

SIouxLAND YOUTH HOCKEY COACHING MANUAL



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Purpose of this Coaching Manual

The purpose of this handbook is to communicate the goals, expectations and responsibilities of the coaches associated with Siouxland Youth Hockey (SYHA). Most problems can be headed off or diminished by good communication, and we hope this handbook is a step in that direction.

Siouxland Youth Hockey Development Philosophy

Hockey is a team sport. But, the fundamental and essential building block of good hockey teams is players with excellent hockey skills – skating, stick-handling, passing, shooting, and (at later levels for boys) checking. At SYHA, we believe that hockey skills must be properly taught and purposefully emphasized at the earliest stages, and further emphasized, advanced and developed as players’ progress through our program. As a youth hockey association, we are committed to the development of our players’ hockey skills. This philosophy is promoted by the Coaching Director and is expected to be embraced by all coaches at all levels. We seek to implement a consistent, progressive program for our players’ skills development.

- By consistent, we mean that our hockey players will be taught *the* proper technique for all hockey skills consistently by every coach they have as they move through SYHA.
- By progressive, we mean that our players’ skills will be developed commensurate with their age, size and ability as they advance through SYHA. The SYHA is committed to putting our resources and excellent hockey teachers to the best possible use to enable our players to develop into the best possible hockey players. We will ensure our coaches receive proper training and support so they are well equipped to provide consistent and progressive teaching of hockey skills to the players on their teams.
- Of course, coaches will influence the team experience with their own personalities – including motivation and teaching styles – and will have the flexibility to incorporate their preferred systems inherent in game play. This is highly encouraged.
- However, when it comes to skills development, each coach will instruct and emphasize the same techniques for the same fundamentals of skating, stick-handling, shooting, passing, and checking to facilitate and reinforce individual development from year to year. Our coaches are expected to plan to advance players’ skill development as a regular part of their practices throughout the season.
- In addition, our association will offer separate skills clinics throughout the season to assist in this development.
- The SYHA Coaching Committee is committed to helping all of our coaches develop their players’ hockey skills.

Coach's Code of Conduct and Responsibilities

At SYHA, coaches are not compensated. They are volunteers who spent countless hours on the ice working with the kids. We are lucky to have so many fine individuals donate so much time out of their lives to help our program. Our coaches are our strength.

Coaches will:

1. Have a parent meeting prior to the season.
2. Appoint a team manager.
3. Keep in mind the player is the most important part of the program and that learning, developing, and effort are as important as winning.
4. Know and understand the rules of the game and share that understanding with the players.
5. Treat players fairly and honestly.
6. Be prompt and be well prepared for practices - ice time is valuable.
7. Display consideration and understanding towards the players.
8. Share ideas and techniques with other coaches for the betterment of the entire program.
9. Be considerate of other teams.
10. Have a positive attitude at all times.
11. Teach players to respect game official's decisions.
12. Be in the locker room for a reasonable time prior to/after games/practices (or assign a parent) – SafeSport requirement.
13. Lead by example and set a standard of conduct so high that the Sioux City community and SYHA, including all coaches, players, parents and fans, will be proud.
14. Refrain from the use of tobacco or alcohol while supervising players during practice/games.
15. Participate in periodic coaches meetings.
16. Follow the player development map.

Parent Meeting Agenda

- Introduction of coaches & team manager
- Introduction of parents
- SYHA background/philosophy
- Practice schedule
- Season schedule – tournaments & games
- Team budget
- Team/parent communications - Who, how, when
- Volunteering needed by parents – SafeSport requirements
- Player expectations
- Other information

Coaches Grievance Procedure

Coach / Parent:

If you, as a coach in SYHA have a problem or a concern regarding a team parent, we encourage you to act promptly and resolve the issue as soon as possible. You must first talk to your team manager who will in turn discuss the matter with the parent. If your problem or concern is still unresolved, you must follow the flowchart as shown below.

Coach >> Team Manager >> Parent >> Level Coordinator >> Board of Directors

The following acts are considered inappropriate behavior towards a coach:

- Violence towards a coach
- Any form of intimidation or abusive language
- Continual harassment of a coach, whether direct or indirect, via any type of media

Coach / Coach:

If you, as a coach in SYHA have a problem or concern regarding a fellow coach, we encourage you to act promptly and resolve the issue as soon as possible. You are encouraged to first talk with your fellow coach. If your problem or concern is still unresolved, you must follow the flowchart as shown below.

Coach >> Fellow coach >> Coaching Director >> Board of Directors

The following acts are considered inappropriate behavior towards your fellow coach:

- Violence towards a coach
- Any form of intimidation or abusive language
- Continual harassment of a coach, whether direct or indirect, via any type of media

Coaches Guidelines for Success

CEP

Coach Certification applies to head and all assistant coaches. The proof of a coaching certification level is maintained in the database of coaches at the USA Hockey website.

Coaching Education Program Rules and Requirements (FROM USA HOCKEY)

- A. Coach Registration** All ice hockey coaches as well as instructors of USA Hockey programs shall be registered annually as individual Participants of USA Hockey 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 to register the coaches (head and assistants) and instructors. Coaches who also play on a USA Hockey registered team are required to pay this registration fee only once per year. Coaches may register as participants online at www.usahockey.com or through a local association/member program (refer to Section I Participant Registration).

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

Note 2: The head coach and all assistant coaches of each disabled hockey team must complete the required CEP registration and online age-specific module(s) for each level of play. Those volunteers or employees who assist with helping disabled hockey teams (i.e. interpreters, pushers, on-ice mentors, etc.) must be properly registered with USA Hockey but are not required to attend a CEP clinic and otherwise comply with these rules and regulations.

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

B. Coaching Education Program Requirements

(1) Required Coaching Education Program Levels for Ice Hockey

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

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

(a) All coaches must enter USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program at Level 1, and must continue their education with a coaching clinic each year until, at a minimum, they achieve Level 3.

EXCEPTION: Coaches of 8U or younger players may remain at Level 1 or their current level.

A coach may attend only one (1) certification clinic per year (not including age-specific requirements). Coaches who do not coach in continuous years must re-enter the program at the next level when they resume coaching responsibilities. Once Level 3 is achieved, periodic renewal [as outlined in Paragraph (c) below] is required for coaches who have not achieved Level 4.

Coaches of national tournament bound teams (Tier I 14U, 16U and 18/19U and Tier II 16U and 18/19U) must complete Level 4 in their fourth season of coaching. Coaches who attain Level 4 certification are not required to attend any further certification clinics but must adhere to the age-specific requirement as outlined in Paragraph (b) below.

(b) In addition to the training in paragraph (a) above, coaches must also complete online age-specific training modules specific to the level of play they are coaching, if they have not already taken that module. This requirement applies to all coaches at all levels, 1 through 5. Coaches may complete more than one age-specific module in any given season.

(c) Coaching certification at Level 3 is valid for two (2) seasons, as indicated by the expiration date.

A coach whose Level 3 is due to expire must take the online Level 3 Recertification Track 1 curriculum or they may move up to Level 4. Level 3 Track 1 Recertification is valid for two (2) seasons.

A coach whose Track 1 Level 3 recertification is due to expire must take the online Level 3 Recertification Track 2 curriculum or move up to Level 4. Level 3 Track 2 Recertification is valid for two (2) seasons.

Coaches whose Track 2 Level 3 Recertification is due to expire must attend a Level 4 clinic prior to the expiration of their Level 3 Recertification.

Coaches must complete the online recertification program in order to recertify their Level 3 certifications. Attending a clinic or workshop is no longer valid for recertifying any certification level.

(d) Grandfather Clause

For coaches who enrolled in the Coaching Education Program prior to May 1, 2011, their entry into the above program will be at their current certification level. Level 1 and 2 coaches must adhere to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, effective May 1, 2011. Current Level 3 coaches must adhere to paragraph (b) and (c) above; effective with the season their Level 3 expires.

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

YEARS OF COACHING	CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS
Year 1	Level 1 clinic + age-specific component
Year 2	Level 2 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 3	Level 3 clinic (expires Dec. 31, 2015) + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 4	No Level certification required but can attend a Level 4 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 5	Complete the online Level 3 Recertification Track 1 (expires Dec. 31, 2017), or attend a Level 4 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 6	No Level certification required but can attend a Level 4 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 7	Complete the online Level 3 Recertification Track 2 (expires Dec. 31, 2019), or attend a Level 4 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level

Year 8	No Level certification required but can attend a Level 4 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 9	Must attend a Level 4 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 10 and beyond	No Level recertification required but must complete age specific component if not previously taken for current age level. Coaches are highly encouraged to attend a continuing education course every two years.

(2) Evidence of Level

All USA Hockey coaches will possess a USA Hockey Coaching Education Program card with valid certification stickers (if certification was received prior to September 1, 2011), or a printout from the USA Hockey online certification list (if certification was received after September 1, 2011).

It is the responsibility of the local association to identify those coaches who do not meet the certification requirements. All coaches have until December 31 of the current season to attend a USA Hockey coaching clinic and complete the online age-specific playing level module to become properly certified. Prior to the start of all games throughout the season all coaches are required to indicate their current certification status on the scoresheet, regardless of their certification level. All coaches (except for juniors) must legibly print their USA Hockey Coaching Education Program (CEP) card number, their CEP level (levels 1-5), their online age-specific playing level module and the year their CEP level was attained.

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

(3) Penalty and Enforcement

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

C. Under-Age Coaches

(1) Student Coach

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

(2) Qualifications

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

D. Screening Policy

All USA Hockey coaches and instructors will comply with the USA Hockey Screening Policy. Failure to comply with the policy will result in the forfeiture of coaching privileges in programs, at sites, or events under USA Hockey's governance. In order to be in compliance with this policy all SYHA coaches will complete the Tri-State Affiliate's Consent to be Screened Disclosure Agreement or register online at the Tri-State Affiliate's website.

E. Coaching Ethics Code

All USA Hockey ice hockey coaches (head and 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.

All coaches have an obligation to be familiar with USA Hockey's Coaching Ethics Code. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of an ethical standard is not itself a defense to a charge of unethical conduct. The USA Hockey Coaching Ethics Code can be found online at www.usahockey.com under Coaches.

F. Waiver of Liability

All SYHA coaches will sign and return to the Coaching Director the SYHA Waiver of Liability Release form.

G. SafeSport Training Requirement

All USA Hockey registered coaches, officials, employees, and volunteers are required to take the online SafeSport training/education program. The SafeSport Training is valid for two (2) seasons. The SafeSport Training and SafeSport Refresher courses are available all season and a link to the sessions can be found at usahockey.com.

Coaching Resources

The SYHA Coaching Director has developed a section of the SYHA website dedicated to our coaches called Coaches Corner. This site will be maintained to provide our coaches with links to websites pertaining to coaching certification, our Tri-State Affiliate, and the Midwest League. This site also contains a wealth of information regarding practice plans, practice structure, and skill development articles. Coaches should use Coaches Corner to assist them in developing their Season Plans and Daily Practice Plans. Additional resources, practice plans, and video instruction can be found at the USA Hockey website (www.usahockey.com) and at the Minnesota Hockey website (www.minnesotahockey.org)

It is all about Skills-At all Levels

Youth hockey coaches across the country are busy training players that will soon be wearing the sweaters of the Division 1, 2 and 3 college teams. Some of those players will eventually move on to earn a paycheck in the game. So why do we hear the cry from college coaches, pro scouts and USA Hockey for better skilled players?

The truth is that most youth and many high school coaches spend most of their time on the ice teaching systems, and doing drills that are supposed to simulate games. It seems like the more complicated the drills the better many coaches like them. Every day there are more and more sources to get drills. There are numerous on line services, books, manuals, and publications from USA Hockey, CAHA, and European Hockey organizations. But what about teaching basic fundamental skills like skating, passing, and stick handling?

In most all cases the systems and drills are like putting the horse before the cart. At the USA Hockey Coaching Education Program (CEP) clinics that I speak at each fall I pose the following question, "How many of you can teach basic skating fundamentals?" The average group was 175 squirt, peewee, and bantam coaches, and at each of the five clinics less than four coaches indicated that they could teach skating. That is astounding, especially in a hockey rich state like Minnesota. It means nearly 3,000 players have coaches who do not know how to teach skating fundamentals.

The stark reality is that to excel at the game a player needs to be an outstanding skater, passer and stick handler. But at what age level should coaches' start working on systems? Consider these comments from the University of Minnesota Men's Head Hockey Coach, Don Lucia, "*We are continually working on skill development at our level. During the first half of the season the majority of our practice time is devoted to individual skill development with skating being the number one focus. As the season progresses we gradually shift to more systems and special teams play as we prepare for the playoffs. I remind my staff daily that our focus needs to be on skills. We can run any systems when we have the skills to execute them.*" It is apparent that skill development is the top priority all the way to the pinnacle of college hockey and beyond. It is then logical that skill development should be the top priority for youth, high school and junior hockey players and teams.

College coaches can help their own programs by spreading this message to the hockey communities in their towns. A little involvement by themselves, their staffs and players (within the NCAA guidelines) can go a long way. Particular attention should be paid to the youth hockey organizations in your communities. They need to know that your priority is skilled players and that the foundation for those skills are set in place at an early age. You can help by attending the first three levels of the USA Hockey Coaching clinics in your area as a presenter and skill instructor. Your presence and encouragement will go a long way to help youth coaches keep the proper focus. Don Lucia advises youth coaches, "*to work on the fundamental skills of skating, passing and stick handling. Be sure the players are progressing in their individual skills and make sure they are having fun.*"

Youth hockey needs and wants the college coaches input and participation. If there was ever a win-win scenario, this is it.

(Hal Tearse-USA Hockey, Minnkota District Associate Coach in Chief, Curriculum Development)

Planning for Player Development

From a very basic viewpoint there are two levels at which you plan;

- The Season Plan and the
- Daily Practice Plan.
- Both plans are equally important.

The Season Plan is the blueprint that determines what the objectives are for the year and also determines the timing for implementing action plans to achieve those objectives. Typically objectives should be categorized into Beginning, Mid and Late season timeframes.

Normally Early season objectives would focus more on individual skills such as skating, puck control, puck movement, and shooting. At the Squirt level and beyond, offensive and defensive zone positioning is introduced.

During the Mid-Season time frame the focus should continue to reinforce skill development by increasing the speed at which the drills are performed. In addition, teamwork and puck movement should be emphasized as part of the positioning discussion.

Late season objectives are normally honing the various skills and position play. After the Season Plan has been established then Daily Practice Plans should be prepared.

The Practice Plans are the action plans and should be developed in such a fashion that they will meet the objectives established in the Season Plan. It is helpful if you prepare a week worth of Practice Plans at a time. This allows coaches to create a progression and continuity of drills from one day to the next while meeting the objectives included in the Season Plan.

Generally a drill should run 6 – 9 minutes; this includes the time it takes to explain the drill. It's the quality of development time not quantity of time that makes the difference so make sure every player understands the drill and, if possible, demonstrate the drill before the players execute it. Don't leave a drill until it is done correctly or progress has been made towards correctly executing the drill.

EXPLAIN -)))))) DEMONSTRATE -)))))) EXECUTE

Prepared practice plans are required for each practice. Templates for practice plans and drill forms are available in the Coaches Corner section of the SYHA website.

Off-Ice Instruction

For travel age levels – locker room / class room time is encouraged to explain/teach positional play, offensive, neutral zone & defensive zone systems before they are implemented on the ice. This will greatly increase the efficiency of ice time for each group. At least once a week coaches should have a “chalk talk” or video review session to instruct and teach players these systems, to review game footage, or to review video that aids in player skill development.

Dryland Training

For all age levels – dryland training sessions are encouraged. These dryland sessions should be used to develop stickhandling and shooting skills and to promote and develop overall athleticism. Dryland sessions should be conducted at least twice a week for travel teams and once a week for Mite level players. Dryland training, stickhandling, and shooting drills can be found at www.usahockey.com in the coaches section.

Play of Players Guidelines

Coaches should encourage players to demonstrate the following behaviors at all times:

- Positive, team oriented attitude
- Strong work ethic at practices and games
- Coachable

Coaches may reduce playing time for players who do not demonstrate these three qualities and will communicate with the player in order to correct the problem. The three goals of the youth travel program are: to develop the skills of individual players, to teach teamwork, and proper position play. At times these goals may seem to conflict. We do not condone a coaching attitude of “win at all costs.” We do recognize that winning is important and sometimes requires discretionary deployment of players in critical situations where winning is in the balance. What the children want from their playing experience is a balance of team wins and individual accomplishments, a balance of “us” and “me”. The guidelines for the coaches will attempt to provide both. At all times we demand that coaches be considerate of the players’ feelings and that tradeoffs be employed if a player has been shortchanged in a certain situation. We believe that a good coach can maximize team success while simultaneously maximizing individual development and ensuring fairness.

The following rules are to be used by coaches:

POSITIONS: All Tyke, Mite, and Squirt players should have an opportunity to play the forward and defense positions. In fact, players who have experience at both positions develop into more skilled skaters and better overall players. For Pee Wee ages and above, player positions are left up to the coach, but, are encouraged by the Coaching Committee to rotate players to different positions as necessary in order to develop the skaters into well-rounded hockey players.

PLAYING TIME: Playing time is left to the discretion of the coach given the policy above regarding a player’s attitude, work ethic, and coachability. Coaches should keep in mind the younger the age division the more equal playing time should be for all players.

Tykes & Mites: Each player should play in every game and should receive approximately equal playing time.

Squirt House League: Each player should play in every game and should receive approximately equal playing time.

Squirt Travel: Each player should play in every game. The coach should give his best effort in “rolling” his offensive lines and defensive pairings. Special teams units should not be devised at this age as every player should experience playing in power play or penalty kill situations. The coach should use his best judgement in ensuring that playing time is equitable at this age level and that all players receive development.

Pee Wee Travel: Each player should play in every game. The coach should give his best effort in “rolling” his offensive lines and defensive pairings. Special teams units should begin to be introduced at this age and every player should get some experience playing in power play or penalty kill situations. This is an age when playing time in key game situations is starting to be “earned” through a player’s skill level, attitude, and overall work ethic in practices and games. The coach should use his best judgement in ensuring that playing time is fair at this age level and that all players receive development.

Bantam Travel: The coach should give his best effort in “rolling” his offensive lines and defensive pairings as at this age players are still being developed for the Metros high school

program. Teams should have special teams units at this age level. Playing time at this level is “earned” through a player’s skill level, attitude, and overall work ethic in practices and games. Playing time at this age level should be “fair”, meaning each player should be given the same opportunity to earn playing time through their demonstrated skill level, positive attitude, and overall work ethic in practice and in games. Playing time is a reward for hard work and dedication and can be used as a motivational tool for players. This is an age where a coach really must use his best judgement in how to motivate and develop players.

Goalies: Goalies should be rotated at the Mite & Squirt age level. For the Pee Wee age levels, playing time for goalies may not be equal but should still be somewhat fair. For Bantam age levels, playing time is earned. The Bantam coach should still use their best judgement in providing playing time for the backup goaltender and continue to develop them as a player. In tournaments at the Squirt and Pee Wee age levels each goalie must play at least one game, barring injury. Exception: Pee Wee A can play one goalie during Midwest League Finals and State Tournament Finals until the team is eliminated from Championship contention. Squirt A can play one goalie during the Fargo Squirt International Tournament until the team is eliminated from Championship contention then both goalies should receive equal playing time.

Tyke Development Plan

Overall goals:

Learn to skate (forward, backward, cross-over).
Stick handling - basics of puck control.
- stationary and while skating.

1. Individual Skills:

- a. Skating--hockey stance, posture, proper stride, balance, forward and backward strides, stopping, forward crossovers, control turns.
- b. Puck handling--stationary, straight ahead “puck push”, side to side control while skating, control around cones.
- c. Passing and receiving passes--little or none at this level. Focus is on skating and skating with puck.
- d. Shooting--forehand, backhand, no slap shots.

2. Team Skills:

- a. None. It is essential to learn skating and stick handling fundamentals.

3. Tyke coaching priorities/philosophy:

- a. Keep players moving--no waiting at end of long lines.
- b. Lots of fun, lots of encouragement.
- c. No goalie equipment--everyone learns to skate.
- d. Use a skater net or train with the W-nets.
- e. Need a dedicated coach to work with newcomers/non-skaters to teach them how to skate and get off the skating sled.

Mite Development Plan

Overall Goals:

Skating--continue to work on skating, front and back crossovers.

Stick handling--puck control.

Puck movement--introduce passing and receiving, keep working on skating with puck.

Understand basic rules of the game.

Find and identify goalies to enter the squirt program.

1. Individual Skills:

a. Skating--stick on ice, forward, backward, crossovers/unders, variety of stops, starts, speed and quickness drills, mohawk turns. There should be at least one or two Power Skating stations incorporated into each ADM Practice plan or a Power Skating circuit should be done at the beginning of each practice.

b. Stick handling--lateral, forward, backward, forward to backward, cupping, pushing puck on the fly, techniques and speed drills (cones, etc.) lateral / deke moves.

c. Passing/receiving--forehand, backhand, fundamental techniques of passing and receiving with accuracy (stationary and moving), look up and pass.

d. Shooting--wrist shot, backhand, how to create "quality" shots (emphasize slot area, discourage wide-angle shots), goalie dekes.

e. Face-offs--introduce fundamental technique (draw back to defense/taking man or go for puck/open). Positional line-up at a face-off.

2. Team Skills:

a. Rules of the game--understand zones, lanes, positions, face-offs in zones, penalties, what to do when your team or other team has the puck. These skills should be introduced after January 1st when full ice intra-squad games are introduced.

b. Appropriate passes (offensive and defensive), game flow awareness, defensive angling of the puck carrier.

3. Mite Coaching Priorities/Philosophy:

a. Skill development has priority over winning games.

b. Develop defensemen--all players play defense 1/2 of the time.

c. Encourage players to skate with puck.

d. Back checking--importance of.

e. Use cross-ice opportunities to develop skills in tight areas.

f. Encourage all players to try playing in the goal.

g. Teach to an objective--stay focused, keep kids focused on skill being taught.

Squirt Development Plan

Overall Goals:

Achieve sound skating ability. Stick handle while skating with head up. Pass and receive puck with accuracy while skating. Know the rules of the game and understand basic game strategies.

1. Individual Skills:

- a. Skating--powerful stride, deep knee extension drills, edges, balance drills, control turns, agility and acceleration drills with and without the puck.
- b. Stick handling--lateral, forward, and backward, forward to backward cupping, pushing puck on the fly, technique and speed drills, one on one moves, attacking the triangle, wide separation, use of feet.
- c. Passing/receiving--continue with fundamental techniques, forehand and backhand, on the move accuracy, drop pass, bank pass (use of boards), break to “open” / angles.
- d. Shooting--wrist shot, backhand, goalie dekes, rebounds, tips, shooting on the fly (keep feet moving), strength and quickness drills, finishing around the net.
- e. Faceoffs--Continue fundamental techniques, positions.
- f. Communication--on ice, verbal communication between players, positional awareness.

2. Team Skills:

- a. Forwards and Defenseman:
 - i. Neutral zone--move and pass puck, headman or carry it, move to get open, create good passing angles, basic regroups, try to create 2 on 1 (odd man situations).
 - ii. Faceoff plays--positioning and coverage.
 - iii. Forecheck system, i.e. (1-2-2, 2-1-2, etc.)
- b. Forwards:
 - i. Offensive--zone entries, introduce offensive plays, center trail, center break, attack wide, stay on-side, support puck carrier, control / movement of the puck, puck rotation, use of defensemen, triangle offense.
 - ii. Defensive--Zone coverage system (3 man game down low, wingers at points), positions, coverage, transitions (offensive to defensive and vice versa), man-to-man angling, and breakouts basics.
- c. Defensemen:
 - i. Offensive--breakout basics, rushing the puck, following the play, holding the blue line, point shooting decisions/angles, diagonal support, D to D passes, pinching decisions.
 - ii. Defensive--net coverage, corners, D to D passes, diagonal support, 1-1, 2-1 and 3-2 rushes/situations, know goalie responsibilities.

3. Squirt Coaching Priorities/Philosophy:

- a. Develop defensemen--top players play defense “1/2” the season.
- b. Establish discipline on passing, positional play, and teamwork.
- c. Back checking--develop two-way players.
- d. Emphasis on development, not winning games.
- e. Encourage team play.
- f. Teach to an objective—focus on skill being taught.

Pee Wee Development Plan

Overall Goals: Continue emphasis on skating. Refinement of passing/shooting-wrist shots, snap shots, slap shots. Develop defensemen. Ice awareness and positional play. Encourage creativity and aggressive puck handling.

1. Individual Skills:

- a. Skating--Continue emphasis on basics, turns, stops, pivots, edges, look for and work on individual player's skating weaknesses. Full speed drills, acceleration drills, lengthen stride drills.
- b. Stick handling--expansion of reach, cupping the puck, backwards skating with head up, puck protection, dekes, escape moves, handling puck in feet.
- c. Passing/receiving--forehand, backhand, on the move--full speed drills, accuracy techniques, drop pass, bank pass, break to open, angles, flip pass, passing before challenged, vacating/filling lanes.
- d. Shooting--wrist shot, introduce snap shots and slap shots, shooting on the fly (ft. moving), shot selection, accuracy, quick release, shoot to score, creating screens, goalie dekes.
- e. Defensive skills--techniques for delivering/receiving checks, finishing and holding checks, body blocking vs. attacking, containment. Forechecking, proper angling, finishing, creating turnovers. Playing 1 on 1, 2 on 2. Back checking responsibilities-first man, second man, third man.
- f. Offensive skills--1 on 1 attacks, creating odd man situations, attacking wide with speed, driving to the net, "seeing" the ice, face-offs.
- g. Defensemen--board to board vision, diagonal support, escapes with puck, reverse escapes, reversing the puck, board passes, using the net.
- h. Communication on ice.

2. Team Skills:

- a. Forwards and Defenseman
 - i. Intro to team systems-offensive/defensive, neutral zone strategies, and creating/filling passing lanes, appropriate passes, lugging the puck.
- b. Forwards:
 - i. Offensive--cycling, face-offs, positions, zone attack options, screening/tipping, breakouts, forechecking, power play.
 - ii. Defensive--forecheck systems, back checking, defensive zone coverage, faceoffs, penalty kill, covering for rushing defenseman.
- c. Defensemen:
 - i. Offensive--breakout options, rushing, follow the play, regrouping, holding the offensive blue line, diagonal support, play making decisions, power play.
 - ii. Defensive--penalty kill, diagonal support, net coverage, pinching, odd man rushes, defensive zone coverage, gap control, holding defensive blue line.

3. Pee Wee Coaching Priorities/philosophy:

- a. Develop defensemen.
- b. Establish team discipline on passing and teamwork.

- c. Teach “safety valves” --some actions are never wrong.
- d. Develop creativity with puck--encourage puck handling.
- e. Individual puck protection/individual attack the puck.
- f. Maximize “game like” conditions in practice.
- g. Teach shooters to finish drills with speed and following shots to net.
- h. Develop two-way players--back check.
- i. Teach rink safety--for self and others.
- j. Teach to an objective.

Bantam Development Plan

Overall Goals:

Develop scorers, puck handlers/playmakers and defensemen.

1. Individual Skills:

- a. Skating--build on previous fundamentals (maintenance). Identify weak skaters-focus on improving shortfalls, stress-muscle strength, speed, power, and endurance.
- b. Stick handling--maintenance/improvement. Stress quickness.
- c. Passing--maintenance/improvement, touch pass, tape-to-tape passing, speed, and anticipation-pass to spot.
- d. Shooting--maintenance, quick release, shooting on the fly, goalie dekes, screens, tips. Identify weak shooters-focus on improving.
- e. Offensive skills--control puck (use of body/boards), faceoffs-positioning, strategies.
- f. Defensive skilled--holding/finishing checks, not allowing give and goes, always face the puck.

2. Team Skills:

- a. Forwards:
 - i. Offensive--breakouts/danger zones, regrouping, puck control in danger zones/critical areas, creating offense behind opponents net, 3rd man high in scoring zone for scoring opportunities plus good defensive position, no turnovers, and puck cycling.
 - ii. Defensive--shot blocking, backchecking-pickup man, not puck carrier, 2 man short penalty kill, covering defensemen rushes, counter-attacks, offensive insertions, pressuring puck carrier, odd man defenses.
- b. Defensemen:
 - i. Offensive--breakouts, breakout danger zones, rushing puck, when to gamble on offensive blue line, shooting-on net, tips, height, screens, D to D passes.
 - ii. Defensive--reading odd man rushes with and without back checkers, holding defensive blue line, always pressure puck carrier, and backs to the net.

3. Bantam coaching priorities/philosophy

- a. Respect for others--self-control, behavior on/off ice.
- b. Develop/refine defensemen.
- c. Establish team discipline in executing systems of play.
- d. Practice like you play--game-like conditions during practice.
- e. Shooters--finish at the net, quick release, on net shots.

- f. Encourage creativity with the puck.
- g. Reinforce player in-ice communication.
- h. Back check, back check, back check!!!
- i. Teach to an objective in every drill you do.

Goalie Development Plan

Overall Goals:

Encourage top athletes to try out for goalie.

Provide/have available goalie training tapes, materials, literature.

Encourage/facilitate attendance at goalie schools/clinics/camps.

Appoint an individual to take “ownership” of goalie development/monitoring.

Tyke: No equipment, rotate kids through the positions, use cross-ice play. Work hard on skating.

Mite: Continue to rotate kids through the position, take turns wearing the equipment. SYHA should supply the equipment.

➤ SKILLS:

- Basic stance, Parallel shuffle, Lateral T-guide, forward and backward movement, stick saves, body saves, glove saves, and leg saves, stacking pads, “V” drop, and Rebounds.

Squirt: Start “settling into” goalies. Pick best athletes and those who express an interest in the position. Specialized coaching introduced.

➤ SKILLS:

- Parallel shuffle, lateral T-glide, forward/backward moves, stick saves, body saves, glove saves, leg saves, skate saves, stacking pads, “V” drop, playing angles, rebounds, team situations.

Pee Wee:

Settle on goalies. Focus on good athletes. Increase specialized coaching. Encourage attendance at goalie clinics/camps.

➤ SKILLS:

- Parallel shuffle, lateral T-glide, forward/backward moves, stick saves, glove saves, leg saves, skate saves, stacking pads, “V”-drop, playing angles, rebounds, and team situations.

Bantam:

Focused, intense development, specialized coaching. Seek goalie clinics/camps-- encourage attendance.

➤ SKILLS :

- Skate saves
- Stacking pads
- V drops
- Rebounds
- Team situations

Basic Structure for Tyke & Mite Practices

Overview:

The Tyke and Mite divisions will follow the USA Hockey's Red, White, and Blue Hockey training program. Its emphasis is on playing cross-ice games and conducting station-based practices and is designed to get the best out of each and every player.

In this environment, a player's activity level skyrockets because their engagement level increases, which leads to an increased skill set and love of the game. Drills are designed to focus on multiple skills and situations, increasing time with the puck and situational repetition. The goalies are also more involved in the drills because they get more shots to stop. It's been proven that kids who begin their hockey training in this environment develop a better foundation of skills and hockey instincts, and enjoy the game more.

It's because of this emphasis on fun and development that we are implementing station-based practices and cross-ice games at the Tyke & Mite level. Doing so is an important part of the development process at these age groups.

Practice Structure:

The Tyke & Mite groups consist of players ranging from 4 to 6 years old for Tykes and 7 to 8 years old for Mites. USA Hockey recommends skaters first take a basic Learn to Skate and Learn to Play program. SYHA is a small association and doesn't always have Learn to Skate and Learn to Play programs available. We offer several Try Hockey events but this isn't always enough. We want to encourage kids to play hockey and often times the Tyke division serves the role of Learn to Skate and Learn to Play programs. Skating is a primary skill for ice hockey and although players must continue to master skating technique throughout their career, there must be a special emphasis placed on the ABC (Agility, Balance, Coordination) elements of skating in the early years of development. Players at the Tyke & Mite age have a harder time processing technical skills instruction and their bodies lack some of the fine motor control required. At this age large muscle groups and multiple joint movements should be incorporated into the practice sessions. Agility, balance and coordination (ABC) on the ice surface are at the foundation of Long-Term Athletic Development (LTAD) for Tykes & Mites.

Practices have a preparatory phase followed by the main body of the practice. The main body of the practice session includes station work so that kids are developing their skills in an efficient manner. The recommended breakdown is with six stations so that there is enough variety to hold the interest of players at this age. Training should be structured so that a large part of the skill repetition is done in a games format. Players at all levels must be mentally engaged in order to best acquire new skills. When skills repetition lacks an emotional element, children at this age quickly become bored. If the skills repetition is hidden in the form of a game, children are capable of extended periods of focused effort. Play is the key to emotional engagement in the skills repetition.

The six station format should include the following breakdown:

- 1 station is of ABC's

- 1 station of hockey competition, 1v1, 2v2, 3v3, or 4v4
- 1 station is on puck control skills
- 1 station is of passing/shooting skills
- 2 stations are devoted specifically to skating skills

Out of these six stations, two to three at least should be in a games format.

Coaches also need to be mindful of the costs associated with quality ice time for the players and must always strive to maximize the learning environment. Keep explanation, demonstration and setup time to a minimum. The goal is to have the players actively participating in a drill within one minute of station rotation. This is not easy to do so preparation is a key. If you can divide setup and explanation time between multiple coaches, two jobs will get done in half the time.

The SYHA Tyke & Mite ice schedule allows for a one hour ADM practice during the weekday and 1 ½ hours on the weekend for games. It is strongly encouraged prior to the weekend game activities to spend the first 10-15 minutes on basic skating skills (ABC'S – agility, balance, coordination, and speed) prior to starting the games. The ADM practice structure is for a 50 minute hour block of ice as this is common across the country (50 minutes of ice with the cost of a 10 minute ice cut included). Since SYHA schedules a full 60 minutes block of ice the practice sessions are easily modified by adding one additional minute to each station and four minutes to the game activity at the conclusion of practice.

It is a good practice to repeat one of the prescribed ice sessions twice in a row. Kids at this age like familiarity with the drills, the repetition is good and it helps the overall efficiency of the session. It is easier for the coaches the second time through.

At the Tyke & Mite age groups, USA Hockey doesn't recommend full time goalies. Every player at this age needs to build a foundation of agility, balance and coordination on the ice surface. We recommend that teams rotate every player through the goaltender position to help kids discover if that position is truly for them. Goaltending requires a high degree of athleticism to be successful.

If a Mite player has demonstrated a good on-ice foundation in the ABC's and skating skills and has a passion for the position, it is acceptable to allow that player to play more regular in net. During the practice sessions the goalies should only play goal when they rotate to a station that has a net. Goalies should continue to rotate with their team as the group advances through the stations. The goalies should continue to skate and be active in every drill. When no goalie is present for a station, the coaches can tip the net over to provide a low to mid-range target for the player to shot at or small nets or W-nets can be used if available.

Group Structure:

One of the most important ADM principles is the grouping of players of similar ability. At Tykes & Mites this is a key element of a player's development. It is important during the station-based, weekday practices for players to be grouped by similar ability whenever possible. At the beginning of the season the coaches will group the players into 3 different skill groups (Gold, Green, and Black) based on their skill level. A piece of colored tape which corresponds to the skill group will be placed on the players' helmet so they are easily identifiable. During a six

station practice there will be 6 station groups which will consist of 2 Gold groups, 2 Green groups, and 2 Black groups. These groups will then rotate through the station based practice. Several times a year, ideally once a month, the players' skills will be re-evaluated and will be regrouped based on their skill level.

Game Structure:

Tyke House League games will be played in a cross-ice format and Mite House League games in both cross-ice & half-ice formats. The benefits of these formats are endless because without the comfort of open ice, kids have to rely on creative ways to stickhandle, skate and outsmart their opponent. It's been proven that kids who begin their hockey training in this environment develop a better foundation of skills and hockey instincts, and enjoy the game more. Teams will be grouped according to the way they were rostered for House League.

- Each game lasts 60 minutes.
- The goal is to keep the players active every other shift in order to maximize playing time.
- For Mites, keep shifts to 60 seconds. 90 seconds for Tykes.
- Use a running clock buzzer to keep track of time.
- As best as you can, match players with similar ability levels.
- Face-offs after goals and/or tie-ups are recommended, but drop the puck quickly instead of waiting for all players to line up in the right position.
- Rotate teams every 20 minutes to play different opponents.
- At Tykes play 3v3 with mini nets or W-nets and no goalies.
- At Mites play 4v4 with nets and goalies. Half-ice, instead of cross-ice, games may also be played at Mites.
- Make sure you keep plenty of water bottles by the dividers.
- Splitting the ice into 3 games or 2 games with a skill zone in the middle of the ice is encouraged at both the Tyke and Mite levels.

Full-Ice Mite Games:

After the first of the year, full ice games should be introduced to the Mite division. During this introduction to full ice play the players will learn the rules of full ice game play. Emphasis should be placed on understanding zones, lanes, positions, face-offs in zones, penalties, and what to do when your team or other team has the puck. These full ice games should be a controlled scrimmage with no emphasis placed on winning and losing. Since the ice surface is larger it will probably be necessary to combine house league teams together. Shifts should be managed and a horn or whistle blown every minute to signify when it is time to change lines. During line changes play should not be stopped (no face-offs), the puck should be left where it was last played and picked up by the new line of players where the game left off.

The Coaching Director will go over the Tyke & Mite House League schedules with their respective coaches prior to the season, or provide a sample schedule if necessary, to ensure the proper practice formats and game structures are being implemented.

Basic Structure for House League Practices

GOLDEN AGE OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Players between the ages of 8-12 are considered to be in the Golden Age of Skill Development. This is the prime age period for kids to acquire and develop athletic skills. Coaches of players who are in this age range should spend the majority of practice time working on skill development. Although skill development should be a focus at other ages, too, there is no better time than during this Golden Age of Skill Development to optimally affect the long-term skill development of each player.

ACTIVE PRACTICES

Coaches should strive to activate players for the majority of each practice session and avoid the archaic practice in which kids spend much of their time standing in line waiting to participate in drills. These archaic practices activate players for only 12-15 minutes in a 60-minute practice. Coaches at the Squirt & Pee Wee age level should aim to have much more activity than this for each player in each practice. Coaches should also consider the number of repetitions that each player executes while performing the desired skills in a practice. Coaches are encouraged to take a statistical look at their practices. This includes analyzing the number of minutes each player is active, the number of shots each player takes, the number of passes each player makes, how many shots each goaltender faces, etc. All of these are important skills and it is imperative that coaches consistently maximize the minutes of activity and the number of repetitions. While the number of repetitions is important, it is also important the player is doing the repetition correctly in order to avoid bad habits. Repeatedly performing a skill/drill incorrectly only reinforces those bad habits. Coaches should take the time to instruct the player in performing the skill/drill correctly.

Station-based practices are an effective way to teach Squirt & Pee Wee players the skills they need, while also maximizing the activity level and increasing the number of repetitions for each player. Coaches might consider modifying the stations to better fit their players' needs, however high activity levels and age-appropriate skills must remain the main focus.

It is also strongly encouraged at the beginning of each practice to spend the first 10-15 minutes on basic skating skills (ABC'S – agility, balance, coordination, and speed).

PRACTICE FOCUS

Practices should focus on (percentage of time listed after each):

1. Individual skill improvement (hockey skills, activities, and games) — 75%
2. Hockey sense (teaching concepts through small area games) — 15%
3. Systems (team-play training) — 10%

While these percentages are approximations, they emphasize the key principle that individual skills are the most important part of development at this age and that the majority of practice should be spent improving those skills. The percentages also indicate that hockey sense and concepts are still more important than systems and team-play training.

SMALL AREA GAMES

Coaches should utilize small area games on a consistent basis in every practice for fun, practicing skills and teaching basic concepts. As young hockey players age, they will be increasingly able to understand important concepts related to the game. Rather than telling players how to play each situation, small area games provide a great opportunity to let a game teach the desired concept(s). Players learn the desired concept by playing the game within its parameters; it challenges players to find their own solutions, increasing their confidence and retention. Consistent use of these games is important in the development of hockey sense for each player. They should be playing a variety of games and, in each case, figuring the game out on their own. Coaches should not be telling players how to play. The number of players, rules of the game, and size of the game area should be varied with each game. Coaches might also opt to use pucks, balls, or ringette rings to change the dynamic of each game. Refer to the Small Area Competitive Games file located in the Coaches Corner section of the SYHA website for age-appropriate small area games.

PRACTICE TO GAME RATIO

Throughout the history of SYHA the House League has focused on games. There has been a very unhealthy ratio of practice to games, often times the ratio has been 1 practice to 1 game and sometimes it has been as high as 2 games to 1 practice. That ratio is the opposite of what it should be in developing skilled hockey players. In the future, a practice to game ratio of at least 2 practices to 1 game will be maintained in House League and a practice to game ratio of 3 to 1 is encouraged. The Coaching Director will go over the House League schedule with the House League Head Coach prior to the season, or provide a sample schedule if necessary, to ensure both the proper practice format and practice to game ratio is being maintained.

CONCLUSION

The ultimate goal is to make practices as much fun as the games because in the end it is practice that allows our players to develop the skills that will allow them to have the success they desire in the games. As a coach this can be difficult to achieve. How can a coach make practice appealing enough and the games special enough to drive the desired outcome? First of all, we have to change the culture and get both the players and the parents to understand how important practice is to their development. The pace, intensity and focus needed in every practice session is critical in order to have positive, productive movement forward. Secondly, we need to develop practice plans that are fun and challenging. They need to hide the fact that they are working hard and getting the necessary touches and repetitions through FUN, CHALLENGING and CREATIVE drills and games that take the mundane aspects of developing a player and mask them.

SYHA Snipers & Danglers Challenge

SYHA has designed a stickhandling and shooting program for all Mite, Squirt, Pee Wee, and Bantam players to assist them in increasing their skill with handling and shooting the puck over the summer. Coaches should encourage their players to complete this in the off-season.

MITES:

Complete Mite Stickhandling Circuit 25 times/Period

2500 SHOTS TOTAL (100 shots / session)

FOREHAND WRIST SHOTS = 2000

BACKHAND SHOTS = 500

Record activity on recording sheet

SQUIRTS:

Complete Squirt Stickhandling Circuit 30 Times/Period

3000 SHOTS TOTAL (100 shots / session)

FOREHAND WRIST SHOTS = 1200

FOREHAND SNAP SHOTS = 1200

BACKHAND SHOTS = 600

Record activity on recording sheet

PEE WEE:

Complete Pee Wee Stickhandling Circuit 35 Times/Period

3500 SHOTS TOTAL (100 shots /session)

FOREHAND WRIST SHOTS = 1225

FOREHAND SNAP SHOTS = 1225

BACKHAND SHOTS = 600

SLAP SHOTS = 450

Record activity on recording sheet

BANTAM:

Complete Bantam Stickhandling Circuit 40 times/Period

4000 Shots Total (100 shots / session)

FOREHAND WRIST SHOTS = 1400

FOREHAND SNAP SHOTS = 1400

BACKHAND SHOTS = 600

SLAP SHOTS = 600

Record activity on Recording Sheet

Notes: Focus on getting the shot off quickly. Everyone loves the big, booming slap shot but the top goal scorers possess excellent snap and back hand shots.

Mites

IMPORTANT STUFF

- On all drills set feet a little wider than shoulder width with good knee bend (Hockey Position)
 - When expanding reach set feet even further so player can transfer weight from leg to leg.
 - Move head, shoulders and upper body during all drills to encourage head and shoulder fakes. Keep your head up as much as possible. **Don't stare at the puck/ball!!**
 - Keep your hands out from your body. This allows your hands to move freely and increases your stickhandling reach and range of motion.
 - VERY IMPORTANT - Proper hand position (hands forearm distance apart) with the thumb and pointer finger (both hands) making a V down the top of the shaft of the stick.
 - Rest 15-30 seconds between drills (take more rest if needed).
 - Control ball/puck on the heel of the stick.
 - Increase hand and foot speed as skill improves.
1. Dribble in front of body (small and fast) - 2 x 30 seconds
 2. Dribble on forehand side of body (small and fast) - 2 x 30 seconds
 3. Dribble on backhand side of body (small and fast) - 2 x 30 seconds
 4. Expand reach (wide lateral) in front of body - 2 x 30 seconds
 5. Expand reach (dribble wide) on forehand side of body - 2 x 30 seconds
 6. Little and big in front of body - dribble quickly in front of body and expand to forehand side (wide lateral) return to quick dribble in front of body then expand to backhand side (wide laterals & super wide laterals, alternate) and continue - 2 x 30 seconds
 7. Little and big on forehand side of the body - dribble quickly on forehand side of the body and expand to front of the body return to quick dribble then expand behind feet and continue- 2 x 30 seconds
 8. Walk and dribble (forwards & backwards) - 2 x 30 seconds
 9. Creative dribbling – walk around dribbling using various moves. Create an obstacle course using pucks, sticks, & chairs to move through - 2 x 30 seconds

This is the basic workout. Tired of the same routine? Use some of the other drills we have linked at the website to add some variety to your workout.

Squirts

IMPORTANT STUFF

- On all drills set feet a little wider than shoulder width with good knee bend (Hockey Position)
- When expanding reach set feet even further so player can transfer weight from leg to leg.
- Move head, shoulders and upper body during all drills to encourage head and shoulder fakes. Keep your head up as much as possible. **Don't stare at the puck/ball!!**
- Keep your hands out from your body. This allows your hands to move freely and increases your stickhandling reach and range of motion.

- VERY IMPORTANT - Proper hand position (hands forearm distance apart) with the thumb and pointer finger (both hands) making a V down the top of the shaft of the stick.
- Rest 15-30 seconds between drills (take more rest if needed).
- Control ball/puck on the heel of the stick.
- Increase hand and foot speed as skill improves.

1. Dribble in front of body (small and fast) - 2 x 30 seconds
2. Dribble on forehand side of body (small and fast) - 2 x 30 seconds
3. Dribble on backhand side of body (small and fast) - 2 x 30 seconds
4. Little and big in front of body - dribble quickly in front of body and expand to forehand side (wide lateral) return to quick dribble in front of body then expand to backhand side (wide laterals & super wide laterals, alternate) and continue - 2 x 30 seconds
5. Sprinkler (stationary) - Dribble around the body start on forehand side and move all the way around the body to the backhand side and continue back to your forehand side - 2 x 30 seconds
6. Walk and dribble – Be creative. Use wide lateral & super wide lateral moves. Push ball/puck into your feet and kick back out onto blade of your stick. Slide ball/puck through legs or behind your back as you move – 2 x 30 seconds
7. Yo-Yo Drill (Toe drags) - Dribble toe pull in and push back out to forehand side - 2 x 30 seconds
8. Line Drill - walk and dribble (forwards & backwards) through a line of 5-6 pucks/markers - 2 x 30 seconds
9. Double 8 Drill - set up 3 pucks/markers in a triangle 18 inches between them. Work ball/puck in and around the markers using a figure 8 motion – 2 x 30 seconds
10. Obstacle course – use pucks, sticks, chairs, anything you like to create an obstacle course. Work your way randomly through the course using a variety of moves, toe drags, wide laterals, etc. – 2 x 30 seconds

This is the basic workout. Tired of the same routine? Use some of the other drills we have linked at the website to add some variety to your workout.

Pee Wees & Bantams

IMPORTANT STUFF

- On all drills set feet a little wider than shoulder width with good knee bend (Hockey Position)
- When expanding reach set feet even further so player can transfer weight from leg to leg.
- Move head, shoulders and upper body during all drills to encourage head and shoulder fakes. Keep your head up as much as possible. **Don't stare at the puck/ball!!**
- Keep your hands out from your body. This allows your hands to move freely and increases your stickhandling reach and range of motion.
- VERY IMPORTANT - Proper hand position (hands forearm distance apart) with the thumb and pointer finger (both hands) making a V down the top of the shaft of the stick.
- Rest 15-30 seconds between drills (take more rest if needed).
- Control ball/puck on the heel of the stick.
- Increase hand and foot speed as skill improves.

1. Dribble in front of body (small and fast) - 2 x 30 seconds
2. Dribble on forehand side of body (small and fast) - 2 x 30 seconds
3. Dribble on backhand side of body (small and fast) - 2 x 30 seconds
4. Little and big in front of body - dribble quickly in front of body and expand to forehand side (wide lateral) return to quick dribble in front of body then expand to backhand side (wide laterals & super wide laterals, alternate) and continue - 2 x 30 seconds
5. Dribble and spin alternating to forehand and backhand side - 2 x 30 seconds
6. Sprinkler (stationary) - Dribble around the body start on forehand side and move all the way around the body to the backhand side and continue back to your forehand side - 2 x 30 seconds
7. Walk and dribble – Be creative. Use wide lateral & super wide lateral moves. Push ball/puck into your feet and kick back out onto blade of your stick. Slide ball/puck through legs or behind your back as you move – 2 x 30 seconds
8. Yo-Yo Drill (Toe drags) - Dribble toe pull in and push back out to forehand side - 2 x 30 seconds
9. Figure 8 – place two pucks/markers wide apart (6-7 feet). Work pull/ball in a figure 8 motion around the markers using a wide lateral motion. Remember to do this drill in the reverse direction – 2 x 30 seconds
10. Line Drill - walk and dribble (forwards & backwards) through a line of 5-6 pucks/markers - 2 x 30 seconds
11. Double 8 Drill - set up 3 pucks/markers in a triangle 18 inches between them. Work ball/puck in and around the markers using a figure 8 motion – 2 x 30 seconds
12. Obstacle course – use pucks, sticks, chairs, anything you like to create an obstacle course. Work your way randomly through the course using a variety of moves, toe drags, wide laterals, etc. – 2 x 30 seconds

This is the basic workout. Tired of the same routine? Use some of the other drills we have linked at the website to add some variety to your workout.

Power Skating

Techniques commonly covered in a basic/intermediate class

Focus is on developing proper skating technique

- This is not a conditioning clinic.
- The focus is on developing proper skating technique and teaching the players the concepts behind the techniques so they can better understand the system.
- Start by slowing the players down and teaching them the correct way of skating.
- Then bring the player back up to speed, then add in a puck, and then put them into game type situations.
- The players will develop a **Longer** stride, use **Less** energy, and will be able to skate **Faster!**

Start off the first session by working on forward and backward skating. The reason for this is because the rest of the clinic builds off of techniques that are covered within these two basic techniques.

Forward skating

- Deep knee bend.
- Edge control.
 - Inside edges
 - Outside edges
 - Last part of the blade (neither edge)
 - Length of stride
 - Full extension
 - Toe flick
 - Full return
 - Proper arm swing

Backward Skating (C-cut push)

- Deep knee bend.
- Full extension and locking the leg
- Full return.
- Correct ankle pivot
- Weight transfer or getting most power out of push

Forward Crossovers

- Strong knee bend
- Strong edge control
- Correct use of body positioning and body weight
- Stride push and X-push
 - Full extension
 - Toe flick
 - Correct use of balance and blade position (blade parallel to ice surface)

Backward Crossovers

- Deep knee bend
- Strong edge control
- Correct use of body positioning and body weight
- C-cut push
 - Full extension
 - Weight distribution or putting all weight on pushing foot
 - Full return
 - X-push
 - Full extension
 - Toe flick
 - Correct balance, blade parallel to ice on follow through Using power from both feet for the first push

Explosive Starts, Forward Toe Starts

- Starting position
 - Wide V-diamond
 - Deep knee bend
 - Strong inside edge of toes
 - Foot positioning inside the skate
 - Weight over pushing foot
 - Explosive pushes
 - Explode or leap out with one skate to full extension
 - Land on toe of other skate and push again
 - Body positioning

Explosive Starts, Backward Crossover Start

- Body positioning
- Strong pushes
- Quick pushes
- Full extension
- Powerful pushes

Lateral Mobility

- Going far laterally or to the sides
- Full extension on all pushes
- Leap out or getting extra extension on last push
- Weight distribution on blade of skates
- Quicker pushes and quicker laterally

Skating with pucks

- Same technique
- Edge control.
 - Getting full arm swings
 - One hand arm swing
 - Keeping puck away from body
 - Keeping control of puck
 - Same stride as without the puck.

THE TEN COACHING COMMANDMENTS

“Never lose site that we coach for the players ~ not for the parents or for ourselves.” Dennis Freed

I - HAVE FUN This is the sole reason why the players and coaches are brought together. It’s simple; if you’re not having fun coaching then it is a good bet that your players are not having a good time either. Players will develop quicker and reach higher levels if they enjoy your coaching. This does not infer that you don’t work them hard. You and your players can still have fun while working very hard. A true indication of a fun and productive practice is when the players leave the ice dripping with sweat and brimming with a smile. (Thank you Armand!)

II - THINK LIKE A PLAYER Actually, think like a kid! Would you be having fun at your practices or games? Would you have understood the drill or play the way you just explained it? Is the play or drill too hard or simple for your players at their current level? Ask yourself these questions before you begin. Then remember – offer advice, praise and discipline on their level, not yours. Follow the Platinum Rule, “DO ONTO OTHERS AS THEY WANT”. Analyze the difference between the Platinum Rule and the standard Golden Rule. If you apply the Platinum Rule you will create a team which is having fun and winning.

III - TEACH BY GAMES - LET THEM LEARN ON THEIR OWN Part of your practice should consist of themed games which teach the skills you are targeting during the practice. They learn & practice the skill on their own thus reinforcing it. Juhani Wahlsten and Tom Molloy's book "Hockey Coaching - The ABC's of International Youth Hockey" describes in detail this method of teaching and gives many examples. It is a suggested addition to your hockey library.

IV - BY THE INCH IS A CINCH - BY THE YARD IS HARD

This is the Golden Rule of coaching, teaching and learning anything! Teach new concepts and skills in pieces. Break down each skill into individual components; and teach the entire skill over the course of one or more practices. It is easier to digest small bites than large chunks.

V - SINCERE AND HONEST PRAISE Right out of Dale Carnegie’s How to Win Friends and Influence People: Pointed, detailed, short praise to a player is more valuable than hours of condemnation. Always praise a player for a proper action before correcting them of an improper action. If you must discipline a player, QUICKLY follow it up with praise once the player acts correctly. Remember, children do not have the same tolerance for, and understanding of, criticism as adults (most adults).

VI - CHALLENGE Adding challenge to the most basic of drills will motivate your players tremendously. Athletes, at all levels, are competitive by nature. Find unique ways to integrate challenges into all aspects of your coaching. For example, the so-called “Suicide” drills demand the most from your players – physically. Add a “rabbit” to the drill. The last player(s) to finish the drill becomes the next “rabbit.

VII - KEEP THE PLAYERS MOVING Most line drills are BORING! Plan drills that keep the players moving; or standing around as little as possible. In the event line drills are absolutely necessary, divide the players into as many lines or sections possible. Remember a good indication that your players are bored or standing idle too long is that they are shooting pucks at the boards or fooling around as they wait their turn to perform the drill. Added bonus: your players' endurance will benefit from constant movement.

VIII - REPETITION An average mite/squirt player must repeat a skill hundreds, sometimes thousands, of times before they can perform the skill automatically. Repeat, an average mite/squirt player must repeat a skill hundreds, sometimes thousands, of times before they can perform the skill automatically. The more difficult the skill – the more it has to be repeated. Repeat the skill in several forms both during a single practice session, and over the course of several practices.

IX - 20-SECOND EXPLANATION Most mites/squirts lose interest after 20 seconds. Therefore, it is your responsibility to be concise in your explanation of a drill/skill so as not to lose the players attention. Because the playing surface is so large, it is difficult for players to hear or understand you if you are moving and talking. Begin by explaining the drill in a stationary position; then, follow it up with a demonstration. Also, address your players with your back to the boards. This will prevent the players from being distracted by other happenings taking place on the ice. In addition: Try to keep drills to a maximum of eight minutes. After eight minutes, drills become tedious and the players will stop having fun. Occasionally, I will schedule several simple three-minute drills to drive home a specific skill point. This approach keeps practices moving and maintains the players' attention levels.

X - DO NOT MAKE NEGATIVE COMMENTS TO PLAYERS IN FRONT OF TEAMMATES OR PARENTS Never put down or ridicule a player in front of other players or parents – especially when that player is not present. Likewise, do not allow other players or parents to make the same mistake. Other players are keen to negative remarks made by coaches such as “that player stinks”, and it reduces their trust and confidence in you. Simply put: Give a dog a bad name and the dog will bite. Give a dog a bone and it will perform tricks.

XI - ESTABLISH A CODE OF CONDUCT EARLY Establish a code of conduct and administer it equally (i.e. the best player and the coaches' sons/daughters). Lack of control will be inevitable if favoritism is evident. Let your players' parents know the code also. If a player is not conforming to the team's code let their parents know promptly.

XII - OLD DOGS CAN LEARN NEW TRICKS: As coaches, we should constantly seek out new ideas and methods. Swap drills with other coaches, watch and read skills videos and books, attend coaching clinics and keep abreast of the latest developments. Hockey is played differently today than it was in the 60's, 70's and 80's. Players are motivated differently too. A knowledgeable and informed coach is a good coach – so keep learning new tricks!

Russo's Golden Rules of Forwards

Do you know the 16 Golden Rulers for Forwards ?

Golden Rules of Forwards

Reprinted from Lets Play Hockey

John Russo

1. **Know what your job is** in all 3 zones and do it each time. **Don't try to do teammates jobs** or you will fail at your own. Ask questions in practice if you are unsure about any situations during play or faceoffs. Intelligent hockey is what wins games.
2. **Backcheck at full speed until you have someone covered when coming back to your zone.** Backchecking at full speed is simply the complement of attacking at full speed. Don't be a one-direction player.
3. **When backchecking, pick up the most open man without the puck.** If the puck is in your area, it may well be appropriate to go after the puck carrier. However, the player without the puck is often most dangerous. Often it is most effective to let the defenseman take the puck carrier and to take away the pass by covering the open forward.
4. Put out a full and honest effort on each shift then get off the ice. **Maximum effort, short shifts have proven to be most desirable at all levels of hockey.**
5. **Push the puck into the offensive zone or get a whistle when you or anyone on your line is tired.** A tired line is most vulnerable - it is seldom productive to play tired. It's always desirable to take a whistle in the defensive zone than to defend it without legs.
6. **Always attack with the puck.** Do not make it easy for the other team to catch you from behind. A pressured attack is much harder for a defenseman to cover and results in more 2 on 1 and 3 on 2 situations.
7. **Move the puck up ice with passes to linemates ahead that are open,** then move quickly to join the rush. Don't force passes to covered linemates ahead. **Skating the puck up the ice is the slowest alternative.**
8. **Get into the habit of shooting when in the slot area** unless an obvious open pass is available. It is seldom productive to stickhandle further once in the slot unless to gain a better angle on the goaltender or to let linemates move in for rebounding. Extra passes look good but often take away good scoring chances. The key offensive strategy of hockey is to get shots from the slot. When they are available, they should be taken.
9. **Always use a wrist or snap shot when shooting from the slot.** Quickness and accuracy score from the slot, slap shots do not provide either.
10. Move away from the net when a teammate has the puck behind the opposition goal line or wide and deep on the boards, and move toward the net when your defense or high forward has the puck in a shooting position. It is easier to remember "**move out when the puck is inside and move in when the puck is outside.**" The tendency is to move up close to the net when a teammate has the puck in the corner or behind the net. However, up close is where most of the congestion and close coverage is. A high slot position will result in more opportunities for clear shots. **When a defenseman is in shooting position, on the other hand, moving to the net creates the best screening of the goaltender and also puts players around the net for rebounds.** There are some details to be worked out by individual coaches, but the basic concept is important.
11. Take specific care not to go offside when attacking in an advantage situation (2 on 1) or 3 on 2). While it is seldom good to be offside, it is critical to complete 2 on1 or 3 on 2 situations as many times possible in each game. It is best to be conservative going over the blue line in these situations.
12. **When throwing the puck into the zone, shoot it to the opposite corner or off the end boards where it will come out at a difficult angle for both the goaltender and defenseman to handle.** Shooting the puck at the goaltender or around the boards gives control to the opposing goaltender - who can easily feed a defenseman or wing.
13. Don't tie up with an opposing player when your team is short-handed. The odds of scoring get better as fewer players are involved in a power play situation, i.e. 4 on 3 is better than 5 on 4.

14. **Don't retaliate from checks or infractions, whether legal or not.** Part of the forwards job is to take checks and keep playing. Retaliation often results in a penalty and referees often miss the opposing player's infraction.
15. **Communicate with your linemates** and other teammates. It is one of the most important parts of teamwork. Don't ever communicate with opposing players - it seldom is of value and exposes your emotions.
16. **Constantly practice your weakest skills.** Get away from the habit of just shooting when you have free time in practice. Other skills are more important.

Russo's Golden Rules for DEFENSEMEN

How Many of the 16 Golden Rules for Defensemen do you know?

Golden Rules of Defensemen

Reprinted from Lets Play Hockey

John Russo

1. **Always back up your partner** - on the offensive blue line, in the neutral zone and especially in the defensive zone.
2. Always one defenseman in front of the net when the opposition has the puck in your zone or there is a danger that they may gain possession. For young defensemen (Mites through early Peewees) the rule should always be one defenseman in front of the net when the puck is in your zone.
3. Do not leave the offensive zone too soon. Leaving too soon is a much more common mistake than leaving too late for a large percentage of defensemen from Mites through High School. It backs the defense up too fast and too far and makes "pacing" the attacking forward much harder.
4. Always **play defense first**. If attacking with the puck, only go deep into offensive zone until prime scoring opportunity is over - and you are part of it.
5. **Never play a 1 on 1 - head on**. Give the attacker a little room on one side to force him to go where you want him to go.
6. **Stagger one defenseman up a little farther than the other on 2 on 2 and 3 on 3 situations**. The up man will generally be nearest the puck carrier.
7. Shoot intelligently from the point. **The best shot is always low**, generally not too hard, (so it stays in the scoring area for rebounds) and accurate. **Defensemen seldom are shooting to score, but rather to put the puck into the scoring area so that forwards can score**. Always look up so shots are not into opposing players and so that passes to wide wings or partners can be made when appropriate.
8. **Do not "tie up" with people in front of your net**, rather gain position and control.
9. Do not ever "tie up" with an opposing player anywhere when your team is a man short. As the players on the team with a penalty tie up and are out of the play, the odds get better on the power play, i.e.: 4 on 3 is better than 5 on 4, 3 on 2 is better than 4 on 3, etc.
10. **Do not stand looking for someone to pass to**, especially in the defensive zone. look - move - look - pass. This reduces the chances of being surprised from the back side, makes the pass more accurate, and forces the opponent to begin retreating.
11. **When turning with a player breaking around the outside, keep the feet moving - do not lunge or reach without moving the feet**. young players have an especially hard time with this, mainly because of their lack of skating and turning skills.
12. Work, work, work on backwards skating and turning. A defenseman must be as comfortable going backwards and sideways as forwards. young players all the ways through college must continue to practice these skills as their bodies grow and change.
13. **Do not pass to covered forwards** - carry it, cross-pass to partner, or "eat it" if necessary. Defensemen must gain confidence in cross-passing and in carrying the puck to open up the attack, allowing their forwards to get open. **Feeding the opposition's point has been a weakness at all levels** since day one.
14. Check only for purpose. Checking just for the sake of a hit is seldom of value and creates risk of self-injury, missed checks - and open opposition players, as well as penalties. There are many situations in games when checking is appropriate and necessary. Learn to check for these situations.
15. **Communicate - with your partner, the goalkeeper, and your forwards**. it is important part of teamwork. Do not communicate with opposing players - it seldom is of value and exposes your emotions.
16. **Follow your attacking forwards closely (20-30 feet) and move quickly into offensive zone after puck goes into the zone**. Many defensemen are lazy moving up the ice and allow the puck to turn around before they get over the blue line.
17. **The blue line is critical**. Always clear the puck over the defensive blue line as a first priority - then move up to blue line quickly. Defend both blue lines with as much vigor as is reasonable as the opposition attacks down the ice - they are the natural points to stop the attack.

Golden Rules for Goalies

Reprinted from Lets Play Hockey
John Russo

1. Stay alert at all times, no matter where the puck is on the ice. Of course, that does not mean you have to be in a crouch at all times, but it does mean that the eyes and the mind have to always follow play.
2. Learn the basic moves and techniques as soon as possible and work to excel at them. The basic moves and techniques are skate saves, pad stack, V drops, stick or pad saves with puck control, blocker saves, catcher saves, covering the puck, puck movement with the stick (shooting, passing and clearing), slides, glides and skating.
3. Understand and work on angles and distances. This is knowing the distance and angle from the goal to take away the maximum goal opening away from the shooter. This is a matter of constant practice and monitoring.
4. Learn to analyze each situation — especially when being attacked — then act accordingly. There are innumerable possibilities for situations that, by analysis, involve understanding the options of the player with the puck, as well as attackers without the puck, plus the level of support available from teammates.
5. Work on major segments of the goaltender's arsenal: feet, gloves, pads, stick. Work must be more than just taking shots; it must often be specific isolated segments. Don't let any segment be dominant because another is weak.
6. Just like other hockey positions, master the skating skills and major arsenal segments so that the thinking portion of the position can be concentrated on. If you don't have good mechanical skills, the critical mental portion of the game will not develop.
7. Work, work, work on skating skills. Invariably, the best goaltenders skate very well and have great agility and balance.
8. Learn what it takes for you to prepare yourself to play a good game. Find the appropriate process that gets you focused.
9. Learn to control the puck whenever possible. That means controlling shoot-in pucks behind the net, freezing the puck whenever it's loose around the net, deflecting shots or loose pucks to the corners, getting the puck to teammates and controlling rebounds.
10. Play with confidence and shake off goals allowed to maintain focus on upcoming action. Non-emotional, clear thinking is one of the basics of good goaltending.
11. Strive for consistency. The best way to do that is to control emotions and have a good grasp of physical skills.
12. Be aggressive and force the attacker with the puck to shoot when and where you want. Challenge the play any time possible.
13. When you are not involved in a team drill during practice, work on individual skills, such as shooting, handling the puck and skating skills and techniques. Good shooting skills are especially important because they allow you to become part of moving the puck out of your zone.
14. Ask for help from coaches and goaltender teammates if you are having problems.
15. Don't retaliate from contact around the net — whether legal or not. Retaliation often results in penalties to you and your teammates who feel obligated to defend their goaltender.

16. Communicate with your teammates, especially those defending around the net. It is a critical aspect of successful goaltending. Don't ever communicate with opposing players; it is seldom of value and exposes your emotions.

17. Look for opportunities to get shots. Every shot is an experience that makes stopping the next puck easier.