

Prior Lake Youth Hockey Points of Emphasis (Part 1)

Individual Skills All Players

- Age Appropriate Checking (stick down, eye's on player, no puck watching)
- Angling (dictate where players go)
- Play without puck, *very important* (move and support)
- Puck protection (use you rear-end, legs, and reach)
- Quick Decisions (don't wait to learn in high school, too late)

Individual Skills Defenseman

- Always lead with stick when engaging puck (one hand on stick)
- Watch the player not the puck
- Stay on defensive side of puck in D Zone, puck to the outside
- Head on swivel, be able to react to loss of coverage
- Make a good outlet pass, 1st pass is everything
- Read the forecheck, partner needs to communicate and help out
- Look over shoulder when retreating for puck in D Zone, be ready to make a play
- Look for stretch passes when available
- Beware cross ice passes
- Good gaps, stay up on play!!!

Defensive Zone Draws

- Players need to know their responsibilities, please stress the importance
- In high school we line up as follows (given a standard opponent formation) and is standard at the NHL, College, and Junior levels
 - 1 Defenseman on the wall
 - Center at center
 - 1 Defenseman on inside hash
 - 1 Wing 2 feet below inside hash on the circle below inside Defenseman
 - 1 Wing behind Defenseman on inside hash
 - Wing below hash shoots out to strong side defenseman or wing coming off boards
 - Note, inside wing below hash and defenseman on hash can flip flop positions. It all depends on the opposing team's attention to offensive zone responsibilities.
 - Wing behind Defenseman on hash shoots out to weak side Defenseman
 - Both W's need to identify draw win/loss and check off on players before shooting out. If there's a clean loss they shoot out immediately.
- Center stays with center on loss draw, stay on the D side of him and don't watch puck.

Power Play

- Overload
- Umbrella
- Use what works best for your team, but all players should know the language and be able to execute
- Keep the Power Play breakout simple; there is no need for more than two passes to gain zone entrance
- If a player has open ice on the breakout skate it, don't make it harder than necessary
- Only dump when absolutely necessary; attempt to keep puck possession when entering offensive zone

Forecheck

- Different for all teams and can change depending on opponent
- Typically F1 get's in, play's the body, create turnover
- Teach players different forechecks, they'll need to adjust when older

Please Place Emphasis On These Points

- Make defenseman and find time to work with them individually at practice; there's a good chance they will all play it at some point
- D is not for the weaker players, good defenseman make good teams
- Attitude on bench – teach them what acceptable and what's not. This will make a big difference down the road. Pouting and feeling sorry should be addressed immediately and not tolerated.
- Pre-game and Pre-practice preparation – all teams should warm up as a team prior to games and act like hockey players (tape sticks, listen to music, stretch). Game time is serious and players should prepare that way (all ages can get better at this). Teach them to act like hockey players!!
- Have meetings with players to address areas they need to improve on. No need to go overboard, but this is great feedback for players of all ages.

We've identified these areas as things that need to improve by the time players reach high school age. For many players, 10th and 11th grade is too late to learn many of these skills if they want to be successful at the high school level.

If you ever have any questions or just want to hash something over, feel free to give me a call or shoot an email. This stuff is important and will affect our program significantly in years to come. Thanks for all the time you guys put in, much appreciated by a lot of people!!

Thanks,
Joe Pankratz