



TECHNICAL

*Skill Performance: Observing,
Analyzing and Demonstrating*



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OBJECTIVES

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

INTRODUCTION

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

OBSERVATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Planning

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

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

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

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

Observation

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

- View the athlete performing the skill from various angles so that you see different things.
- Get a general idea of the entire skill by making a few broad observations before breaking down the skill.
- Be patient with your observation as well as your player. Do not correct just on the first

observation. Watch a number of executions to be sure a problem really exists.

- A useful technique is to describe to yourself what you see.
- Video is a useful tool in helping the coach break down a skill.

Analysis

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

DEMONSTRATION AND PRACTICE

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

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

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

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

1. When teaching a complicated skill, show the player the skill in its entirety.
2. Break the skill down into teaching and learning components.

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

SKILL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

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

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