



Hockey Coaches Handbook

March 01, 2010

Hockey Operations Committee

North Metro Youth Hockey Association

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North Metro Youth Hockey Association

1. Introduction

The following pages represent the dedicated efforts of past and current members who have donated their time to help build North Metro into the successful youth hockey association it is today.

The information is designed to promote the best possible experience for all our players, coaches, parents and friends of the program.

These guidelines and rules were developed with a singular purpose. To build a program whose foundation is the commitment to developing the hockey skills and competitive spirit of every player that joins our association.

As an organization we value good sportsmanship and integrity and strive to promote that philosophy in every activity.

This handbook is a living document and will change as we continue to grow. We encourage your participation and any comments or suggestions where you see improvements can be made. Our future as an association is linked to these collective, individual and team contributions.

On behalf of the entire association, have a great season!

- Hockey Operations Committee

North Metro Youth Hockey Association

2. North Metro Hockey Philosophy

Hockey is a team sport. But, the fundamental and essential building block of good hockey teams are players with excellent hockey skills – skating, stick-handling, passing, shooting, and (at later levels for boys) checking. At the NMYHA, 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 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 the NMYHA. By progressive, we mean that our players' skills will be developed commensurate with their age, size and ability as they advance through the NMYHA. The NMYHA is committed to putting our superb 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 offers separate skills clinics throughout the season to assist in this development. The ACE Director, the Hockey Operations Committee, our veteran coaches and the entire board are committed to helping all of our coaches develop their players' hockey skills.

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3. Coach's Code of Ethical Conduct and Agreement

1. To abide by all association rules.
2. To respect your fellow coaches and work together in cooperative manner.
3. To understand that coaches need to support each other on and off the ice.
4. To never criticize or bad-mouth your fellow coaches.
5. To never criticize your players in front of parents.
6. To keep your relationship with parents strictly professional.
7. To not be confrontational or abusive in word or deed to fellow coaches, parents, and/or players.
8. To establish and enforce team discipline and rules on and off the ice, with no exceptions and/or favoritism.
9. To meet the general and basic expectations of level developmental plans set forth.
10. To understand that coaches will not be evaluated based on win-loss records, but rather on the degree of progress and advancement of individual and team skills.
11. To attend mandatory coaches meetings, clinics, tryouts, etc.
12. To refrain from using or being under the influence of tobacco and/or alcohol containing products in front of players
13. To lead by example and set a high standard of conduct that the community and hockey association including coaches, parents and players will be proud of.

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4. Coaches Grievance Procedure

If you, as a coach in NMYHA 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. No exceptions!

Meeting 1
Coach » Team Manager » Parent

Level 1 Meeting
Coach » Team Manager » Parent
Level Coordinator

Level 2 Meeting
Coach » Team Manager » Parent » Level Coordinator
Hockey Ops Director (and/or Asst. Director)

Appeal Process
Executive Board

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

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5. Practice/Scrimmage/Game Rules and Guidelines

A. Rules

1. Skill clinics are mandatory - all players and designated coaches are required to attend.
2. Any cancellation of a skill clinic in favor of a scrimmage must be approved by the Hockey Operations Director.
3. The maximum number of Squirt scrimmages and/or games played in a season is 35. Controlled scrimmages with another team on the ice are to be counted as a game/scrimmage (See Minnesota Hockey Manual – Rule 7 – LEVELS OF PLAY, Section H).
4. Regular season guideline for number of hockey events (practice, scrimmage, games, dryland, etc) per week is:

Mites	4 or less
Squirts	4 to 5
PeeWees	5 to 6
Bantams	6

B. Guidelines

1. Strive to get to a 2:1 ratio (2 hours of practice for every game).
 - i. "practice" includes team practice's and skill clinic sessions
 - ii. "game" includes District 3 League play, tournament play, Jamboree and scrimmage play
 - iii. Teams must make an effort to schedule dry land during the course of the season.
2. It is recommended that a maximum of 4 tournaments, jamborees and/or "road trips" take place per season. Of the 4 tournaments, jamboree and/or road trips, a maximum of 2 should be out of town.

C. Miscellaneous

1. Practice is not to be cancelled unless, due to weather or safety considerations, it is not possible to get to the ice rink where the practice is scheduled. Practice will not be cancelled for the Super Bowl, Halloween, hunting, etc. The Ice Director will do his best to accommodate requests from the head coach for specific days off when submitted with reasonable notice.
2. The head coach is responsible for managing all team on and off-ice activities. If the Head Coach is not able to attend a scheduled practice, or other team event (scrimmage, league game, etc.) it is his responsibility to make sure that adequate coverage, supervision and planning have taken place to ensure the event is properly managed and supervised.
3. The head coach is responsible for keeping the Ice Director apprised of all events added to the team calendar. This includes any changes to tournament schedules, scrimmages and post season game results.

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6. Coaches Guidelines for Success

CEP

Coach Certification applies to all head and all assistant coaches. The proof of a coaching certification level will be on the reverse side of the USA Hockey Coaching Education Card (CEP) with an appropriate, dated verification sticker attached.

To be certified you must meet 2 requirements: (1) certified at the appropriate Level of Play or above and (2) card must not be expired. The dated sticker is the year you were certified - this is good for 3 years. Any cards dated 2005-06 or earlier are now EXPIRED and must be re-certified at that level or higher. Level 4 certified coaches are exempt from the re-certification requirement.

This chart will explain the relationship with the Level of Play and CEP Program Level.

<u>Level of Play</u>	<u>CEP Program</u>	<u>Level of Play</u>	<u>CEP Program</u>
Mites	level 1 - initiation	Girls 10U level	1 - initiation
Squirt*	level 2 - associate	Girls 12U*	level 2 - associate
Pee Wee**	level 3 - intermediate	Girls 14U**	level 3 - intermediate
Bantam**	level 3 - intermediate	Girls 16U**	level 3 - intermediate
Junior Gold**	level 3 - intermediate		

*Prerequisite level 1

**Prerequisite level 1 & 2

Level 4 (Advanced) and Level 5 (Master) cards do not expire.

Head coaches are required to register with *USA Hockey* and provide proof of their registration.

Head coaches are required to complete a background check. No coach may participate in any on or off-ice activity until all of the requirements have been met and approved by the registrar.

Head coaches are required to submit a list of Assistant Coach candidates to the Hockey Operations Committee for approval before they are placed on any roster.

Head coaches are required to create team rules for their team and provide the Hockey Operations Committee a copy of their rules within the first 2 weeks of the season.

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7. Planning

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, 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 weeks' 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.

It is highly recommended that drills be introduced in the locker room prior to taking the ice for a practice. Use of the dry erase board is highly encouraged. Too much standing around on the ice is wasteful and a poor use of our facility.

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8. Play of Players Policy

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

1) Positive, team oriented attitude 2) Strong work ethic at practices and games, 3) Coachability.

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 hockey 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 Mite, Squirt and Pee Wee B or C players must have an opportunity to play both forward and defense positions. For Pee Wee A and above, player positions are left up to the coach, but are encouraged by the Hockey Operations Committee to rotate players to different positions.

RULE: Squirts and Pee Wee B and C teams must rotate defense to forward and forward to defense for a minimum period of **3 consecutive weeks** AND play a minimum of **8 consecutive games** at that position, whichever is longer. Ideally, this time period should also include one tournament.

Subject to the exceptions below, coaches must play three lines (9 forwards and 6 defensemen) unless players are absent or injured.

PLAYING TIME:

Each player should play in every game and over the season, all players should have approximately equal playing time. Goalies should be rotated, but in critical situations the coach may use his discretion and over the course of the season, we expect the goalies to play approximately the same amount of time. In tournaments each goalie must play at least one game, barring injury, including district, region and state play. Exception: Pee Wee A/U12A, Bantam A/U14A and Jr. Gold can play one goalie during district, region and state play. Exceptions to this rule are outlined in the Hockey Operations Manual.

LINE PLAY:

All players will play on an equal line rotation basis. Equal line rotation basis means that lines are skated on a regular shift basis, not necessarily minute for minute. In critical situations, Pee Wee A/U12A, Bantam A/U14 A and Jr. Gold coaches may selectively rotate lines or players. However, over the course of the season, it is the responsibility of the head coach to assure that approximately equal playing time is given to all players. Exceptions to this rule are outlined in the Hockey Operations Manual.

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9. Rostered Skaters

Only rostered members of the North Metro Youth Hockey Association may be on the ice during a team's practice.

There are two exceptions to the above rule:

- 1) If the team is short a goalie, they may call upon a goalie rostered on another NMYHA team, at the same level, to participate in practice. In other words don't bring in skaters to practice or to play in a scrimmage, jamboree or game that are not rostered on your team.
- 2) Student Coaches may participate and assist with team practices as long as the appropriate Student Coach form has been properly filled out, approved by and is on file with the Hockey Operations Director.

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10. Squirt/U10 Level Developmental Plan

Squirt Coaching Philosophy

1. Allow the players to have fun and want to return next season.
2. Enhance and refine skill techniques in skating, puck control, puck movement, and shooting.
3. Prepare players to advance to the next level (Squirt B to A or Squirt to Pee Wee).
4. Increase understanding and appreciation of the game (teamwork, position play, specialty situations).

Level goals: Skating – backwards skating with emphasis on rip C starts with backwards crossunders and reach; transition from forward to backward to forwards, and forward crossovers and pushunders

Stickhandling/Puck Control - demonstrate the ability to stickhandle with head up; extend stickhandling to outside the shoulders; control the puck with the feet; protect the puck along the boards, control the puck through and around obstacles

Puck movement - develop strong forehand and backhand passes while maintaining the head up: being able to control the passes received

Shooting- develop proper technique for forehand and backhand shots while skating

Concepts - D zone coverage; breakouts; O zone entry; forecheck/backcheck and Faceoffs

Skating

Proper body setup, balance and stride
Proper starting and stopping technique
Running start
One legged stops and inside edges stop
Forward crossovers and pushunders
Rip C starts from the backward starting position
Backward crossunders and reach
Transition from forwards to backwards and back to forwards
Two hands on stick while moving forward and one hand on stick when moving backwards

Stickhandling/Puck Control

Proper placement of hands
Eyes looking up ice
Puck control while stationary and while moving
Moving the puck laterally while skating forwards or backwards
Moving the puck front to back from the forehand and backhand positions
Cupping the puck when transitioning from forwards to backwards and vice versa
Pushing the puck while skating forward
Stickhandling with two hand while skating forward
Extending the stickhandling to outside the shoulders

Puck Movement

- a. Proper technique for passing and receiving forehand and backhand passes
- b. Be able to give a pass the width of the rink
- c. Catching a backhand pass with one hand
- d. Catching a puck coming directly behind you on the forehand or backhand
- e. Moving up ice before passing the puck

- f. Passing the puck while skating backwards
- g. Headman the puck
- h. Direct passes, bank passes, calling for the pass
- i. Puck support

Shooting

- Proper setup for shooting wrist shots and backhands
- Shooting off the inside foot
- Proper technique on how to open up for a shot
- Head up and looking at the target

Concepts

- Defensive zone coverage
- Center supporting the D
- Wing on Defensemen
- Breakouts
- D to wing or Center
- Puck support
- Offensive Zone Entry
- Support puck carrier
- Puck carrier stay wide
- Weak side wing stay wide and crash the net
- Center drive
- Create 2 on 1 situation
- Forecheck System
- 2-1-2 system
- 2-3 system
- Face-offs
- Proper set up of the face-off man
- Proper positioning and coverage responsibility of all other players
- Designated plays

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11. Pee wee/U12 Level Developmental Plan

Pee wee Coaching Philosophy

1. Develop defensemen - identify top players as defensemen
2. Provide "game-like" conditions in practice as often as possible
3. Teach shooters to finish the drills by following the shot to the net
4. Backchecking, backchecking, backchecking (2-way hockey players)
5. Short shifts (45 seconds to 1 minute)

Level goals: Player Development – defensemen, scorer's and checkers

Concepts – defensive zone play, neutral zone play, offensive zone play and special team play

Checking – instruct players on the correct methods of playing the body

Skating - backwards skating with emphasis on rip C starts with backwards crossunders and reach; transition from forward to backward to forwards, and forward crossovers and pushunders

Stick Handling/Puck Control - demonstrate the ability to stickhandle with head up; extend stick handling to outside the shoulders; control the puck with the feet; protect the puck along the boards, control the puck through and around obstacles

Puck Movement - develop strong forehand and backhand passes while maintaining the head up: be able to control the passes, once touch passing

Shooting – ability to shoot wrist shots and backhanders, shoot off of inside skate

Player Development

Defensemen

Defensive skills

Top players should play defense at least 25% of the season

Stress taking the man at the earliest opportunity

Controlling the offensive player in the defensive corners and on the boards

Controlling the opponents sticks

Clearing the opponent from in front of our net

Setting picks

Blocking shots

Diagonal support

Proper technique for playing 1 on 1, 2 on 1, 3 on 1, 2 on 2, 3 on 2

How to use backcheckers

Handing off offensive player to partner

Offensive Skills

Making breakout passes

Using defensive partner

Skating the puck

Joining the offensive attack

Pinching in the offensive zone

Scorers

Playing without the puck

Finding open ice

Crashing the net

Handling the puck in crowded areas

Shooting angles

Tipping

Controlling rebounds

Checkers
Forechecking
Backchecking
Neutral Zone

Concepts

Defensive zone play
2-1-2 coverage
Containment
Pinching
Neutral Zone
Pressure the opponent
Keeping the opponent to the outside
Regrouping the puck
Gap Control
Penalty kill
Set up against the breakout
Set up in the defensive zone
Offensive Zone play
Breakouts
Zone entry
Cycling the puck
Cut backs
Creating traffic in front of the goal tender
Tipping
Controlling rebounds
Power Play
Breakout
Offensive zone set up
Face-offs
i. Proper set up of the face-off man
ii. Proper positioning and coverage responsibility of all other players
iii. Designated plays

Checking

Pinning
Angling
Open Ice
Poke check
Hip check
Sweep Check – Outside In

Puck/Puck Control

Proper placement of hands
Eyes looking up ice
Puck control while stationary and while moving
Controlling the puck in open ice or on the boards
Moving the puck laterally while skating forwards or backwards
Moving the puck front to back from the forehand and backhand positions
Cupping the puck when transitioning from forwards to backwards and vice versa
Pushing the puck while skating forward
Stick handling with two hand while skating forward
Extending the stick handling to outside the shoulders

Puck Movement

Proper technique for passing and receiving forehand and backhand passes
Be able to give a pass the width of the rink
Catching a backhand pass with one hand
Catching a puck coming directly behind you on the forehand or backhand
Moving up ice before passing the puck
Passing the puck while skating backwards

Headman the puck
Direct passes, bank passes, calling for the pass
Puck support

Shooting

Proper setup for shooting wrist shots and backhands
Shooting off the inside foot
Proper technique on how to open up for a shot
Head up and looking at the target

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12. Bantam/U14 Level Developmental Plan

Bantam Coaching Philosophy

- Develop defensemen as top priority
- Establish team discipline in executing a system of play
- Provide "game-like" conditions in drills as often as possible
- Teach shooters to finish the drills by following the shot to the net
- Backchecking, backchecking, backchecking (2-way hockey players)
- Short shifts (45 seconds to 1 minute)
- Reinforce player communication on the ice

Level Goals: Player Development – mentality for creating scoring opportunities, offensive and defensive skills for defensemen

Concepts – zone entry, neutral zone regrouping, forechecking, defensive zone coverage, face-offs, special teams

Checking – ability to take/control the body aggressively

Stick Handling/Puck Control – ability to control the puck in traffic and open ice

Puck Movement – head man the puck

Shooting – wrist, snap and slap shots

Conditioning – on ice and dry land

Player Development

- Scoring opportunities
- Driving the net
- Creating odd man situations
- Finding open ice
- Creating traffic in front of the net
- Tipping skills
- Finding the back door
- Setting picks
- Handling rebounds
- Shooting angles
- Defensemen
- Offensive skills
- Making breakout passes
- Using defensive partner
- Joining the offensive rush
- Shooting the puck with eyes on the net
- Lob shots and off net shots
- Beating the forecheck
- Escapes
- Counters
- Reverses
- D to D
- Defensive skills
 - 1) Gap control
 - 2) Controlling/Containment – moving players to the least dangerous area
- Body
- Stick
- Shot blocking

Diagonal support
Playing 1 on 1, 2 on 1, 2 on 2, 3 on 1 and 3 on 2 situations
Pinching in the offensive zone
Handing off offensive player to partner

Concepts

Defensive zone play
2-1-2, 2-3, 1-2-2 and man on man coverage schemes
Containment in the corners and on the boards
Neutral Zone
Defensive gap control
Pressure the puck carrier
Keeping the puck to the outside
Reversing the puck flow
Re-grouping the puck
Players without the puck moving to open ice
Offensive Zone
 i. Zone entry schemes
 ii. Creating space
 iii. Cycling the puck
 iv. Cut backs
 v. Pulling up
Face offs
Proper technique
Coverage responsibilities
Designated plays
Defensive zone
Neutral zone
Offensive zone
Special Teams
Power Play
Breakout
Zone entry
Set up
Overload, umbrella, inverted umbrella and pro
Penalty Kill
Set up against breakout
Neutral zone pressure
Trap
Set up in defensive zone
Triangle
Box
Diamond
Transition from Box to Diamond and vice versa

Checking

Pinning
Angling
Open Ice
Poke check
Hip check
Sweep Check – Outside In

Puck/Puck Control

Proper placement of hands
Eyes looking up ice
Puck control while stationary and while moving
Controlling the puck in open ice or on the boards

Moving the puck laterally while skating forwards or backwards
Moving the puck front to back from the forehand and backhand positions
Cupping the puck when transitioning from forwards to backwards and
vise-versa
Pushing the puck while skating forward
Stick handling with two hand while skating forward
Extending the stick handling to outside the shoulders

Puck Movement

Be able to give a pass the width of the rink
Catching a backhand pass with one hand
Catching a puck coming directly behind you on the forehand or backhand
Moving up ice before passing the puck
Passing the puck while skating backwards
Headman the puck
Direct passes, bank passes, calling for the pass
Puck support

Shooting

Proper technique for shooting Wrist, Snap, Slap and backhand shots
Shooting off the inside foot
Proper technique on how to open up for a shot
Head up and looking at the target

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13. Face Off Tips

The Center owns the face off.

NEVER step into the face circle until all your players are in position, if they are not, step out and direct traffic.

In the defensive zone, we match up to the opponents' line up.

In the offensive zone, we set up the way we want to.

Make sure you block out your man on the draws.

Centers should have a good low center of gravity, good knee bend and feet apart for stability. The bottom hand should be down on the stick (past the mid-point) and the top hand can be slid down as well for better leverage.

Although the feet must be on each side of the "T" you can still line up on an angle to help win the draw.

Watch the referee's hand and try to anticipate the drop.

Change up your draw tactics: forehand, backhand, pushing the puck forward, pulling back between the legs, shooting on the net or tying up your opponents stick and using your feet. Also consider turning the bottom hand over for increased leverage.

North Metro Youth Hockey Association

14. Russo's Golden Rules for Defensemen

Reprinted from Lets Play Hockey
John Russo

- Always back up your partner - on the offensive blue line, in the neutral zone and especially in the defensive zone.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Do not "tie up" with people in front of your net, rather gain position and control.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Follow your attacking forwards closely (20-30 feet) and move quickly into offensive zone after the 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.
- 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.

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14. Russo's Golden Rules for Forward

Reprinted from Lets Play Hockey
John Russo

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 face-offs. Intelligent hockey is what wins games.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Move the puck up ice with passes to line mates ahead that are open, then move quickly to join the rush. Don't force passes to covered line mates ahead. Skating the puck up the ice is the slowest alternative.

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 line mates 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Communicate with your line mates 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.

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.

North Metro Youth Hockey Association

15. Game Emphasis and Team Goals

Goalie save percentage of 90+

Develop "dominant, highly-skilled" defensemen.

Limit opponents to 15 shots on net or less.

Create 25+ "quality" shots on net per game with at least 1/3 coming from defensemen (a "quality" shot is defined as a shot on net from within the "triangle").

Condition team to wear down the opponent, own and dominate the 3rd period.

Teach proper checking techniques and stress finishing your check (Pee Wees and Bantams).

Combined special team percentage at or above 105%

Exemplarily sportsmanship that adheres to the standard set by the NMYHA

Develop two way hockey players

Identify individual player skills and develop role players that enhance the overall team success of the team

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16. Goalie Clinic Information

Attendees: All hockey players that are Advanced Mite or above that want to play goalie

Frequency: Every week throughout the season

When: NMYHA Web Site for specific dates and times

Lead Instructor: NMYHA Goalie Director

It is strongly recommended that each team have a designated goalie coach on staff who will be required to attend the goalie clinics on a regular basis.

It is imperative that all goalies on each and every team are properly instructed and taught the same techniques at each and every level - **CONTINUITY!**

Coaches must design practices that will provide goalies as much work as possible.

Goalie development is a focal point and a **top priority** of the NMYHA.

Goalie equipment is available for checkout through NMYHA. Please contact the Goalie Equipment Director with your questions.

Please also see the Goalie tab at the NMYHA website for more information.

Special Note: If there is a scheduling conflict for goalies... goalie clinics take priority over skills clinics and practices (not including scrimmages)

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17. Skill Clinic Information

1. The objective of in-season skill clinics is to implement a step-by-step progression of skill development at each level with every team. CONTINUITY!
2. The higher level coach is the lead instructor. Other team coaches will assist and play an active role during the skill clinics.
3. It is **mandatory** that all team coaches attend the skills clinic **and assist** the lead instructor correcting the skaters who are executing the skill incorrectly. Team coaches are strongly encouraged to take drills from the skill clinics and incorporate them into team practice plans. By doing so, skaters will master drills much faster and skill clinics will therefore become more advanced and more effective.
4. A skill clinic will count as a **"team practice"** in determining team's 2:1 practice to game ratio.
5. Skill clinics are **mandatory** - all players and coaches are required to attend just like a team practice.
6. Skill clinics cannot be canceled under any circumstance unless in conflict with a district or tournament game.
7. Any cancellation of a skill clinic in favor of a non-district or non-tournament game is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
8. For scheduling purposes, skill clinics take top priority. Absolutely, positively NO CANCELLATIONS! Skill development is the #1 priority of the NMYHA.

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18. Team/Parent Meeting

A parent (or team meeting) is required. Each head coach will schedule and plan such a meeting to take place with 3 weeks of team selection. Each head coach is required to prepare written team rules and to submit a copy to the Hockey Operations Director.

A member of Hockey Operations or the Executive Board is required to attend your team meeting to represent the board. It is the responsibility to extend this invitation through the Hockey Operations Director.

Recommended Topics for the meeting:

- A. Head Coach and Assistant Coach Introductions
- B. Distribute Parent Handbook
- C. Coaching Philosophy
- D. Team Objectives
- E. Play of Players Policy
- F. Team Manager
- G. Team Rules (parent handout in writing)
- H. Rules and Responsibilities (parent handout in writing)
- I. Road Trips /Tournaments
- J. Assessments
- K. Team Representative
- L. Parent/Player Roster (names, addresses, telephone numbers)
- M. Parent/Player Introductions