

# LEVEL 2 – ASSOCIATE MANUAL



## Handbook 1: Methods Of Effective Coaching

*A Publication Of The USA Hockey Coaching Education Program*



The USA Hockey Coaching  
Education Program is Presented By



# USA Hockey Coaching Education Program

Level 2 — Associate Manual

HANDBOOK I  
Methods of Effective Coaching

Mark Tabrum  
Director, Coaching Education Program



Copyright © 1998, 2001, 2003, 2004 USA Hockey

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of USA Hockey, 1775 Bob Johnson Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80906.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data:

Belmonte, Val, 1951 -

USA Hockey Coaching Education Program Level 2 — Associate Manual  
Handbook I: Methods Of Effective Coaching

Cover: Dana Ausec

ISBN: 1-884125-14-X

10 9

The Publisher disclaims responsibility for any adverse effects or consequences from the misapplication or injudicious use of the information contained within this text.



# Contents

## Handbook I Methods of Effective Coaching

Preface . . . . .	vii
Acknowledgements . . . . .	ix
What is USA Hockey? . . . . .	xi
Purpose Statement . . . . .	xiii
Mission Statement . . . . .	xiii
Value Statement . . . . .	xiii
Coaching Education Guidelines . . . . .	xv
Codes of Conduct . . . . .	xvii
Abuse Policies . . . . .	xix
Core Values . . . . .	xix
Components and Competencies . . . . .	xx
<b>1 Introduction . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
Objectives . . . . .	I
For Whom is This Manual Written? . . . . .	1
How Should I Use This Manual? . . . . .	2
What Can I Gain By Using This Manual? . . . . .	2
Summary . . . . .	2
References . . . . .	3
Suggested Readings . . . . .	3
<b>2 Role of the Coach . . . . .</b>	<b>5</b>
Objectives . . . . .	5
USA Hockey Thanks You . . . . .	5
Introduction . . . . .	5
Coach as a Role Model . . . . .	6
Humanistic Aspects of Coaching . . . . .	7
Goals for the Coach . . . . .	8
Why I Coach: Developing Your Philosophy . . . . .	8
Role of the Assistant Coach . . . . .	9
Summary . . . . .	10
References . . . . .	10
Suggested Readings . . . . .	10

<b>3</b>	<b>Establishing a Good Relationship Between Coach and Parents</b> . . . . .	<b>13</b>
	Objectives . . . . .	13
	Introduction . . . . .	13
	Getting Parents to Attend an Orientation Meeting . . . . .	13
	Organizing the Parents' Orientation Meeting . . . . .	14
	Content of a Parents' Orientation Meeting . . . . .	14
	Follow-up on the Parents' Orientation Meeting . . . . .	16
	Summary . . . . .	17
	References . . . . .	17
	Suggested Readings . . . . .	17
<b>4</b>	<b>Effective Teaching and Risk Management</b> . . . . .	<b>19</b>
	Effective Teaching Objectives . . . . .	19
	Introduction . . . . .	19
	Effective Teaching Guidelines . . . . .	19
	Guidelines to Good Teaching . . . . .	21
	Protecting the Safety of Players . . . . .	25
	References . . . . .	26
	Suggested Readings . . . . .	26
	Risk Management Objectives . . . . .	26
	Introduction . . . . .	26
	Developing a Risk Management Program . . . . .	28
	The Legal Competencies Expected of Coaches . . . . .	28
	The "Management" Program for Coaching Risk Management . . . . .	31
	Implementing the Coaching Risk Management Program . . . . .	32
	Suggested Readings . . . . .	34
	Videos . . . . .	35
<b>5</b>	<b>Prevention of Common Hockey Injuries</b> . . . . .	<b>37</b>
	Objectives . . . . .	37
	Introduction . . . . .	37
	Injury Prevention Techniques . . . . .	37
	Severe Injuries and Illnesses . . . . .	38
	Potential Safety Hazards . . . . .	42
	Equipment: Guidelines for Selection and Fitting . . . . .	46
	Enforce the Rules . . . . .	48
	Summary . . . . .	48
	References . . . . .	49
	Suggested Readings . . . . .	49
<b>6</b>	<b>Care of Common Ice Hockey Injuries</b> . . . . .	<b>51</b>
	Objectives . . . . .	51
	Introduction . . . . .	51
	Medical Information . . . . .	51
	Emergency Procedures . . . . .	52
	Provide First Aid . . . . .	53
	Maintaining Appropriate Records . . . . .	54



Summary.....	55
References.....	55
Suggested Readings.....	55
<b>7 Growth and Development: Modifying Your Practice by Age.....</b>	<b>59</b>
Objectives.....	59
Introduction.....	59
Age-Adjusted Practices.....	60
Motor Development: Ages 6-10 Years.....	60
Components of Age-Adjusted Practices.....	61
References.....	61
Suggested Readings.....	61





# 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.

It is also the intent of USA Hockey that, through a comprehensive but practical educational system, the organization will meet the educational needs of our volunteer coaches.

The Manual represents a part of the new direction which will take USA Hockey's coaching program into the 21st century. Although this manual represents something new in the coaching education program, it also contains general coaching effectiveness methods and ice hockey specific material from USA Hockey's first manual *Fundamentals of Coaching Youth Ice Hockey*, which has been updated and revised so that it may be incorporated into this manual. Therefore, gratitude is extended to Dr. Vern Seefeldt, Paul Vogel, Keith Blase, Lou Vairo, Dave Peterson, Ken Johannson, as well as other authors involved in the first Associate Level Manual.

Sincere appreciation is also extended to the many people who contributed to this publication. Also, a special thanks to USA Hockey's Coaching Section, Youth Council, Legal Council and the Curriculum Committee. Finally, I would like to thank Val Belmonte (former Director, Coaching Education Program) for his vision and hard work that he put forth in the Coaching Education Program. Through his direction, USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program is the leader in educating and training coaches in youth sports. Thanks for all of your support!

As you read through the USA Hockey coaching materials, remember, create a fun and positive environment and allow the players to be creative and enjoy our wonderful sport.

Mark Tabrum  
Director, Coaching Education Program  
USA Hockey, Inc.







# Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the following individuals for their assistance and contributions in the preparation of this manual. All of your efforts added immeasurably to the final product, and your passion and dedication to the sport of ice hockey is deeply appreciated.

Dr. Alan Ashare  
Ken Asplund  
Bill Beaney  
Val Belmonte  
Joe Benedetto  
Steve Dagdigian  
Dave Durkin  
Dick Emahiser  
Dan Esdale  
Ernie Ferrari  
Tim Gerrish  
Alan Godfrey  
Sam Greenblatt  
Jim Johansson  
Ken Johansson  
Joe Mallen

Dr. B. Pat Maloy  
Jeff Marten  
Ed McGonagle  
John Mickler  
Bob O'Connor  
Glenn Olson  
Doug Palazzari  
Dave Peterson  
Ray Scherer  
Dr. Vern Seefeldt  
Ron Skibin  
Jim Smith  
Jack Stoskopf  
Kevin Sullivan  
Lou Vairo  
Doug Woog



# What is USA Hockey?

USA Hockey, Inc., is the National Governing Body for ice hockey in this country. As such, its mission is to promote the growth of ice hockey and to provide the best possible experience for all participants in the United States by encouraging, developing, advancing, and administering the sport.

Headquartered in Colorado Springs, Colo., USA Hockey is the official representative to the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) and the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF). In these roles, USA Hockey is responsible for organizing and training teams for international competition, whether it be a world tournament or the Olympic Games. It also coordinates activities with other national ice hockey federations around the world and, closer to home, works with the National Hockey League (NHL) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) on matters of mutual interest.

USA Hockey is divided into 11 districts throughout the United States. Each district has a Registrar to register teams, a Referee-In-Chief to register officials and organize clinics, a Coaching Program Director to administrate an educational program, and a Risk Manager to oversee liability and safety programs.

For the player, USA Hockey conducts annual regional and national championships in various age classifications, sponsors regional and national player development camps at the United States Olympic Training Centers and other suitable facilities, studies and makes recommendations for protective equipment, distributes Hat Trick, Playmaker, and Zero Club awards and provides an excellent insurance plan.

For coaches and officials, USA Hockey conducts clinics and produces training manuals and films through the Coaching Education Program and the Officiating Program. These programs can enrich the knowledge of either a coach or official through careful study, training and examination. USA Hockey also promotes uniformity in playing rules and their interpretations.

USA Hockey has not forgotten parents either, supplying these vital members of amateur hockey with a "Parent's Introduction To Youth Hockey," which includes tips on buying equipment, rules of the game, the role parents should play, and much more.

Another publication which keeps players, coaches, officials, and parents in touch with USA Hockey is *American Hockey Magazine*, published regularly throughout the year. The main communication vehicle for USA Hockey, the magazine is sent to every registered member of the organization as a benefit of membership.

Finally, USA Hockey acts as a clearinghouse for information to assist local organizations find solutions to problems at the grass roots levels, and annually publishes an "Official Guide" of the USA Hockey By-Laws, Constitution, Rules and Regulations, Board of Directors, Officers, Affiliate Associations and Staff.



# USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program

## Purpose Statement

Educating coaches in pursuit of excellence in ice hockey.

## Mission Statement

The USA Hockey Coaching Education Program is committed to developing coaches who will be effective instructors and role models through a comprehensive education program at all levels.

The Coaching Education Program shall emphasize the teaching of fundamental skills, conceptual development, sportsmanship, and respect for the dignity of the individual athlete.

## Value Statement

USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program will embrace the following values to establish the moral and ethical priorities that serve to guide the Coaching Program:

Character  
Commitment  
Enjoyment  
Integrity  
Knowledge  
Leadership  
Sportsmanship  
Vision



## Coaching Education Required Levels

USA Hockey requires that the following set of coaching education levels must be the **minimum criteria** for districts and/or affiliates.

It must be clearly understood that coaching education requirements must be monitored and enforced by the districts or affiliates.

All coaches must have the USA Hockey Coaching Education Program card by December 31 of the calendar year.

<b>Level Of Play</b>	<b>Coaching Education Program Level</b>
Mites (All 8 and under programs)	Level 1
Squirts	Level 2 ( <i>Prerequisite Level 1</i> )
Pee Wees	Level 3 ( <i>Prerequisite Level 1 and 2</i> )
Bantams	Level 3 ( <i>Prerequisite Level 1 and 2</i> )
Midgets	Level 3 ( <i>Prerequisite Level 1 and 2</i> )
Midgets (Tier I & Tier II National Tournament Bound)	Level 4 ( <i>Prerequisite Level 1, 2 and 3</i> )

<b>Level Of Play</b>	<b>Coaching Education Program Level</b>
High School	Level 3 ( <i>Prerequisite Level 1 and 2</i> )

<b>Level Of Play</b>	<b>Coaching Education Program Level</b>
Junior C	Level 3 ( <i>Prerequisite Level 1 and 2</i> )
Junior A & B	Level 4 ( <i>Per individual league guidelines</i> )

<b>Level Of Play</b>	<b>Coaching Education Program Level</b>
Girls/Women 8 & Under	Level 1
Girls/Women 10 & Under	Level 1
Girls/Women 12 & Under	Level 2 ( <i>Prerequisite Level 1</i> )
Girls/Women 14 & Under	Level 3 ( <i>Prerequisite Level 1 and 2</i> )
Girls/Women 16 & Under	Level 3 ( <i>Prerequisite Level 1 and 2</i> )
Girls/Women 19 & Under	Level 3 ( <i>Prerequisite Level 1 and 2</i> )

### Note

LEVEL 1	Skill Development
LEVEL 2	Associate
LEVEL 3	Intermediate
LEVEL 4	Advanced
LEVEL 5	Master

# 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, try-outs, etc.), State, District, Regional Playoff, National Championships or in the USA Hockey Player Development Programs. There will be an annual fee of \$25.00 to register the coaches (heads and assistants) and instructors. If a coach or instructor has paid a registration fee for the current year as a player he/she shall not be required to pay an additional fee as a coach or instructor.

Ice hockey coaches shall be registered on the official Team Roster Registration form. All registered coaches (heads and assistants) as well as instructors shall register through a Registrar, Associate Registrar, or Junior Roster Manager by completing the information on the Individual Membership Registration Form with appropriate fee. All registered coaches (heads and assistants) as well as instructors shall receive a USA Hockey membership card, a subscription to the American Hockey Magazine, the USA Hockey Annual Guide, the USA Hockey Official Playing Rules Book and insurance coverages (See Registration, Individual Players/Coaches/Instructors).

*Note: All USA Hockey Coaching Education Program Instructors, Skill Development Instructors and Course Conductors as well as National Player Development Camp Coaches will be exempt from the \$25.00 annual register fee, but must complete an Individual Membership Registration form.*

It is strongly recommended that all coaches and instructors wear hockey helmets during on-ice sessions, including practices, controlled scrimmages and coach and referee clinics (seminars).

Registration, education and other requirements for inline coaches are as provided in the InLine Rules and Regulations.

## Education and Years of Coaching Prerequisite

Education and years of coaching prerequisite requirements are noted in the Coaching Education Chart. These requirements must be strictly adhered to.

## Evidence of Level

Proof of coaching education level will be evidenced by a USA Hockey Coaching Education Card with appropriate dated verification sticker. This card must be carried by all coaches for all USA Hockey games.

Before the start of each game and in the presence of the referee, each coach must present their card to one another for verification of coaching education level.

If a coach cannot produce their current and up to date USA Hockey Coaching Education Card prior to the start of the first period, it must be noted on the official game score sheet and signed by the opposing coach.

Beginning January 1 of the current season, prior to the start of the game, all coaches present, from each team, 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. In addition, all coaches (Head and Assistant) must include their USA Hockey Coaching Education Program (CEP) card number, their CEP level (1 - Skill Development, 2 - Associate, 3 - Intermediate, 4 - Advanced, or 5 - Master) and the year their CEP level was attained. The CEP card number, level and year attained shall be printed legibly and next to the signature of the coach.





## Continuing Education Requirement

All coaches below Level 4 shall progress through the Coaching Education Program, attending a coaching clinic at least once every three years through Level 3 (Intermediate). After a coach has completed Level 3 (Intermediate), the coach shall do one of the following: attend another Level 3 (Intermediate) clinic within three years, take a USA Hockey Continuing Education Course within three years or attend a Level 4 (Advanced) clinic as per the Coaching Education Program Requirement chart. Once Level 4 (Advanced) is achieved, there is no further requirement for recertification.

If a coaches's accreditation was received more than 3 years from the current calendar year, the card is rendered invalid/expired below Level 4 (Advanced) and a refresher course at the same level or attending a clinic at the next level is necessary for the accreditation to remain current.

## Penalty and Enforcement

Beginning January 1 of the current season, it will be the responsibility of the district/affiliate to determine if there should be any penalties imposed on an individual coach who fails to produce a current, up-to-date coaching education card with appropriate verification of level. It will also be the responsibility of the local association registering the team to enforce any penalties.

## Under-Age Coaches

### (1) Student Coach

A player between the ages of 13 and 17 who is currently properly registered with USA Hockey.

### (2) Qualifications

- Must attend a training session conducted by the local hockey association.
- Must always be under the supervision of a carded, screened adult coach during all practices, clinics, try-outs and in the locker room.
- May help out at practices, clinics, try-outs only. (May not participate in scrimmages or games as a STUDENT COACH).
- May not act as an assistant or head coach during practices or games.
- May be on the bench during games with an adult.
- 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 down (e.g., a Pee Wee age player may act as a STUDENT COACH at the Squirt or Mite level).
- The organization that is using the STUDENT COACH must provide a form indicating on what team 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 the usa-hockey.com web site.
- 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.

# Coaching Ethics Code

All USA Hockey ice hockey coaches (head, assistant and instructors) must abide by the USA Hockey Coaching Ethics Code, and understand that violations may result in full or partial forfeiture of coaching privileges in programs, at sites or events under USA Hockey's governance. The Ethics Code Agreement states that the coach and/or instructor has read and will abide by USA Hockey's Coaching Ethics Code.

Ice hockey coaches and instructors need only have to sign this commitment each hockey season. All coaches have an obligation to be familiar with USA Hockey's Coaching Ethics Code, or as it may be amended from time to time. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of an ethical standard is not itself a defense to a charge of unethical conduct (See USA Hockey Coaching Ethics Code Booklet).

All registered USA Hockey ice hockey coaches and instructors of USA Hockey programs must sign the Coaching Ethics Code Agreement in order to be eligible to coach or instruct in any regular season activities (practices, clinics, games, tournaments, tryouts, etc.), State, District, Regional, Play-off, National Championships or in the USA Hockey Player Development Program.

## Coaches' Code of Conduct

Winning is a consideration, but not the only one, nor the most important one. Care more about the child than winning the game. Remember players are involved in hockey for fun and enjoyment.

Be a positive role model to your players, display emotional maturity and be alert to the physical safety of players.

Be generous with your praise when it is deserved, be consistent, honest, be fair and just, do not criticize players publicly, and study to learn to be a more effective communicator and coach, don't yell at players.

Adjust to personal needs and problems of players, be a good listener, never verbally or physically abuse a player or official, give all players the opportunity to improve their skills, gain confidence and develop self-esteem, teach the basics.

Organize practices that are fun and challenging for your players. Familiarize yourself with the rules, techniques and strategies of hockey, encourage all your players to be team players.

Maintain an open line of communication with your players' parents. Explain the goals and objectives of your association.

Be concerned with the overall development of your players. Stress good health habits and clean living.

To play the game is great, to love the game is greater.

## Parents' Code of Conduct

Do not force your children to participate in sports, but support their desires to play their chosen sport. 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. Deemphasize 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 victory and in defeat, and reinforce 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 sport.

Recognize the importance of volunteer coaches. They are very 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 the game, and volunteer!

## Players' Code of Conduct

Play for FUN!

Work to improve your skills.

Be a team player—get along with your teammates.

Learn teamwork, sportsmanship, and discipline.

Be on time for practices and games.

Learn the rules, and play by them. Always be a good sport.

Respect your coach, your teammates, your parents, opponents, and officials.

Never argue with officials' decisions.

## Sexual Abuse Policy

It is the policy of USA Hockey that there shall be no sexual abuse of any minor participant involved in any of its Sanctioned Programs, its Training Camps, Hockey Clinics, Coaches Clinics, Referee Clinics, Regional and National Tournaments or other USA Hockey events by an employee, volunteer, or independent contractor. Sexual abuse of a minor participant occurs when an employee, volunteer or independent contractor touches a minor participant for the purpose of causing the sexual arousal or gratification of either the minor participant or the employee, volunteer or independent contractor. Sexual abuse of a minor participant also occurs when a minor player touches an employee, volunteer or independent contractor for the sexual arousal or sexual gratification of either the minor participant or the employee, volunteer or independent contractor, if the touching occurs at the request or with the consent of the employee, volunteer or independent contractor.

Neither consent of the player to the sexual contact, mistake as to the participant's age, nor the fact that the sexual contact did not take place at a hockey function are defenses to a complaint of sexual abuse.

Upon proof of violation of this policy, the violator will be permanently banned or suspended from USA Hockey sanctioned programs and/or the programs of its Affiliate Associations.

## Screening Policy

It is the policy of USA Hockey that it will not authorize or sanction in its programs that it directly controls any volunteer or employee who has routine access to children (anyone under the age of majority) who refuses to consent to be screened by USA Hockey before he/she is allowed to have routine access to children in USA Hockey's programs. Further, it is the policy of USA Hockey that it will require its affiliates to adopt this policy as a condition of its affiliation with USA Hockey.

A person may be disqualified and prohibited from serving as an employee or volunteer of USA Hockey if the person has:

- 1) Been convicted (including crimes the record of which has been expunged and pleas of “no contest”) of a crime of child abuse, sexual abuse of a minor, physical abuse, causing a child’s death, neglect of a child, murder, manslaughter, felony assault, any assault against a minor, kidnapping, arson, criminal sexual conduct, prostitution related crimes or controlled substance crimes;
- 2) Being adjudged liable for civil penalties or damages involving sexual or physical abuse of children;
- 3) Being subject to any court order involving any sexual abuse or physical abuse of a minor, including but not limited to domestic order or protection;
- 4) Had their parental rights terminated;
- 5) A history with another organization (volunteer, employment, etc.) of complaints of sexual or physical abuse of minors;
- 6) Resigned, been terminated or been asked to resign from a position, whether paid or unpaid, due to complaint(s) of sexual or physical abuse of minors; or
- 7) Has a history of other behavior that indicates they may be a danger to children in USA Hockey.

## Physical Abuse Policy

It is the policy of USA Hockey that there shall be no physical abuse of any participant involved in any of its Sanctioned Programs, its Training Camps, Hockey Clinics, Coaches Clinics, Referee Clinics, Regional and National Tournaments or other USA Hockey events by any employee, volunteer or independent contractor. Physical abuse means physical contact with a participant that intentionally causes the participant to sustain bodily harm or personal injury. Physical abuse also includes physical contact with a participant that intentionally creates a threat of immediate bodily harm or personal injury.

Physical abuse does not include physical contact that is reasonably designed to coach, teach or demonstrate a hockey skill. Permitted physical conduct may include, but is not necessarily limited to, shooting pucks at a goaltender, demonstrating checking and other hockey skills, and communicating with or directing participants, during the course of a game or practice, by touching them in a non-threatening, non-sexual manner.

## Core Values

The following core values of USA Hockey are adopted to guide the Association’s members in its planning, programming and play, both now and in the future.

**SPORTSMANSHIP:** Foremost of all values is to learn a sense of fair play. Become humble in victory, gracious in defeat. We will foster friendship with teammates and opponents alike.

**RESPECT FOR THE INDIVIDUAL:** Treat all others as you expect to be treated.

**INTEGRITY:** We work to foster honesty and fair play beyond mere strict interpretation of the rules and regulations of the game.

**PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE AT THE INDIVIDUAL, TEAM, AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS:** Each member of the organization, whether player, volunteer or staff, should seek to perform each aspect of the game to the highest level of his or her ability.

**ENJOYMENT:** It is important for the hockey experience to be fun, satisfying, and rewarding for the participant.

**LOYALTY:** We aspire to teach loyalty to the ideals and fellow members of the sport of hockey.

**TEAMWORK:** We value the strength of learning to work together. The use of teamwork is reinforced and rewarded by success in the hockey experience.



# USA Hockey Coaching Education Program Components and Competencies

The Coaching Education Program of USA Hockey is committed to developing coaches through a comprehensive education program at all levels. Since quality coaching is the single most important element affecting the development of athletes and the sport itself, the experience athletes gained through participation will come from a direct influence of the coach’s qualifications, education, and competencies. Therefore, it is paramount that USA Hockey prepare its coaches through a comprehensive curriculum. The following components represent the essential elements for USA Hockey’s Coaching Education Program.

1. **Sports Medicine/Safety/Legal Component:** The coaching education program shall provide knowledge, references, and competencies in the area of first aid, care and prevention of athletic injuries, safety, and legal responsibilities.
2. **Psycho-Social Sports Science Component:** The coaching education program will provide knowledge, references, and competencies in the area of leadership, humanistic coaching and the behavioral aspects of athletic participation as it relates to the coach, athlete, parent, and society.
3. **Bio-Physical Sports Science Component:** The coaching education program will include basic knowledge, references and competencies in the area of practical application in the principles of anatomical kinesiology, and physiological aspects dealing with improving skills, motor development, and stages of human growth and development.
4. **Pedagogy Component:** The coaching education program shall provide knowledge, references and competencies in administration and organizational skills, planning theory, teaching techniques, coaching techniques, effective communication, and philosophical theory.
5. **Technical, Tactical, and Conceptual Component:** The coaching education program shall provide knowledge, references and competencies in the technical, tactical and conceptual aspects in the sport of ice hockey.

## Levels of USA Hockey Coaching Education Program

- Level 1 Skill Development
- Level 2 Associate
- Level 3 Intermediate
- Level 4 Advanced
- Level 5 Master

### 1. Sports Medicine/ Safety/Legal Component

Principles of Safety	Level 1 — Skill Development
Organizing a First Aid Kit	Level 2 — Associate
Risk Management Issues (Part 1)	Level 2 — Associate
Risk Management Issues (Part 2)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Legal Responsibilities (Part 1)	Level 2 — Associate
Legal Responsibilities (Part 2)	Level 3 — Intermediate



Care and Prevention of Injuries (Part 1)	Level 2 — Associate
Care and Prevention of Injuries (Part 2)	Level 3 — Intermediate
<b>2. Psycho-Social Sports Science Component</b>	
Leadership (Part 1)	Level 1 — Skill Development
Leadership (Part 2)	Level 2 — Associate
Coach/Parent Relationship Issues (Part 1)	Level 2 — Associate
Coach/Parent Relationship Issues (Part 2)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Amateur Athletics in Today's Society	Level 4 — Advanced
Building Self-Esteem	Level 3 — Intermediate
Motivation of Athletes	Level 4 — Advanced
Stress Management	Level 4 — Advanced
Psychology of Coaching	Level 4 — Advanced
Team Building	Level 4 — Advanced
Ethical Conduct in Sports (Part 1)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Ethical Conduct in Sports (Part 2)	Level 4 — Advanced
Developing a Philosophy	Level 2 — Associate
Goal Setting	Level 4 — Advanced
Mental Preparation	Level 4 — Advanced
<b>3. Bio-Physical Sports Science Component</b>	
Skill Analysis (Part 1)	Level 1 — Skill Development
Skill Analysis (Part 2)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Stages of Growth and Development (Part 1)	Level 2 — Associate
Stages of Growth and Development (Part 2)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Basic Motor Movement (Part 1)	Level 2 — Associate
Basic Motor Movement (Part 2)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Nutrition (Part 1)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Nutrition (Part 2)	Level 4 — Advanced
Off-Ice Training and Conditioning	Level 4 — Advanced
High Speed Training	Level 4 — Advanced
<b>4. Pedagogy Component</b>	
Communication	Level 1 — Skill Development
Effective Communication	Level 2 — Associate
Teaching Skills	Level 1 — Skill Development
Progressive Teaching Technique	Level 2 — Associate
Advanced Teaching/Coaching Techniques	Level 4 — Advanced
Lesson Organization	Level 1 — Skill Development
Organizing the Season (Part 1)	Level 2 — Associate
Organizing the Season (Part 2)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Season Planning	Level 4 — Advanced
Basic Practice Planning (Part 1)	Level 2 — Associate
Basic Practice Planning (Part 2)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Practice Cycles	Level 4 — Advanced
Drill Development (Part 1)	Level 2 — Associate
Drill Development (Part 2)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Proper Use of Assistant Coaches (Part 1)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Proper Use of Assistant Coaches (Part 2)	Level 4 — Advanced



## 5. Technical, Tactical, and Conceptual Components

Skating (Part 1)	Level 1 — Skill Development
Skating (Part 2)	Level 2 — Associate
Skating (Part 3)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Puck Control (Part 1)	Level 1 — Skill Development
Puck Control (Part 2)	Level 2 — Associate
Puck Control (Part 3)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Passing/Receiving (Part 1)	Level 1 — Skill Development
Passing/Receiving (Part 2)	Level 2 — Associate
Passing/Receiving (Part 3)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Shooting (Part 1)	Level 1 — Skill Development
Shooting (Part 2)	Level 2 — Associate
Shooting (Part 3)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Checking Skills (Part 1)	Level 2 — Associate
Checking Skills (Part 2)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Goaltending (Part 1)	Level 2 — Associate
Goaltending (Part 2)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Goaltending (Part 3)	Level 4 — Advanced
Individual Tactics (Part 1)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Individual Tactics (Part 2)	Level 4 — Advanced
Concepts (Part 1)	Level 2 — Associate
Concepts (Part 2)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Concepts (Part 3)	Level 4 — Advanced
Introduction to Systems (Part 1)	Level 3 — Intermediate
Systems (Part 2)	Level 4 — Advanced
Specialty Teams	Level 4 — Advanced
Scouting	Level 4 — Advanced
Use of Video in Practice and Games	Level 4 — Advanced
Use of Statistics in Practice and Games	Level 4 — Advanced
Bench Management/Game Preparation	Level 4 — Advanced
Selection of Players	Level 3 — Intermediate
Evaluation and Selection of Personnel	Level 4 — Advanced

# 1

## Introduction

### OBJECTIVES

- To identify for whom this manual is written
- To explain how to use this manual
- To point out what a coach will gain by using this manual

### FOR WHOM IS THIS MANUAL WRITTEN?

The success of any youth hockey program depends on the quality of the adult leadership available to instruct and guide its players. Most of the direct contact between adults and children in a youth hockey program occurs in a coach-player relationship. For this reason, youth hockey coaches should be chosen with the greatest care. They should be provided with every educational opportunity to grow in their roles as models, teachers, counselors, and friends of young athletes.

*The success that your players achieve will depend largely on the choices that you make as a coach.*

Despite an organization's best efforts to recruit and educate its coaches, there is usually a shortage of qualified individuals to fill the numerous coaching vacancies that exist at the beginning of each season. The dilemma that faces the league administrators in such situations is to (1) reduce the number of teams, or (2) persuade those who are reluctant to volunteer their services to accept the responsibilities of being a coach. In most programs, the latter

course of action is attempted first, generally with considerable success. However, solving one problem by filling vacancies with what may be inexperienced, unqualified coaches often creates other problems that will require attention prior to and during the season. This manual provides solutions to many of the problems associated with educating youth hockey coaches.

*Educating its coaches is one of the most sound investments a youth ice hockey organization can make.*

The education and guidance of its inexperienced coaches is an essential investment for every youth hockey program. This manual provides simple, practical, user-friendly, and age-specific information, written for the grass-roots level coach. Although many coaches may have acquired much of their information about hockey as a result of their previous experience, this manual contains items likely to assist even the veteran coach. Recent developments in the area of motivation, discipline, injury prevention, methods of instruction, and evaluation are provided in a practical manner. The essential skills of hockey, their key elements, common errors, and suggestions for coaching are also included. Additional references are avail-



able at the end of most chapters for those who seek information that is beyond the scope of this manual.

## HOW SHOULD I USE THIS MANUAL?

This manual is provided in three handbooks: Handbook I—Methods of Effective Coaching; Handbook II—Individual Skill Techniques; Handbook III—Organizing for the Season and Practices. The chapters are arranged in a sequence which permits the inexperienced coach to begin Chapter 1 and proceed through the manual, in order.

**The beginning coach is advised to read and study the material on the “Role of the Coach,” “Planning for the Season and Practices,” and the chapters on teaching skills and concepts.** Then all of the remaining chapters should be read, based on your need for information on a specific topic. Special considerations such as communicating effectively, working with parents, evaluating one’s own performance as a coach, and legal responsibilities are discussed in separate chapters to facilitate access to this information.

**Each chapter is written so that it may be read in isolation without detracting from its content.** Thus, the coach who has a special need, i.e., handling discipline problems, could read that chapter without having read previous chapters.

**Experienced coaches may wish to turn immediately to the “Role of the Coach Chart” in Chapter 2.** Using this chart will help you evaluate your role as a teacher, leader, and organizer.

*Experienced coaches may read any chapter which meets their immediate need for specific information.*

The independent nature of the chapters does not imply that the information therein is unrelated to other content in the manual. Most chapters will refer the reader to information in other sections of the manual. This cross-referencing of related information should assist coaches who are interested in the comprehensive understanding of a specific topic, or topics.

## WHAT CAN I GAIN BY USING THIS MANUAL?

Coaches will appreciate the practical nature of the content and the opportunity to obtain information without having to read several sources. Coaches who believe that youth hockey programs should exist for the benefit of children will find this philosophy expressed throughout the manual. Each chapter is written with its focus on the welfare of young athletes. All the instructions and examples are intended to facilitate your attempts to provide the best possible environment in which to teach physical, social, mental, and attitudinal skills through the activity of ice hockey.

*The content of this manual is based on the belief that youth ice hockey programs should exist for the benefit of the players.*

**The primary contribution of this manual lies in its attempt to help you become a more effective teacher.** From the outset, coaches are encouraged to accept their multiple roles as models, teachers, counselors, and advocates of the players. Subsequent chapters emphasize the need for organization and a thorough knowledge of the various skills to be taught.

The changing nature of coaching techniques and the supporting facts are provided here in the most up-to-date compilation available. Thus, experienced coaches may benefit from a review of this manual, despite their familiarity with the sport.

## SUMMARY

The chapters of this manual contain information that is essential to the grass roots level ice hockey coach. Each of the chapters is a comprehensive unit of its own. **Handbook I** includes chapters on *Role of the Coach, Establishing a Good Relationship Between Coach and Parents, Effective Teaching and Risk Management, Prevention of Common Hockey Injuries, Care of Common Hockey Injuries, and Growth and Development.* **Handbook II** includes chapters on *Observing, Analyzing and Demonstrating, Skating Skills, Puck Control Skills, Passing and Receiving Skills, Shooting Skills, Goalkeeping Skills, Checking*



*Skills, Basic Concepts of Play, and Ice Hockey Terminology. Handbook III* includes chapters on *Planning for the Season and Practice, Sample Practice Plans, Skill Drills, and Coach's Sample Forms for Planning and Recordkeeping*. Each Handbook contains an *Index*.

Coaches will find that the manual advocates a child-centered approach to ice hockey, with recommendations for the latest techniques to use as a teacher and role model for young athletes. The application of this material to the coaching of youth ice hockey will benefit coaches and athletes alike, because its orientation suggests that the success of the season is determined largely by the extent of the participants' personal growth, rather than exclusively by the record of games won or lost.

#### REFERENCES

- Fox, E.L. (1984). *Sport Physiology*. Philadelphia, PA: Saunders College Publishing.
- Martens, R. (1987). *Coaches Guide to Sports Psychology*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers.
- #### SUGGESTED READINGS
- Frew, J.F. (1988). *The Art of Coaching Kids*. Kenthurst, Australia: Kangaroo Press, Ltd.
- Gleeson, G. (Ed.) (1986). *The Growing Child In Competitive Sport*. Toronto, Ont., Canada: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Hustlar, J. (1985). *Beyond X's and O's*. Kernerville, NC: North American Youth Sport Institute.
- Magill, R., Ash, M.J., and Smoll, F.L. (1987). *Children in Sport*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers.
- Margenau, E.A. (1990). *Sports Without Pressure*. New York: Gardner Press, Inc.
- Martens, R. (1978). *Joy and Sadness in Children's Sports*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers.
- Orlick, T., and Botterill, C. (1980). *Every Kid Can Win*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- Schreiber, L.R. (1990). *The Parents' Guide to Kids' Sports*. Boston: A Sports Illustrated Book. Little, Brown Company.
- Seefeldt, V. (1987). *Handbook for Youth Coaches*. Reston, VA: AAHPERD.
- Smith, R., Smoll, F.L., and Smith, N.J. (1989). *Parents' Complete Guide to Youth Sports*. Reston, VA: AAHPERD.
- Valeriote, T. (1984). *Children's Sport Program: The Parent—The Coach—The Administrator*. Ottawa, Ont., Canada: New Traditions.
- Youth Sports Institute (1979). *Coaching Youth in Team Sports*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University.



# 2

## Role of the Coach

### OBJECTIVES

- To identify the primary roles of a youth hockey coach and assistant coach
- To understand the benefits that ice hockey offers its participants
- To understand the value of quality coaching and leadership and its effect on the 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 of 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. GOOD LUCK.

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 that 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 totally beneficial experience, as a hockey coach it is your responsibility to ensure that the experi-

ences 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

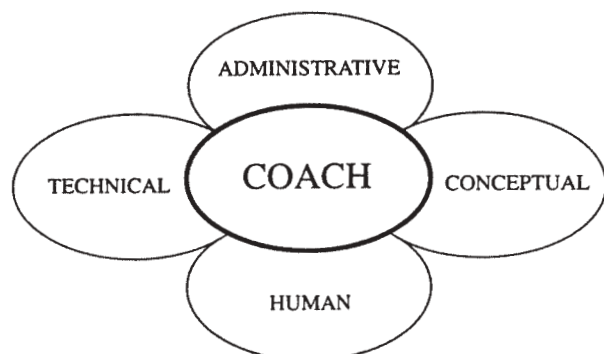
A player will benefit from an ice hockey program when the coach creates a positive environment and sets appropriate objectives. However, if the coach sets inappropriate goals, this will create a negative environment, and problems may result.

A well educated, caring, youth coach helps players to:

- Develop appropriate skills
- 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 unrealistic 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 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 strategic 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.” So whatever the coach says or does, it must be right, because he/she is being looked up to.

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 in Handbook I is devoted to this subject.

You become a teacher

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

### **Be a Good Counselor**

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

- 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
- someone to laugh with
- someone to work with
- someone to trust
- someone to turn to
- someone who cares

### **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
- to parents
- to the community
- to the organization
- to 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
- for expressing a passion for the game of hockey
- for a lifestyle
- for keeping your composure
- for expressing compassion

### **Be a Good Administrator**

Keeping things organized will help everything run smoother. Pay particular attention

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

### **Be a Good Guardian**

As a coach you are the guardian

- of the integrity for each individual
- of the integrity for the sport of ice hockey
- of 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.

*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 by-product.

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
- A feeling of belonging
- A 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
- Children's self esteem built up
- 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 through-

out 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, as well as 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 an instructor. 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 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

#### Suggestions for Coaches

- Head coaches should clearly define the role that the assistant will play throughout the season. This includes responsibilities, duties, and expectations.
- 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.
- 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.
- For a self-evaluation of your coaching effectiveness, see *Role of the Coach Chart* at the end of this chapter.

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.

### 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, a good instructor, know the rules, 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.

### REFERENCES

- Blanchard, K., and Johnson, S. (1982). *The One Minute Manager*. New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc.
- Douge, B. (1987). *Coaching Qualities of Coaches*.
- Gould, D. (1983). Developing Psychological Skills in Young Athletes. *Coaching Science Update*, 4-10.
- Jones, B., and Wells, L. (1982). *Guide to Effective Coaching*.
- Martens, R., Christina, R.W., Harvey, J.S., Jr., and Sharkey, B.J. (1981). *Coaching Young Athletes* (Chapters 1-2, 7-10). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers, Inc.
- Martens, R., and Seefeldt, V. (Eds.) (1979). *Guidelines for Children's Sports*. Reston, VA: AAHPERD.
- Martin, G.L. (1987). *Coaching: An Effective Behavioral Approach*.
- National Coaching Certification Program (1979). *Coaching Theory: Level One* (Chapters 1,6, and 7). Ottawa, Ontario: Coaching Association of Canada.
- National Task Force on Children's Play (1979). *Fair Play Codes for Children in Sport*. Ottawa, Ontario: Canadian Council on Children and Youth.

### SUGGESTED READINGS

- Alberta Sport Council. *They're Calling You Coach*. Edmonton, Alb., Canada: Alberta Sport Council.
- Australian Coaching Council (1990). *Beginning Coaching: Level 1 Coach's Manual*. Belconnen, Australia: Australian Sports Commission.
- Bearpark, B. (1988). *Fun in Sport—How Coaches Can Reinforce the Positive Values of Sport* (in Focus Series). Gloucester, Ont., Canada: Coaching Association of Canada.
- Bell, K. (1985). *Coaching Excellence*. Austin, TX: Kiel Publications.



- Coaching Association of Manitoba (1990). *Call Me Coach—An Introduction to Coaching*. Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada.
- Gowan, G. (1987). *Building Your Own Coaching Profile* (in Focus Series). Gloucester, Ont., Canada: The Coaching Association of Canada.
- Howell, R.D. (1980). *Pre-Season Checklist for Youth Sport Coaches*. East Lansing, MI: Youth Sports Institute, Michigan State University.
- Martens, R. (1990). *Successful Coaching*. Champaign, IL: Leisure Press.
- McPherson, B. and Davidson, L. (1980). *Minor Hockey in Ontario*. Willowdale, Ont., Canada: Hockey Development Centre for Ontario.
- National Coaching Foundation (1986). *Coaching Handbook One: The Coach at Work*. Leeds, UK: National Coaching Foundation.
- Seefeldt, V. and Brown, E.W. (1992). *Program for Athletic Coaches Education (PACE)*. Carmel, IN: Cooper Publishing Group.
- Seefeldt, V., Smoll, F.L., Smith, R.E., and Gould, D. (1981). *A Winning Philosophy for Youth Sports Programs*. East Lansing, MI: Youth Sports Institute, Michigan State University.
- Zulewski, R. (1993). *The Parent's Guide to Coaching Hockey*. Cincinnati, OH: Betterway Books.

## 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 which 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	_____	_____	_____



# 3

## 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 my responsibility to the parents of the players on my 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

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

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 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 that they could attend. This information, as well as items of parental concern for an agenda, can be obtained through telephone conversations with the parents. Once the time and date have been determined, the parents should be notified about this information by telephone or brief letter.

If a letter 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 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, medical examination form (if provided by your program), accident insurance form and information (if provided through your program), athletic medical information form, medical release form, description of proper equipment, list of team assistants and responsibilities, season schedule, telephone tree, and player and 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

Each agenda item and its relationship to the hockey program is explained in the following.

### **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 (e.g., carpooling and 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.

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

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?

Please refer to the **Coaches Code of Conduct** in the frontmatter of this manual.

## 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 film, 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, and strategies 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.

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

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 (at the end of this chap-



ter) 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 hand-out describing proper equipment should be provided. A list and guidelines for the selection of hockey equipment is provided in Chapter 5. This could be reproduced and used as a hand-out 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. This can be found in the frontmatter of this handbook. 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 and teammates
- 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

These responsibilities should be discussed so parents may help reinforce them at home. Please refer to the **Player's Code of Conduct** in the frontmatter of this manual.

## 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. Please refer to the **Parent's Code of Conduct** in the frontmatter of this manual.

## Season Schedule

Fewer telephone calls and memos 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).

*Keep the lines of communication open between you and the parents.*

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 parent's comments. By inviting parents to talk with you, they will become a positive rather than 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.

## REFERENCES

- Martens, R. (1978). *Joys and sadness in children's sports*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers.  
Martens, R. and Seefeldt, V. (Eds.). (1979). *Guidelines for children's sports*. Reston, VA: AAHPERD.

## SUGGESTED READINGS

- Doherty, P. and Hedley, B. (1982). *The Hockey Administrator's Manual*. Willowdale, Ont., Canada: Hockey Development Centre for Ontario.  
Hockey Development Centre for Ontario (1982). *You and Your Child in Hockey*. Willowdale, Ont., Canada: HDCO.  
Foley, J. (1980). *Questions Parents Should Ask About Youth Sports Programs*. East Lansing, MI: Youth Sports Institute, Michigan State University.  
National Task Force On Children's Play (1979). *Fair Play Codes for Children in Sport*. Ottawa, Ont., Canada: Canadian Council on Children and Youth.  
Smoll, F. *Introduction to Coaching: Communicating with Parents*. Gloucester, Ont., Canada: The Coaching Association of Canada.  
USA Hockey (1982). *Parent Introduction to Youth Hockey*. Colorado Springs, CO: USA Hockey.  
USA Hockey. *The Relationship Between Coach and Parent*. Colorado Springs, CO: USA Hockey.





# MEDICAL HISTORY FORM

(COMPLETION OF THIS SIDE OF THE FORM IS OPTIONAL)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## WHO TO CONTACT IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital of Choice: \_\_\_\_\_

## PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:

If the answer to any of the following questions is or was yes, please describe the problem and its implications for proper first aid treatment on a separate piece of paper.

### Have you had (or do you presently have) any of the following?

### Circle One

Head injury (concussion, skull fracture)	Yes	No
Fainting spells	Yes	No
Convulsions/epilepsy	Yes	No
Neck or back injury	Yes	No
Asthma	Yes	No
High blood pressure	Yes	No
Kidney problems	Yes	No
Hernia	Yes	No
Diabetes	Yes	No
Heart murmur	Yes	No
Allergies	Yes	No

Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

### Injuries to:

Shoulder	Yes	No
Knee	Yes	No
Ankle	Yes	No
Fingers	Yes	No
Arm	Yes	No
Other: _____		

Impaired vision Yes No

Impaired hearing Yes No

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you had a recent tetanus booster? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, when? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently taking any medications? \_\_\_\_\_ What? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

Has the doctor placed any restrictions on your activity? \_\_\_\_\_ Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Athlete)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Parent)

# 4

## Effective Teaching and Risk Management

### OBJECTIVES

- What the coach must know in order to be an effective teacher
- What guidelines the coach should follow when teaching young athletes
- The characteristics of a good practice
- To identify qualities of a “good” drill
- 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.

*Good teaching is the foundation for successful coaching.*

### 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
- 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 and shooting, 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, official and spectators, listening to the coach's instructions, and conducting oneself as a responsible citizen.

**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 player's 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. Refer to Chapter 7 *Growth and Development* in Handbook I and Chapter 1 *Observing, Analyzing, and Demonstrating* in Handbook II.

### **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 athlete's performance. If you are inexperienced in the analysis of skills you should obtain the outstanding videotapes on skill development that are available through 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 the

videotape's commentator 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, then 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
- tell them 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 ten steps to good teaching have been shown to be effective in a variety of settings, including the teaching of young athletes.

### 1. 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.

### 2. 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

### 3. 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.

### 4. 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 4-1.

### 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 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 4-2.

*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.

**Table 4-1.** Items to consider when defining rules for your team.

Examples of Desirable and Undesirable Conduct in Hockey	
Desirable Conduct	Undesirable Conduct
Attending to your instructions	Talking while you are trying to give instructions
Full concentration on drills	Inattentive behavior during drills
Treating opponents with respect	Fighting with opponents or using abusive language
Giving positive encouragement to teammates	Making negative comments about teammates
Avoiding penalties	Intentionally fouling during the game
Being prompt to practices and games	Being late or absent from practices and games
Helping to pick up equipment after practices	Leaving equipment out for others to pick up
Bringing all your equipment to practices	Forgetting to bring a part of your equipment or uniform to games and practices
Respect for coaches, teammates, opponents, and referee	Disruptive behavior



**Table 4-2.** Example of rewards and penalties.

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. a specific number of minutes
Medals	3. rest of practice
	Dismissed for
	1. next practice
	2. next week
	3. rest of season

*Children should not associate activity with punishment.*

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

### 5. 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 where 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.

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.

### 6. 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.

## 7. 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."

## 8. 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.

## 9. 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 are the significant persons in his/her life? What are his/her goals for the season? 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.

## 10. 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 which will communicate your approval.

## 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.

#### REFERENCES

Brophy, J.E. (1976). *Learning From Teaching: A Developmental Perspective*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.  
 Rosenshine, B.V. (1983). *The Elementary School Journal*, 83, 335-352.  
 Rowe, M.B. (1974). Wait Time and Rewards as Instructional Variables. *Journal of Research in Science*, 81-94.

#### SUGGESTED READINGS

AAHPERD. *Coaches Manual*. Reston, VA: AAHPERD.  
 Anshel, M.H. (1989). *Ten Commandments for Effective Communications* (in FOCUS Series). Gloucester, Ont., Canada: The Coaching Association of Canada.  
 Burnett, D.J. (1993). *Youth Sports & Self-Esteem*. Indianapolis, IN: Masters Press.  
 Gould, D. (1980). *Motivating Your Athletes*. East Lansing, MI: Youth Sports Institute, Michigan State University.  
 Haslan, I. (1988). *Communication Skills for Coaches* (in FOCUS Series). Gloucester, Ont., Canada: The Coaching Association of Canada.  
 Hutchins, B. (1989). *Hey Coach, Winning Ways with Young Athletes*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Committee for The Prevention of Child Abuse.  
 McKee, D. (1980). *Teaching Hockey Skills*. Willowdale, Ont., Canada: Hockey Development Centre for Ontario.  
 Robitaille, G. and McKee, D. (1992). *Getting Started in Hockey*. Gloucester, Ont., Canada: The Coaching Association of Canada.  
 Sabock, R.J. (1985). *The Coach*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers.  
 Taylor, J. (Ed.) (1979). *How To Be An Effective Coach*. Gloucester, Ont., Canada: The Coaching Association of Canada.  
 Thomas, J.R. (Ed.) (1980). *Youth Sports Guide for Coaches and Parents*. Reston, VA: AAHPERD.

#### RISK MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

- What risk management is and why it is relevant to coaches
- The three parts of developing a risk management program for coaches
- The legal qualifications or competencies that coaches should have
- How the “reasonable expectations of players’ parents” are related to risk management
- The management practices that will help coaches achieve their risk management objectives
- 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 which 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 which 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 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 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.

#### **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; establish a plan for regular inspections of 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 which 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; 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 in-

tegrate those competencies into a management program. Third, we will offer three suggestions 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 twelve, 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 coach's direction to a game or practice. Or, it may be required during a team picnic off the playing area. Any team function where players are required to attend must be supervised. Coaches need to also be prepared, however, to supervise those functions where attendance is optional, or even where 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 to "how to" supervise players. The first is to have 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 injury was 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 which 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 which 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 which 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 which 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 where 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 which 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 the 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 rather than losing 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 which 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 trans-



portation issues. Planning is a critical function in the competent 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 insuring 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 from the feedback of players and parents. Organizational effectiveness can be gauged from 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 who 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 which 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 under-

standing how this function works. When parents recognize that the coach can help their children achieve goals which 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 for 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 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 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' com-

munication, 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 the coach 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 how 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 which 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 which 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 altogether 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 which 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 game plan 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 adaptation. 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 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.

## SUGGESTED READINGS

- Figelman, A.R. and Young, P. (1991). *Keep Young Athletes Healthy*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Hockey Development Centre for Ontario. *Risk Management for Hockey*. Willowdale, Ont., Canada: Hockey Development Centre for Ontario.
- Lefebvre, G. and Gill, J. (1992). *ACTION, Safe-Healthy Hockey*. Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Que., Canada: Palmquist Publications.

Woodcock, T. (1987). *Hockey From the Ice Up, The How To's of Hockey*. Colorado Springs, CO: USA Hockey.

## VIDEOS

- Bossy, M. *Smart Hockey*. Available from Hockey Development Centre for Ontario.
- Metropolitan Toronto Hockey League. *Playing It Safe*. Available from Hockey Development Centre for Ontario.





# 5

## Prevention of Common 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
- Explain the effect warm-ups, cool downs, and conditioning have on preventing injuries
- Explain to coaches how they can keep their players safe during drills
- 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 10 and under age group. 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 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

(Continued)

## Classification of Sports (Continued)

### 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	

#### 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 per-

form 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 the videotape 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 goalposts. Players must be instructed to protect themselves in an eminent collision with something other than their own head. 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 goalpost. At the time of the writing of this chapter, neck guards were not mandatory for any group in USA Hockey, the high school federation, or the NCAA. 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 just 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 as a result of repeated attacks. If the player with asthma takes medication to prevent attacks during and sometimes before exercise, his/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 (which 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 requires 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.

*If a safety hazard is present, it must be avoided by rescheduling, restricting the activity or removing the hazard, and informing the facility manager.*

There are a few hazards associated with ice rinks. These are: ice conditions, boards, plexi-glass, goal posts, gates, improper lighting, and bad air quality due to 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.

### 1. 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.

*The key to teaching safety to your players is to prudently interject safety tips in your instruction whenever appropriate.*

### 2. 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; and
- 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, ten 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.

### 3. 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.

### 4. 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 con-

doned. 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.

### 5. 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 to achieve the same results?
- Can the drill be modified to make it less risky and yet achieve the desired result?

### 6. Burn-Out

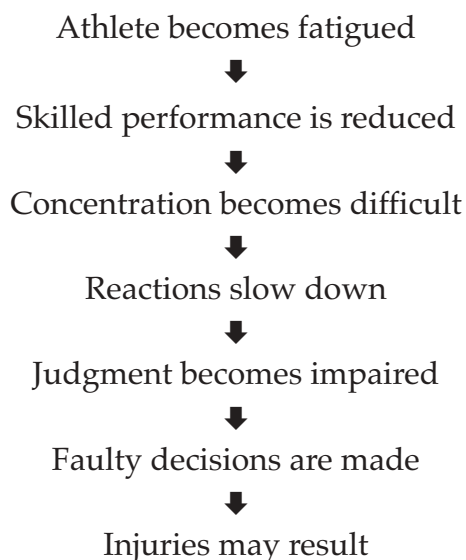
Coaches must be aware that players who engage in intense, frequent practices and games may need time off as the season wears on. It is possible to overtrain, and predispose to, rather than prevent, injuries. Injuries caused by overtraining have grown to represent an increased portion of reported sports injuries. Some tell-tale 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 play-







**Figure 5-1.** How fatigue is linked to an increased potential for injuries and burn-out.

ers 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.

### ● **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 5-1 contains a list of these exercises and how contraindicated exercises can be modified to eliminate their undesirable characteristics. Also included in Table 5-1 are substitute hockey exercises that accomplish the same purpose in a safer manner.

## **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.

### **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 ten teens is dependent on drugs or alcohol. One in ten 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

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 5-1.** Contraindicated exercises.

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. There have been no studies to date evaluating the risk of transmission between athletes. 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. The experimental medication AZT is used in HIV exposed patients. HBV exposed patients should be treated with either Hepatitis B Immune Globulin and/or Hepatitis B Vaccine. Recommendations for follow-up testing and care are discussed.

**Transmission of blood-borne pathogens between competing athletes is a rare and unusual event.** *No documented cases exist of such transmission.*

### 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 (i.e., 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 match or more often as needed.
6. To minimize contact, emergency mouth-to-mouth resuscitation bags or other ventila-

tion 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 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. Matches should be interrupted when an athlete has a wound where 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 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 comparable solution;
4. Re-clean 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 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.

### *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). 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.

### FOR FROSTBITE

#### DO NOT. . . .

- . . . . rub or massage frostbitten areas.
- . . . . apply ice to frostbitten areas.
- . . . . allow frostbitten tissue to refreeze.



## Prevention of Frostbite

1. Do not touch bare metal with bare skin; cover all metal with cloth, tape, leather, or 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 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 water-proof, 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. The varsity squad may produce large amounts of internal heat, while reserve units 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 provides full facial protection which 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, 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 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, however, particularly for defensemen for puck protection. 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." Oversize 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 boy's 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. Goalkeeper's Pads:** 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 4" above the knee. The large vertical roll is always on the outside of each leg. Goalkeeper's 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. Goalkeeper's Knee Pads:** Can afford additional protection when the goalkeeper is in such a position that the goalie pads do not cover the knee area.

**16. Goalkeeper's Athletic Support:** Goalkeepers should wear the specially designed cup because of the extra padding and protection it provides.

**17. Goalkeeper's Pants:** Have several additional protective pieces, and the padding is heavier than in the regular 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:** 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. Goalkeeper's Shoulder and Arm Pads:** Designed to protect the shoulder 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 which are too small, not reaching the cuff of the glove, leave the forearm open to injury.

**20. Catching Glove (Trapper):** Has a heavily padded protective cuff, which should overlap the protection of the arm pad.

**21. Blocker:** 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:** 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), 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 stick, 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 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 which attach the blade hold-

ers 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 which 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 assure that your players will have a safe season.

#### REFERENCES

- Alter, J. (1983). *Surviving Exercise: Judy Alter's Safe and Sane Exercise Program*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Anderson, B. (1980). *Stretching*. Bolinas, CA: Shelter Publications.
- Bergeron, J.D. and Green, H.W. (1989). *Coaches Guide to Sports Injuries*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers.
- Cooper, R.K. (1989). *Health and Fitness Excellence: The Scientific Action Plan*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Darden, E. (1984). *The Nautilus Handbook for Young Athletes*. New York: Wanderer, Simon & Schuster.
- Duff, J.F. (1992). *Youth Sports Injuries: A Medical Handbook for Parents and Coaches*. New York: Collier Macmillan.
- Grant, H.D., Murray, R.H. Jr., and Bergeron, J.D. (1994). *Emergency Care, Sixth Edition*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Brady/Prentice Hall.
- MacAdam, D. and Reynolds, G. (1988). *Hockey Fitness: Year-Round Conditioning On and Off the Ice*. Champaign, IL: Leisure Press.
- Mangi, R., Jokl, P., and Dayton, O.W. (1987). *Sports Fitness and Training*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Micheli, L.J. and Jenkins, M.D. (1990). *Sportswise: An Essential Guide for Young Athletes, Parents and Coaches*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Pearl, B. and Moran, G.T. (1986). *Getting Stronger: Weight Training for Men and Women*. Bolinas, CA: Shelter Publications.
- Reader's Digest (1988). *Emergency: Reader's Digest Action Guide*. Pleasantville, NY.
- Rutherford, G., Miles, R., Brown, V., and MacDonald, B. (1981). *Overview of Sports Related Injuries to Persons 5-14 Years of Age*. Washington, DC: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- Shahady, E.J. and Petrizzi, M.J. (1991). *Sports Medicine for Coaches and Trainers, Second Edition*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Southmayd, W. and Hoffman, M. (1981). *Sports Health: The Complete Book of Athletic Injuries*. New York: Perigee Putnam.

#### SUGGESTED READINGS

- American College of Sports Medicine, American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine & Sports Medicine Committee of the United States Tennis Association (1982). *Sports Injuries—An Aid to Prevention and Treatment*. Coventry, CT: BristolMyers Co.
- Hendry, L. (1987). *The Prevention and Treatment of Injuries in the Young Athlete (in Focus Series)*. Gloucester, Ont., Canada: The Coaching Association of Canada.
- Jackson, D., and Pescar, S. (1981). *The Young Athletes Health Handbook*. Everest House.
- Micheli, L.J. (1985). Preventing youth sports injuries. *Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, 76 (6): 52-54.
- Mirkin, G., and Marshall, H. (1978). *The Sportsmedicine Book*. Little, Brown & Co.
- The National Coaching Foundation. *Coaching Handbook Two*. Leeds, UK.
- The National Coaching Foundation. *Introductory Study Pack 3*. Leeds, UK.
- The National Coaching Foundation (1984). *Safety and Injuries*. Leeds, UK.
- The National Coaching Foundation (1986). *Safety First For Coaches*. Leeds, UK.







# 6

## Care of Common Ice Hockey Injuries

### OBJECTIVES

- Assist coaches in identifying and providing first aid for the different medical conditions commonly associated with ice hockey
- Identify items in a well-stocked first aid kit
- Identify procedures you should follow when an injury occurs
- Identify information 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

*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.*

### MEDICAL INFORMATION

The completed Athlete Medical History Form (Chapter 3, Handbook I) 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.<sup>1</sup>

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 Ameri-

can 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, correct change must be available, and the 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 EMT's 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).

*Rehearsing emergency care procedures can be invaluable.*

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/her own emergency plan.

## PROVIDE FIRST AID

If the player is seriously injured, have your assistant coach, a parent, or a responsible player take the coins and 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.

## 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
- \_\_\_\_\_ coins for pay telephone
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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 too big a problem 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, use the coins in your first aid kit and call for professional medical help. Do not make decisions about treatments if you are not qualified to make them.

Remember, react quickly and with confi-

dence. 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.

## REFERENCES

1. American Red Cross (1981). *Cardiopulmonary resuscitation*. Washington, DC: American Red Cross.

## SUGGESTED READINGS

- American College of Sports Medicine, American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine & Sports Medicine Committee of the United States Tennis Association (1982). *Sports Injuries—An Aid to Prevention and Treatment*. Coventry, CT: BristolMyers Co.
- Hackworth, C., Jacobs, K., and O'Neill, C. (1982). *Prevention, Recognition, and Care of Common Sports Injuries*. Kalamazoo, MI: SWM Systems, Inc.
- Jackson, D., and Pescar, S. (1981). *The Young Athlete's Health Handbook*. New York: Everest House.
- Rosenberg, S.N. (1985). *The Johnson & Johnson First Aid Book*. New York: Warner Books, Inc.

# 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									
<i>P=Practice G=Game</i>																																									
<b>ROSTER</b>																																									
1.																																									
2.																																									
3.																																									
4.																																									
5.																																									
6.																																									
7.																																									
8.																																									
9.																																									
10.																																									
11.																																									
12.																																									
13.																																									
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.*

<b>I</b> Injured	<b>N</b> New injury happened during practice/game	<b>T</b> Tardy to practice/game
<b>E</b> Excused — sick or ill	<b>R</b> Re-injury to same body part	Other _____
<b>U</b> Unexcused — did not practice/play; discipline or skipped	<b>G</b> Gone from team — quit or removed from team	Other _____
<b>L</b> Limited practice/play due to previous injury (no contact)	<b>X</b> Missed practice/game from a non-hockey injury	Other _____

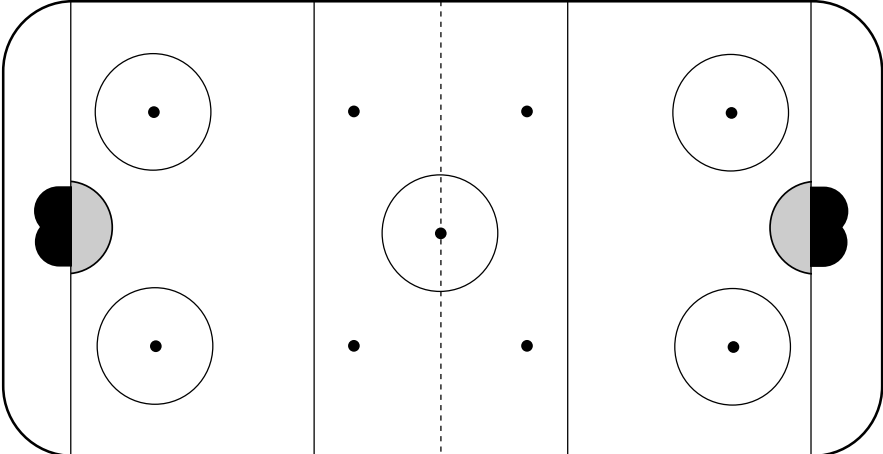


# INJURY REPORTING FORM



One form must be completed for each "injury" is defined as: Any ice hockey or in-line 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) \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>TYPE OF INJURY</b></p> <p><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 _____  _____</p>	<p><b>BODY PART AFFECTED</b>  <small>(Check the affected areas and indicate left or right side)</small></p> <p><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</p>	<p><b>INJURED'S CATEGORY</b></p> <p><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 _____</p> <p><b>INTENT TO INJURE?</b>  <small>(according to injured player)</small></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES    <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><b>PENALTY CALLED?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES    <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><b>NEW INJURY?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES    <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
<p><b>HOW INJURY OCCURRED</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Contact with boards  <input type="checkbox"/> Contact with goal/net  <input type="checkbox"/> Body contact with another person      <input type="checkbox"/> Caused by a body check      <input type="checkbox"/> Incidental to playing puck/ball  <input type="checkbox"/> Struck by a stick  <input type="checkbox"/> Contact with skate  <input type="checkbox"/> Contact with floor  <input type="checkbox"/> Struck by puck/ball  <input type="checkbox"/> No apparent contact  <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____  _____</p>	<p><b>LOCATION</b> (X on floor where injury occurred)</p>  <p>Please indicate the injured player's defending goal</p>	

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: \_\_\_\_\_  
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: \_\_\_\_\_  
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: \_\_\_\_\_  
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: \_\_\_\_\_  
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: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor's Name & Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Policy No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_ Medications: \_\_\_\_\_



# 7

## Growth and Development: Modifying Your Practice By Age

### OBJECTIVES

- To provide coaches with an understanding of basic ice hockey and motor movement skills that are age specific
- To provide coaches with a plan to design their practices and drills to be age specific
- To point out to coaches that players must have the opportunity to progress according to their own physical, mental, and social levels of development

### INTRODUCTION

The fundamental idea of development in the younger age groups is to emphasize the basic skills of skating, passing, stickhandling, shooting, goaltending, etc., as well as to improve motor movement skills, and promote the fun of playing ice hockey.

Learning a variety of systems and tactics should be limited. If complicated systems and tactics are introduced too early in a player's development, it may cause frustration and stress along with these negative effects:

- not developing skills properly
- not developing proper technique
- not giving the player the opportunity to fully understand the game
- not enhancing long-range player development
- not developing the total athlete

Understanding age-adjusted practices and drills will enable the coach to systematically develop a player's skill progression and evalu-

ate exactly where that player is in terms of his/her ability level. Age-adjusted practices and drills will also help the coach determine when to introduce new skills and game-like drills into practice.

The primary goals of youth ice hockey coaches should be aimed at developing the players comprehensively (physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally), and to give them an environment in which to build self-esteem as well as a love for the game.

Coaches must be able to recognize players' ability levels in order to make good sound judgements about practice planning, teaching, and drill designing. By learning the main elements of age-adjusted practices and continually evaluating the athlete's progress, the coach can determine whether the child is mature enough for new skills and concepts of the game. (See Figure 7-1 *Age Grouping in Skill Development*, Figure 7-2 *Athletic Performance*, and Figure 7-3 *Skill Dynamics*.)

## AGE-ADJUSTED PRACTICES

With a well-adapted practice plan and properly selected drills, players have the best opportunity to improve. Once a coach understands and appreciates age-adjusted practice components, she/he will be able to determine if her/his teaching is adjusted correctly according to the difference in the physiological development of the players.

The following is a list of the most common traits of youth development for ages ten and under.

### Child's Development (6-10 years of age)

- Relatively small height, weight, and strength growth
- Little capacity to stretch muscles
- Circulation organs are developed only slightly
- Motor combinations start to become automated
- Movements flow very easily
- Learning is best achieved by seeing the right execution and later imitating
- Have difficulty comprehending complex and multi-task skills
- Strong feelings for fairness and fair play
- Willingly practices but has very little patience
- Contact with friends and the coach leads to positive results in practice and acceptance in a group

### Aim of Practice

Developing fundamental practice techniques in:

- Skating (forward, backward, crossovers, turns, starts and stops)
- Puck control
- Pass and receiving
- Shooting (wrist, backhand, flip)
- Stick checking
- Small games and creative play
- Understanding positional play
- One-on-one situations at the basic stages
- Fun drills
- Emphasis on coordination training

## MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

### Ages 6-10 Years

#### Physical Development

Physical growth (i.e., development of strength, endurance, running speed, coordination, and balance abilities) occurs continuously.

#### Motor Movements

The part of motor movement which becomes combination movement ability is developed quickly in the 6-12 year olds. Those movements enable catching and hitting a ball, being able to avoid obstacles, kick a ball, shoot a puck, etc.

#### Levels of Ability 6-8 Year Olds

Drills should focus on balance and motor movement. Motor movement skills include hopping, running, jumping, throwing, catching, rolling, and hitting.

*Suitable Drills:* (To help the athlete understand how the body functions)

- **Coordination Drills:** alternating hand-foot, hand-eye, foot-hand, foot-eye rhythms
- **Balance Drills:** different types of balancing, jumps, hops, skipping, etc.
- **Motor Movement Combinations:** obstacle course (steeple chase), shipwreck, somersaults, combination movements, etc.
- **Eye-Hand (Foot) Motor Drills:** throwing-catching, juggling of balloon with different body parts (hands, feet, knees, elbows), and dribbling drills with hands and feet

#### Level of Ability 9-10 Year Olds

Motor movement combinations include running, throwing, and catching.

*Suitable Drills:*

- **Eye-Body Motor Movement Combinations:** high jump and running long jumps, relays of different types, reaction games, apparatus drills (obstacle course, balance training)

- **Eye-Hand (Foot) Motor Movement Combinations:** throwing, running, skipping, hopping, passing and shooting

## COMPONENTS OF AGE-ADJUSTED PRACTICES

### Motor

Children’s body movements vary. Sometimes it is simple and relaxed, and occasionally the child makes unnecessary movements. The development improves by using effective coordination between eye, hand, and quickness in the motor movements.

### Psychologically/Socially

Children can often develop their own games and take on new challenges. They are at the stage when they need a variety of activities to keep their interest in practices.

### Objectives in Training

Fundamentally, one who has learned “to discover his/her body” finds it easier to learn new technical elements. For example, it is hardly profitable to devote time to teach an eight-year-old to skate on the outside edge when crossing over if he/she hasn’t experienced the feeling of gliding on the outside edge. Also, teaching the correct positioning of the feet, push-off, etc. is ineffective when the youth’s physical development is insufficient. This is not to say that it is wrong to teach the correct positioning of the feet in skating at this age, however, the coach should devote an equal amount of time working with the players on coordination, balance, and experiences of space.

Shooting the puck reasonably well requires strength and timing often not developed in 8-10 year old players. So teach technique but do not be discouraged by results.

## Eye-Body Coordination

Children of this age have difficulty orienting themselves in “space” situations, distinguishing right and left. This is noticed in face-off formation when there is no circle. Some players have great difficulty remembering their previous positioning.

Players may also have difficulty “looking” around the rink and, therefore, have trouble understanding how they should position themselves. As their skills mature, coaches should teach them elementary concepts.

### Aims of Practice

Small games, fun drills, creative free time, and skill development should dominate practice sessions and be cross-ice in nature. Lighter pucks and smaller nets may be used to make meaningful instruction of the technical elements easier, which are very important elements in development at this age. Fun should be a major component of every practice session.

Other elements in practice should include:

- instruction and a great deal of practice for the basic fundamental skills
- introduction to small games in restricted areas
- instruction and numerous drills in puck control, passing/receiving, and movement
- general physical drills which promote coordination and balance

### Suggestions for Coaches

- Drills should suit the age of the players
- Always teach and perform progressively
- Challenge athletes continually even after they master skills
- Develop the WHOLE athlete (body and mind)
- Always remember practice should be FUN

## REFERENCES

Karlsson, L. (Ed.) (1983). *Training Plan for Youth Team Players*. Swedish Ice Hockey Federation (Translation in USA Hockey office).

## SUGGESTED READINGS

Cratty, B.J. (1973). *Teaching Motor Skills*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Haywood, K., et al (1981). *Motor Development—Basic Stuff Series I*. Reston, VA: AAHPERD.

Rothstein, A., et al (1981). *Motor Learning—Basic Stuff Series I*. Reston, VA: AAHPERD.

Seefeldt, V. (Ed.) (1986). *Physical Activity and Well Being*. Reston, VA: AAHPERD.

Singer, R.N. (1975). *Motor Learning and Human Performance*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc.

Trimble, R.T. (1981). *Childhood—Basic Stuff Series II*. Reston, VA: AAHPERD.



# Age Grouping in Skill Development

<b>RECREATIONAL/ COMPETITIVE</b>	<p>A level that provides a competitive environment of play. <b>Beginners, semi-skilled, skilled.</b></p>
<b>COMPETITIVE</b>	<p>A level for higher skilled players within local associations who have the desire and ability for a competitive experience. <b>Beginners, semi-skilled, skilled.</b></p>
<b>SELECT</b>	<p>A high-level regional, state and district program which draws the best players. <b>Semi-skilled, skilled, very skilled.</b></p>
<b>ELITE</b>	<p>Highest level national program which draws potential world class athletes from across the United States in international competition. <b>Skilled, very skilled, exceptionally skilled.</b></p>

The key to the successful progress of a hockey player's skill development lies in three areas:

1. A solid establishment of the hockey skills during the early stages of development.
2. Constant refinement and expansion of hockey skills throughout the player's playing years.
3. A compelling desire to continue to improve.

		<b>PLAYER'S AGE</b>																
		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
6	<p>Phase for learning the skills of hockey. <b>Practice/Game Ratio</b> 2 to 1</p>																	
7	<p>Phase for learning and increasing the speed in execution while constantly improving the skills in hockey. <b>Practice/Game Ratio</b> 3 to 1</p>																	
8	<p>Phase for "Being all you can be." Enhancing skills in the areas of: Strength Power Acceleration Agility Constantly Expand Skills Constantly Refine Skills <b>Practice/Game Ratio</b> Recreational – 1 to 1 Developmental – 3 to 1</p>																	

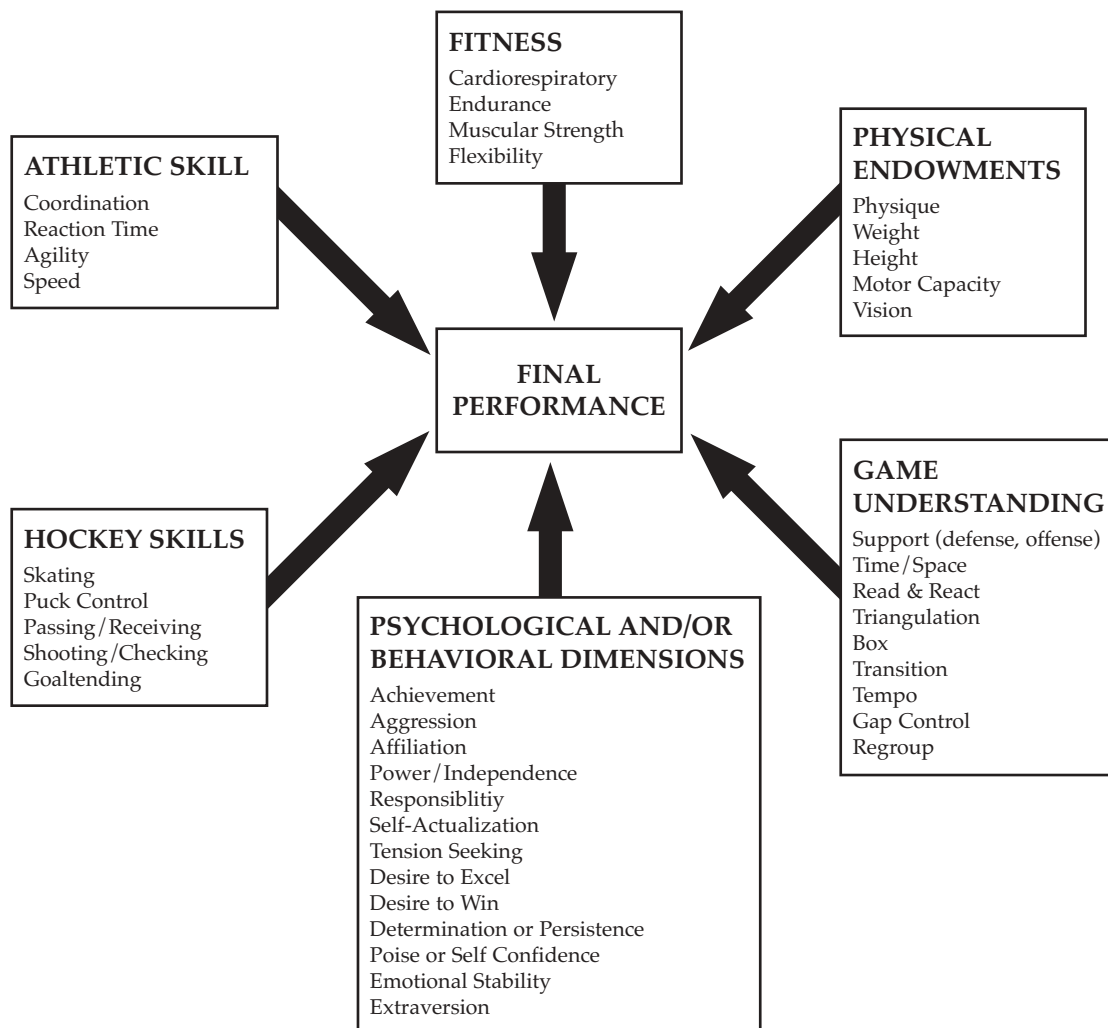
**NOTE:** A person may begin hockey at any age, but these are the most common pathways to skill improvement. Every level of hockey has a difference in the skill standards within the group. The standards of skill increase at each escalating level defined by these terms:

- semi-skilled
- skilled
- very skilled

A player's choice of hockey level will depend on their level of skill and motivation.



# Athletic Performance



## Athletic Performance Mainly Dependent on Four Major Groups or Factors

- A. The specific type and level of physical fitness mandatory for that sport.
- B. The acquisition of the specific skill required for excellence in a specific sport.
- C. The natural ability, capacity and physical endowment an individual receives via genetic inheritance.
- D. The general psychological make-up of the person in terms of his/her personality, motivational and emotional strengths.

These factors and their performances resulting from an interaction of them are also definitely influenced by the general environment in which the person lives and the specific conditions under which the situation is occurring.

This applies to all levels of performance, from novice through skilled.

Coach must be aware of individual differences in each player. When all factors are at optimal level, then performance will be optimal.

Regardless of how much ability, skill or fitness a player possesses for a sport, the success or quality of his/her performance will in the final analysis, probably depend on his/her particular psychological make-up, personality structure, motivation and emotional control he/she possesses.

# Skill Dynamics

## CHILD

*Awaken Interest  
Have Fun  
Learn Basic Skills*

### 6-10 YEARS OF AGE

Develop the whole person

1. mentally, physically, socially
2. begin teaching players to become their own coach.

New movements

Introduction to new skills

Love of hockey – Love feeling good

#### Primary Skills:

1. Ready Position – weight shift, edge balance, push down, push out, rhythm, push-touch, coast, almost touch, stationary slide board movement

#### Introduce Hockey Skills:

1. Skating – forward, forward stops, forward control turns, forward crossovers, backward C - cut swizzles, backward stops, backward crossovers, mohawk forward to backward, mohawk backward to forward using heel to heel stepouts
2. Puckhandling – eyes up, wrist roll, short long combinations of puck movement, yoyo, fake to backhand then pull to forehand, advanced slip thru, slip around, slip across, sit - show - stick, small games
3. Passing – pass with slide, guide, spin from heel to toe, point stick toe on follow thru, forehand, backhand
4. Shooting – shoot-slide-guide-spin puck from heel to toe, and point stick toe on follow thru, forehand, backhand; shoot-slide-guide-spin puck from heel to toe, shift weight, roll wrist, point toe of stick, wrist, backhand shot
5. Small games width of rink
6. Races
7. Competition skill drills
8. Development – competition first, winning second

## SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

## EARLY PRE-PUBERTY

*Versatility  
Proper Technique*

### 10-12 YEARS OF AGE

Develop the whole person

1. mentally, physically, socially
2. begin teaching players to become their own coach.

Refinement – better execution

Fun – define fun

Love of hockey

Elevate speed skills

Enjoyment is fun with a purpose

#### Read – React:

1. Skate – posture, weight shift, balance, edge control, smooth stride forward and backward, good push-unders on control turns, forward and backward crossovers, two foot stop, one foot stop forward and backward
2. Puckhandling – eyes up, review and refine
3. Stickhandling – fake shot forward, escapes, protect the puck, review learned moves
4. Shooting – eyes up
5. Passing – eyes up
6. Flip pass, board pass, drop pass, surround the puck to forehand
7. Teach offense first
8. Showdown on goalie
9. 1/1 concept
10. 1/2 concept
11. 2/2 concept
12. 3/2 concept
13. Introduce support
14. Teach plays – trailer, trailer-off wing, drop pass, back pass, give and go pass, pass-return pass
15. Triangle concept
16. Breakout concept
17. Attack concept
18. Back check concept
19. Stick check
20. Rub-out
21. Box defense
22. Development is first, competition is second
23. Game understanding
24. Ice time is a great coach
25. Competition skill drills
26. Small games, races, teach offensive skills, offense is spontaneous creation, defense is coordinated discipline and had work
27. Time alone working by yourself developing skills is the incubator of great skills

## ASSOCIATE

## LATE PRE-PUBERTY

*Preparation for Increased Training  
Increased Training*

### 12-14 YEARS OF AGE

Develop the whole person

1. mentally, physically, socially
2. begin teaching players to become their own coach.

Enjoyment – fun with a purpose

Working with a new body – fine tune new abilities by learning new skills

Quality execution

Quality repetition

Faster execution with quality

Love of game

Love of finesse

#### Primary Skills:

The Right Way is always the right way. Repetition the right way is skill development. Complacency is the enemy of development.

1. Aggressive skating with edges, puckhandling, refine giving and taking pass, snap shoot, slap shoot, checking better, faster, stronger, teach checking as a skill.
2. Team play review
3. Team support tactics
4. Expand offensive plays
5. Build a house in the offensive zone
6. Cycle
7. Cycling in man advantages
8. Regrouping
9. Forechecking Systems – conservative, aggressive
10. Box Defense
11. Learn to read and react
12. A player must work by him/herself:
  - a. watch hockey games, analyze plays
  - b. watch the best player on the ice
  - c. improve your skating by open skating
  - d. shoot pucks at target
  - e. use inline skates, ball and stick in driveway for improved eye-hand coordination
13. Game understanding
14. Ice time is a great coach
15. Teach athleticism – play other sports

## INTERMEDIATE



# Skill Dynamics

## EARLY PUBERTY

*Increased Training  
Special Training (Weights)  
More Competition*

- 15-16 YEARS OF AGE
1. Expansion refinement
2. Biggest step in development thru next three years
3. Quality execution and repetition with speed
4. Overspeed skating
5. Overspeed with puck – feet moving all the time, no coasting
6. One touch passing
7. One touch shooting
8. Gapping
9. Surround the puck
10. Special situations – faceoffs, MA, MS, 6th man, neutral zone
11. Passing to forehead
12. Read and react
13. Focus
14. Angle opponents
15. Check thru opponent, block using body, stick on stick, “get in their face” defense
16. Weights, conditioning, athleticism
17. Swivel head
18. Go to net
19. Two areas that count the most – in front of their net and in front of your net
20. Humbling year – star last year, rookie this year
21. Mental toughness
22. Learn patience, courage – prepare yourself for evaluation by your coach, the spectators, your peers and yourself
23. Discipline
24. Good attitude pays off
25. Small games
26. Game understanding
27. Hustle solves problems
28. Small games, competition drills and races
29. Play 3-on-3 down low
30. Play 5-on-5 in one zone
31. Here is where the fast and early matures, those that have gotten complacent will be awakened.

**ADVANCED**

## LATE PUBERTY

*Special Training (Weights)  
More Competition  
Top Performance*

- 17-18 YEARS OF AGE
1. Review all previous levels
2. Refine
3. Expand skills
4. Quality execution at uncomfortable speed
5. Conditioning program
6. Weight program
7. Where last year’s stars, earn their stripes in grown-up hockey where power and strength are added to playing the game.
8. If a player has developed the skills during their growth years, he/she will have a good chance of playing at the level they aspire to.

**ADVANCED/MASTERS**

## FULL DEVELOPMENT

*Top Performance*

- 19-22 YEARS OF AGE
1. Be all that you can be.
2. If a player has developed skills during his or her growth years, he or she will now have the potential to play at the highest competitive levels.

**MASTERS**



**1775 Bob Johnson Drive  
Colorado Springs, CO 80906  
[www.usahockey.com](http://www.usahockey.com)**