



GHC on Proper Stick Length

Hello Head Coaches (feel free to send this to your AC's)

How goes the beginning of the season? Hopefully things are getting settled with your team.

Just wanted to arm you with a few points and the cool "old school video" for you to start or continue the discussion about stick length and stick grip with your **PARENTS and PLAYERS**.

The Challenge....How many sticks can you check the length of? Find the time while waiting for the zamboni to finish cleaning the ice and players are standing there...maybe its a Station at practice and you can talk to the players about the most imp't piece of equipment (besides their skates of course)..

Second part of the Challenge... How many players actually cut their stick?

Have you checked yours?

- **Stick Grip** - Top Hand - Bury the knob > "V" on narrow top of the shaft - Bottom hand "Violin" - finger grip sliding up and down 1 hand and 2 hands.
- A long stick (at or above the chin on skates) can be extremely detrimental to a child's development. **A stick of proper length should lie with the blade flat on the ice when standing on skates with arms at sides, while holding the knob in the palm of the hand.** (For most, this is a stick cut shoulder height on skates)
- Proper stick length is required to develop proper skating mechanics. The most efficient forward skating body positioning requires players to have a 45 degree upper body lean and a 90 degree knee bend. If the stick is too long and the player has these perfect skating qualities, there will be very little of the stick blade on the ice (usually only the heel) making puck control extremely difficult. Instead, they force the full blade onto the ice, which in turn straightens the players legs/back, and consequently eliminates the perfect stride posture (since knee bend = stride length = powerful/efficient stride).
- **OLDER PLAYERS:**The long stick disease affects older players as well (even if they have learned proper skating techniques at a young age) and still hurts their skating, however many have learned to adapt. Skating can be improved at an older age, but it is just much more difficult (and won't happen with a long stick).
- The modern game of hockey is played in **small spaces** now and in turn, players need to be able to handle the puck in tight spaces, which is very tough to do with long stick. They also need to be able to receive passes on their backhand and in tight; this is difficult to do with a long stick. *A stick of proper length will enable players to handle the puck close to their body, make backhand passes, help them control the puck when moving laterally and develop more power and control in their shot by forcing them to learn correct technique rather than simply using the flex of the stick.*
- **The Poke Check Excuse** - Some people argue that they need a longer stick for poke checks. Poke checks have very little to do with stick length. Good fwd will only come as close to a D's stick as they think the D can reach. So this in turn means that poke checks are only an extension of your arm, which takes stick length out of the equation. The new poke check is called "stick on puck".
- **The Harder Shot Excuse** - Some people argue that they can shoot harder with a long stick. They are simply compensating stick flex for knee bend (a much less controllable variable), which will



hurt their passing and receiving, puck control, skating and shot control. If players learn to shoot with correct techniques (using their full body to shoot the puck rather than just their arms) their shot will be much harder and much more accurate than if they simply used the flex of the stick for velocity. On top of that, high velocity on shots are the least important quality (especially for D) when shooting. I can elaborate on this with a few points on shooting Importance scale, just pop me a note...

- Right Start Video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmiO-j6ZOeU>

I know its a lot of info, I tried to trim it down but I think its important to give them all the info to make a decision. Feel free to cut and paste to send a message to parents.

Please reach out to me if you have any questions, thoughts, suggestions, or comments.

Samm

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It's catching on below is an email that one of my coaches already sent to his team... I'm not found if the video as I feel it gives them too many options for this level of player - all beginning players aka minor hockey need to have a shorter stick - my question is can the stick be too short? I guess looking at arm bend - it how to tell

Samm

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Atom Flames - Stick Length Discussion

Hello Parents I started to roll this out on Friday's practice. This topic was discussed at the GHC coaches meeting.

We measured a few stick at practice to get a sense of where each girl was at. We did tape a few girls sticks to landmark (Addison, Allie, Chloe were the ones I remembered).

DO NOT CUT YOUR DAUGHTERS STICK UNTIL YOU HAVE WATCHED THE VIDEOS AND HAD A DISCUSSION WITH ME!!!!

Some key points to consider:

1. Skating mechanics are affected by stick length.
2. Every coach in hockey will tell your kid to bend their knees into a hockey stance. Every player will have a slightly different stance. This will affect almost everything with your stick.



3. Our girls needs to work on deeper knee bend, ankle flex/strength and bend from the waist, all of which will lower their hockey stance. The lower the stance the shorter the stick.

4. Puck control is easier with a shorter stick.

As the videos states "For beginner Players" the general rule of thumb - With skates on the stick length is just under the chin. This is the MIDDLE OF THE RANGE!
The short end of the range is with skates on the stick length is at the top of the chest/collar bone (Look at Crosby and Gretzky).

The long end of the range is with skates on the stick length is at eye/ eyebrow level.

I measured Sydney and the range is almost 8"!!!

This is a personal choice and I want to inform you. The decision lies with you and your daughter. I DO NOT want you to think that you have to cut your daughter's stick because Coach J said so.

I know hockey sticks are expensive and that kids grow fast. If your interested in how to get cheap sticks I can let you know my buying technique. Alternatively, use your OLD stick. If you have a stick from a couple of seasons ago bring it to practice and try it.

Here are the videos:

<https://www.hockeyshot.ca/stickhandling-tips/proper-hockey-stick-length> (This is one is more up to date then the next one)

<http://www.cuthockeysticks.com/> (This one is pretty funny and a throw back. I remember watching it when I was a kid)

Some other key points about the hockey stick:



1. Curve - Get a moderate curve. Sidney Crosby uses almost straight curve blade. Alex Ovechkin uses a crazy hook. If you need more info ask me.

2. Knob - Do not put a giant knob at the end. Myth - "The giant knob will help my kid pick up the stick." NOT TRUE - you kid will learn to pick their stick up. If not pick it up from the blade. A giant knob will negatively affect proper grip and restrict wrist/hand mobility.

3. Flex - The general rule of thumb is 1/2 the weight of the player equals flex. However, strength and technique also affect how a hockey player uses the flex of their stick. For girls hockey I am recommending a lower flex due to strength. NOTE: Cutting a stick increases flex rating. There is no standard for flex. A Bauer 30 flex may not be the same as a CCM 30 flex.

4. Lie - Lie is the angle between the blade and the shaft. Most kids sticks are in the middle so I wouldn't worry. If your interested in more watch this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-etQAglS48>

Note: Skating mechanics affect lie.

5. Shaft Dimensions - My girls have smaller hands. I have them use a smaller diameter. Shafts come in many shapes.

6. Rocker and Kickpoint - By now you must be thinking OMG there's more!!! I'm an Engineer and an equipment junkie. I'll omit these for now.

I will have a discussion with you one on one and we will write down the decision.