Weight is placed on the inside edge of the balls of the “drive” leg skate.
- To stop, turn the inside edge of the lead leg skate and resist momentum.
- Set the feet in a stance square to the potential shot angle.

### BUTTERFLY

The purpose of the butterfly is to eliminate the lower portion of the net while maintaining balance and recovering ability.



### Body Position

- Chest – up so shooters can see the logo of the jersey
  - improves balance and net coverage
- Shoulders – parallel to each other and level to maintain proper chest positioning
- Pads – extended to the sides with the inside of the pads flush on the ice and knees together
  - when dropping into a butterfly the goaltender should quickly drive knees onto the ice
- Butt Up – helps with the following:
  - keeps chest up and maintains balance
  - improves net coverage and keeps knees on the ice
  - maintains positioning for proper and quick on-ice or full recoveries.
- Gloves – out in front of the body creating good balance. Gloves should also be placed just outside the width of the goaltender's chest with elbows slightly outside of the body creating no double coverage
  - on shots in tight, a goaltender should bring elbows in and to the side of the body, eliminating any holes and forming a wall
  - on shots from one foot away, a goaltender can extend the arm and angle the glove above the puck
- Stick – 8 to 12 inches in front of the skates and resting on a slight angle, allowing for proper cushion on shots and coverage of the five hole
  - never perpendicular to the ice

### Benefits of a Proper Butterfly

- allows goaltender to be balanced and under control
  - proper balance limits excessive and/or wasted movement
- more efficient movement and recoveries.

### Tendencies

- Goaltenders sink their butts back to the heels of skates
  - poor recovery and balance
  - limits net coverage
  - separates knees, opening a hole between the legs
- stick extended too far out in front of the goaltender's knees (creates a ramp for pucks to go over goaltender's shoulders)

- sinking chest and shoulders (limits net coverage)



Figure 17-4. The butterfly.

### EXTENDED BUTTERFLY/HALF BUTTERFLY

The extended/half butterfly is used to give the goaltender proper net coverage and rebound control based on where the shot is heading.

### Body Position

- the goaltender drops into an extended butterfly so his or her shin is extended toward the puck while keeping the pad flush to the ice.
- center of gravity moves toward the puck, including eyes, stick and glove.
- the goaltender's thighs remain tight together to keep the five hole closed.

### Tendencies

- The goaltender lifts his or her extended pad off the ice, causing a triangle effect between the foot and five hole.
- The goaltender leans away from the puck or reaches without moving.
- The goaltender creates holes instead of closing them.

### LEARN MORE

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. (*Internet access is required*).

- [www.usahockey.com/usahgoalies/default.aspx](http://www.usahockey.com/usahgoalies/default.aspx)



## Section 5

# Risk Management





# Chapter 18

## Legal Liability

### OBJECTIVES

- To outline the responsibilities of a youth hockey coach
- To know your obligation as a coach
- To know how to meet the expectation of coaches

### BASIS FOR LIABILITY

The main reason coaches are sometimes sued is because they act in a “negligent” manner. Negligence is another word for conduct that is not reasonable. In determining whether a coach acts in a negligent manner (or whether the coach’s conduct is unreasonable), the law will compare the actions of the coach to those of other coaches in the same situation.

Negligence is a civil matter, not a criminal matter. Coaches should act in an alert manner, be aware of the surrounding circumstances, and always use caution when dealing with players, referees and spectators.

**The primary responsibility of a coach is to minimize the risk of injury to all participants of the game.**

In minimizing the risk of injury, coaches have certain responsibilities with respect to the following areas:

- the responsibility of properly supervising players either at practice or during a game
- the responsibility of properly training and instructing players as to all facets of the game

- the responsibility of ensuring that the players are wearing safe and proper equipment
- the responsibility of providing competent and responsible assistant coaches and personnel
- the responsibility of warning players and parents of dangers of which they may not be aware
- the responsibility of providing proper medical attention to injured players
- the responsibility of prohibiting injured players from participating in practice as well as games
- the responsibility of placing players of a similar competitive level against one another

These are the most common responsibilities required of coaches, which can be found in the Bill of Rights for Young Athletes enacted by USA Hockey. When coaches fail to meet these responsibilities, players usually end up injured.

### Coaches’ Responsibility to Supervise Their Players

One of the primary responsibilities of a coach is to provide proper supervision. In general, coaches



must provide the degree of supervision necessary for the age, experience and skill of those supervised. When coaches fail to properly supervise their players, they may be held responsible for any resulting injuries.

For example, in one instance, one of the players on a golf team was killed as a result of being struck in the head by the errant swing of another player. The court found that the coach was liable for the death of the golfer because he failed to provide proper supervision. At the time of the accident, the coach was concentrating solely on one golfer and not paying any attention to the other golfers. The court held that if the coach was providing proper supervision, the accident would not have occurred.

In another case, a wrestler was injured during practice by another wrestler when the wrestler applied a hold taught by their coach. The court found that the coach failed to provide proper supervision because he was supervising two matches at the same time. The court stated that he should have been supervising only one match at a time in order to minimize the risk of unnecessary injury to the wrestlers.

These cases point out that all ice hockey coaches should maintain proper supervision over their players at all times. This includes when the players are on the ice or when they are in the locker room. The easiest way to alleviate any problems in these situations is simply to pay attention and watch what is going on. Discourage players from engaging in horseplay and do not let them engage in risky activity that is likely to get someone injured.

In addition, when coaches are absent from practices or games, the coach is responsible for providing competent and responsible assistant coaches that can provide proper supervision.

### **Coaches' Responsibility to Properly Train and Instruct Their Players**

Coaches must instruct their players on the skills necessary to compete.

In this regard, it is imperative for coaches to teach players the rules of the game and to ensure that the players are physically fit to compete. Coaches have been held responsible in many instances for failing to provide the injured athlete with adequate training or instruction that would have prevented the injury.

One example in which several coaches were found not to provide an athlete with proper training and instruction occurred when a football player sustained severe neck and back injuries resulting from an improper tackle made on an opposing player. The player sued several of the coaches, claiming that they failed to properly instruct him on how to tackle. In this instance, the player was originally a track star and was recruited to play football because of his outstanding speed. The player, prior to injuring himself, had participated in only one practice on tackling. The head coach and the interior line coach were eventually found liable for \$6.5 million because they had not properly instructed the player on how to tackle. This case is just one alarming example of why coaches should properly instruct their players on all facets of the game.

In another instance, a wrestler was injured by another wrestler as a result of a hold taught by the coach. The injured wrestler sued the coach for not providing proper training and instruction. The coach was found liable because he failed to teach his wrestlers a defense to that particular hold.

If a coach provides proper training and instruction, however, the coach will not be held responsible for a player's injuries. For example, in another football case, a football player incurred severe neck and back injuries after tackling another player head-on. In this instance, the coach was not responsible for the player's injury because he had demonstrated that he provided all of his players with proper instruction as to all aspects of the sport. In this case, the coach implemented a program where all football players:

- **had to undergo a complete physical and be certified physically fit to play.**
- **were enrolled through an extensive training program that included calisthenics, weight training and conditioning, instruction as to the fundamentals of the game and instruction on the use of protective equipment**

This example demonstrates that coaches will not be responsible for a player's injuries if they provide proper training and instruction.

In ice hockey, it is critical that coaches instruct players on all aspects of the game in order to facilitate the safety of all players. One example of



such instruction would be to advise players not to check from behind, especially within five feet of the boards, because it can cause severe injury to other players. Coaches should always take the time to teach the fundamentals and rules of the game.

Finally, you should teach players how to protect themselves from injury. This should be particularly important to coaches of lower-level players such as Mites, Squirts and Pee Wees. In these instances, coaches should be sure to explain to the players how to properly give and take a check as well as explain the dangers of the game such as high-sticking, boarding, hitting from behind and cross-checking.

### **Coaches' Responsibility to Ensure that Players are Wearing the Proper Equipment**

In the most common situations, coaches are not responsible for providing equipment for their players. However, there are instances when a coach will provide equipment such as when a player's equipment fails during a game. In addition, there may be instances when coaches are responsible for ordering certain equipment for the team. In these instances, coaches should be sure to provide safe and suitable equipment.

In one instance, a prep school hockey coach was sued after a player was injured as a result of being struck in the head with a hockey puck. The coach ordered helmets that were comprised of three separate pieces, which allowed enough room for a puck to squeeze between the pieces and strike the player in the head. The coach was found liable for not providing his players with the proper equipment. The court found that, based upon the coach's experience, the coach should have known that there was a more safely designed helmet available and provided the safer helmets to his or her players.

As a suggestion to coaches, it is always a good idea to routinely check that the players are using the proper equipment. It might be best to circulate a form for the players' parents to fill out at the beginning of the season, in which they can check off the various pieces of equipment that have been provided to the player.

Moreover, the coach must prohibit a player from competing if the coach knows that the player is not properly equipped (for example, a player going out

on the ice with a bicycle helmet instead of a hockey helmet). It might be wise for coaches to have a preseason meeting with the players and their parents to outline the equipment necessary for the players.

Finally, a coach should be aware of the safest and newest equipment available.

### **Coaches' Responsibility to Provide Responsible Assistant Coaches and Other Personnel**

Coaches have the responsibility to ensure that assistants or team managers are responsible individuals, have knowledge of the game, and are persons who will act as the coach would act.

### **Coaches' Responsibility to Provide Immediate and Proper Medical Care**

Coaches are responsible for providing necessary and proper medical assistance for injured players. Coaches, however, should not provide any assistance that could make the injury worse.

For example, in one case, a high school coach was held responsible for injuries to a wrestler because he moved the wrestler after he suffered a severe knee injury, thereby making the injury worse. The coach was also held responsible because he failed to contact the appropriate medical authorities or the wrestler's parents after the injury had occurred.

Particularly in cases where a player is injured while on the ice, it is absolutely critical that coaches take the time to investigate and evaluate the player's condition. If it appears that the injury is more than the player merely "getting the wind knocked out of him," the coach must obtain immediate medical assistance. If the coach fails to obtain proper medical assistance, the coach will be held responsible.

For example, in one instance, a football coach was held liable for the death of a football player who died from heat stroke because he failed to obtain prompt medical attention that would have probably saved the player's life.

### **Coaches' Responsibility to Prevent Injured Players from Competing**

Under no circumstances are coaches to allow injured players to play if there is a chance that the player can aggravate his or her injury. It is always difficult to keep an injured player from playing when



he or she is a very good player and is asking to participate despite the injury. However, courts have routinely found that coaches are responsible for keeping an injured player from playing.

For example, in one case, a basketball coach was held responsible for making the player's injuries worse because the coach permitted the injured player to play even though he was aware that the player had facial injuries and was ordered by his doctor not to participate in any type of athletic activity.

Therefore, take notice when a player is shaking his hand, grabbing his ankle, or moving his arm in a circular motion that would suggest a possible shoulder injury. Coaches should never wait for a visibly injured player to tell them that he or she is physically injured.

### **Coaches' Responsibility to Place Players in Competitive Settings**

In some cases, coaches have been held responsible for allowing players to play in a "mismatched" situation, such as a player from the Junior level playing against a player from the Pee Wee level.

A recent incident occurring in Brick, N.J., emphasized that coaches should always be aware of the competition on the ice. In this case, the injury occurred during a skills clinic at which the player, who was 15 years old, was hurt by a slap shot taken by a player who was 19 years old. The ice rink was later held responsible for the player's injury because they permitted a "mismatched" situation.

Had this been either a practice or a game situation, it is probable that the coach would have been held responsible for allowing one of his or her players to play in a "mismatched" situation.

### **Vicarious Liability**

In certain cases, coaches should be aware that they may be responsible for the actions of their players and assistants under a legal theory known as "vicarious liability." This theory essentially means that coaches may be responsible for the irresponsible actions of others under their control such as the coach's players or assistants.

One example of when a coach may be "vicariously liable" for the actions of others is when a coach specifically instructs his or her players to cause

intentional injury to other players. For example, should a hockey coach tell another player to intentionally board, cross-check, high-stick or hit another player from behind, the coach will be responsible for the actions of his or her player and for the injuries caused to the other player.

Therefore, coaches should always encourage fair and responsible play and discourage acts that can cause injury to others.

### **Coaches' Defenses**

It is important to discuss some of the defenses available to coaches when others are trying to hold the coach responsible for a player's injuries. These defenses are mentioned not to relieve coaches of their responsibilities but to affect greater safety for the players.

The defenses available to coaches are:

1. Assumption of Risk
2. Comparative Negligence
3. Volunteer Statutes
4. Consent/Exculpatory Agreements/Waiver/Release
5. Sovereign Immunity

### **Assumption of Risk**

Assumption of Risk is a legal doctrine that holds that players choosing to play in spite of the incidental risks associated with the game cannot blame others if they are injured.

For example, a goalie stands in front of slap shots ranging from 50 to 100 mph. The goalie knows that he or she may be injured as a result of getting hit with the puck, but continues to play in spite of that risk. If the goalie is injured as a result of the slap shot, provided the coach fulfilled all of the aforementioned responsibilities, the goalie cannot hold anyone responsible for his or her injuries.

There are two general rules regarding assumption of risk, particularly for USA Hockey coaches. First, a player can only assume the risk for those risks that the player can understand. In this regard, the player will be compared to other players of the same experience and age. Second, for a player to assume the risk, the risk must be one of which the player is aware.



## Comparative Negligence

The second major defense is a legal theory known as “comparative negligence.” This theory provides that coaches are responsible only for their percentage of fault. For example, if a player injures himself or herself as a result of horseplay with another player, the coach may be held 60% responsible because he or she failed to provide proper supervision, while the injured player may be held 40% responsible for goofing around to begin with. In this case, if there is a verdict of \$100.00, the coach would be responsible for \$60.00.

In some states, such as New Jersey and Pennsylvania, if it is found that the player was more responsible than the coach, (i.e., the player was 60% responsible and the coach 40% responsible), the player can not be compensated at all for his or her injuries.

## Volunteer Statutes

Finally, in some states such as New Jersey and Pennsylvania, there are such things known as “volunteer statutes.” Essentially, such statutes provide coaches with “immunity” (the inability to be successfully sued) provided that the coach has satisfied various requirements.

For example, in New Jersey, coaches who are not paid for their services (such as most club league hockey coaches) cannot be held responsible for injuries to a hockey player unless:

1. The coach’s conduct is extremely unreasonable (known as “gross negligence”). An example of this situation would be to allow a hockey player to play in a game without any equipment.
2. The coach failed to participate in a safety/training skills program that covers injury prevention, first aid, and general coaching concepts. The USA Hockey Coaches’ Clinics is an example of such a clinic.
3. The coach permits an event or practice without supervision such as a “captain’s” practice.
4. The coach’s services are provided as part of the school’s athletic program such as high school coaches.
5. The player is injured as a result of the coach’s negligent operation of a motor vehicle (i.e., when the accident is the

coach’s fault). This situation may arise when coaches give their players a ride to practice or game.

As most people are aware, attendance at USA Hockey clinics satisfies the main criteria for providing the coach with the required safety and training skills program.

In 1989, a New Jersey court interpreted New Jersey’s volunteer statute and found that coaches must attend these safety and training skills programs to qualify under the statute. In the New Jersey case, a little league catcher who was struck in the eye by a baseball during a pre-game warm-up while he was not wearing his mask sued the coach for allowing him to play without his mask. The coach claimed immunity under New Jersey’s volunteer statute. The court held that the statute did not apply because the coach failed to attend a safety/training skills program as required by the statute and that he was responsible for the player’s injuries. The court stated that the coach was still responsible for attending such a program despite the fact that the league did not offer such a program.

Even if the coach is paid, the coach will still be liable if he commits acts of gross negligence (i.e., extremely unreasonable conduct) or if a player is injured as a result of a motor vehicle accident that is the coach’s fault.

## Waivers, Releases, Exculpatory Agreement and Consent

In some cases, coaches may be able to take advantage of waivers and releases signed by the parents of the players. If the player has attained the age of majority, which is 18 years old, it may not be necessary to have the player’s parents sign the release. Essentially, a “waiver” is a document that more or less gives up the right of the player signing the document to sue another person for any injuries he or she may incur. Similarly, a “release” is a document that releases that person from any possible responsibility.

The problem with these documents is that courts will frequently not honor them. The main reason is because people rarely negotiate the terms of these documents and usually a waiver and release is presented to a player who must sign or not play. In such cases, the courts have held that because the



player has no choice, these types of agreements are not valid.

Coaches also should refrain from having minor players sign any waivers or releases because they will probably not be valid. For example, in one case, a minor was injured during an ice hockey clinic and later sued the New York City Ice Hockey League. In this case, the court found that the sponsors of the league had inadequately supervised the player while he was engaged in various drills. The court held the league responsible despite the fact that a release was signed by the player's parents. The court stated that the release was not binding upon the player because he was a minor.

Additionally, coaches should be wary of presenting waivers and releases to parents because players' parents will frequently be offended because the waivers and releases appear to attempt to relieve the coach of his or her responsibilities.

### Sovereign Immunity

Not much needs to be addressed regarding the defense of "sovereign immunity," as this defense will probably not apply to most coaches who attend USA Hockey clinics. Sovereign immunity is a legal doctrine that applies when a public or governmental institution (i.e., a public high school) is involved. In those cases, suing the government is a tough job. The government may not be sued like any other ordinary person. Public school coaches can avail themselves of this defense because they are considered government employees.

### SUMMARY

The legal responsibilities that coaches have for the welfare of their teams include the teaching of skills,

values, and knowledge that will allow young athletes to safely participate in practices and games. Coaches are also accountable for the supervision of their teams during pregame, intermission and postgame activities that are commonly associated with athletic competition. Specific information about skill progressions, conditioning and first aid is essential, but the judgment required in the application of this information to the hockey programs is a much more important prerequisite to successful coaching than certificates or diplomas.

The responsibilities of the coach have been divided into five categories: the need for **proper instruction**; liability in **failure to warn of potential injuries**; the need for athletes to acknowledge the **assumption of risk**; consequences of failure to **provide proper equipment and facilities**; and the determination of **causation for injuries and requisites in the proper care and treatment of injuries**.

Medical insurance is an essential form of protection for players and coaches. Due to the unpredictable nature of hockey injuries, coaches should also be financially protected by some form of liability insurance. Conditions of coverage and restrictions are specific to each policy; therefore, coaches should be informed about their current protection and the duration of its coverage.

Knowledge of a coach's legal responsibilities can serve two useful purposes. The most important of these is that such information provides a potent stimulus to discharge one's duties in a diligent manner, ever mindful that carelessness provokes situations which could induce injuries. The second purpose is that if coaches have used every possible precaution to prevent injuries, they are in a good position to defend themselves against litigation.



# Chapter 19

## Developing a Risk Management Program

### OBJECTIVES

- To understand what risk management is and why it is relevant to coaches
- To understand the three parts of developing a risk management program for coaches
- To understand the legal qualifications or competencies that coaches should have
- To understand how the “reasonable expectations of players’ parents” are related to risk management
- To understand the management practices that will help coaches achieve their risk management objectives
- To understand the three steps coaches should take to implement their risk management program

### INTRODUCTION

#### Coaching to the Reasonable Expectations of Your Players’ Parents

Assume that a prospective volunteer coach is interviewing for a position with a youth hockey organization. The candidate is asked to, “identify the one quality you have that distinguishes you as the best candidate for this coaching position.” If you were the prospective coach, what would your answer be?

For the inexperienced candidate, the likely answer is going to focus on past playing experience. After all, isn’t that the primary qualification of many volunteer coaches? It is not uncommon for youth coaches to assume that past playing experience is a sufficient qualification. Probably many youth sports organizations have agreed.

There is, however, a growing realization of a coaching crisis in youth sports. It is a crisis created by the failure of youth sports organizations to select coaches with better qualifications. And, it is a crisis that has been sustained by many well-intentioned

coaches who did not realize that coaching is, first and foremost, effective teaching. For example, one research report estimates that more than 70% of American youth are turned off to competitive sports by age 13. The primary reasons are that the kids are tired of getting yelled at by coaches and they are given attention only if they display exceptional skills. In other words, coaching appears to be ineffective in motivating youngsters to participate.

Motivating participation is a teaching function and should be a hiring qualification. Returning to the interview question, what quality would best distinguish a coaching candidate? It could easily be the candidate who proposes to “coach to the reasonable expectations of my kids’ parents!” Traditionally, teachers have been held to standards established by communities of parents. Youth sport coaches, as teachers, should be measured by the same standards. **The youth sports coach who understands that the requirements of the job will be measured by the reasonable expectations of his players’ parents knows that he or she must be an effective teacher.**



Coaches, in any sport, owe certain legal obligations to their players. The goal of risk management programs is to identify those legal obligations for coaches, then translate them into coaching conduct or behavior. The following are considered the minimum requirements for a standard of care.

## MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR STANDARD OF CARE

### EFFECTIVE TEACHING

**Legal Obligation:** Coaches are supposed to be teachers first and foremost.

**Coaching Behavior:** Enroll in certification and continuing coaching education programs and start your own reading education program in coaching and communication skills.

### EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION

**Legal Obligation:** Coaches are responsible for team supervision wherever and whenever the team meets.

**Coaching Behavior:** Hire competent assistants and establish a plan of supervision for all team practices, meetings, games, and other events.

### EFFECTIVE REACTION TO MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

**Legal Obligation:** Coaches are supposed to know medical emergencies when they see them and to know how to respond quickly and responsibly.

**Coaching Behavior:** Take a certification course in emergency medical procedures, or at least first aid and establish a plan for prompt reaction to medical emergencies.

### PROVIDING SAFE EQUIPMENT

**Legal Obligation:** Coaches are supposed to know how to buy, fit and maintain safe sports equipment.

**Coaching Behavior:** Establish equipment fitting, distribution, and maintenance plans in accordance with all manufacturer warranties, guidelines, and directions; take continuing education programs regarding equipment; and maintain records on equipment inspection and reconditioning.

### PROVIDING SAFE FACILITIES

**Legal Obligation:** Coaches are supposed to know when field or surface conditions pose a danger to players.

**Coaching Behavior:** Take continuing education programs regarding facility operations and establish a plan for regular field or surface inspections, including quick repair of defects or problems.

### PROVIDING SAFE TRANSPORTATION

**Legal Obligation:** Coaches are supposed to know how players are being transported to away games or events, and with whom the players will be traveling.

**Coaching Behavior:** Use the league and parents to help establish transportation plans that should include approved drivers, vehicles, and stops, and establish a team code of travel conduct.

### PROVIDING DUE PROCESS

**Legal Obligation:** Coaches have to establish fair rules and policies and explain their reasons for suspending a player from the team.

**Coaching Behavior:** Use the league and parents to establish rules and policies regarding team conduct, provide written copies of rules and policies to players and their parents, and never suspend a player without giving the player and his parents the chance to explain their conduct.

### PROVIDING COMPETENT ASSISTANTS

**Legal Obligation:** Coaches are supposed to hire or assign assistant coaches who are as competent as the head coach.

**Coaching Behavior:** Start a training program just for the assistant coaches, plan and organize the staff with continuing education and training as a requirement and require references from all assistants.

### DEVELOPING A RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Coaching can be very frustrating when it involves being constantly second-guessed. For that reason alone many coaches might prefer an evaluation standard based solely on their effort or time spent coaching. When dealing with volunteers, it seems more fair to be evaluated on one's willingness to work with kids. The problem is that risk



management cannot be successful if it measures effort alone. A successful risk management program has to evaluate coaching performance as “effective teaching.”

Volunteer coaches who accept the teaching role also accept the role of a parent. And, thereby, they assume the standards of effective teaching. **Parents have the right to assume the coach has the ability to teach the sport or activity, to teach it safely and to teach it with the participation of their child in mind.** Obviously, it is expected that the experience will be fun. Those are the desired characteristics of an effective coaching risk management program.

Some risk management programs have been developed simply by identifying the legal competencies expected of coaches. The premise is that when a coach practices those legal competencies, it results in an effective risk management program.

The problem is that merely identifying coaching competencies does not mean a coach knows how to practice or utilize them. Using “effective teaching according to the reasonable expectations of players’ parents” as the risk management mission, we will develop the coaches’ risk management program in three steps. First, we will identify the legal competencies required of coaches. Second, we will integrate those competencies into a management program. Third, we will offer three suggestions as to how to implement the management program into an effective coaching risk management plan.

## THE LEGAL COMPETENCIES EXPECTED OF COACHES

Legal experts have identified as many as 12, and as few as five, legal competencies expected of coaches at any level of participation. All agree that the foundation of coaching competency is effective teaching. This program suggests that coaches consider eight additional competencies:

- effective supervision
- effective reaction to medical emergencies
- providing safe equipment
- providing safe facilities
- safe transportation
- matching players according to size, skill, and maturity
- providing “due process”
- providing competent assistants

## Effective Teaching or Instruction

This competency has been extensively reviewed in the first section of the chapter. It is important that coaches realize this competency is inclusive. That means many of the competencies we will discuss naturally flow from effective teaching. In other words, the effective teacher knows that instruction means a great deal more than teaching plays or conducting drills. The youth sports coach has to learn that this competency demands a great deal of sensitivity, compassion, and patience and some specific non-instructional abilities.

## Effective Supervision

Effective teaching includes the supervision of players. Effective coaching supervision has two primary components: when to supervise and how to supervise.

### When to Supervise

Supervision is not strictly limited to the ice or to practice time. Supervision may be required when parents are late to pick up kids after practice. It may be required when kids are being transported under the coach’s direction to a game or practice. Or, it may be required during a team picnic off the playing area. Any team function that players are required to attend must be supervised. Coaches need to also be prepared, however, to supervise those functions at which attendance is optional, or even at which the team just happened to be present without parental supervision. The coach is expected to know that greater supervision may be needed before and after practice, as well as when players are coming to or leaving practice. In hockey, one of the more obvious supervision problems occurs when players fail to leave the ice before the Zamboni starts cleaning the ice.

Based on our risk management mission, the risk-conscious coach will not wonder if there is a responsibility to supervise in a particular instance. Rather, he or she will act according to whether, “it is reasonable for my players’ parents to expect that I will supervise in this instance.”

### How to Supervise

There are three elements involved in “how to” supervise players. The first is having a sufficient number of assistants to supervise. If the program provides assistant coaches, then this may not be a



major problem unless the coaching staff's attention is solely directed to the area of activity. The greatest need for supervision usually occurs with players not directly involved with the activity, or who are away from the center of activity. Parents expect there will be sufficient help to supervise their youngsters during any phase of the activity.

The second element is location. **This means that the staff is located on and around the playing area where they can see, and readily react to, any situations requiring supervision.** As noted before, supervision is not limited to the playing area. Location and accessibility of supervisors includes locker rooms, showers and toilets, or other areas where team members are likely to congregate.

The final element is competence. One of the coaching competencies we will discuss is providing competent personnel. **It is reasonable for parents to expect that coaching assistants or aides are as well-qualified as the coach.** It is not unreasonable for parents to expect their children to be supervised by a competent staff.

The failure to reasonably supervise is the primary allegation in most personal injury lawsuits filed against coaches and sports administrators. Our society has a deep-seeded belief that player injuries would not occur if proper supervision is provided. That surely is the attitude of many parents, whether their children's injuries were activity-related or caused by some risk other than hockey.

### Effective Reaction to Medical Emergency

Ideally, coaches should be certified in emergency medical treatment, or at least in first aid. Most injuries occur during practice, and safety experts have come to realize that qualified medical personnel are usually not available during the periods of greatest risk. **Several states now require that coaches have some minimal certification in emergency medical procedures.** Youth sports organizations and coaches should check for any local and state requirements regarding availability of medical personnel.

Parents expect that the coaching staff can recognize a medical emergency when it occurs. They also expect the coach to have a plan that can be immediately implemented to deal with the emergency.

There should be a plan for notifying emergency care providers, for providing emergency medical transportation promptly and for notifying a player's parents and family physician as soon as possible. Clearly, a coach would be well-advised to have signed medical consent forms as well as appropriate addresses and phone numbers available at all times. USA Hockey's risk management recommends the use of cellular phones be considered.

### Providing Safe Equipment

Teaching a sport or activity means that the teacher knows how to use the tools of the trade. There are a number of factors that coaches have to consider with equipment.

First, if the coach is directly involved in the purchase or approval of equipment, or has agreed to exclusively utilize a certain manufacturer's equipment, then the coach may have assumed the same legal responsibility as the manufacturer. This is referred to as products liability. It means that liability can attach to the coach for any equipment that is defectively designed or manufactured. That is why USA Hockey works closely with HECC on certifying equipment.

In most instances, however, providing safe equipment means the coach should make sure that it fits each player correctly, that equipment is worn during activity and that the coach knows how to properly re-condition and store equipment. **Plainly, it is expected that coaches will instruct their players on the proper means of equipment care and will watch for the misuse or abuse of equipment.**

A good coaching practice is to thoroughly read manufacturer instructions and guidelines. A coach can usually rely on those directions for maintenance or repair problems. Local youth leagues or associations can usually identify trade associations and journals that will provide up-to-date information regarding equipment use for their coaches.

### Providing Safe Facilities

Providing safe facilities is similar to the safe equipment competency. It is based on a coach's ability to recognize dangerous playing surfaces and conditions. **Players should not be subjected to the risk of injury from improperly maintained ice, from unsafe glass and dasher boards, or even from**



**poor air quality.** A coach should have a knowledge of maintenance and repair processes. For example, coaches should learn about common problems with ice surfaces, protective barriers, and refrigerants.

Coaches are expected to recognize when there is a need for facility repair. It means that the coach will not allow play until the condition or defect is repaired. Some years ago during the first period of a college hockey game, a pane of glass on top of a dasher board shattered. When replacement glass could not immediately be installed, the game was permitted to continue until the end of the period. The threat of injury to the spectators and the players was obvious. **The potential liability for any injury extended from the referees to the coaches who should have known better than to allow the game to continue.**

### Transportation

Generally, there is not an obligation to provide transportation. Often, however, coaches find themselves planning or organizing their team's transportation. In those cases, coaches may assume the obligation to plan a safe means of transportation. While the type and condition of the transportation vehicle is important, the more critical consideration for the coach is knowing and approving who will drive team members. The major liability problem here is insurance coverage for the team. In many states, players who travel with friends or other team members by private arrangements may not be covered for personal injury due to the strict limitations of guest driving statutes. It is a good idea to have an organizational plan or policy that specifies who is permitted to drive the team or, if available, which vehicles are to be used. Parental input should be included in any policy regarding transportation. Finally, it is important that the automobile insurance policies of the parents, coaches, and the youth sports organization be reviewed to determine where liability and medical coverage will be provided.

### Matching Players According to Size, Skill, and Maturity

This competency has been addressed in the first part of the chapter, but it bears repetition. Good teaching requires coaches to advise their players of the risks of injury common to hockey. Implicit in that instruction is the condition that coaches will not match inexperienced players against experienced

players in drills in which the experienced players will have an advantage due to their experience. The same prohibition is true for size and weight as well. **Basically, this coaching competency recognizes that safe contact drills and exercises are an important part of effective teaching.** It also recognizes that parents reasonably expect their inexperienced child will not face undue risks while learning hockey.

### Due Process

This is not easily accepted by many coaches as a competency. To a great extent, coaching has adopted the military style of command and leadership as the basis for its management method. In other words, providing reasons or explanations for coaching instructions are characteristic of the profession. Of course, due process is also perceived as a legal tactic encompassing attorneys and second-guessing.

In fact, due process is an effective teaching method. It does not interfere with the decision-making process, but it provides a level-headed approach to enforcement of rules and procedures. It does not mandate a forum where players will be represented by a lawyer. Simply stated, due process merely means that before a player is to be suspended for a game or from the team, the coach will explain what rule was violated and give the player the opportunity to explain his or her conduct. Due process requires that team rules have a legitimate instructional or supervisory purpose and that the coach will enforce the rules fairly and consistently. Due process does not hinder a coach's right to discipline or to require adherence to team rules. **Due process merely means that a coach will be fair with the establishment and enforcement of team rules, which is another reasonable parental expectation.**

### Competent Personnel

Parents have the right to expect that assistant coaches or aides are competent. If teaching and supervision will be shared by more than just the head coach, then coaching competency requires that assistants be as competent as the head coach.

This obligates coaches to do three things: first, to recruit and select competent assistants; second, to plan a good training program for assistants that emphasizes the goals and objectives of the



instructional program; and finally, to perform a competency evaluation of assistants. It is common knowledge that getting good assistants can be a difficult chore. However, it is an easier task than facing legal liability for failing to provide capable personnel. Coaches are urged to check the references on all assistants, and to plan and implement comprehensive training programs. USA Hockey provides coaching education programs for interested coaching staffs.

## THE “MANAGEMENT” PROGRAM FOR COACHING RISK MANAGEMENT

The basic functions of organizational management are planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and evaluating. They are important to risk management because they help establish a competency program for the types of legal risks we identified.

Effective management, like effective teaching, begins with goals and objectives. The processes of planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and evaluating depend on established goals and objectives. They are enhancing kids’ physical skills, teaching kids how to learn, and establishing good social behavior. **It is important to remember that winning was not identified as a primary coaching goal.** Unfortunately, in this day and age, winning is often mistaken as the primary goal of sport. However, just as the business organization risks its health by concentrating only on short-term profits, youth sports risks its credibility if it cannot see beyond winning.

**The three goals specified (physical, mental, and social) are valuable because they not only serve as a foundation for sport, but they represent what most parents expect from their children’s participation in sport.** Parents expect youth sport to instill confidence, teach sportsmanship, develop physical skill, and provide fun. The three goals of sport do just that.

### Planning

As noted, effective teaching requires planning. Using the three goals as a basis, a coach should plan how he or she is going to achieve those goals. A good teacher utilizes a lesson plan and a syllabus for achieving teaching goals. The effective coach should have a lesson plan that charts a path for players to achieve team and personal goals. A

prudent coach will have plans for supervision, plans for reacting to medical emergencies, and plans for transportation issues. Planning is a critical function in personnel competency, and the planning process can be utilized as a valuable tool for training assistant coaches. From a parental point of view, most would expect that the coach has established goals or guidelines for the team and for their children.

### Organization

Most organizations realize that establishing goals and objectives has little effect if the structure of the organization is not designed to meet them. Since the goals we have identified in the first part of the chapter are generally recognized in sport, you will not find many diverse organizational structures in youth sports. Many organizations have structured themselves along the traditional lines of the military command structure. A means of ensuring that your team’s organizational structure is effective is to examine how well you communicate the goals and objectives. For example, how well a coach has planned can be gauged by the feedback of players and parents. Organizational effectiveness can be gauged by team and parental feedback regarding communication within the team structure.

### Staffing

This again refers to the competent personnel issue. Since physical, mental, and social goals of sport serve as the basis for your planning and organization, they also determine whom you should select. Will a candidate who sees winning as the primary goal of sport be a person who is likely to fit within the team organization? We already realize that planning and organization issues have to match the goals that have been established. From a staffing point of view, a coach is much better off accepting assistants who share the same goals and objectives.

### Leading

This management function looks at leadership from two sides. First, why do people in an organization follow a leader? Second, how does a leader motivate people to perform with their best effort. There is no trick to understanding how this function works. When parents recognize that the coach can help their children achieve goals that the parents believe are important, they will support the program. When players see that their participation is



more important to the coach than merely winning or losing, they will follow the program. Finally, when a coach, like the effective teacher, can show how those goals help the players become better, they will be motivated to perform better. Again, the emphasis is on the goals and objectives. A coaching manner may be charismatic, or it may be relatively passive.

**Whatever manner or method is used to coach a team, adherence to goals and objectives will be the mark of the good leader.**

### Evaluating

This management function is really called controlling. However, that term does not best describe the function. The purpose of controlling is to evaluate or measure how successful an organization has been in accomplishing its goals and objectives. Some coaches will measure success based on winning and losing percentages. Other coaches, like effective teachers, will measure success on the basis of retention. That is, did most of the kids retain an interest in the sport and return to play the next season. **In risk management, the measure of success is the safety of the program.**

Again, this function is based on the physical, mental, and social goals of sport. From a risk management perspective, when an evaluation indicates that these goals have been largely met, then it is a good and safe indication that the coaching risk management program has been effective. By the same token, you cannot assume a coaching risk management program has been effective if winning is the only measure of success.

## IMPLEMENTING THE COACHING RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Implementing is the most difficult part of any management program. Many people who consider themselves “idea people” lack the ability to execute their plans. Experience persistently reminds us that ideas have little value if there is no capability to implement them.

We know that risk management starts with risk identification. Risk identification, however, has little effect in a risk management program if the program itself is not properly implemented. In coaching, however, all coaches have to be risk managers. They cannot leave that function to others. That means

that all coaches must have the ability to implement risk management goals and objectives.

There are three essential elements in the successful implementation of a risk management program: communication, working through people, and accepting change.

### Communication

Like most of us, coaches probably would not admit that they don’t communicate well. As a matter of fact, many coaches exaggerate their oral communication skills. Since coaches rarely have their writing critiqued, many might also assume that their writing skills are satisfactory. The reason for these false assumptions is that people believe that effective communication is in the message itself. In other words, if what is spoken or written is good, then the communication is good.

We now know, of course, that the key to effective communication in any organization is not the message, but the receiver. If the message is not received and understood by the receiver, the communication has been ineffective. Coaching communication is compounded by the different ages, backgrounds, and experiences of other coaches and players. Therefore, it takes a very strong and understanding effort by a coach to be an effective communicator. The first step is to learn how to listen.

### Be an Emotional Listener

The first lesson for the coach who wants to improve his or her organizational communication skills is to become a more effective listener. According to organizational management experts, there are two types of listening: rational listening and emotional listening. Most of us are rational listeners. That means that we tend to evaluate or judge what others have said to us. It is exemplified by our responses, which either agree or disagree with what the speaker said. The rational listener judges others’ communication, and is not prepared to change his mind or behavior as a result of what the speaker said. Emotional listening, on the other hand, means that you view things strictly from the speaker’s point of view. It means that you can be influenced to change your mind or behavior. For the coach, it means that he or she puts himself or herself in the shoes of the speaker, whether assistant coach or player. This is a tough characteristic to learn because



most of us are more interested in communication as it affects us, not as it affects the speaker.

### **Effective Teaching Requires Emotional Listening**

The effective teacher knows that children see and understand things in different ways than adults. The teacher who is an emotional listener views things from the child's perspective. It is that ability that enables the effective teacher to communicate with children. The first step in effective communication for the coach is not speaking or sending a message; rather it is learning how to listen.

### **Teamwork: The Ability to Work through People**

Another organizational concept that has proved successful is teamwork. Teamwork, of course, is recognized as a critical element of success in sports. It is a quality upon which many coaches evaluate their team's performance. Also, it is a personal characteristic that coaches look for in their players. Unfortunately, it is not always clear that coaches understand how to build teamwork, or how to participate as a team member.

### **Effective Teamwork Requires Commitment to Training**

A goal of teamwork is to make your members as good as they can be and to help them develop a feeling of satisfaction in what they do. Often, that goal depends on a leader's commitment to training. Today's effective organizations emphasize continuous training for their members, as well as cross-training to help members develop new skills and specialties.

Training is not merely something one learns to start a job or a sport. It is a way of working; it never ends. It is a commitment that requires a willingness to train, retrain, and then train some more. Do the training practices of organizations have a place in youth sports? If organizations know that teamwork based on a commitment to training creates job satisfaction, it's safe to assume that player satisfaction and retention will result from the same commitment to training. Can coaches become committed to that concept? It is difficult to gauge. For example, coaches often respond to losses in the following ways: "We did not execute," or, "We need to work harder," or, "We weren't ready to play." The blame is placed on the failure of the players rather than the coach. It would be novel to hear a coach

say, "I did a lousy job of calling plays," or, "My gameplan was bad," or, "I choked and lost the game for us."

Successful organizations know failures in team performance usually reflect problems at the top, not the bottom. Likewise, the coaching commitment to training would require that coach to reflect on team performance from the top first. The training ethic is intended to make assistant coaches more competent, help players continuously improve, and thereby create a sense of team satisfaction. If the training program is not doing that, the coach needs to first evaluate his or her performance. As noted, however, the popular excuse is that poor team performance is a result of player failure, not coaching failure.

### **Effective Teamwork Requires Emotional Listening**

Working through people, like communication, requires emotional listening. Teamwork and the training ethic are based on the willingness to listen. Effective training requires input and feedback from the participants. A coach, therefore, must be an emotional listener to recognize whether or not the training is working. If the coach does not actively listen, it means the coach is making his or her own assumptions about the team. That is how the blame game starts.

The basis of teamwork is the capability to influence others, adapt to others, and be influenced by others. It is easy to see that emotional listening is its foundation.

### **The Ability to Accept Change**

Many coaches model their coaching style on their own experiences. In management, it is an axiom that we manage as we were managed. In sport, many coaches coach as they were coached. There is nothing wrong with adopting some of your past experiences in sport. After all, the principal objectives (mental, physical, and social) are time-honored values. However, the effective teacher realizes that teaching those values requires change and adaption. The ability to change does not mean that you sacrifice values, it means you learn how to teach them more effectively than before.

Unfortunately, it is not easy to change even when team performance may be at stake. If your coaching experience is rooted in rational listening, as opposed



to emotional listening, and team direction has always been simply left to the determination of the coach, then change will be difficult. Coaches, however, should consider that they utilize change all of the time. For example, any time a coach makes a defensive or offensive adjustment, that is an organizational change because it affects how other coaches and players perceive their roles. Any special preparations for a specific opponent are changes. While many coaches may fear to change how they coach, they are, nevertheless, engaged in change and its effects every day.

The effective teacher seeks change. He or she is constantly searching for new methods and approaches to teaching. The effective teacher knows that “effective” is not a stationary concept. Effectiveness requires constant evaluation. Similarly, the coach must be able to adapt his or her methods in order to remain effective. And, the coach must be able to recognize that the role of sports has changed just as the players’ abilities have.



# Chapter 20

## Principles of Safety

### OBJECTIVES

- To understand injury prevention techniques
- To understand the importance of protective equipment
- To understand the value of warm-up
- To understand on-ice safety precautions

### INJURY PREVENTION

Virtually all injuries sustained by participants will be caused by lack of skill and will be minor in nature. As a coach, you should strive to minimize the chance of injury occurring, particularly injuries that could be caused by faulty equipment or unsafe facilities.

If we can identify the causes of injuries, we can think of ways to reduce or prevent them. The following is a list of potential injury prevention techniques you can use:

1. All coaches should have a basic knowledge of first aid. If you do not, you should attempt to take a basic first aid course as soon as possible.
2. Get information on the health status of your players. This can be done by:
  - getting a health history from parents
  - getting reports on previous injuries
  - health insurance number
3. Try to anticipate problems that could arise on the ice.
  - Check out facilities and equipment for potential problems.
4. Don't force players who have been injured back too soon.

- Ensure the player demonstrates normal flexibility, strength and absence of pain before returning.

5. Be familiar with emergency procedures in the arena, the location of a fracture board, stretcher, first aid kit, and telephone.
6. Take care of minor injuries quickly so they don't become major ones.
7. Check your players' equipment to see that it is appropriate, that it fits and that it is kept in good repair.

### PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

The following is a summary of the important points raised regarding each piece of equipment. It is the responsibility of every coach to ensure that each of his or her players is adequately protected and that parents are advised of the necessity to wear properly fitting and approved equipment.

1. Protective cup and pelvic protector
  - Equipment must completely cover and protect genitalia.
  - Purchase according to correct waist size.



2. Garter belt
  - Belt must be properly adjusted to hold up hockey socks.
  - Purchase according to correct waist size.
3. Shin pads
  - Pads must properly protect shin bone and knee cap.
  - The shin and knee cap should be made of hard plastic with suspension in the shin and extra padding in the knee.
  - The space between the knee cap and shin section must be flexible yet well protected.
  - When the knee cap is properly fitted over knee, the bottom of the pad must reach but not extend beyond the top of the skate.
4. Pants
  - Pants must protect the front and side of the thigh, tailbone, hip and kidney area. Unless they are properly fitted, they will not provide this protection.
5. Shoulder pads
  - Pads are constructed with hard caps for shoulder tips, plus flexible shock-absorbing material over the upper arms, chest and back.
  - It is advisable to have adjustable straps on the arms and body to ensure proper fit.
6. Elbow pads
  - Pads must cover the complete elbow joint with good shock-absorbing material.
  - When fastened properly, pads should extend from the shoulder pads to the gloves, and not be able to slip.
7. Helmet
  - Helmet must be HECC-approved.
  - If adjustable, it must fit properly and cover the forehead, temple and base of the skull.
  - Straps must be fastened.
  - Helmet is available in different sizes, and must not move around the head.
8. Face mask
  - Mask must be HECC-approved.
  - Masks are available in clear plastic and wire cage.
- Mask must be securely fastened to the helmet so that it will not make contact with the face and rest properly in the “J” clips.
9. Gloves
  - Gloves must be well padded over the fingers, thumb and back of the hand, yet flexible to allow movement.
  - There should be hard fiber protection covered with shock-absorbing material over the wrist and forearm.
  - The glove must extend up the arm to the elbow pad.
  - Gloves must fit snugly, yet be large enough so that hand and wrist movement is not hindered.
10. Skates
  - Skates must provide good support and protection in the toe, heel and Achilles tendon areas.
  - Toe caps must be constructed of hard plastic.
  - The counter should also be constructed of plastic in order to provide long lasting support.
11. Stick
  - Stick must be of proper length and lie.
  - It should be taped on the blade and upper handle.
  - Ensure a proper shaft size for the player (should be smaller for younger players).

## ON-ICE SAFETY

During ice sessions you have a responsibility as a coach to be prevention-minded about injuries. The following safety precautions should be observed:

1. Have players learn how to fall
2. Ensure that players stop at least 5-10 feet from the boards when performing drills or skills.
3. Ensure properly fitting protective equipment is worn at all times.
4. The coach must wear a HECC-certified helmet while on the ice.
5. Do not permit any “horse-play.”
6. Care should be taken to ensure that shooting drills are conducted in as safe a manner as possible.
7. Remove immediately any foreign materials on the ice.



8. Ensure all doors to the ice surface are closed prior to players starting any drills.
9. Do not use dangerous materials to divide up the ice surface, e.g. a bare rope stretched across the ice.

### LEARN MORE

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. (*Internet access is required*).

- [www.usahockey.com/Safety\\_Education.aspx](http://www.usahockey.com/Safety_Education.aspx)



# Chapter 21

## Heads Up Hockey

### OBJECTIVES

- To introduce USA Hockey's "Heads Up Hockey" program
- To provide coaches with information regarding severe head and spinal injuries

### INTRODUCTION

You know what it takes to help your team score goals, play solid defense and have fun: knowledge, skating, passing, shooting and stickhandling skills; each player's commitment and motivation; good teamwork; and lots of practice.

But we're sure that's not all you care about. **Your instructions and actions can have a big influence on the safety of every player on the ice** – especially when it comes to preventing potentially serious injuries. Unfortunately, the information and help you need for this part of your job aren't widely available.

That's where "Heads Up Hockey" comes in. In this program, USA Hockey has developed and assembled the information, advice and techniques to help you reduce the risk of head injuries.

"Heads Up Hockey" starts with medical information and specific actions you can take to prevent head injuries. But there's a lot more to it.

USA Hockey is a firm believer in the benefits of high-quality protective hockey equipment for its players. **But no equipment can prevent a serious spinal injury without other training and instruction.** And, unfortunately, some players get an "invulnerable"

feeling from wearing today's high-tech protective equipment, resulting in more reckless play.

By following the "Heads Up Hockey" techniques in this chapter, you will be developing new awareness and playing skills in each of your players. When you tell your kids "Heads up" you'll be telling them not just to play safe, but to focus. And player focus means ... BETTER HOCKEY!

Much of the material in this chapter is directed toward age levels at which body checking is permitted. But the basic principles apply to all age levels of hockey.

When you get your team playing "Heads Up Hockey", you're helping your players, helping your team and helping the whole game of hockey, by making the sport even more appealing at a time of growing popularity.

Let's play HEADS UP HOCKEY!

### HEAD INJURIES ARE PREVENTABLE

Hockey is a contact sport, but like any other contact sport, it has its share of sudden jolts. Players routinely make contact with other players, goal posts, boards, pucks, sticks and with the ice itself.



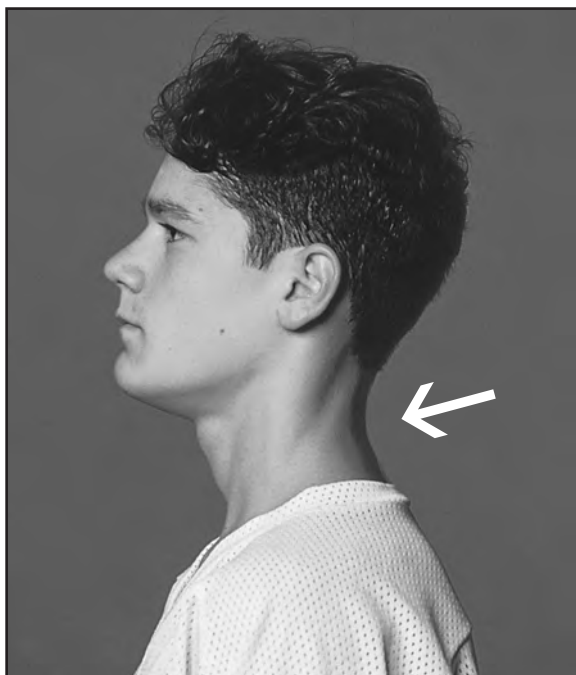
It's all part of the game. But injuries, **especially potentially serious head injuries, are not part of the game.**

You can raise your player's awareness of spinal injuries and concussions by learning more about how injuries happen, by passing this information along to your players and by practicing specific prevention and playing techniques detailed in this chapter.

Let's start by learning more about how these injuries happen.

### How Spinal Injuries Happen in Hockey

The upper cervical spinal column has a natural curve, which lends flexibility to the head and neck when the neck is held in a normal, "heads up" position. (See figure 21-1)



**Figure 21-1.** The natural "heads up" position, which gives your neck the maximum flexibility to take a hit.

However, when the head is flexed (chin toward the chest), this normal curve is removed, and the cervical spine becomes straight, as figure 21-2 demonstrates.



**Figure 21-2.** When the neck is flexed (head down), an impact can result in serious spinal injury.

In this "head down" position, if a player hits the boards or a goal post head on, the head stops suddenly, but the body's movement continues, compressing the spine. This force can produce a shock greater than the neck's discs and muscles can cushion, resulting in a fracture or break of one or more of the vertebrae. And if one breaks, it can cause compression of the spinal cord, resulting in paralysis below the level of the fracture.

*According to research done among a wide range of hockey players, almost all on-ice cervical spine injuries have been due to the head being slightly flexed (head down) while making head-on contact with the boards or goal post.*

A player doesn't have to be going at full speed for this to happen — it can occur at walking speed.

### How Concussions Happen in Hockey

There are differences of opinion on the definition of a concussion, and on how to judge its severity.

A concussion is a brain injury caused by direct or transferred impact forces to the head following intentional or unintentional collisions.



An athlete who is symptomatic after a concussion requires complete physical and cognitive rest – no physical activity or school. Complete rest also means no reading, computers, video games or text messaging.

When the athlete is free of all symptoms at rest, they may begin a graded exertion protocol and progress through each activity stage, provided that no symptoms recur.

Simply put, it's an injury that arises from a blow to the head, usually when the head is moving. Symptoms of a concussion range from mild dizziness to "seeing stars" to severe headaches and nausea to unconsciousness.

In hockey, concussions are not the most common form of injury, but they require your attention for two important reasons.

1. Concussions, especially mild ones, may be hard to recognize. Players may show only momentary confusion from being "dinged" or "having their bell rung."
2. A concussion, even a mild one, may significantly increase the chances of getting a second concussion, and may endanger the player's awareness and safety on the ice.

**No head impact injury can truly be regarded as minor.** Each incident requires your prompt evaluation and attention.

### What Can You Do?

The risk of head injuries at all levels of hockey can be reduced through your participation in *"Heads Up Hockey."*

1. Play Heads Up Hockey
  - Know the basics of injury prevention and pass them along to your players.
  - Practice the team on-ice safety exercises in this chapter.
  - Promote fair play and clean checking on your team, and insist on it from your opponents.
2. Check your players' equipment before, during, and after each practice session or game, and teach them to inspect it as well.
3. Keep your team in good shape through the flexibility and strengthening exercises in this chapter.

4. Know what to look for and how to respond when a player gets hurt by using the information in this chapter.

## PLAYING HEADS UP HOCKEY

### Incorporating *"Heads Up Hockey"* Into Team Practices

In this section, you'll find specific ways to improve the safety and quality of your team's play. Here are some ways to incorporate this material into your practice routine.

- Show the *"Heads Up Hockey"* Challenge video at the beginning of each session. Invite parents and team managers to see it.
- Plan on 15 minutes of *"Heads Up Hockey"* at every other practice session.
- At each of these *"Heads Up Hockey"* sessions, hold a:
  - 5-minute pre-session talk with Q & A
  - 10-minute on-ice drill
- Hold five *"Heads Up Hockey"* sessions total

### Heads Up — Tell Them What It Means

When we hear the phrase *"Heads Up,"* we hear *"be alert"* and *"be careful."* Good advice for hockey players! But in *"Heads Up Hockey,"* it has a literal meaning, too.

At your first practice session, start by asking your players what they think *"heads up"* means, and help them translate it into hockey terms. You might get answers like:

- know where the puck is
- know where your teammates are
- know where your opponents are
- know where you're skating to
- be ready to receive a pass or take a shot
- know where your "man" is
- look for open ice

Next, you can refer to the idea of *"heads up"* as playing safe hockey. Ask players what else the phrase means to them.

Depending on their age level, players might say:

- skating to avoid other players
- avoiding goal posts while driving to the net
- keeping your stick down
- not losing control on the ice
- controlling your temper



- knowing when you're about to get hit or be checked
- preparing for impact along the boards

Now it's time to tell them Rule One of *"Heads Up Hockey"*: in hockey, "heads up" literally means exactly what it says: "Keep your head up on the ice, especially when it looks like you're going to take a hit."

Tell players that this is the single most important thing to know and to do to prevent head injuries and tell them that you're going to be looking for it from now on. Explain that most people duck when they see a hit coming, but doing so puts them in danger.

## DRILL #1

### Heads Up — Say it Loud

During your first on-ice *"Heads Up Hockey"* session, you don't need any specific drills or plays to reinforce what you've told your team. Just watch their play, and shout "Heads Up" from time to time throughout the session. Use it to remind players to keep alert, to point out unsafe situations and to encourage skaters to keep their heads up, whether they're skating or sliding after a fall.

## Angling In

Skating into the boards at an angle means better puck control and less risk of injury.

When the puck goes into a corner, everybody wants to dig it out and dig it out fast. But what's the best way to get it out? And what's the safest way? Skating in on an angle is the best and the safest way.

- Skating in on an angle affords players a **better approach angle** to the puck, and by giving the body a safe position to accept an impact with the boards, it allows players to **keep skating** and gain control of the puck.
- When players skate into the corners at an angle, the risk of hitting the boards with their helmets first is greatly reduced. A leg, side or arm will absorb most of the impact.

Start this *"Heads Up Hockey"* discussion by inviting players to imagine a puck moving through a corner when they're close to the nearest end zone faceoff dot. How should they go after the puck and why?

Now ask players to imagine the same puck moving the same way, but with an opponent behind them.

Should there be any difference in the approach? Why?

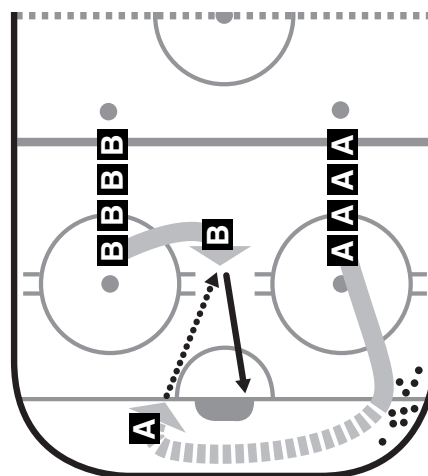
After getting answers from several players, explain the advantages of skating to the puck on an angle, rather than head-on into the boards.

When demonstrating "angling in," be sure to cover these points:

- Go in on an angle.
- Keep a low center of gravity.
- Keep your knees bent, back straight and head up.
- Absorb the shock over the widest possible part of your body.
- Keep your feet parallel to the boards.
- Keep your forearms, hands and legs ready.
- Lean into the impact.
- Never hit the boards or glass with the tip of your shoulder – it can cause an injury.
- Check over your shoulder to see where your opponent is.

## DRILL #2

1. Set up two lines of four players (A and B) behind the faceoff dots and a pile of pucks in the left corner.
2. On the whistle, the first player on the left faceoff spot (A) angles into the corner, picks up a puck, skates behind the net and makes a pass to (B), who has moved from the faceoff spot to the slot area.
3. Player (B) takes a shot on goal and joins the (A) line. Player (A) goes to the (B) line.





### Variations

- Halfway through the drill, move the pucks to the right corner so that players learn to pick up a puck and pass off both the forehand and backhand.
- A coach can stand to the side of the (A) line and slide a puck into the corner one at a time.
- For age levels with body checking, add a line of chasers who try to catch the puck carrier and angle him or her into the boards.

### HITTING THE BOARDS

**Good ways and bad ways to have a close encounter with a goal post, the boards or another player.**

It's going to happen: if you play hockey, you're going to skate into things. But how players skate into the boards, the goal post or another player is important for their safety as well as their ability to stay in the play.

Here are two simple rules:

- Don't duck.
- Hit the boards with anything but your head first.

In Section 1, you told players why they shouldn't duck their head on impact, here's an opportunity to reinforce it.

Start discussion by asking players what they should hit the boards with first when they know an impact is coming.

They might answer:

- an arm
- their backs
- a skate
- a leg
- their sides
- their sticks

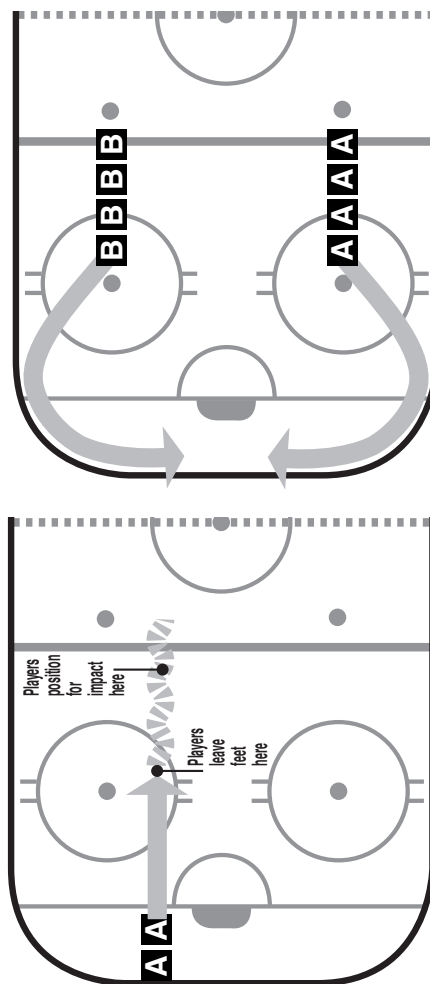
All of these, of course, are right answers. Players probably won't say "your head" as a possible answer, and you should congratulate the players for that.

Conclude your discussion by demonstrating the best way to cushion an impact with the boards: with both hands on the stick if possible, and with their arms out, creating a three-part "shock absorber."

Players should try to absorb the impact over as much of their body as possible.

### DRILL #3

1. Set up two lines of players (A and B) at the faceoff dots.
2. On the whistle, a player from each line skates at an angle toward the corner boards. The players should make contact with the boards and glass with their extended arms, forearms, side of body and legs, but with no head contact at all.
3. Players should alternate between lines (A) and (B). The speed at which the players hit the boards must be managed, depending on the skill level of the players. Proper head, arms and body position must be stressed.



### Variation

From the goal line, players skate full speed toward the blue line. At the top of the faceoff circles, they



should leave their feet and slide on their side, back or stomach. Have them imagine the blue line as an impact with the boards.

Players should pretend to slide into the end boards, using arms, knees, legs and skates to absorb the impact. Proper heads-up position must be stressed.

## TAKING A CHECK

### What players should do when they see it coming.

Since USA Hockey-sanctioned games do not include checking at some levels, this session might not be appropriate for all teams. But if you are coaching a younger team, you might still find the information useful as “body-contact” techniques, especially for less skilled skaters.

Preparing for a body check takes split-second timing. But how a player prepares for a check determines whether he or she will keep or lose the puck, or how quickly he or she will be back in the play. Quick reflexes and smart moves when a check is coming also lessen the chance of a head injury.

By this time, players will have some familiarity with the basics of “*Heads Up Hockey*.” So you might just ask them to see how many of these four basic safety techniques for taking a check they can come up with.

**Heads Up – don’t duck.** It’s just as important in taking a check as in any other impact.

**Keep your head out of it.** The more players can avoid impact with their heads, the more likely they are to come through safe and in control. They should take the impact with anything else first.

**Know where your opponents are.** As players become more experienced, and as they start thinking more about strategy and less about skating, their peripheral vision and overall awareness should start to improve. When they know where their opponents are, they’ll be less likely to get checked without any warning.

**Skate through the check.** Although it may seem safer to slow down or stop if a hit is about to happen, your players’ balance and momentum will be much better if they keep their legs moving and concentrate on skating right through the impact. They’ll not only avoid head injury, they’ll have a

better chance of maintaining their balance and staying in the play.

And if they get in a situation in which they can’t skate through a check, players should keep their arms up, knees bent and, of course, their head up.

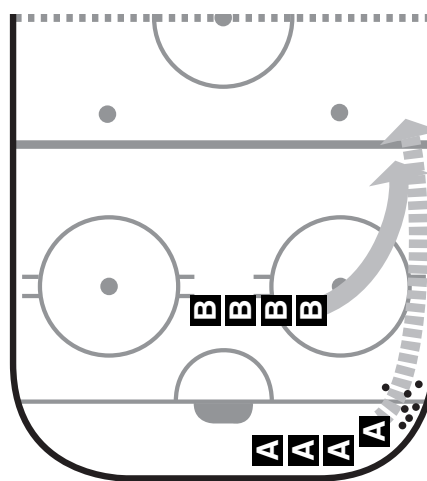
Be sure to cover these points:

- Keep your skates parallel to the boards.
- Move out of the area quickly.
- Keep your feet moving.
- Use your arms and legs as shock absorbers.
- Keep your feet apart, knees bent and have a low center of gravity.
- Do not make shoulder contact on the boards, if possible.

## DRILL #4

Use this exercise to reinforce proper ways of giving and taking a check.

1. Set up a line of puck carriers (A) in the corner behind the goal line and one line of checkers (B) at the faceoff dot.
2. The puck carrier (A) moves up to the boards and skates through the check of the (B) player.
3. For the puck carriers, stress heads-up position, keeping the legs moving and the stick down.
4. For the checkers, stress contact with the shoulders, not the head, elbows, knees, stick or feet.
5. In this drill, players should alternate from puck carrier lines (A) to checking lines (B).



For best use of your ice time, set up the same drill in the other corner, too.



## GIVING A CHECK

### Separating the puck from your opponent, not separating your opponent from consciousness.

As with the previous session, this material may be less appropriate for younger age levels at which checking is not allowed, but the information is still valuable.

Hockey rules are specific about a legal body check: it's when a player checks an opponent who is in possession of the puck, by using his hip or shoulder from the front, diagonally from the front or straight from the side, and does not take more than two steps or strides in executing the check."

The point is, checks and body contact are not about intimidation and not about inflicting pain and injury. They're just one part of the game, along with skating, shooting, passing, and puck handling.

In preparing your team for this "Heads Up Hockey" session, start them thinking by discussing the checking they see in NHL games on TV. Do they find it exciting? (Definitely). Do they wish they could give a check like that themselves? (Probably).

Now invite them to imagine themselves on the receiving end of some of those spectacular NHL checks. Could they take it? Remind your players that the checks they see on TV are given and taken by world-class athletes in top form who have the experience and control to play physical hockey at that level.

As a coach, the caliber and sportsmanship of your team's play is in your hands. We hope you'll promote safe, legal checking for your players. We also hope you'll insist on clean, legal checking from opposing teams, too. It's another way of keeping your team safe without suffering any competitive disadvantages.

### Checking from Behind

It's illegal. And it's extremely dangerous. Even a light hit from behind could inflict a severe head or neck injury.

Be sure to tell your players that no matter how intense the game becomes, they must not hit another player from behind, ever. And, of course, checking from behind exposes your team to the possibility of a major penalty.

## A Word About Reckless Play: DUMB!

In the heat of the game, players can occasionally get so psyched up they forget everything they've learned, and get into a play they have no chance of finishing safely.

Some players drive to the net so fast they just can't stop, making a dangerous collision practically a sure thing.

You know this is bad hockey and that it is dangerous hockey. The sad truth is, many hockey injuries are "self-inflicted" by players skating way past their limits and "going for it" at all costs.

Be sure to tell your team that reckless play like this does nobody any good. It rarely results in a goal or a good play, and often ends up as a penalty, an injury or both.

## PROTECTIVE HOCKEY EQUIPMENT

### The Superman Syndrome

Avoid the "Superman Syndrome" on the ice, and get the best use out of today's protective equipment.

As good as it is, there isn't any protective equipment that can keep a player from getting a serious spinal injury in a head-on collision with his head down.

But protective equipment can prevent or reduce concussions, as well as facial, mouth and other injuries, so we've included guidelines for the proper care and maintenance of protective equipment.

### Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane...

We spoke of reckless play as being "dumb hockey," and it is. One factor leading to reckless play may actually be the "can't get hurt" feeling some players get as a result of wearing protective equipment.

So it's worth your while to tell your players that the purpose of their protective equipment is to protect them from sticks, pucks, skates, and other objects, not to allow them to skate recklessly.

## Maintaining Protective Equipment

### Helmet

- Make sure all helmets are HECC-certified.
- The fit should be snug on the top, back and sides of the head.
- All padding and manufacturer's hardware should be in place.



- No cracks! Throw out a cracked helmet immediately; it's not only ineffective, it's dangerous.
- The neck strap should be working and comfortable.

### Facial Protection

- Use HECC-certified equipment only.
- If it's a plastic shield, no cracks or scratches are allowed.
- If it's a wire cage, no bars can be bent or missing and the wire coating must be intact.
- The chin cup should be in place, and the chin should sit comfortably in it.
- All straps and snaps should be in place and working.

### Mouth Guard

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper fit.
- Make sure your breathing is not inhibited when in place.

## GETTING YOUR TEAM IN SHAPE

### Head and Neck Exercises

You know the value of regular exercise and general fitness to your players. In addition, a strong neck can actually help prevent head injuries. We hope you'll include these neck exercises in your team's loosening up and strengthening routine, as a valuable addition to their *"Heads Up Hockey"* program.

Players should complete this full routine five times a week.

### Flexibility Exercises

As a warm up exercise and to obtain full mobility, isotonic exercises are repeated five times each in a sitting or standing position. Players' shoulders are down and back in the starting position. Keep them there.

1. Drop your head sideways and hold it for a slow count of six. Push against the tension, but not too hard.
2. Now drop it to the other side for a slow six count.
3. Turn your head to one side for a slow count of six, pushing against the tension.

4. Now reverse it and push to the other side. That's one rep of this exercise. Repeat it four more times.

### Strengthening Exercises

Strengthening exercises are repeated five times each in a sitting position. They may be done individually or with a partner of similar size and strength who resists the movements.

1. Put your hands together behind your head. Press against your hands for a slow count of six.
2. Now keep pushing with your head, but ease your hand's resistance to tilt your head back slowly.
3. Put one arm up with your hand over your ear. Try to turn your head to one side, but resist with your hand. Hold for a count of six.
4. Now do the same on the other side for a slow count of six.
5. Now try to drop your head sideways, but resist for a slow count of six.
6. Change sides. Press and hold for a slow six count again.
7. Put both arms in front with your head in your hands. Push with your head and resist with your hands for a slow count of six.
8. Use the same position, but let your head move forward against your hands, slowly. Now repeat this whole exercise four more times.

## WHAT TO DO IF A PLAYER GETS HURT

**You're a coach, not a doctor. But sometimes you need to make a medical decision on the spot.**

One of those situations is deciding whether or not to take a player out of a game after he or she has had a head impact. In the case of a concussion, your judgment is important, because even a mild concussion can have serious consequences.

### Identifying and Dealing with a Spinal Injury

In the case of a potential spinal injury, your immediate care and attention can make a big difference in the player's well-being until medical care arrives.

If you think a player may have sustained a spinal injury, your immediate role is to get help and keep



the player calm and immobile. After a spinal impact, look for these symptoms:

- pain in the area of the injury
- buzzing or tingling in the arms and/or legs
- loss of movement in the arms or legs
- radiating pain in the arms or legs

After calling for immediate medical help, give care as follows:

- Ensure adequate airway and breathing.
- Observe the ABC's: airway, breathing and circulation.
- Reassure the player.
- Do not allow the player to move. Instruct the player not to move, and immobilize him or her to prevent any motion.
- Keep the player warm.

### Identifying and Dealing with a Concussion

The evaluation of an athlete with a suspected concussion should be prompt and thorough. All concussed athletes should be ***cleared for return to play by a sports medicine professional.***

When a player shows ANY symptoms or signs of a concussion:

- The player should not be allowed to return to play in the current game or practice: "When in doubt, sit them out!"
- Athletes may suffer a severe concussion without getting "knocked out" (loss of consciousness).
- The player should not be left alone, and regular monitoring for deterioration is essential.
- The player should be medically evaluated after the injury.
- Return to play must follow a medically supervised stepwise process.
- A player should never return to play when symptomatic.

### Symptoms

- unaware of situation
- confusion

- amnesia
- loss of consciousness
- headache
- dizziness
- nausea
- loss of balance
- flashing lights
- ear ringing
- double vision
- sleepiness
- feeling dazed

### Signs

- loss of consciousness
- altered mental status
- poor coordination
- slow to answer
- poor concentration
- nausea or vomiting
- vacant stare
- slurred speech
- personality changes
- inappropriate emotions
- abnormal behavior

Return to play after a concussion follows a stepwise process:

1. no activity, complete rest
2. light aerobic activity: exercise such as walking or stationary cycling
3. sports-specific training – skating
4. non-contact training drills
5. full-contact training after medical clearance
6. return to competition

\* Proceed to the next level if free of symptoms at the current level

\* If any symptoms or signs occur, drop back to the previous level and progress to the next level again after 24 hours

### SUMMARY

You can obtain a full multimedia kit including all elements of the "Heads Up Hockey" program by contacting USA Hockey directly at 719-576-8724, by logging on to USAHockey.com, or emailing us at usah@usahockey.org.

### LEARN MORE

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. (Internet access is required).

- [www.usahockey.com/Template\\_Usahockey.aspx?NAV=ET\\_02&id=292550](http://www.usahockey.com/Template_Usahockey.aspx?NAV=ET_02&id=292550)



# Chapter 22

## Prevention of Common Ice Hockey Injuries

### OBJECTIVES

- To explain the important role that equipment plays in injury prevention
- To show how we can make facilities safer for ice hockey
- To explain the effect warm-ups, cool downs, and conditioning have on preventing injuries
- To explain to coaches how they can keep their players safe during drills
- To introduce coaches to injury prevention techniques that can be implemented over the course of a season

### INTRODUCTION

Hockey is a contact sport, although the contact in ice hockey has a different purpose than the contact in football and lacrosse. There will be collisions between individual players, players and sticks, players and the boards, or players and goal posts at all ages, in spite of the prohibition of body checking at the 12 and under and below age groups. In addition, the slippery ice surface is also conducive to injuries. Another source of injury is the puck. However, injuries do not have to be part of the game. As youth coaches and administrators, we must do everything possible to provide players with the opportunity to compete in an environment that is healthy and safe. We cannot eliminate all injuries and all contact from ice hockey without significantly altering the game. However, by examining the techniques for preventing injuries and the use of protective equipment, and by developing a plan to follow in case an injury occurs, we can decrease the number of injuries that occur and the severity of the injury.

*As a youth ice hockey coach, you are responsible for doing everything reasonable to provide participants the opportunity to compete in an environment that is healthy and safe.*

### INJURY PREVENTION TECHNIQUES

#### Classification of Sports

#### Contact/Collision Sports

Boxing	Martial Arts
Field Hockey	Rodeo
Football	Rugby
Ice Hockey	Soccer
Boys' Lacrosse	Wrestling

#### Limited Contact/Impact Sports

Baseball	Racquetball
Basketball	Softball
Bicycling	Figure Skating
Cheerleading	Roller Skating
Diving	Field Events
Equestrian	Gymnastics
Squash	Girls' Lacrosse
Volleyball	Downhill Skiing
Water Skiing	Cross Country Skiing

#### Noncontact Sports

##### Strenuous

Running	Shot Put
Swimming	Discus
Rowing	Javelin
Tennis	Dancing
Weight Lifting	



**Noncontact Sports (cont'd)****Moderately Strenuous**

Badminton	Table Tennis
Curling	Hiking

**Nonstrenuous**

Golf	Riflery
Archery	

Source: *Pediatrics* 81 (1988): 737. American Academy of Pediatrics.

**Eliminating Injuries in Ice Hockey**

There are four approaches to eliminating injuries in ice hockey:

1. proper coaching techniques
2. wearing protective equipment
3. playing by the rules
4. awareness by players, coaches, and parents of the possible injuries in ice hockey

Coaches serve as the first line of defense in eliminating injuries in ice hockey. Coaches who emphasize proper warm-up and stretching exercises and cooling-down exercises will help to eliminate many muscle pulls and tendon injuries. Similarly, coaches who emphasize skill development will help players to avoid situations that lead to injuries. Players should be taught the types of body contact (body checking) that are legal, as well as how to perform proper body checking. But, possibly more important, players should also be trained how to protect themselves when they take a body check to minimize any injury that may occur.

Protective equipment is very important, and two of the most important pieces of protective equipment are the helmet and the full face shield. Blinding injuries have been eliminated, and the incidence of trauma to the head and face have been greatly reduced. Standards for helmets, face masks, and skate blades written by ASTM (American Society for Testing Materials) and other standards organizations have been accepted by HECC (Hockey Equipment Certification Council). USA Hockey (and the high school federation and the NCAA) has accepted some of these standards and recommends (and in some cases requires) that certified equipment be worn.

Playing rules are evaluated every two years in USA Hockey. Changes in playing rules may sometimes be

dictated by the occurrence rate of specific injuries. An example of this is the increased penalties levied for hitting from behind, and the relationship of this type of penalty with the increased incidence of cervical spine fracture (about one-third of the players with paralyzing cervical [neck] spine fracture had been hit from behind).

Players and parents must be aware of what possible injuries can occur, and how the players themselves can lessen the occurrence of these type of injuries. Coaches, players, and parents should take time out before the season starts to watch video on the dangerous practice of hitting from behind and what the player can do to avoid or decrease the occurrence of injuries. This should be emphasized before the season starts as well as several times during the season at team meetings.

**SEVERE INJURIES AND ILLNESSES****Neck Fractures and Lacerations**

Fractures or broken bones are always a serious injury. It takes time for bones to mend. However, broken bones involving the spine can cause permanent damage such as paralysis. The neck bones (cervical vertebrae) are especially susceptible to injury, and there is no piece of equipment that will protect the player from this type of injury. This injury, which did not appear in hockey in any great numbers until the early 1980s, is very similar to the "spearing" injury in football, where a player puts his head down and essentially uses his head to tackle or block another player. It is somewhat different in ice hockey, in that the player is not trying to tackle or attack another player but is trying to protect himself from a collision with the boards or goal posts. Players must be instructed to protect themselves in an imminent collision with something other than their own heads. Helmets will not protect players from cervical spine fracture. Players going into the boards should try to get an arm up to take the brunt of the collision. If they can't get an arm up, then they should extend their head (keep their head UP, rather than ducking or flexing their neck). It has been shown that one of the major mechanisms for neck fractures in football and ice hockey is when the neck is flexed (chin to the chest) causing the normal neck curve to be straightened out and allowing the full brunt of the collision to be absorbed by the cervical vertebrae resulting in a fracture. This is called axially loading, and fractures can occur with surprisingly



little force (as little as a few miles per hour). In this case, teaching players the proper way to protect themselves is NOT to be equated with “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” In this case it should be “an ounce of prevention is worth a TON of cure.” Broken bones can mend, but it is almost an impossible task to repair broken nerves and severed spinal cords.

It is important for players, parents, and coaches to understand that protective equipment will not protect the player from all injuries.

Neck guards (wrap-around neck protectors) will only protect against skate blade lacerations of the neck and will NOT protect against neck fractures or a blow to the neck from a puck, a stick or a goal post. Some youth leagues in the United States, and the Canadian Hockey Association have made neck guards mandatory. Neck guards are NOT a substitute for the goalkeeper’s hanging throat protectors that some leagues recommend or require.

### Asthma

Asthma is a lung disorder that is characterized by difficulty breathing. This difficulty is caused by constriction or narrowing of the bronchial or breathing tubes. An acute attack of difficulty breathing can be triggered by a number of things including certain pollens or allergens (such as might trigger hay fever), lung infections, cold air and plain exercise. Most cases of exercise-induced asthma begin in childhood.

There are a number of medications that are available to enable children and adults to participate in competitive sports. Asthma itself is no reason to avoid sports. The vast majority of asthmatics show no deterioration of lung function even after repeated attacks. If the player with asthma takes medication to prevent attacks during and sometimes before exercise, his or her capacity to exercise should be as great as the player without asthma. The International Olympic Committee has sanctioned several anti-asthma drugs for competition, including terbutaline sulfate and cromolyn sodium. The nebulizer (or spray) to dilate the bronchial tubes (include the following: albuterol sulfate, pirbuterol acetate, isotharine mesylate, terbutaline sulfate and metaproterenol sulfate). These medications are available with a doctor’s prescription and can be used on the bench (if the

parents and player’s doctor agrees). If the player needs to use the medication more than two or three times during a game or practice, he may need to be seen by his doctor. However, there should not be any danger in using the medication as prescribed by the player’s doctor.

Medication is essential to the asthmatic, but it has been demonstrated that physical training can dramatically improve the asthmatic’s ability to resist attacks. Through a graduated exercise program, asthmatics can increase their heart-lung endurance considerably. Hockey, because of its short duration of high-speed exercise for 30 to 120 seconds and a work ratio of one to three or four, is actually better suited for asthmatics compared to soccer and basketball, which require high-speed exercise for longer times.

### Facilities

Inspection of a rink for safety hazards is the responsibility of the adults in charge. For practice, the coach is responsible. For games, both the officials and coaches are responsible. Therefore, you or your assistant coach must inspect the facilities before permitting your players to participate in practices or games. Whoever is responsible for inspecting the facilities should arrive approximately 10 minutes before the players to carry out the inspection.

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***If a safety hazard is present, it must be avoided by rescheduling, restricting the activity or removing the hazard, and informing the facility manager.***

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There are a few hazards associated with ice rinks. These are: ice conditions, boards, plexiglass, goal posts, gates, improper lighting, and bad air quality due to an ice resurfacing machine’s exhaust fumes. Safety hazards that are not easily rectified must be reported to the league program administrators and rink managers. If corrections are not made quickly, you should resubmit your concerns in writing.

Some of the things that coaches should be concerned about include:

- doors at the bench areas that do not fit flush with the boards, thereby leaving sharp edges exposed
- loose doors that may pop open when hit
- ruts or holes in the ice



- exposed edges on the goal cage
- uneven ice level at the sideboards
- proper testing for toxic gas fumes, specifically carbon monoxide (CO)

### Management of Practices and Games

Every physical activity that occurs during practices and games has some potential to result in an injury. Fortunately, in ice hockey, most practice and game activities have only a rare chance in resulting in an injury. Injuries that do occur are the result of interactions between the situation in which the activity occurs and the physical status of the player. In addition to having an influence over the equipment and facilities in reducing the risk of injuries, you have a major influence over the physical activities of your players during practices and games. There are several steps you can take to properly manage the physical activities that occur at practices and games to reduce the rate and severity of the injuries. These steps include the following:

#### Teaching Safety to Players

Whenever appropriate, inform your players about the potential risks of injury associated with performing certain ice hockey activities, and methods for avoiding injury. For example, hitting from behind is not only a penalty, but it can be extremely dangerous especially when the players are close to the boards. By informing your players of this danger and establishing a team rule that does not permit hitting from behind, you will reduce the risk of injury to all players.

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*The key to teaching safety to your players is to prudently interject safety tips in your instruction whenever appropriate.*

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#### Warming Up

A warm-up at the beginning of your team's practices and before games provides several important benefits. These benefits are:

- increases the breathing rate, heart rate, and muscle temperature to exercise levels
- reduces the risks of muscle pulls and strains
- increases the shock-absorbing capabilities of the joints
- prepares players mentally for practices and games

Warm-up exercises, which include alternating stretching and motion exercises, should start in the dressing room (or any available space around the rink) and will provide several benefits. Before going on the ice, 10 minutes of stretching and light calisthenics followed by a skating warm-up of five to seven minutes should be performed.

Stretching should be done slowly (up to 30 seconds for each muscle group stretched) and to mild tension (DON'T OVERSTRETCH). The purpose of stretching is to minimize the risk of muscle strains and tendon pulls as well as to prepare the joints for greater shock absorption. Visualization exercises can be done during stretching to enable the players to better prepare for games and for skills drills.

Calisthenics, such as jumping jacks or jogging in place, will increase the heart rate and breathing rate, as well as increase the blood flow to the muscles. Skating will also produce the same increase in heart and breathing rates.

Warm-ups should be done before skill-oriented drills.

#### Cool Down

Muscles tend to tighten up during periods of inactivity following hard work. To minimize this muscle stiffness that usually follows a workout and the soreness that may become evident the following day, players should take time to adequately cool down at the end of practice. A gradual reduction of activity (the reversal of the warm-up procedure) facilitates the dissipation of waste products (such as lactic acid) associated with muscular activity. Letting the body cool off gradually will help to decrease muscle pain and to enable players to function better at high levels during the next practice.

#### Teaching Appropriate Techniques

The instructions you provide during practices on how to execute the skills of ice hockey have an influence on the risks of injuries to your players as well as their opponents. Teach your players the proper ways to perform ice hockey techniques, and avoid any temptation to teach how to intentionally foul opponents. Keep in mind that:

First, an improper technique often results in a greater chance of injury to the performer than the correct execution. Acceptable techniques in sports usually evolve with safety as a concern.



Second, techniques involving intentional penalties should never be taught or condoned. Coaches who promote an atmosphere in which intentional violent acts are acceptable must be eliminated from all youth ice hockey programs. You should promote fair and safe play in practices and games with strict enforcement of the rules to encourage skill as the primary factor in determining the outcome of the game.

### Selecting Proper Drills

Drills that you select or design for your practices and the ways in which they are carried out have an influence on the risk of injuries for your players. Drills should be selected and designed with safety as a primary feature. Before implementing a new drill into your practice, several safety questions should be considered:

- Is the drill appropriate for the level of maturation of the players?
- Are the players sufficiently skilled to execute the drill properly?
- Are the players sufficiently strong enough to handle the physical demands of the drill?
- Are other, less risky drills available that achieve the same results?
- Can the drill be modified to make it less risky and yet achieve the desired result?

### Burn-Out

Coaches must be aware that players who engage in intense, frequent practices and games may need time off as the season wears on. It is possible to overtrain and predispose to, rather than prevent, injuries. Injuries caused by overtraining have grown to represent an increased portion of reported sports injuries. Some telltale signs of overtraining and burn-out include:

- sloppy execution of skills
- loss of enthusiasm
- depression
- higher incidence of injury
- longer time to recover from injury

Antidotes to overtraining and burn-out include time off from practice, shorter practices, alternating intense practices with lighter workouts, or any

combination of these suggestions. Burn-out is not usually a problem when players are practicing two or three times a week, unless they are also: a) playing two or more games per week, b) playing on more than one ice hockey team, or c) playing on a different sport team during the same season.



**Figure 22-1.** How fatigue is linked to an increased potential for injuries and burn-out.

### Avoiding Contraindicated Exercises

Over the past several years, researchers and physicians have identified a list of exercises that are commonly used by coaches but are potentially harmful to the body. These are called contraindicated exercises. This information has been slow in reaching coaches and their players. Table 22-1 contains a list of these exercises and how contraindicated exercises can be modified to eliminate their undesirable characteristics. Also included in Table 22-1 are substitute hockey exercises that accomplish the same purpose in a safer manner.



Exercises	Muscles and Joints Affected	Problems	Adaptations	Hockey Exercises
Toe touches	Hamstrings, lower back, knee	Puts excessive strain on lower back and overextends the knee joint	Seated straight-leg stretch	High road-low road
Straight leg sit-ups	Abdominals, lower back	Puts excessive strain on lower back throughout the exercise; strengthens muscles that contribute to pelvic tilt, thus promoting back problems	Abdominal curls: bent legs, arms across chest; curl 2/3 of the way up slowly	Bent leg sit-ups with the ball
Straight leg lifts	Abdominals, lower back	Same as straight leg sit-ups	Bent leg abdominal curls	
Deep squats	Quadriceps	Opens knee and stretches ligaments	Squat only until thigh is parallel to ground	Jumping over the ball
Hurdler's stretch	Hamstring (straight leg); knee joint (bent leg)	Stretches the ligaments of the bent knee	V-sit with legs spread 90° and both legs straight, or leave one leg straight and place the bottom of the foot of the bent leg up on the straight leg (next to knee)	High road-low road
Standing one-leg quad stretch	Quadriceps, knee of bent leg	Stretches the ligaments of the bent knee	Hold leg with opposite hand and extend the hip joint	

**Table 22-1.** *Contraindicated exercises.*

## POTENTIAL SAFETY HAZARDS

### Hydration-Water Intake

All athletes, including young athletes, lose water during practices and games. While water loss through sweating and exhaled air is greater in warm weather sports, water loss is also a major factor in cold weather sports such as ice hockey. Water loss or dehydration can develop into a life threatening situation. Many young athletes and coaches don't realize that thirst can be a very late indicator of dehydration, and many new coaches don't realize that drinking water during practices and games will NOT detract from the player's performance, and actually can improve it.

- Water must always be readily available during practices and games.
- Water can be taken freely without worry.

- Cold water is more rapidly ingested than warm water. Special electrolyte drinks (such as Gatorade) are not necessary. Plain water provides the same benefits for a lot less money.
- Sports medical experts do not recommend salt tablets before or during a game or practice.
- Players should drink a glass of water (two or three good swallows) every 15 minutes.
- Ideally, each player should have his own water bottle so that there would be less risk of spreading communicable diseases.

Athletes should avoid "energy drinks" that contain stimulants in addition to sugars and electrolytes. Although these drinks provide a short-term energy boost, they also accelerate consumption of fuel



stores and deplete the energy that comes from carbohydrates, fats, proteins, hydration and rest.

### Drug Abuse

The statistics on drug abuse among children are frightening. Alcohol-related auto accidents are the leading cause of death among teens. One in 10 teens is dependent on drugs or alcohol. One in 10 male adolescents has used steroids.

One of the major solutions to the problem is to meet it head on. Coaches of young athletes have a unique opportunity to educate their players and parents about drug abuse. Drug abuse is dangerous and undesirable.

- Youth athletics can help in many ways to conquer the problem of drug abuse.
- Sports keep children busy.
- Sports can give the player a feeling of self worth.
- Sports can give the player a feeling of identification with a team.
- But drug abuse must also be discussed with coaches, players, and parents.
- Talk about alcohol and other drug abuse.
- Open a dialogue with the players about drugs and alcohol. Get the players to use peer pressure on teammates to refrain from taking alcohol and drugs.
- Enforce all training rules and school regulations pertaining to drugs and alcohol.

### Blood-Borne Pathogens in Athletics

The growing worldwide epidemic of AIDS has heightened concern from sport governing bodies about the risks of transmission of blood-borne pathogens between competing athletes and those closely associated with athletic competition. HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus—AIDS) and HBV (Hepatitis B Virus) have been found to be the most prevalent and lethal of infectious blood-borne agents. Transmissions of these agents have only been documented by sexual, percutaneous and perinatal exposure. However, there have been reports of cutaneous and mucosal transmission. Review of studies of health care workers and individuals who lived with infected patients have identified that there is a 0.29% per exposure risk of seroconversion for percutaneous contact. Other routes are even at lower risk for seroconversion.

Very specific tests exist for identification of HIV and HBV. Testing for blood-borne pathogen infection should be administered to individuals thought to be exposed to infected people. Some sports are at higher risk because of the chance that blood will be exposed during competition. Although sports in general are a low risk activity for transmission, prevention guidelines are addressed for sports at greater risk and all activities where blood may be exposed. Post-exposure prophylaxis is recommended for individuals who have direct blood contact from others thought to be infected. Recommendations for follow-up testing and care are discussed.

### Transmission of blood-borne pathogens between competing athletes is a rare and unusual event.

#### Specific Precautions for Sport

Precautions can be undertaken during or prior to athletic competition to reduce the risk of HIV and HBV transmission, which include:

1. Voluntary testing for HIV and HBV is made available to all athletes in the greatest and moderate risk sports. Other athletes perceived to be at risk should also have testing available to them.
2. Educational information, including activities that place individuals at high risk because of lifestyle, geographic location or a specific sport, should be made available to participants and those deemed at risk associated with the athlete/athletic event (e.g., manager, coaches).
3. Gloves should be worn when contact with blood or other body fluids is anticipated. Gloves should also be worn for touching mucous membranes or non-intact skin (e.g., abrasion, dermatitis) of all athletes and for handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids. Gloves should be changed after contact with each athlete.
4. Hands and other skin surfaces should be washed immediately and thoroughly if contaminated with blood and other body fluids. Hands should also be washed after gloves are removed. Athletes should shower immediately after competition.
5. Surfaces contaminated with blood or body fluid should be cleaned with a solution known to inactivate the virus after each game or more often as needed.



6. To minimize contact, emergency mouth-to-mouth resuscitation bags or other ventilation devices should be available for use in emergencies.
7. Soiled linen, towels, uniforms, etc., should be tagged and washed in hot water with a detergent that is known to inactivate HIV and HBV. When possible, disposable towels should be used and proper disposal procedures employed for soiled materials.
8. All athletes in the greatest risk sports should be required to wear mouth pieces, and it should be strongly recommended for athletes competing in moderate risk sports.
9. Spittoons or similar receptacles where bloody sputum or saliva may be spit should contain a solution known to inactivate the virus.
10. Games should be interrupted when an athlete has a wound in which a large amount of exposed blood is present to allow the blood flow to be stopped, the area cleaned and the athletes cleaned.
11. Athletes who have an open lesion, wound, dermatitis, etc., should cover them with a dressing that will prevent contamination from other sources.
12. Where possible, athletes and officials in the greatest risk sports should wear protective eyewear to reduce the possibility of blood or bloody body fluids entering the eyes.
13. Review all athletes' medical history to make sure that all routine vaccinations including tetanus and MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) are up to date.

### Disinfection of Surfaces and Equipment

During practice and competition, surfaces and equipment become contaminated with blood and other body fluids. Because potentially dangerous microorganisms can survive on these contaminated surfaces for various periods of time, it is necessary to apply disinfection procedures to interrupt cross-infection.

Solution of 5/25 percent sodium hypochlorite (household bleach) at a 1:10 dilution is recommended, but not required as the agent of choice for cleaning hard surfaces after all spills of blood or body fluids. These solutions should be prepared fresh, not older than 24 hours. It is not recommended to use sodium hypochlorite solutions

on carpets or rugs. However, sanitary absorbent cleansers may be used on these items. Agents labeled as "hospital disinfectants" are also acceptable cleaning agents and will eliminate HIV and HBV. HIV and HBV are not resistant to many commonly used agents. Common agents that eradicate HIV and HBV include, but are not limited to: Lysol, hydrogen peroxide, betadine, glutaraldehyde, isopropyl alcohol, and Np-40 detergent. Chemical germicides registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as sterilants are recommended for high-level disinfection.

The mechanics of scrubbing are much more important in eliminating organisms than the selected cleansing agent. The end result of scrubbing and rinsing should be the thorough removal of all contaminated materials.

The following simple precautions set forth the necessary elements for handling spills of blood or other body fluids:

1. Wear rubber medical gloves.
2. Contain the spill in the smallest area possible by absorbing the spill with paper towels.
3. If the spill is on a hard surface, decontaminate with a 5.25 percent (1:10 dilution) of hypochlorite bleach or a comparable solution.
4. Re-clean the area with fresh towels.
5. If the spill is on a rug or carpet, use a sanitary absorbent agent according to directions.
6. Place all soiled waste in a moisture resistant bag.
7. Wash your hands.
8. Trash and waste contaminated with blood or bloody body fluids should be regarded as potentially infectious and treated as biohazardous material.
9. Soiled linens and uniforms should be handled as little as possible to prevent microbial contamination of the air and persons handling the linen and uniforms. All soiled material should be bagged where it was used (double bagged if there is a chance of leakage) and transported to the laundry. If hot water is used, the soiled articles should be washed with detergent in water at least 71 degrees Celsius (160 degrees Fahrenheit) for 25 minutes. If low



temperature ( $\leq 70$  degrees Celsius) laundry cycles are used, solutions known to inactivate the virus should be used.

## Frostbite

**Definition** — Superficial frostbite involves localized freezing of the skin and the superficial tissues below it. The nose, ears, toes, and fingers are especially prone to superficially but advances to deep tissues such as muscles and tendons.

### FOR FROSTBITE

#### DO NOT

- ...rub or massage frostbitten areas
- ...apply ice to frostbitten areas
- ...allow frostbitten tissue to refreeze

**Cause** — Exposure of body parts to cold, causing tissues to freeze and blood vessels to constrict.

**Symptoms** — Painful, itchy, burning, or tingling areas that may become numb as the frostbite worsens. These symptoms may recur when the affected areas are rewarmed.

**Signs** — First-degree frostbite — red or flushed skin that may turn white or gray. Second-degree frostbite — firm, white, and waxy skin. Blisters and purple tint to skin may appear when the area is rewarmed. Third-degree frostbite — blisters, bluish skin. The area feels very cold and stiff.

**First Aid** — Move the athlete to a warm area. Remove wet and cold clothing.

**First- and Second-Degree Frostbite** — Rewarm frostbitten areas by soaking them in clean, warm water (100 to 150 degrees Fahrenheit). Call the athlete's parents or guardian to take the athlete to a physician.

**Third-Degree Frostbite** — Monitor the ABCs and cover the frostbitten areas with sterile gauze.

**Playing Status** — The athlete cannot return to activity until he or she is released by a physician.

## Prevention of Frostbite

1. Do not touch bare metal with bare skin. Cover all metal with cloth, tape, leather or a similar material.

2. Keep wiggling cold toes; as long as you can move them, you have not frozen your toes.
3. Beware of any localized skin numbness and protect it from further exposure.
4. Consider the air temperature, wind speed, and precipitation at the time of cold exposure. Consult a wind chill factor chart and determine a safe exposure time for training or competition.
5. Utilize information about weather conditions to select the proper layers of clothing. The inner layer ought to consist of a non-wetable fiber that transports sweat away from the skin surface. The outer layer should be windproof and waterproof, yet allow sweat to evaporate. When immobilized, or during low intensity exercise, a middle layer of clothing may be necessary for insulation. During high intensity exercise, the outer layer (or head covering) may be loosened or removed for brief periods to prevent excessive heat storage. It is important to keep clothing dry. Tight fitting clothing or shoes reduce blood flow to skin and increase the potential for peripheral cold injury.
6. Consider differences in metabolic heat production, especially during team competition. Top lines may produce large amounts of internal heat, while reserve players may suffer from hypothermia because they are inactive. Avoid situations in which athletes stand outdoors in wet clothing or footwear. Provide shelter from the wind and precipitation, whenever possible.
7. Supply athletes with liquids to avoid dehydration, just as you would in a hot environment.

## EQUIPMENT

### Guidelines for Selection and Fitting

1. **Helmet and Face Mask:** Obtain a helmet and mask that provide full facial protection and fits snugly on the head. All helmets and masks must be HECC-certified.
2. **Shoulder Pads:** The cap of the pad should cover the shoulder. Straps under the arms should attach securely. The front flap



should come down far enough to cover the collarbone.

3. **Elbow Pads:** The straps should remain tight, providing a snug fit over the elbow. Some pads have adjustable straps, while some have only elastic straps. When straps become loose, the pad may slip off of the elbow, leaving it unprotected. There should be no space between the shoulder pads, elbow pads, and the hockey gloves.
4. **Shin Pads:** The knee is a primary area of concern for protection. The pad should cover the knee when the leg is straight and when it is bent. Pads should bend just below knee in order to conform to the bent leg.
5. **Ankle Guard:** Ankle guards are considered optional equipment. They are recommended for puck protection, however, particularly for defensemen. The protective part of the guard should cover the top five eyelets on the front of the skate and the inside and outside ankle bones.
6. **Gloves:** Gloves range in price from inexpensive to very expensive. They should have ample room for the fingers and thumb and must not be too snug in the wrist area. Be sure the cuff comes up far enough to adequately cover the wrist.
7. **Stick:** Sticks come in different lies. The most common lie is a five or six for skaters and a 12 to 13 for goalies. Lie refers to the angle between the blade of the stick and the shaft. The smaller the angle, the higher the lie. When choosing a stick, the entire bottom portion of the blade should be on the ice when the player assumes a ready position. If just the heel of the stick is touching, try a lower lie. If just the toe is touching, try a higher lie. Stick length can be determined by placing the front, bottom edge of the stick on the ice between the skates. The top of the shaft should touch the player's face between the chin and the tip of the nose. It should touch closer to the nose if the player is wearing shoes, not skates.
8. **Pants:** Pants are usually six sizes larger than the normal waist size. The top padded portion of the pants should cover the hips, lower ribs, and kidneys. The legs should be

an inch or two above the knees, overlapping with the top of the knee pads. The area above the knee is often hit by the puck. Therefore, make sure there is no gap between the pants and knee pads. If a gap exists, loosen the suspenders and lower the pants or obtain others that fit appropriately.

9. **Skates:** Skates are the hockey player's most important piece of equipment. Without properly fitted skates, the young hockey player is at a tremendous disadvantage. Skates should not be bought several sizes too large so a player may "grow into them." Oversized skates will retard the skating development of the youngster. Skates should be slightly smaller (approximately one-half size) than the normal shoe size. They should fit snugly with just one pair of socks. Push the toes all the way to the front of the boot. At the heel area there should only be enough room for a pencil to fit between the heel and the back of the boot. When properly laced, players should not be able to lift their heels and their toes should be able to move. Rapidly growing youngsters may outgrow more than one pair of skates in a season. Look for good buys on used skates, but make sure they fit properly.
10. **Jock (Athletic Support):** Fitted according to waist size. It should fit snugly but not so tight as to be uncomfortable. The protective cups come in men's and boys' sizes as well as women's and girls' sizes.
11. **Sports Bra:** Any girls should wear a sports bra when participating in vigorous activity. Sized by chest width and cup size as with a regular bra.
12. **Female Shoulder Pads:** For female players, a combination shoulder and chest protector combines shoulder pads with extra protection in the breast area.
13. **Mouthguard:** Use of an internal mouthguard reduces the risk of a brain concussion (from a blow to the jaw) and minimizes chances of chipping teeth should the lower jaw be struck.

#### Goalkeeper's Equipment

14. **Goalkeepers Pads:** These are designed for blocking shots and protecting the front and side of the goalkeepers legs. A properly



fitted set of goalkeeper pads extend from the toe of the skate to about four inches above the knee. The large vertical roll is always on the outside of each leg. Goalkeepers pads should always be left standing, so as to prevent flattening of the padding and “molding” as the pads dry out. The straps should be checked regularly for cuts or cracking, and replaced as needed. Any cuts in the leather of the pads should be repaired immediately.

15. **Goalkeepers Knee Pads:** These can afford additional protection when the goalkeeper is in such a position that the goalie pads do not cover the knee area.
16. **Goalkeepers Athletic Support:** Goalkeepers should wear the specially designed cup because of the extra padding and protection it provides.
17. **Goalkeepers Pants:** These have several additional protective pieces, and the padding is heavier than in the regular skater pants. The inner section, which protects the kidney, tail bone, groin, and waist area, also is fitted with heavier weight padding and protection.
18. **Belly Pad:** This is designed to protect the collar bone and the entire chest and abdominal areas. Ensure the pants are loose enough around the waist to allow the belly pad to tuck into the pants comfortably.
19. **Goalkeepers Shoulder and Arm Pads:** These are designed to protect the shoulders and the arms right to the wrists. Many goalkeepers adjust or add padding to their arms and the front of their shoulders to suit their individual preferences. Pads that are too small (not reaching the cuff of the glove) leave the forearm open to injury.
20. **Catching Glove (Trapper):** This has a heavily padded protective cuff, which should overlap the protection of the arm pad.
21. **Blocker:** This is composed of a large protective fiber back pad, which should not be warped thus exposing the fingers. The glove should be pliable for easy gripping of the stick.
22. **Throat Protection:** Throat protection is vitally important for the goalkeeper. Three

types of throat protection are predominantly used—hanging shield (attached to bottom of the face mask), hinge shield (attached to the helmet) and collar (worn around the neck). While the collar does offer greater protection from accidental skate cuts to the throat area, it does not provide as much protection from impact by the puck (shots) or sticks, as do the hinge or hanging shields.

### Care of Hockey Equipment

1. **Helmet:** Tighten all screws. Wash the interior with soap and a damp cloth before the season starts and several times during the season.
2. **Mouthguard:** Keep your mouthguard in its own case and rinse it thoroughly before and after each use.
3. **Shoulder Pads:** Check the straps for wear. Make sure the shoulder caps are securely attached.
4. **Elbow Pads:** Check the straps for wear and/or elastic fatigue.
5. **Shin Pads:** Check the knee area for cracks. Make sure the padding is not ripped or torn.
6. **Gloves:** Oil the leather, especially the palms. If the palms are worn, make sure the fingers cannot come out through the palm area. New palms may be necessary.

### Other Maintenance Tips

- After a game or practice, the equipment should be immediately hung up to dry. Leather should not be placed over any source of direct heat, as forced drying will cause cracking.
- After every game or practice, wipe off the skate blades and holders until they are completely dry to prevent rust.
- Leave skates unlaced with the tongues pulled down so that air can circulate inside and evaporate moisture. With most plastic skates the “liners” are removable, and should be taken out to dry.
- Check your blades for sharpness – a sharp skate will plane a fine white shaving off your thumbnail.
  - Nicks: Sometimes a nick in the blade can be removed with a small wet stone.



- Bends: A bent or loose blade can often be detected by the squeaking noise it will make when gliding to a stop. Most skate sharpeners have a device for straightening blades.
- Make regular checks after each use to see that the rivets that attach the blade holders to the boot of your skates are secure.
- All equipment should be visually inspected at regular intervals. In most cases, a shoemaker can repair fabric tears or do patch stitching. In the case of cracked padding or plastic, a replacement part can usually be purchased.

## ENFORCE THE RULES

### Strict Enforcement of the Rules

Olympic hockey, college hockey, junior hockey, high school hockey, and youth hockey are all played according to different but similar playing rules that emphasize finesse rather than force. Protective equipment, such as helmets, are mandatory at all of the aforementioned levels of hockey. Full face masks are mandatory at all of the aforementioned except Olympic and junior hockey. Professional hockey has undergone a philosophical change since 1988, with the emphasis on speed and finesse, but fighting and physical aggressiveness continues to be part of the professional game.

At the amateur level, we want to emphasize skill development, strategy, conditioning, and fair play rather than size, physical aggressiveness, or violence. It is important that coaches and officials work to strictly enforce the playing rules at all levels of hockey. The Zero Tolerance Program,

implemented by USA Hockey in 1992, has helped to develop better understanding between players, coaches, officials, and parents. Coaches, officials, and league administrators should meet periodically during the season to review player behavior. Suggestions as to how to do a better job in controlling overaggressive play should be considered and discussed. Coaches, officials, parents, and players must remember that hockey is a game that involves contact, NOT violence. Strict enforcement of the playing rules will reduce injuries to players.

## SUMMARY

This chapter has focused on three areas in which you can exert an influence to reduce the potential number and severity of injuries in hockey. The first area involves your insistence that your players wear appropriate protective equipment. Avoiding safety hazards associated with the ice rinks is the second area. Management of practices and games is the third area. Proper management includes teaching your players safety, appropriate ice hockey techniques, and proper drills; and running practices with warming up, conditioning, and cooling down exercises; but exclude known contraindicated exercises. Safety and injury prevention should be a primary factor to consider in whatever plans you make for your youth ice hockey team. You will be more than compensated for the extra time and effort required to implement the suggestions found in this chapter by the comfort of knowing that you have done as much as you can to ensure that your players will have a safe season.



# Chapter 23

## Care of Common Ice Hockey Injuries

### OBJECTIVES

- To assist coaches in identifying and providing first aid for the different medical conditions commonly associated with ice hockey
- To identify items in a well-stocked first aid kit
- To identify procedures that you should follow when an injury occurs
- To identify information that you should have about your players in case they become injured

### INTRODUCTION

Chris has the puck and one defenseman to beat. A fake leaves the defenseman out of the play. Only the goalkeeper is left. As Chris skates toward the goal, the goalkeeper begins to leave the goal area and approach the play. Chris momentarily loses control of the puck and everyone is uncertain as to who will get to play the puck first. Both Chris and the goalkeeper skate full speed toward the puck and each other. They arrive simultaneously, both out of control. There is a violent collision, and Chris lies motionless on the ice. The referee, sensing the likelihood of injury, immediately signals Chris' coach onto the ice to tend to the downed player.

Watching from the bench, the first, and normal, reaction of a coach is to be frightened by the possible outcome of this violent collision. The sinking feeling in the stomach and the "Oh, no" message sent out by the brain when Chris went down have been felt by most coaches at some point in their careers.

If this, or some similar situation confronted you, what would you do? Are you prepared to act appropriately? As coach of a youth ice hockey team, it is your obligation to be able to deal with such an emergency. Before your first practice, you should:

- obtain medical information on your players
- establish emergency procedures
- prepare to provide first aid

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*You must not rely on the likelihood that a serious injury will not occur to the players on your team as an excuse for not being prepared to handle an emergency situation.*

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### MEDICAL INFORMATION

The completed Athlete Medical History Form should be in your possession whenever your players are under your supervision. Hopefully, the need to use this information will never arise. But, if an injury does occur, the information on this form will help you and qualified medical personnel respond quickly to an emergency.

### EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

As the coach of an injured player, you are responsible for the actions taken until the player is placed in the care of competent medical personnel, parents, or guardians. Parents and players expect you to know how to proceed. The following sequential steps should be taken in an emergency:



1. Take charge of the situation.
2. Determine the nature of the injury.
3. Start emergency procedures if necessary.
4. Transfer care to a medical professional.

### Step 1: Take Charge

Establish immediate control over the situation by having your assistant coach take charge of all uninjured players. If you do not have an assistant coach, send the players to a designated area within range of your voice and vision until the injury situation is resolved. This simple action establishes control, clears the area of potentially harmful distractions, and facilitates a quick response to emergency situations.

### Step 2: Determine the Nature of the Injury

Upon reaching an injured player, you should perform a visual analysis of the situation. Is the player breathing? conscious? bleeding? Ask the player questions to find out what happened and where the pain is located. This information will help you determine whether the injury is serious and requires emergency measures or whether it is an injury that can be properly cared for without emergency procedures.

### Step 3: Provide Emergency Care

Most emergency situations can be appropriately handled if you remember the ABC's of emergency care, as advocated by the American Red Cross.

A = Airway

B = Breathing

C = Circulation

Remembering the ABC's will remind you of how to proceed in a life-threatening situation.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide the complete information necessary to handle all emergencies. To familiarize you with what is involved and to encourage you to obtain appropriate first aid and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) instruction, the ABC's and bleeding are briefly outlined. More complete information on artificial respiration is available through your local chapter of the American Red Cross.

## The ABC's

### Open the Airway

Always check the airway to make sure it is free of any items that may impede breathing. In ice hockey, the mouth guard can obstruct the airway and should be removed immediately. The primary method advocated for opening the airway is the jaw thrust or chin lift method. The American Red Cross and American Heart Association provides materials and training for developing this skill.

### Restore Breathing

Once the airway is open, check to see if the player is breathing. Is the chest moving up and down? Are there sounds of breathing? Can you feel exhaled air at the mouth or nostrils? If breathing is not taking place, begin artificial respiration. The procedures taught by the American Red Cross and American Heart Association are the standards to follow when attempting to restore breathing.

### Restore Circulation

If the heart has stopped beating, circulation should be restored via CPR. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation is a valuable skill to learn and maintain because you are coaching a sport in which the temporary interruption of cardiopulmonary function could occur. The techniques of CPR are beyond the scope of this manual. **You are encouraged to attend one of the many American Red Cross or American Heart Association CPR courses that are regularly offered in nearly every local community that sponsors youth hockey.** Call your local American Red Cross or your local hospital for more information.

### Bleeding

Extensive bleeding should be controlled by applying direct pressure over the wound for 10 to 20 minutes without checking the wound. A sterile pad is preferred but, in an emergency, use whatever is available: a towel, a shirt, your hand, etc. The use of a tourniquet is ill-advised and should only be employed when one accepts the fact that its use may be trading the loss of a limb to save a life.



#### Step 4: Transfer Care to a Medical Professional

The usual culmination of providing emergency care is transferring that care to trained medical professionals (a physician and/or emergency medical technician, an EMT) and transporting the player to a medical facility. This action presumes knowledge of how this should be done.

We recommend that a call for assistance be made immediately upon determination that the injury is life-threatening. This should be completed by an assistant during the time that appropriate care is being administered to the player. To complete this important task, the location of a phone must be known and the appropriate telephone number must be readily available. If you have the completed Medical History Form in your possession, you are prepared to act.

It is recommended that you contact parents as soon as possible. The information on the Medical History Form is useful to direct EMTs or others to the family's preferred physicians or hospitals. The Medical History Form must accompany the injured player to aid the medical professionals in their diagnosis for treatment of the problem(s).

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*Rehearsing emergency care procedures can be invaluable.*

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Immediate treatment of life-threatening injuries is extremely important. Being trained in basic first-aid and emergency procedures is invaluable and will give you more confidence when dealing with any type of injury. Each coach must develop his or her own emergency plan.

#### PROVIDE FIRST AID

If the player is seriously injured or has collapsed, have your assistant coach, a parent, or a responsible player take the list of emergency telephone numbers from the first aid kit and call an ambulance. You should stay with the injured player until help arrives.

#### Collapse

The single most important determinant of survival is the time from collapse to defibrillation. Each minute of delay decreases the chance of survival by 10 percent.

Most patients will survive if defibrillation is achieved in less than three minutes.

#### Sudden Cardiac Arrest

Sudden cardiac arrest is a condition in which the heartbeat stops suddenly and unexpectedly. It is caused by life-threatening arrhythmias or electrical disturbances in the heart's electrical system.

The only effective way to treat cardiac arrest is through a defibrillator, a piece of equipment that delivers an electrical shock or current to the heart through the chest.

Cardiac arrest is usually reversible if defibrillation occurs within the first few minutes after collapse or loss of the pulse. The sooner the shock is delivered, the better the chance of survival.

The sequence of events that must happen for a victim to survive and recover from a cardiac arrest are:

- **Early Access** – Someone suspects that the victim is in sudden cardiac arrest and calls for help.
- **Early CPR** – A person trained in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation keeps the victim's blood flow to the vital organs until defibrillation can occur.
- **Early Defibrillation** – A person trained in defibrillation shocks the victim as quickly as possible.
- **Early Advanced Care** – Medical personnel provide advanced cardiac care, which can include airway support, medications and hospital services.

The Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) is a portable, light, easy-to-use medical device designed specifically for first responders with minimal training. The coach is the one most likely to be on the scene and respond to the emergency. The AED has a built-in computer that analyzes the heart rhythm and determines if the heart requires a shock.

1. The operator turns on the AED once it is established or thought that the victim does not have a pulse.
2. The operator then attaches the electrodes to the chest of the victim.
3. The machine interprets the heart rhythm of the victim.
4. The operator simply follows the voice prompts and instructions on the screen.



If a shock is necessary, the voice will tell the operator to press the shock button. The AED will not allow a shock to be given unless the victim requires it. An AED should be present in every hockey arena.

### Aids for Proper Care

If the injury is less serious and does not require assistance from trained medical personnel, you may be able to move the player from the ice to the bench area and begin appropriate care. Two important aids to properly care for an injured player include a first aid kit and ice.

### First Aid Kit

A well-stocked first aid kit does not have to be large, but it should contain the basic items that may be needed for appropriate care. The checklist below provides a guide for including commonly used supplies. You may wish to add and subtract from the kit on the basis of your experience and/or local policies or guidelines.

#### First Aid Kit Checklist

- \_\_\_\_\_ plastic tape – 2 rolls
- \_\_\_\_\_ sterile gauze pads – 4 pads
- \_\_\_\_\_ sling – 1
- \_\_\_\_\_ Band-Aids, assorted sizes – 20
- \_\_\_\_\_ foam rubber/moleskin
- \_\_\_\_\_ disinfectant
- \_\_\_\_\_ zip lock plastic bags for ice – 4
- \_\_\_\_\_ emergency care phone numbers
- \_\_\_\_\_ list of emergency phone numbers
- \_\_\_\_\_ scissors
- \_\_\_\_\_ safety pins
- \_\_\_\_\_ surgical gloves
- \_\_\_\_\_ player's Medical History Forms
- \_\_\_\_\_ chemical ice packs
- \_\_\_\_\_ list of first aid kit contents

A good rule of thumb for coaches is, "If you can't treat the problems by using the supplies in a well-stocked first aid kit, then it is a problem too big for you to handle." You should be able to handle

bruises, small cuts, strains, and sprains. When fractures, dislocations, back, or neck injuries occur, call for professional medical assistance.

### Ice

Having access to ice is easy in an ice rink. Ice is very important to proper immediate care of many minor injuries and should, therefore, be readily available.

### Care of Minor Injuries

#### R.I.C.E.

Unless you are also a physician, you should not attempt to care for anything except minor injuries (e.g., bruises, bumps, sprains). Many minor injuries can be cared for by using the R.I.C.E. formula.

#### R.I.C.E. Formula

The R.I.C.E. formula for care of minor injuries involves the following steps:

**R = REST:** Put the injured area at rest.

**I = ICE:** Apply ice to the injured area.

**C = COMPRESSION:** Wrap an elastic bandage around the injured area and the ice bag to hold the bag in place. The bandage should not be so tight as to cut off blood flow to the injured area.

**E = ELEVATION:** Let gravity drain the excess fluid.

When following the R.I.C.E. formula, ice should be kept on the injured area for 15 minutes and taken off for 20 minutes. Repeat this procedure three to four times. Icing should continue three times per day for the first 72 hours following the injury. After three days, extended care is necessary if the injury has not healed. At this time, options for care include:

- stretching and strengthening exercises
- contrast treatments
- visiting a doctor for further diagnosis

### Contrast Treatments

If the injured area is much less swollen after 72 hours, but the pain is subsiding, contrast treatments will help. Use the following procedure:



1. Place the injured area in an ice bath or cover with an ice bag for one minute.
2. After using the ice, place the injured area in warm water (100-110 degrees) for three minutes.
3. Continue this rotation for five to seven applications of ice and four to six applications of heat.
4. Always end with the ice treatment.

Contrast treatments should be followed for the next three to five days. If swelling or pain still persists after several days of contrast treatments, the player should be sent to a physician for further tests.

### MAINTAINING APPROPRIATE RECORDS

The immediate care you provide to an injured player is important to limit the extent of the injury and to set the stage for appropriate rehabilitation. However, immediate care is not the end of prudent action when an injury occurs. One brief but valuable task should be completed. That is to complete a USA Hockey Injury Survey Form (located at the end of this chapter).

#### USA Hockey Injury Survey Form

It is important for you to maintain a record of the injuries that occur to your players. This information may be helpful to guide delayed care or medical treatment and may be very important if any legal

problems develop in connection with the injury. It includes a standard form that will help guide the recording of pertinent information relative to each injury. These records should be kept for several years following an injury. You should check on legal requirements in your state to determine how long these records should be kept.

### SUMMARY

This chapter attempts to acquaint you with various injuries associated with hockey and how you should be prepared to deal with these injuries. If you have prepared your first aid kit, brought along the medical records, and familiarized yourself with the different types of injuries, you should be able to handle whatever situation arises. Follow the steps that are outlined for you, and remember—you are not a doctor. If you are in doubt about how to proceed call for professional medical help. Do not make decisions about treatments if you are not qualified to make them.

Remember, react quickly and with confidence. Most injuries will be minor and the injured players will need only a little reassurance before they can be moved to the bench area. Injuries will always occur in hockey. Therefore, you must prepare yourself to deal with whatever happens in a calm, responsible manner.



# Chapter 24

## Rehabilitation of Common Ice Hockey Injuries

### OBJECTIVES

- To understand common ice hockey injuries
- To identify common treatment of common injuries
- To outline rehabilitation tips

### COMMON INJURIES

The following section lists 14 injuries that may occur in ice hockey. The information about each injury provides (1) definition, (2) common symptoms, (3) immediate on-ice treatment and (4) guidelines for returning to action.

1. back or neck injury
2. blisters
3. bruise
4. dental injury
5. dislocation
6. fracture
7. head injury - conscious
8. head injury - unconscious
9. lacerations
10. loss of wind
11. nose bleed
12. skate bite
13. sprain
14. strain

### BACK OR NECK INJURY

**Definition** — Any injury to the back or neck area that causes the player to become immobile or unconscious.

### Symptoms

- pain and tenderness over the spine
- numbness
- weakness or heaviness in limbs
- tingling feeling in extremities

### Care

- Make sure the player is breathing.
- Call for medical assistance.

### Return to Action

- Return time is dependent upon severity of the injury. A bruise may mean no practice for 2-3 days, while a fracture may mean the player could never play again
- Permission of a physician is required.

### BLISTERS

**Definition** — A localized collection of fluid in the outer portion of the skin.

### Symptoms

- redness
- inflammation
- oozing of fluid
- discomfort



**Care**

- Clean the site with disinfectant.
- Use a sterile needle and puncture the blister at the edge; force the fluid out.
- Put disinfectant on the area.
- Cover the area with a Band-Aid.
- Alter the cause of the problem when possible (e.g., proper size and/or shape of the skates).

**Return to Action**

- immediately, unless pain is severe

**BRUISE**

**Definition** — a bruising of the skin caused by a direct blow

**Symptoms**

- tenderness around the injury
- swelling
- localized pain

**Care**

- Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation (R.I.C.E.) for the first three days.
- Contrast treatments for days four through eight.
- Restrict activity and wear protective padding.

**Return to Action**

- Return when there is complete absence of pain and full range of motion.

**DENTAL INJURY**

**Definition** — any injury to mouth or teeth

**Symptoms**

- pain
- bleeding
- loss of tooth (partial or total)

**Care**

- Clear the airway where necessary.
- Stop the bleeding with direct pressure (make sure excess blood does not clog airway).
- Save any teeth that were knocked free. Store them in a moist, sterile cloth. They may be reinserted in some cases.
- Transport player to a hospital.

**Return to Action**

- Return when pain is gone - usually within two to three days.
- Permission of a dentist is required for return.

**DISLOCATION**

**Definition** — loss of normal anatomical alignment.

**Symptoms**

- complaints of joint slipping in and out (subluxation)
- joint out of line
- pain at the joint

**Care**

- Mild
  - Treat as a sprain (R.I.C.E.).
  - Obtain medical care.
- Severe
  - Immobilize player before moving.
  - The player needs to be treated by a physician.
  - Obtain medical care (do not attempt to put joint back into place).
  - R.I.C.E.

**Return to Action**

- Subluxation: Go by the pain level, range of motion and strength; if there is no pain, full range of motion is restored and strength has returned to 95% of the same joint on the opposite side of the body, the player may return to action.
- Severe: Surgery may be necessary. Six weeks is usually the minimum recovery time. Full range of motion and full strength must be present. A doctor's permission is required to resume practice.

**FRACTURE**

**Definition** — A fracture is a crack or complete break in a bone. A simple fracture is a broken bone, but with unbroken skin. A compound fracture is a broken bone and broken skin.

**Symptoms**

- pain at fracture site
- tenderness and swelling
- deformity or unnatural position
- loss of function in injured area
- open wound and bleeding (compound)



- A simple fracture may not be evident immediately. If localized pain persists, obtain medical assistance.

### Return to Action

- Return when full range of motion is present.
- Strength must be returned to pre-injury levels throughout the entire range of motion of adjoining joints.
- Permission of a physician is required.

## HEAD INJURY - CONSCIOUS

**Definition** — any injury that causes the player to be unable to respond in a coherent fashion to known facts (names, date, etc.)

### Symptoms

- dizziness
- pupils unequal in size and/or non-responsive to light and dark
- disoriented
- unsure of name, date, or activity
- unsteady movement of eyeballs when trying to follow a finger moving in front of the eyes
- The same symptoms as noted for back or neck injury may be present.

### Care

- If the above symptoms are present, player may be moved carefully when dizziness disappears. Players with head injuries should be removed from further practice or competition that day and should be carefully observed.
- Obtain medical assistance.

### Return to Action

- Permission of a physician is required.

## HEAD INJURY – UNCONSCIOUS

**Definition** — any injury in which the player is unable to respond to external stimuli by verbal or visual means

### Symptoms

- player is unconscious
- cuts or bruises to head area

### Care

- Any time a player is unconscious, assume an injury to the spinal cord or brain.

- Remove the mouthpiece and clear the airway if necessary.
- Do not move the player.
- Call for medical assistance.
- Do not remove the helmet.

### Return to Action

- Permission of a physician is required.

## LACERATIONS

**Definition** — a tearing or cutting of the skin

### Symptoms

- bleeding
- swelling

### Care

- Direct pressure to the wound for four to five minutes will usually stop the bleeding.
- Clean the wound with disinfectant.
- R.I.C.E.
- If stitches are required, send the player to a doctor within 24 hours.

### Return to Action

- Return as soon as the pain is gone, if the wound can be protected from further injury.

## LOSS OF WIND

**Definition** — a forceful blow to mid-abdomen area that causes inability to breathe

### Symptoms

- rapid, shallow breathing
- gasping for breath

### Care

- Make sure no other injuries exist.
- Place player on his or her back.
- Get the player to relax and breathe slowly.

### Return to Action

- Return after five minutes of rest to regain composure and breathing has returned to normal rate.

## NOSE BLEED

**Definition** — bleeding from the nose

### Symptoms

- bleeding
- swelling
- pain
- deformity of nose



**Care**

- Calm the athlete down.
- Get the athlete into a sitting position.
- Pinch the nostrils together with fingers while the victim breathes through his or her mouth.
- If the bleeding cannot be controlled, call for medical assistance.

**Return to Action**

- Following a minor nosebleed, return when the bleeding has stopped for several minutes.
- Following a serious nosebleed, allow no more competition that day. A doctor's permission is required if a fracture has occurred.

**SKATE BITE**

**Definition** — pain where the skate laces are tied

**Symptoms**

- localized pain
- small, swollen area

**Care**

- Lace skates down one eyelet.
- Put foam rubber under the tongue where the laces are tied.
- Rest if the pain continues.

**Return to Action**

- Player can return immediately.

**SPRAIN**

**Definition** — a stretching or a partial or complete tear of the ligaments surrounding a joint

**Symptoms**

- pain at the joint
- pain aggravated by motion at the joint
- tenderness and swelling
- looseness at the joint

**Care**

- Immobilize the player at the time of the injury if pain is severe. Use a hockey stick as a splint.
- R.I.C.E.
- See a physician.
- extended rest
- surgery

**Return to Action**

- pain and swelling are gone
- full range of motion is reestablished
- strength and stability are within 95% of the non-injured limb throughout range of motion
- light formal activity with no favoring of the injury
- moderate to full intensity formal activity with no favoring of the injury
- return to formal practice and competition

**STRAIN**

**Definition** — a strain is a stretching or tearing of the muscle or tendons that attach the muscle to the bone. It is commonly referred to as a "muscle pull."

**Symptoms**

- localized pain brought on by stretching or contracting the muscle in question
- unequal strength between limbs

**Care**

- R.I.C.E. for the first three days
- Stretching to the point of discomfort but not pain; start as soon as the player is able
- Contrast treatment for days four through eight

**Return to Action**

- Check the player's flexibility. Can the player stretch as far as they could pre-injury?
- Check the strength between the player's limbs. Do both sides of the body appear equally strong?
- Can the athlete perform basic hockey tasks (e.g., skating, passing, shooting) without favoring the injury?
- mild strain – one to two days
- moderate strain – four to six days
- severe strain – one to two weeks or more

**MAINTAINING APPROPRIATE RECORDS**

The immediate care that you provide to an injured player is important to limit the extent of the injury and set the stage for appropriate rehabilitation and thus a quick recovery. It is not sufficient, however, to terminate your care with these two areas. Two additional brief but valuable tasks should be completed. The first of these is to complete a personal injury report form and the second is to log the injury on your summary of season injuries.



## Personal Injury Report Form

It is important for you to maintain a record of the injuries that occur to your players. This information may be helpful to guide delayed care or medical treatment and may be very important if any legal problems develop in connection with the injury.

## Summary of Season Injuries

A Summary of Season Injuries lists each type of injury with a space for you to record when that type of injury occurred. At the end of the season you should total the incidences of each injury to see if there is a trend to the kind of injuries your team has suffered. If a trend exists, evaluate your training methods in all areas of practices and games. Try to alter drills or circumstances that may be causing injuries. Perhaps your practice routine ignores or overemphasizes some area of stretching or conditioning. Decide on a course of action that may be implemented for next season and note the appropriate changes you wish to make on your season or practice plans.

## REHABILITATION

Decisions about the rehabilitation of injuries and re-entry into competition must be made according to a flexible set of guidelines; not hard and fast rules. Every individual on your team and each injury is unique. Therefore, rehabilitation techniques and re-entry criteria will differ for each injured player.

### General Procedures

Most minor injuries suffered by your players will not be treated by a physician. Therefore, you, the player, and the player's parents will determine when the player returns to action. Players, coaches and parents realize that missing practices will reduce the player's ability to help the team and that the loss of practice time will reduce the opportunity to perfect the skills of the game. Pressure is often exerted on the coach to play injured players before they are fully recovered. However, chances of an injury recurring are greatly increased if a player returns too soon. The following five criteria should be met, in order, before allowing an injured player back into full competition. They are:

1. absence of pain
2. full range of motion at the injured area

3. normal size and power (strength throughout the range of motion) at the injured area
4. normal speed and agility
5. normal level of fitness

If a physician is not overseeing an injured player's rehabilitation, the task of rehabilitation will probably fall upon the coach. **Stretching activities, calisthenics and weight training exercises form the basis of a rehabilitation program.** Start with simple stretches. Presence of pain during movement is the key to determining if the activity is too stressful. The onset of pain means too much is being attempted too soon. When players can handle the stretching, then calisthenics and weight training can be added to the program.

### Absence of Pain

Most injuries are accompanied by pain, although the pain is not always evident immediately when the injury occurs. Usually, the pain disappears quickly if the injury is a bruise, a strain or a minor sprain. For more serious injuries such as dislocations, tears, or fractures, the pain may remain for days or weeks. When the pain is gone, the player can start the stretching portion of a rehabilitation program. **The main goal of a rehabilitation program is to re-establish range of motion, strength, power and muscular endurance at the point of injury.** As long as players remain free of pain, they should proceed with their program. If pain reoccurs they should eliminate pain-producing movements until they are pain-free again.

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*The chance of an injury recurring is greatly increased if a player returns to action too soon.*

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### Full Range of Motion

Injuries generally reduce the range of motion around a joint. The more severe the injury, the greater the reduction in range of motion, particularly when the injured area has been immobilized. As soon as they are able, injured players should start moving the injured area in a progressively normal way. For example, if the player has strained a groin muscle, a fairly common injury early in the season, he or she should stretch the muscle as much as possible without causing pain. Initially, the movement may be slight if the injury was severe but, with stretching, the full range of motion will



eventually return. When the player can move the injured joint through its normal range, strengthening exercises should begin.

### Strength and Size

After a body part has been immobilized (cast, splint wrap or disuse), muscles become smaller and weaker than they were prior to the injury. Just because a cast is removed and the injuries have “healed” does not mean that players are ready to practice or play at full speed. Loss of muscle mass means a loss of strength. Letting the player resume a normal practice schedule before strength has returned to pre-injury levels could lead to re-injury. Strengthening the injured area should be done very conservatively. If weights are used, start with light weights and perform the exercise through the entire range of motion. If the exercise causes pain, then lighter weights should be used. **Your goal is to have the players regain full strength through the entire range of motion before allowing them to return to competition.** To determine when full strength and size has been regained, compare the injured area to the non-injured area on the opposite side of the body. When both areas are of equal size and strength then the players may progress to the next phase of recovery.

### Normal Speed and Agility

If the lower parts of the body were injured, skating drills that incorporate progressively more intense changes of speed and/or direction, stopping and accelerating will provide a good indication of the player’s recovery. If the upper part of the body was injured, passing and shooting drills should be attempted also. In your observation of injured players, try to detect any favoring of the injury or inability to smoothly perform a skill at increasing intensities. When players can move at pre-injury speed and agility, they are almost ready to play.

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*The main goal of a rehabilitation program is to re-establish range of motion, strength, power and muscular endurance to the injured area.*

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### Level of Fitness

Every extended layoff reduces the level of muscular fitness. While recovering, the player may be able to exercise other body parts without affecting the

injured area. Someone with a sprained ankle may not be able to skate, but may be able to swim. Someone with a broken wrist may be able to jog or ride a bike. Encourage this type of activity, because it helps to maintain portions of their pre-injury levels of fitness. Players who have missed long periods of time due to an injury should practice for several days after meeting the previous criteria before being allowed to play in a game. Their cardiovascular system and the endurance of the injured musculature need time to adjust to the demands of the game. **The longer the layoff, the more conditioning work they will need.**

### SUMMARY

This chapter was an attempt to acquaint you with various injuries associated with hockey and how you should be prepared to deal with these injuries. If you have prepared your first aid kit, brought along the medical records and familiarized yourself with the different types of injuries, you should be able to handle whatever situation arises. Follow the steps that are outlined for you and **remember – you are not a doctor.** If you are in doubt about how to proceed and call for professional help. Do not make decisions about treatments if you are not qualified to make them.

Remember, react quickly and with confidence. Most injuries will be minor and the injured players will need only a little reassurance before they can be moved to the bench area. Injuries will always occur in ice hockey. Therefore, you must prepare yourself to deal with whatever happens in a calm, responsible manner.

When the pain is gone, and the range of motion, strength, agility and conditioning are back to normal, your player is ready to resume play. The entire process may take two days for a bruise to 12 weeks or more for a fracture. In either case, if you have followed the general guidelines of this chapter, you know you have acted in the best long-term interest of the player. Participation is important, but only if the participation is achieved with a healthy body. Resist the pressure and the temptation to rush players into a game before they are ready. Your patience will be rewarded in terms of the long-term health and performance of your players.



## Section 6

# Appendices





# Appendix 1: Forms

The following pages contain forms that you may find useful throughout the season. Please utilize them as you see fit for your program.

- Coach Self-Evaluation Form
- Consent to Treat/Medical History Form
- Waiver of Liability, Release Assumption of Risk and Indemnity Agreement
- Attendance/Injury Report Form
- Injury Reporting Form
- Insurance and Player Information Form



## COACH SELF EVALUATION

**For the Coach:** Using the following chart, evaluate how well you carry out your roles as a leader, teacher and organizer. For each statement, select the word that best describes you. This chart can be used to assess yourself throughout the season.

	Excellent	Good	Need Improvement
<b>As a Leader, I:</b>			
1. Establish goals	_____	_____	_____
2. Use a democratic coaching style	_____	_____	_____
3. Am a good role model	_____	_____	_____
4. Develop leadership skills in my athletes	_____	_____	_____
5. Have a positive relationship with officials	_____	_____	_____
6. Interact effectively with parents	_____	_____	_____
7. Help athletes maximize their potential	_____	_____	_____
<b>As a Teacher, I:</b>			
1. Teach the necessary hockey skills	_____	_____	_____
2. Teach the skills using the proper sequence and progressions	_____	_____	_____
3. Teach skills using understandable language	_____	_____	_____
4. Realize athletes differ in their readiness to learn a skill	_____	_____	_____
5. Realize athletes learn skills at different rates	_____	_____	_____
6. Teach more than just hockey skills	_____	_____	_____
<b>As an Organizer, I:</b>			
1. Plan effective practices	_____	_____	_____
2. Select very good assistant coaches	_____	_____	_____
3. Have parents assist in the program	_____	_____	_____
4. Attend to details	_____	_____	_____
5. Communicate effectively	_____	_____	_____





# USA Hockey

## Consent To Treat/Medical History Form



This is to certify that on this date, I \_\_\_\_\_, as parent or guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, (athlete participant), or for myself as an adult participant, give my consent to USA Hockey and its medical representative to obtain medical care from any licensed physician, hospital, or clinic for the above mentioned participant, for any injury that could arise from participation in USA Hockey sanctioned events.

If said participant is covered by any insurance company, please complete the following:

Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian/Adult Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Excess accident insurance up to \$25,000, subject to deductibles, exclusions and certain limitations, is provided to all USA Hockey registered team participants. For further details visit [usahockey.com](http://usahockey.com) or contact USA Hockey at (719) 576-USAH.

### EMERGENCY CONTACT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital of Choice: \_\_\_\_\_

### COMPLETION OF MEDICAL HISTORY INFORMATION BELOW IS OPTIONAL

#### MEDICAL HISTORY

If the answer to any of the following questions is yes, please describe the problem and its implications for proper first aid treatment on the back of this form.

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Head Injury<br>(concussion, skull fracture) | <input type="checkbox"/> Asthma              | <input type="checkbox"/> Allergies _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fainting spells                             | <input type="checkbox"/> High blood pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Convulsions/epilepsy                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Kidney problems     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neck or back injury                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Hernia              | _____                                    |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Heart murmur        | _____                                    |

#### Have you had (or do you currently have) any of the following?

Have you had a recent tetanus booster? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently taking any medications? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please list all medications on back.

Has a doctor placed any restrictions on your activity? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please explain on back.





## Waiver of Liability, Release Assumption of Risk & Indemnity Agreement

It is the purpose of this agreement to exempt, waive and relieve releasees from liability for personal injury, property damage, and wrongful death, including if caused by negligence, including the negligence, if any, of releasees. "Releasees" include USA Hockey, Inc., its affiliate associations, local associations, member teams, event hosts, other participants, coaches, officials, sponsors, advertisers, and each of them, their officers, directors, agents and employees.

For and in consideration of the undersigned participant's registration with USA Hockey, Inc., its affiliates, local associations and member teams (all referred to together as USAH) and being allowed to participate in USAH events and member team activities, participant (and the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of participant, if applicable) waive, release and relinquish any and all claims for liability and cause(s) of action, including for personal injury, property damage or wrongful death occurring to participant, arising out of participation in USAH events, member team activities, the sport of ice hockey, and/or activities incidental thereto, whenever or however they occur and for such period said activities may continue, and by this agreement any such claims, rights, and causes of action that participant (and participant's parent(s) or legal guardian(s), if applicable) may have are hereby waived, released and relinquished, and participant (and parent(s)/guardian(s), if applicable) does(do) so on behalf of my/our and participant's heirs, executors, administrators and assigns.

Participant (and participant's parent(s)/guardian(s), if applicable) acknowledge, understand and assume all risks relating to ice hockey and any member team activities, and understand that ice hockey and member team activities involve risks to participant's person including bodily injury, partial or total disability, paralysis and death, and damages which may arise therefrom and that I/we have full knowledge of said risks. These risks and dangers may be caused by the negligence of the participant or the negligence of others, including the "releasees" identified below. These risks and dangers include, but are not limited to, those arising from participating with bigger, faster and stronger participants, and these risks and dangers will increase if participant participates in ice hockey and member team activities in an age group above that which participant would normally participate in. I/We further acknowledge that there may be risks and dangers not known to us or not reasonably foreseeable at this time. Participant (and participant's parent(s)/guardian(s), if applicable) acknowledge, understand and agree that all of the risks and dangers described throughout this agreement, including those caused by the negligence of participant and/or others, are included within the waiver, release and relinquishment described in the preceding paragraph. I/We agree to abide by and be bound under the rules of USA Hockey, including the By-Laws of the corporation and the arbitration clause provisions, as currently published. Copies are available to USA Hockey members upon written request.

Participant (and participant's parent(s)/guardian(s), if applicable) acknowledge, understand and assume the risks, if any, arising from the conditions and use of ice hockey rinks and related premises and acknowledge and understand that included within the scope of this waiver and release is any cause of action (including any cause of action based on negligence) arising from the performance, or failure to perform, maintenance, inspection, supervision or control of said areas and for the failure to warn of dangerous conditions existing at said rinks, for negligent selection of certain releasees, or negligent supervision or instruction by releasees.

If the law in any controlling jurisdiction renders any part of this agreement unenforceable, the remainder of this agreement shall nevertheless remain enforceable to the full extent, if any, allowed by controlling law. This agreement affects your legal rights, and you may wish to consult an attorney concerning this agreement.

Participant (and participant's parent(s)/guardian(s), if applicable) agree if any claim for participant's personal injury or wrongful death is commenced against releasees, he/she shall defend, indemnify and save harmless releasees from any and all claims or causes of action by whomever or wherever made or presented for participant's personal injuries, property damage or wrongful death.

Participant (and participant's parent(s)/guardian(s), if applicable) acknowledge that they have been provided and have read the above paragraphs and have not relied upon any representations of releasees, that they are fully advised of the potential dangers of ice hockey and understand these waivers and releases are necessary to allow amateur ice hockey to exist in its present form. Significant exclusions may apply to USA Hockey's insurance policies, which could affect any coverage. For example, there is no liability coverage for claims of one player against another player. Read your brochure carefully and, if you have any questions, contact USA Hockey or a District Risk Manager.

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE	Age _____	Date Signed _____
PARTICIPANT NAME (PRINT)		
PARENT OR GUARDIAN SIGNATURE (if Participant is 17 years of age or younger)		Date Signed _____

*This form to be retained by local program.*



# ATTENDANCE/INJURY REPORT

Coach: \_\_\_\_\_ Month: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: 20\_\_\_\_

DAY OF MONTH	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	31	COMMENTS
P=practice G=game																																
ROSTER																																
1.																																
2.																																
3.																																
4.																																
5.																																
6.																																
7.																																
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14.																																
15.																																
16.																																
17.																																
18.																																
19.																																
20.																																

**KEY** NOTE: If a player is at practice/game and has no sickness or injury, leave box blank.

- I Injured

E Excused — sick or ill

U Unexcused — did not practice/play; discipline or skipped

L Limited practice/play due to previous injury (no contact)

N New injury happened during practice/game

R Re-injury to same body part

G Gone from team — quit or removed from team

X Missed practice/game from a non-hockey injury

T Tardy to practice/game

Other

Other

Other





# INJURY REPORTING FORM



One form must be completed for each "injury" is defined as: Any ice hockey related ailment, occurring on the rink or player's bench, that kept (or would have kept) a player out of practice or competition for 24 hours or required medical attention (trainer, nurse or doctor) and all concussions, lacerations (cuts), dental, eye and nerve injuries.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Injury \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_ Trainer/MD Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Position played at time of injury (W, C, D, G) \_\_\_\_\_ Game opponent (team) \_\_\_\_\_  
Time of injury (Warm-ups, 1, 2, 3, OT, After) \_\_\_\_\_ Game frequency (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. game of event) \_\_\_\_\_

## TYPE OF INJURY

- |                                      |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contusion   | <input type="checkbox"/> Fracture    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laceration  | <input type="checkbox"/> Dislocation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strain      | <input type="checkbox"/> Concussion  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sprain      |                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |                                      |

## BODY PART AFFECTED

(Check the affected areas and indicate left or right side)

- |                                      |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Head/Scalp  | <input type="checkbox"/> Chest      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Face/Nose   | <input type="checkbox"/> Abdomen    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eye(s)      | <input type="checkbox"/> Back/Spine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mouth/Teeth | <input type="checkbox"/> Buttocks   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neck/Ear    | <input type="checkbox"/> Groin      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shoulder    | <input type="checkbox"/> Hip        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arm/Elbow   | <input type="checkbox"/> Leg/Knee   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wrist       | <input type="checkbox"/> Ankle      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hand/Finger | <input type="checkbox"/> Foot/Toe   |

## INJURED'S CATEGORY

- |                                      |                                    |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Player      | <input type="checkbox"/> Coach     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Referee     | <input type="checkbox"/> Manager   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer   | <input type="checkbox"/> Spectator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |                                    |

## INTENT TO INJURE?

(according to injured player)

- ☐ YES ☐ NO

## PENALTY CALLED?

- ☐ YES ☐ NO

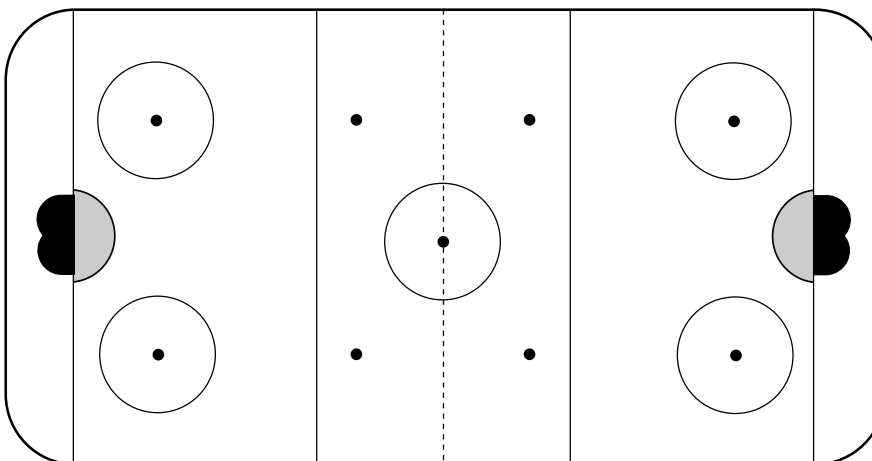
## NEW INJURY?

- ☐ YES ☐ NO

## HOW INJURY OCCURRED

- ☐ Contact with boards
- ☐ Contact with goal/net
- ☐ Body contact with another person
- ☐ Caused by a body check
- ☐ Incidental to playing puck/ball
- ☐ Struck by a stick
- ☐ Contact with skate
- ☐ Contact with floor
- ☐ Struck by puck
- ☐ No apparent contact
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## LOCATION (X on diagram where injury occurred)



Please indicate the injured player's defending goal

Brief description of injury (what happened): \_\_\_\_\_

What action was taken for injury? \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Treating \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_



## INSURANCE & PLAYER INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor's Name & Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Policy No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_ Medications: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor's Name & Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Policy No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_ Medications: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor's Name & Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Policy No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_ Medications: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor's Name & Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Policy No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_ Medications: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor's Name & Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Policy No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_ Medications: \_\_\_\_\_



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