

**INFORMATION EVERY COACH
SHOULD KNOW AND PASS ON
TO PARENTS AND ATHLETES**



Important Development Philosophy

In hockey there are a thousand situations which may arise over the course of a game. Don't focus on teaching each and every situation, focus on the fundamentals which will allow the player to assess every situation, whether on offence or defence and react accordingly.

Don't prepare the path for the player, prepare the player for the path!

Coach-Player Communication

Ongoing communication with your players will be easier if you have taken time at the beginning of the season to talk about goals, outline your approach and answer questions.

Tips for Effective Communication during practices and games:

- Arrange players in front of you and face them so there are no distractions behind you
- Scan your group as you talk. Make eye contact with everyone
- Ask questions to make sure players understand you and know what is expected of them
- Give the players the opportunity to ask questions-listen to what they say and how they say it
- Speak to players using words they understand – keep everything simple
- try to speak to players at their level – if they are kneeling, try to crouch or kneel so you are all at the same level
- Try to speak to every player at every session

*****Always state the rules for ice sessions at the beginning of the year*****

AMAZING HOCKEY FACTS & PHILOSOPHIES

Keep the following in mind while you design and execute fun, intense and challenging practices:

- One effective practice will provide players with more individual skill development than 11 games collectively
- to achieve 1hr of quality work in practicing the basic skills of puck control, approx. 150-200 games have to be played
- in a 60 minute game an average minor hockey player will have the puck on their stick for 8-20 seconds – what is this player doing for the other 59 minutes?
- a young player that has played for 8 years averages 50 games/year and 10 seconds of puck control/game and will achieve 66.66 minutes of puck control over 8 years
- 99% of feedback that coaches give to players is a result of when they have the puck. Ironically most players have the puck for less than 1% of the game
- the puck moves from one team to the other approx. 400 times/game. How many are unforced? What other sport recognizes unforced errors?
- Players evaluate a coach's hockey knowledge based on 2 things:
 - Practice execution AND - Game Management

COACHES CHECKLIST

Did you set your goals and objectives for the practice?

Do your drills have a specific purpose and meet the goals of the practice?

Does your practice have general progressions from individual skills to team play?

Are your drills applicable to the skills used in games?

Do you teach new skills and drill early in the practice?

Do your drills challenge the skill level of the players?

Do you keep all players active including goaltenders?

Do you give clear and concise instructions?

Do you have the attention of your athletes when you speak to them?

Do you explain and demonstrate skills and drills clearly?

Do you inform your assistant coaches and use them effectively? Did you keep them active in all drills?

Did you use the entire ice surface available to you? (Full or half ice)

Do you observe, evaluate and give feedback throughout practice?

Do you keep the drills effective, competitive, active and challenging?

Are you positive and upbeat?

Do you greet the players by their first names before practice?

Do you include a warm up and cool down in each practice?

Do you include a fun drill in each practice?

Do you stop drills when general error or a lack of effort is apparent?

Do you do your conditioning drills at or near the end of practice?

Do you speak to players as a group at the end of practice about the practice, upcoming games or other information?

Do you allow time for players to work on/practice specific skills individually?

Do you communicate individually with each of your players throughout practice?

PRACTICE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

There are 9 key ingredients a coach should mix into practices. Collectively these lead to the enjoyment and learning for both players and coaches.

1. Coaches need to make sure they have enough pucks for a practice (min. of 40)
2. Coaches set the standard for being on time. Educate parents and players on the importance of being on time.
3. The use of stations for the development of skills and individual tactics are the important part of practices. Stations keep participants active enabling them to achieve high levels of repetition. Have players spend 3-8 min/station. Try to do 2-3 stations.
4. Basic skill development (skating, puck control, passing, shooting) should compromise 90% of your practice time. Remember you can work on basic skills in game-like drills. It doesn't have to be boring.
5. Positive and specific feedback is imperative. Consider a head coach who always stands at center ice and never provides feedback to his players. How often during the practice is the coach able to reinforce something a player is doing correctly and provide constructive feedback? Teaching is done in the trenches (corners, lines)
6. Routines in practice are dangerous as players will pace themselves and become bored very quickly. Routine practices develop great players at half-speed.
7. Tell me, I'll forget. Show me, I might remember. Involve me, I'll understand.
8. Practice execution by coaches is of principle importance. Great drills that aren't executed properly by coaches are useless. Execution involves using all staff on the ice, having pucks spotted in the proper areas, informing players of the whistle sequence (1st whistle, begin; 2nd whistle stop; 3rd whistle begins next group) and providing appropriate feedback. To assist in practice execution, name your drills.
9. Relate what you do in practice to games and vice versa. "Players we are doing this drill because in our last game we were unable to finish around the net" or "This drill will assist you in keeping your stick and body away from the checker and in an effective scoring position.

60 Minute Practice Session

These facts relate to a 60 minute practice session:

- 1 efficient practice will give a player more skill development than 11 games collectively
- No more than 5 min should be spent in front of a teaching board each practice
- if you have 10 players on the ice, strive to keep 4-5 moving at all times
- if you have 15 players on the ice, strive to keep 9-10 moving at all times
- if you have 20 players on the ice, strive to keep 14-15 moving at all times

PRACTICE STATS IN MINOR HOCKEY

Excellent Hockey Practice

- Players will give/receive over 100 passes
- Players will have a puck on their stick for 12-20 minutes
- Players will take a min of 30 shots
- Players will miss the net 20% of the time
- 90% of actual practice time is utilized properly. The 10% not used to full advantage is a result of players being late, disorganized and lack of planning by coaches
- Coaches will execute 4-5 drills that meet specific needs of the players and are challenging and rewarding
- Conditioning is performed in the drills as coaches are keeping the players active, involved and exerting max effort

Typical Minor Practice

- Players will give/receive 10-15 passes
- Players will have a puck on their stick for 1-2 minutes
- Players will take 5-15 shots
- 60% of actual practice time is utilized properly. The 40% not used to full advantage is a result of players being late, disorganized and lack of planning by the coaches
- 60% of coaches will execute at least 2 of the Big 3 drills-horseshoe, skating the circles or bag skate
- in 70% of minor hockey practices coaches will end practice with players lined up on the goal line with no pucks and have them skate wind sprints. As a result players expect this and pace themselves for the 2-3 drills prior

Dynamic Warm-Up and Flexibility Training

This is an area of training that is receiving more and more attention in the sporting community and many of the conclusions that have been drawn about this type of warm up are directly applicable to hockey.

Pre-practice and pre-competition warm-up routines have typically focused on static stretching. While this type of stretching is still important for maintaining flexibility and joint range of motion, it really should be performed after play, not before practice or competition. This is a new way of thinking about stretching and flexibility, but recent research has shown that static stretching can reduce the force and power the muscle can generate and that this impaired function can last for over one hour. Therefore the traditional practice of team static stretching in a circle on the ice needs to change.

One of the most pervasive myths in sports is the belief that stretching before activity improves performance and reduces risk of injury. Over a decade of biomechanical research on the acute and long-term responses of muscle to stretching shows that this traditional teaching is wrong. Stretching is most effective for increasing range of motion when conducted during the cool-down phase of a workout.

Dynamic warm-up and flexibility training is an essential element of any pre-practice or pre-competition routine and helps prepare the body for the demands of today's hockey game. An effective warm-up does six very important things for hockey players.

- 1. Increases body temperature allowing muscles to work more efficiently.**
- 2. Gets the heart and lungs ready for vigorous activity.**
- 3. Stretches muscles actively, preparing them for the dynamic forces experienced during hockey practices and games.**
- 4. Engrains proper movement patterns and the coordination needed in hockey.**
- 5. Wakes up the nervous system and gets the brain talking with the muscles.**
- 6. Prevents injury, while improving performance.**

A dynamic warm-up, which involves active stretching and movement, accomplishes all of these tasks. So get up, get moving, get ready and get in the game.

Stretching Guidelines

1. Use dynamic flexibility before exercise and static flexibility after exercise.
2. The fluid, low impact dynamic method prepares your muscles and your mind for activity. It is the best way to warm up and lengthen muscles while preparing them for fast movements. Stretching sitting stationary like a statue does not prepare you for explosive actions.
3. For a dynamic warm up, you gently move your body through a variety of patterns. Stay relaxed, move at a warm up pace and involve every muscle.
4. Gentle static stretching is suitable after your workout, or post-game, when the muscles are optimally warmed up and more elastic.
5. Your body is a linked system – a tight hamstring, for example, will lead to a groin or low back pull. Don't skip any muscle groups.
6. Move slowly and smoothly into a light "micro stretch". Do not overstretch. You should only feel a very mild sensation. Stretching too fast or too far will cause the muscle to react and contract (in an effort to protect itself from being pulled too far or fast). Stretching across a contracted muscle only leads to micro muscle injury and decreased flexibility. Hold the stretch to a sensation of very mild tension. If you feel too much tension, back the stretch off.
7. Hold each stretch for 60 seconds. You can stretch a muscle in 30 seconds but it takes 60 seconds to target the muscle-tendon junction. This is the site of most high speed injuries, because players have not improved the flexibility there.
8. Position your body so you are relaxed without having to contract muscles to balance yourself. You will have to modify old stretching techniques to accomplish this. The bottom line is that if you have to contract a number of muscles to balance yourself and hold your position, you are obviously not relaxed and will not achieve any stretching benefits. Your goal is to have zero muscles contracted when holding a stretch. Lying and seated stretches in which you do not have to manually hold or force limbs into position work best.
9. Compliment your muscle relaxation with deep breathing. This will help your muscles and mind relax. Each time you move into a stretch, slowly exhale and then breathe normally during the 60 second stretch. Note that a workout or practice releases hormones that enhance relaxation and a sense of well-being.

Staying Hydrated and In-Line with your Performance

Have you ever experienced the feeling of dizziness and/or fatigue in the middle of a tough workout or competition, or that post training headache that just doesn't want to go away? We often think this is due to lack of sleep, muscle fatigue, or being run-down. Any or all of these could be contributing factors yet an often overlooked issue is that of hydration: are you drinking sufficient fluids to support your level of activity?

Sweating It Out

When you train to compete, your working muscles generate heat. The harder you exercise the greater amount of heat that is produced. This unwanted heat is dissipated in the form of sweat, helping you to stay cool. But the water loss through sweat can affect your performance by increasing your body temperature and accelerating fatigue. In fact, you can lose up to a litre of water per hour during a workout, and double that if you are training in hot or humid weather.

You can tell how much water you have lost simply by weighing in before and after a training session or game. The weight difference, which could be as little as half a kg to over 2kg during workouts in hot climates is due to body fluid loss-also known as SWEAT or WATER! Running Dry Your body needs water. Water helps deliver oxygen to the working muscles and helps you to stay cool. But as you lose water through sweat, you become dehydrated, decreasing the volume of blood circulating in your body and forcing your heart to pump harder during exercise. Because there is now less fluid in the body, there is decreased sweat production, causing heat to build up in the

body. THE END RESULT: you are running the risk of fatigue, headaches and cramping and then your performance suffers.

STAYING COOL

Sweating and water loss through sweat are natural phenomena of exercise. But a decrease in our ability to perform can be avoided by taking care to ensure adequate pre-during-and post exercise hydration.

1. Prepare yourself in advance of your training and competitions
2. Drink fluids throughout your training session or competition
3. Rehydrate after exercising

FLUID INTAKE GUIDELINES:

To ensure that you are properly hydrated use the following guidelines in your daily training:

1. Prepare yourself in advance of your training and competitions:

- Drink a min of 2L (8 cups) of water during the day
- Consume a pre-workout drink in the 1/2hr before exercise of 250ml (1cup) – drink more if you sweat heavily
- Drink fluids throughout your training session or competition (125-250ml of fluid every 10-20 min)
- Re-hydrate yourself with fluids after exercise

What is the BEST Choice for Re-Hydration?

What's in the Bottle? Sports Drinks to Vitaminized Water

There is an ever-increasing variety of beverages in the store coolers these days. Some are targeting athletes and athlete wannabe's; others sound like they are healthy choices. Before you grab the best tasting or the one with all the hype, look to see what's in the bottle and consider what it is you really need.

What are Sports Drinks?

Are sports drinks just sugary beverages? In fact, there is more to these drinks than just sugar. The science behind sports drinks technically defines them as carbohydrate electrolyte solutions designed specifically to replace energy (carbohydrates), electrolytes (sodium, potassium) and fluids lost as a result of physical exercise.

Sports Drinks can be used:

- Before** exercise to provide a little extra fuel
- During** physical activities that last longer than 60 min of non-stop exercise
- During** and **In-Between** multi-events (swim meets, soccer tournaments)
- After** exercise to help restore carbohydrates, electrolytes and fluids lost

Sports Drinks are NOT Necessary when:

- Random drinking not related to exercising
- Exercise is less than 60min steady duration (ex community hockey game)
- Sipping throughout the day or as a drink with meals

However selecting a suitable sports drink isn't always an easy task as the composition of these drinks can vary from product to product, especially their carbohydrate and sodium content. To make this even more confusing there are a variety of beverages that may be perceived to be sports drinks but technically are not designed to aid sport performance.

True Sports Drinks: Carbohydrate, Electrolyte Beverages

-ex Gatorade, Powerade, eLoad, Accelerade

-Ideally consist of 6-8% carbohydrate (6-8grams of carbohydrate for every 100ml of beverage), 500-700mg of sodium/L

-**Purpose:** replace energy (carbohydrates), electrolytes (sodium, potassium) and fluids lost as a result of physical exercise

Low-Calorie Electrolyte Drinks: Artificially Sweetened, provide electrolytes & fluids

-ex G2, Nuun

-**Purpose:** Provide fluids and electrolytes only

-**Usage:** when no need for carbohydrates is in a drink but want to replenish electrolytes and fluids lost with sweat. Will not enhance endurance as they contain no carbohydrates

Vitaminized Water: Water with Vitamins added and possibly carbohydrates

-ex Aquafina Plus; Vitamin Water

-**Purpose:** promoted as a "healthy" type of water

-**Usage:** not a replacement for a healthy diet, could result in consumption of too many random vitamins, may be too high in sugar for use during exercise

Energy Drinks: Source of Caffeine, taurine, carbohydrates, vitamins, possibly herbs

-ex: Red Bull, Rockstar

-**Purpose:** promoted to boost energy levels and improve mental concentration

-**Usage:** only provide short term perception of energy; caffeine content is usually excessive for children and/or those not accustomed to regularly consuming caffeine; may be too high in sugar for use during exercise

The Bottom Line: Drink when you are thirsty! Drink when you are not thirsty! And DRINK in between!

More About Water: All life depends on water. Your body is made up of water. Every day you lose about 6-7 cups(1.5L) of water through sweating, breathing and other body processes. During intense activities, you will lose more. A goalie can lose up to 2L of water/hour. The quantity of water you drink should really depend on your size, how active you are and the type of weather where you live. Try to drink half of your body weight in ounces.

For someone who plays hockey or is active in anyway, they should drink more glasses of water per day.

-Drink as much fluid as you comfortably can before, during and after exercise

-Sweat replacement should be mostly water plus a few key electrolytes – especially sodium. Add small amounts of table salt to your water for a good source of sodium

-If you are concerned with weight loss you should weigh yourself before and after an event and for every pound lost, drink two cups of fluid. Since water represents 2/3 of your body weight, short term changes in body weight tell us more about your body water situation

-Don't rely on your thirst. It has little to do with whether you need fluid or not.

-The best muscle stores are built from carbohydrates taken on a regular basis in the days leading up to the leading up to the event starting in the hour following an event. Large meals should be consumed no closer to 3-4hrs prior to the event

-Don't experiment with something new prior to an event. Test it out at a less important time to assess its affects and results

-Carbohydrates taken in the hour prior to the event will stave hunger but will not likely add much as far as muscle energy. They should be sources that will digest easily and quickly like orange juice, bananas and digestive biscuits. The more intense the exercise event, the more time that should be allowed for digestion. Don't forget to wash down your food with fluid

-Food may not be necessary during an activity, but fluid intake is

-Immediately following a workout such as a game or practise it is vital to consume fluids and carbohydrate snacks such as bananas, bagels, yogurt or digestive biscuits to start the replenishment process for muscle glycogen. Snacks are used immediately because they are easier and efficient

-something more substantive should follow 1-2 hrs of the event. Muscular storage of carbohydrate is at its best when carbohydrate is consumed right after a game or practice. Plan ahead – Balance Food, Exercise and Rest

-Rest is a key ingredient of a training regimen. Tired muscles need time to heal and rejuvenate and to replenish the glycogen stores depleted by constant activity.

-Looking ahead over the hockey schedule will help you figure out where your peaks of energy usage will occur. You can ensure replenished and full stores of glycogen by consuming carbohydrate-rich foods