Coaching Education Program

Skill Progressions for Youth Hockey

The USA Hockey Coaching Education Program is presented by

Liberty Mutual. INSURANCE

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Please note that bold italicized text throughout the book indicates a new skill or concept to be introduced at that age level.

8-and-Under

(Mites)

8-and-Under (Mites)

At the 8-and-Under level, coaches should focus on teaching age-appropriate concepts and skills so that children have an enjoyable hockey experience while also developing as players and young people.

FOCUS POINTS

- Fun
- Engagement
- Active Practices
- Age-Appropriate Training (includes skills and concepts)

FUN

8-and-Under coaches should never underestimate the value of having fun. While this is true at all ages, it is especially true at this age, where the hockey-for-life seed is planted. If it's not consistently fun at this age, the novelty of the sport will wear off and the young player(s) may eventually quit. Players at this age should have fun every time they are on the ice.

ENGAGEMENT

Coaches should recognize the importance of engagement. It goes hand-in-hand with fun, but it's more than just fun. It's targeting the optimal skill level for each player – not too easy and not too hard. It's designing small games that do the teaching. The players don't need a coach to provide the feedback. The games themselves give players the opportunity to successfully demonstrate targeted skills and concepts. The coach becomes the facilitator – less talking from the coach and more learning by doing.

ACTIVE PRACTICES

Practices at this age level should include a high amount of activity and a low amount of rest. Players should not spend large amounts of time standing in line, waiting to participate in drills or games. Coaches should strive to design practices in which players are active for the majority of the practice. Coaches should set goals related to the amount of activity they expect each player to achieve in a practice (e.g., each player will be active for 40 minutes in a 60-minute practice). While the activity level is not the only crucial component on which coaches should focus, it definitely is important in the long-term development process, as coaches must remember that players learn by doing (more than by watching or listening). Designing practices with high activity levels and opportunities for many repetitions is very important at this age. Refer to the Player Activity Chart found on the free Mobile Coach App and at admkids.com under Coaches/Repetition for a form to evaluate the developmental opportunities that occur for players in practice and in games.

STATION-BASED PRACTICES

Station-based practices are an excellent way to accomplish these high-activity goals. Coaches are encouraged to split the ice into 4-6 areas with an age-appropriate skill, drill, or game to be practiced in each of area. A typical station-based practice would include six stations with 6-10 players at each station. While coaches have some flexibility when it comes to the duration of time that players spend at each station, 6-8 minutes is a good guideline for players at the mite level. Coaches should restrict the instructional part to less than a minute for each station. Players should practice the desired skill at each station, with coaches making sure that each player is active the majority of the time, thus receiving a high number of repetitions. Coaches may have to be creative to ensure that all players spend more time practicing the desired skill rather than waiting in line to participate. Coaches are encouraged to use a stopwatch to determine the amount of time a player is active and count the repetitions performed by an individual player at each station. USA Hockey has a large number of these station-based practice lesson plans available on the free Mobile Coach App and at admkids.com.

AGE-APPROPRIATE TRAINING

8-and-Under coaches must determine what skills and concepts are appropriate for the kids in their program to learn and understand. Most would not expect a second-grader to be taught sixth-grade math. The same should hold true for the skills and concepts related to mite hockey. First, coaches must determine whether the players are ready to learn the desired skill or understand the desired concept. Second, they should decide whether the skill or concept is truly important for an 8-year-old. Teaching players the right thing at the right age is crucial in their development.

Cross-ice hockey, or hockey on a smaller surface (half-ice), is an important part of age-appropriate training for mites. Using a smaller surface in mite hockey games offers several benefits, including increased puck battles, increased puck-touches for all players, puck carriers will have to avoid more players in the small areas, etc. All of these benefits are extremely important in the long-term development of each player.

PRACTICE FOCUS

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

1. Individual skill improvement (hockey skills, activities, and games) — 85%
2. Hockey sense (teaching of concepts through small area games) — 15%
3. Systems (team-play training) — 0%

SMALL AREA GAMES

Coaches should utilize small area games on a consistent basis in every practice for fun, practicing skills and teaching basic concepts. These games should be included in station-based practices and there should be a variety of games for mite players. 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 blue (light-weight) pucks, balls or ringette rings to change the dynamic of the game. Refer to the *Small Area Competitive Games Handbook and CD* for age-appropriate small area games.

OPTIMAL WINDOWS OF TRAINABILITY

In order for players to maximize their ability and reach their potential, it's important for youth coaches to do the right thing with young athletes at the right time. Focusing on these key components at the appropriate age will give the young athletes the best opportunity to achieve their potential as they progress through their teenage years. Researchers have concluded that players in this age classification should spend time developing the following capabilities related to their long-term development:

1. **Speed —** constant stopping, starting, changing direction, and puck races in small areas
2. **Suppleness (Flexibility) —** perform a variety of activities and exercises through a full range of motion

PLAYER KNOWLEDGE

Mite players are not at a cognitive level where they should be lectured on the following topics; however, throughout the course of playing mite hockey, they should learn:

1. **Puck Pursuit –** Players should be taught to pursue the puck aggressively and engage in battles to gain possession of the puck.
2. **Puck Support –** Players should learn to make themselves available to receive a pass from a teammate. This is the beginning of the idea of "getting open."
3. **Acceptable On-Ice Conduct –** Acceptable conduct should be taught and reinforced. Unsportsmanlike conduct is the broad term covering this topic, but acceptable conduct should relate to teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, etc. This is the beginning of teaching players to be good sports and to respect everyone involved with the game.
4. **Allowable Contact with Opponents –** Players should learn what types of physical contact are allowed with an opponent. Players should learn the importance of having their stick on the ice in puck battles, so that good body-contact habits are established early. The players should also begin to learn the types of physical contact that are not allowed, such as body checking, checking from behind, slashing, tripping, etc. While these young players are not at an age where they should be lectured as to the types of illegal contact, they should be made aware when they have made contact in a way that violates the rules.

INDIVIDUAL HOCKEY SKILLS

Players must learn and master:

1. Skating
   a. ready position
   b. edge control
   c. forward start
   d. forward stride
   e. controlled stop: two-foot and one-foot snowplow
   f. controlled turn
   g. forward crossover
   h. backward skating
   i. backward stop
   j. ABCs of skating (agility, balance, coordination, and speed drills)
2. Puck Control
   a. lateral (side-to-side) stickhandling
   b. front-to-back stickhandling
   c. diagonal stickhandling
   d. attacking the triangle
3. Passing and Receiving
   a. forehand pass
   b. backhand pass
   c. receiving a pass properly with the stick
4. Shooting
   a. wrist shot
   b. backhand
5. Body Contact
   a. stick on puck
   b. stick lift
6. Goaltending

   At this level, coaches should not designate full-time goaltenders so that players may begin the development of skills that will help improve their long-term skating and athleticism. These are crucial for goaltenders as they progress to higher age levels.

TEAM CONCEPTS

While the teaching curriculum recommends that no time be spent on teaching systems related to team-play in mite hockey, players should begin learning important skills and basic concepts that will be important when they get to an age where systems

and team-play takes on added importance. Players should learn and understand:

1. **Puck Pursuit –** Players should pursue the puck aggressively and engage in battles to gain possession of the puck.
2. **Puck Support –** Players should learn to make themselves available for a pass whether they are close to the puck or further away. This is the beginning of near- and far-support concepts, as well as creating and finding passing lanes.

NUTRITION

Players should be introduced to:

1. **Proper Hydration –** Players should learn the importance of proper hydration before, during, and after all games and practices.
2. **Good Eating Habits –** Players should be encouraged to eat good meals and refrain from eating candy and other foods that lack nutritional value.
3. **Recovery Drink –** While there are many recovery drinks on the market, players should be encouraged to drink chocolate milk following any practice or game session.

OFF-ICE ACTIVITIES

Players should perform exercises and play games that improve their agility, balance, coordination and speed (ABCs). For off-ice activities and exercises, coaches should utilize the 6-and-Under/8-and-Under Off-Ice Training Cards that are available through USA Hockey and are on the Mobile Coach App. Exercises and activities should include:

1. Stretching/flexibility exercises
2. Fun games
3. Relays
4. Eye-hand coordination exercises
5. Exercises related to improving the ABCs

PLAYER SAFETY

Players should be in practice and game environments where their health and well-being is a priority. Expectations related to safe practices and acceptable on-ice conduct should be taught and reinforced with the young players.

HOCKEY ENVIRONMENT

Players should be in an environment where:

- the practices and games are fun. Young players should enjoy each session and they should want to return for the next one.
- making mistakes is okay. Mistakes are common and a part of sports. Maintaining the confidence to attempt new skills or moves is important to developing those skills, as is continuing to work on correcting mistakes.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND LIFE SKILLS

Players must learn:

- they are part of a team and are expected to follow team rules.
- to have respect for their teammates, coaches, opponents, officials, and parents.
- to always try their best.
- the foundation of a strong work ethic by consistently participating in practices with a high level of activity.

PARENT DEVELOPMENT

Refer to *An American Hockey Parent Handbook* found on the USA Hockey website.

10-and-Under
(Squirts)

10-and-Under (Squirts)

At the 10-and-Under level, coaches should focus on the following age-appropriate concepts and skills so that players enjoy the experience and develop both as hockey players and as young kids.

FOCUS POINTS

- Fun
- Engagement
- Active Practices
- Age-Appropriate Training
- Basic Hockey Knowledge

FUN

These players are entering the Golden Age of Skill Development, and coaches should ensure that every session, both on-ice and off-ice, is fun for the players. Hockey is a game that requires a tremendous amount of skill to be proficient at any level, and developing this skill takes a substantial amount of time. If fun is not incorporated into every practice and game, then many players will not invest the amount of time necessary to develop their skills. Fun is a crucial component in the long-term athlete-development process. A lack of fun can limit the potential of many young players by deterring them from fully engaging or causing them to quit.

ENGAGEMENT

Coaches should recognize the importance of engagement. It goes hand-in-hand with fun, but it's more than just fun. It's

targeting the optimal skill level for each player – not too easy and not too hard. It's designing small games that do the teaching. The players don't need a coach to provide the feedback. The games themselves give the players opportunities to successfully demonstrate targeted skills and concepts. The coach becomes the facilitator – less talking from the coach and more learning by doing.

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 10-and-Under 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. Refer to the Player Activity Chart found on the free Mobile Coach App and at admkids.com under Coaches/ Repetition for a form to evaluate the developmental opportunities that occur for players in practice and in games.

Station-based practices are an effective way to teach 10-and-Under 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.

AGE-APPROPRIATE TRAINING

Coaches must be very careful when determining what is appropriate for the 9- and 10-year-olds in this age group. It's not what the adults want them to be doing at this age that matters. Instead, it should be about what the players are actually ready to do at this age. Although these players should be ready to learn more of the rules and concepts related to the game, skill development is still the top priority. Players will begin learning and executing skills and concepts related to team play.

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.

RULE KNOWLEDGE

While players at this age will be able to understand more of the game's rules, coaches must recognize that these players are at an age where skill development must be the priority. All practices should reflect this. Players should gain knowledge related to the rules of the game through the use of small games and drills. Young players learning by playing small games is a far more effective teacher than being told the rules (learning by doing rather than learning by listening). Coaches must be patient throughout this learning process and allow players the opportunity to make mistakes and then encourage them to try again. Failing to create an excellent learning environment can stifle creativity, confidence, learning, and a player's work ethic.

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 Handbook and CD* for age-appropriate small area games.

OPTIMAL WINDOWS OF TRAINABILITY

In order for players to maximize their ability and reach their potential, it's important for youth coaches to do the right thing with young athletes at the right time. Focusing on these key components at the appropriate age will give the young athletes the best opportunity to achieve their potential as they progress through their teenage years. Researchers have concluded that players in this age classification should spend time developing the following capabilities related to their long-term development:

1. **Speed –** constant stopping, starting, changing direction, and puck races in small areas
2. **Suppleness (Flexibility) –** perform a variety of activities and exercises through a full range of motion
3. **Skill Acquisition and Development –** science has shown this is the prime age for children to acquire and develop sport skills, therefore it's known as the Golden Age of Skill Development

PLAYER KNOWLEDGE

Players should know:

1. ***Rules***
    a. ***face-offs***
    b. ***body contact***

   c. ***offsides***
   d. ***icing***
   e. ***checking from behind***
2. ***Common Infractions***
   a. ***unsportsmanlike conduct***
   b. ***body checking and checking from behind***
   c. ***cross-checking and charging***
   d. ***head contact, elbowing, and high-sticking***
   e. ***tripping and hooking***
   f. ***interference and holding***
3. ***Penalties***
   a. ***minor***
   b. ***major***

INDIVIDUAL HOCKEY SKILLS

Players must learn and master:

1. Skating
   a. ready position
   b. edge control
   c. forward start
   d. forward stride
   e. controlled stop: two-foot and one-foot snowplow
   f. controlled turn
   g. forward crossover
   h. backward skating
   i. backward stop
   j. ABCs of skating: agility, balance, coordination, and speed drills
   k. one-foot stop
   l. backward crossover
   m. mohawk turn
2. Puck Control
   a. lateral (side-to-side) stickhandling
   b. front-to-back stickhandling
   c. diagonal stickhandling
   d. attacking the triangle
   e. puck protection
   f. change of pace
   g. toe drag
   h. give and take
   i. accelerating with the puck (one-hand carry)

3. Passing and Receiving
    a. forehand pass
    b. backhand pass
    c. receiving a pass properly with the stick
    d. saucer pass (forehand and backhand)
    e. receiving a pass properly with the skate
    f. indirect pass
4. Shooting
    a. wrist shot
    b. backhand
    c. flip shot
    d. screen shot
    e. deflection
    f. off rebound
5. Body Contact
    a. stick on puck
    b. stick lift
    c. poke check
    d. gap control concept
    e. body positioning and angling
6. Goaltending
    a. positioning
        i. proper stance
        ii. angling
    b. movement
        i. forward
        ii. backward
        iii. lateral
    c. save technique
        i. stick
        ii. gloves
        iii. body and pads
        iv. butterfly
    d. recovery

TEAM PLAY

Players must learn and understand:

1. Offensive Concepts
    a. 2-on-1 situations
    b. 1-on-1 situations
    c. triangle offense

2. ***Defensive Concepts***
    a. ***gap control***
    b. ***protect center of the ice***
    c. ***stick on puck***
    d. ***backchecking***
    e. ***body position: man-you-net***
    f. ***basic defensive zone coverage***

NUTRITION

Players should continue learning about:

1. **Proper Hydration –** Players should learn the importance of proper hydration before, during, and after all games and practices.
2. **Good Eating Habits –** Players should be encouraged to eat good meals and refrain from eating candy and other foods that lack nutritional value.
3. **Recovery Drink –** While there are many recovery drinks on the market, players should be encouraged to drink chocolate milk following any practice or game session.

OFF-ICE ACTIVITIES

Players should perform exercises that improve their agility, balance, coordination, and speed (ABCs). For off-ice activities and exercises, coaches should utilize the 10-and-Under/12-and-Under Off-Ice Training Cards (Phase I and Phase II) that are available through USA Hockey and are on the Mobile Coach App. Exercises and activities should include:

1. Warm-up exercises
2. Cool-down exercises
3. Stretching exercises
4. Flexibility exercises
5. Eye-hand coordination exercises
6. Fun games
7. Relays
8. Exercises related to improving the ABCs
9. Jump-rope activities
10. Off-ice stickhandling

INJURY PREVENTION

Players and parents should be introduced to:

1. Heads Up Hockey Program
2. Proper care of equipment
3. Proper fitting of equipment
4. Rink safety
5. Safety precautions for practice
6. The importance of warming up and cooling down

SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY

Players should be taught:

- the difference between being relaxed and tense (fun vs. nervous).
- that making mistakes is common and a part of sports. Players should be allowed to make mistakes in practice and game settings. Coaches should not squash a player's creativity by making them feel uncomfortable while trying to perform a hockey move or skill. In order to execute a move properly, the player has to be allowed to fail along the way. The key is to establish an environment where players are willing to try again after failing.
- the benefits of positive reinforcement. Everyone involved with youth sports needs to understand that positive comments help reduce stress and enhance the self-image of a player and team. Most of all, positive reinforcement increases the enjoyment of practices and games for the athletes.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND LIFE SKILLS

Players must learn to:

- demonstrate high levels of sportsmanship.
- have respect for their teammates, coaches, opponents, officials and parents.
- balance family, school and other activities.
- be on time for practices and games.

PARENT DEVELOPMENT

Refer to *An American Hockey Parent Handbook* found on the USA Hockey website.

12-and-Under
(Peewees)

12-and-Under (Peewees)

At the 12-and-Under level, coaches should focus on the following age-appropriate concepts and skills so that players enjoy the experience and develop both as hockey players and as young kids.

FOCUS POINTS

- Fun and Engagement
- Active Practices
- Age-Appropriate Training
- Skill Development
- Body Contact/Body Checking

FUN AND ENGAGEMENT

It's important for coaches to understand that 12-and-Under players are in the Golden Age of Skill Development, which is a crucial time in the long-term development of a player. Coaches should also remember that fun is a key component of youth sports, and that practices and games at the 12-and-Under level must be fun in order for these players to continue working hard to acquire and improve skills.

When coaches are able to deliver the appropriate level of skill development for each player, then players have an excellent opportunity to engage. Engagement occurs when players are able to successfully execute the targeted skills within an environment that still provides an appropriate challenge level (i.e., not too easy, not too hard). Finding the appropriate balance between success and challenge for each player can be an

ongoing challenge for coaches, but providing the optimal blend should always be the goal.

Remember, fun and engagement are important factors in the development process. Coaches should never underestimate the importance of each.

ACTIVE PRACTICES

While a peewee practice shouldn't be as active as a mite practice, coaches must still seek to increase the amount of time players spend participating in drills and small games in each practice session (rather than standing and watching). Players are more likely to successfully execute skills when they have been given many repetitions in practice. Coaches should consider designing practices with high activity levels each week so that players have ample opportunity to practice the targeted skills. Coaches should also design practice sessions that are not as high in activity level, but instead require the players to go hard for short intervals with appropriate rest to follow each interval. Coaches should strive to find the optimal work-to-rest ratio in any of these practices. Refer to the Player Activity Chart found on the free Mobile Coach App and at admkids.com under Coaches/Repetition for a form to evaluate the developmental opportunities that occur for players in practice and in games.

AGE-APPROPRIATE TRAINING

Players in the peewee age classification are at a sensitive stage in their development. Two aspects of their game need special attention: body contact/body checking and skill development. Peewee coaches must be extra careful when determining what is appropriate for 12-and-Under players to learn. On-ice skills and drills must be age-appropriate and coaches should spend considerably more time developing players' skills rather than teaching systems. Small games should be used to teach appropriate concepts such as understanding the game. Improving hockey sense takes on a heightened priority at this stage.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Since peewee players are in the Golden Age of Skill Development (ages 8-12), coaches must maximize the skill development that

occurs during this time period. While skill development can occur during later years, the opportunity for positively affecting the long-term development of a player is never greater than in this age period. Players should be allowed to focus on developing all of their hockey skills at this age. The development of these skills takes a tremendous amount of time and the time invested at this age will pay great dividends later. Players who are allowed to spend large amounts of time acquiring and developing skills at this age will have an advantage in later years over many players who did not have this opportunity.

BODY CONTACT/BODY CHECKING

Although body checking is not allowed in games at the peewee level, coaches should teach 12-and-Under players the proper techniques of making legal body contact with an opponent. Players must learn that body contact should have a purpose and that purpose is to gain possession of the puck. Skills related to body contact and body checking should be taught in a progression and should be practiced in every session. These skills should include angling, stick position, delivering body contact, and receiving body contact. These skills should be practiced both on and off the ice with the goal of improving the body contact/body checking skills of each player and preparing each player for body checking at the bantam level. Refer to *Checking the Right Way for Youth Hockey* for information and drills related to body contact and body checking.

PRACTICE FOCUS

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

1. Individual skills (hockey skills and activities) — 65%
2. Hockey sense (teaching of concepts through small area games) — 25%
3. Systems (team-play training) — 10%

While these percentages are approximations, they emphasize that individual skill development remains the highest priority at this stage, and the majority of practice time should be spent improving skills. The percentages also indicate that hockey sense and concepts are still more important than systems and team-play training at 12-and-Under.

SMALL AREA GAMES

Hockey sense becomes a more important focus at this age level. Hockey sense includes the ability to understand important age-appropriate hockey concepts and execute tactics related to these concepts. 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.

Small area games are great teaching tools that also create a fun and competitive environment. Refer to the *Small Area Competitive Games Handbook and CD* and the *Small Area Competitive Games 2* book for age-appropriate small area games.

OPTIMAL WINDOWS OF TRAINABILITY

In order for players to maximize their ability and reach their potential, it's important for youth coaches to do the right thing with young athletes at the right time. Focusing on these key components at the appropriate age will give young athletes the best opportunity to achieve their potential as they progress through their teenage years. Researchers have concluded that players in this age classification should spend time developing the following capabilities related to their long-term development:

1. **Skill Acquisition and Development (for boys and girls) –** Science has shown this is the prime age for children to acquire and develop sport skills, therefore it's known as the Golden Age of Skill Development.
2. **Speed (for girls) –** This is prime time to increase speed by improving the stride length and stride frequency through drills requiring high velocity for shorter intervals of time.
3. **Stamina (for girls) –** This is prime time to improve the endurance of each female athlete (the ability to sustain prolonged physical or mental effort).

The factors affecting long-term development differ slightly for boys and girls at this age level.

PLAYER KNOWLEDGE

Players should know:

1. Rules
    a. face-offs
    b. body contact
    c. offsides
    d. icing
    e. checking from behind
2. Common Infractions
    a. unsportsmanlike conduct
    b. body checking, checking from behind ***and boarding***
    c. cross-checking, charging ***and slashing***
    d. head contact, elbowing, and high-sticking
    e. tripping, hooking ***and kneeing***
    f. interference and holding
3. Penalties
    a. minor
    b. major
    c. misconduct
    d. penalty shot
    e. match

INDIVIDUAL HOCKEY SKILLS

Players must learn and master:

1. Skating
    a. ready position ***and the ability to find this strong position when engaged in body contact***
    b. edge control
    c. forward start
    d. forward stride
    e. controlled stop: two-foot and one-foot snowplow
    f. controlled turn
    g. forward crossover
    h. backward skating
    i. backward stop
    j. ABCs of skating: agility, balance, coordination, and speed drills

k. One-foot stop
l. backward crossover
m. mohawk turns
n. lateral skating
o. backward cross-under start
p. backward two-skate stop
q. backward power stop (one skate)

2. Puck Control
   a. lateral (side-to-side) stickhandling
   b. front-to-back stickhandling
   c. diagonal stickhandling
   d. attacking the triangle
   e. puck protection
   f. change of pace
   g. toe drag
   h. give and take
   i. accelerating with the puck (one-hand carry)
   j. change of direction
   k. backward puck control
   l. fakes and deception while stickhandling
   m. puck off the boards
3. Passing and Receiving
   a. forehand pass
   b. backhand pass
   c. receiving a pass properly with the stick
   d. saucer pass (forehand and backhand)
   e. receiving a pass properly with the skate
   f. indirect pass
   g. receiving a pass properly with the hand
   h. surround the puck
   i. one-touch passes
   j. area passes
4. Shooting
   a. wrist shot
   b. backhand
   c. flip shot
   d. screen shot
   e. deflection
   f. off rebound
   g. snap shot
   h. slap shot
   i. fake shots

5. Body Contact
    a. stick on puck
    b. stick lift
    c. poke check
    d. gap control concept
    e. body positioning and angling
    f. stick press
    g. angling
    h. delivering body contact
    i. receiving body contact (contact confidence)
6. Goaltending
    a. positioning
        i. proper stance
        ii. angling
    b. movement
        i. forward
        ii. backward
        iii. lateral
    c. save technique
        i. stick
        ii. gloves
        iii. body and pads
        iv. butterfly
        v. sliding butterfly
    d. recovery
    e. stopping the puck behind net
    f. puck retention
        i. cradling
        ii. rebound control
    g. game situations
        i. screen shots
        ii. walkouts
        iii. wraparounds

TEAM PLAY

Players must learn and understand:

1. Offensive Concepts
    a. 2-on-1 situations
    b. 1-on-1 situations
    c. triangle offense
    d. team play in each zone

   e. ***face-offs***
   f. ***zone entry***
   g. ***power-play concepts***
2. Defensive Concepts
   a. gap control
   b. stick on puck
   c. backchecking
   d. body position: man-you-net
   e. basic defensive zone coverage
   f. ***defending the middle of the ice***
   g. ***1-on-1 and even-numbered situations***
   h. ***2-on-1 and odd-numbered situations***
   i. ***forechecking***
   j. ***man-short concepts***
   k. ***shot blocking***

NUTRITION

Players should learn:

1. **Proper Hydration –** Players should learn the importance of proper hydration before, during, and after all games and practices.
2. **Good Eating Habits –** Players should be encouraged to eat good meals and refrain from eating candy and other foods that lack nutritional value.
3. **Recovery Drink –** While there are many recovery drinks on the market, players should be encouraged to drink chocolate milk following any practice or game session.
4. **Eating and Energy –** Players should be introduced to the importance of eating healthy foods that are high in carbohydrates in order to gain long-term energy. These players will experience tournaments where they are expected to play several games in a relatively short period of time. This is an excellent time for them to learn about the importance of eating the right foods for long-term energy.

FITNESS AND TRAINING

Players should perform exercises that improve their agility, balance, coordination, and speed (ABCs), as well as:

1. Quickness activities
2. Team games

3. Sprint workouts
4. Agility, balance, and coordination exercises
5. Light calisthenics
6. Flexibility exercises
7. Relays and obstacle courses
8. Upper-body strength: body-weight resistance activities
9. Off-ice skill development
    a. slideboard
    b. stickhandling with various types of balls
    c. shooting range
    d. passing

Coaches should utilize the 10-and-Under/12-and-Under Off-Ice Training Cards (Phase I and Phase II) that are available through USA Hockey and are on the Mobile Coach App.

INJURY PREVENTION

Players and parents should continue to learn about:

1. Heads Up Hockey Program
2. The proper care of equipment
3. The proper fitting of equipment
4. Rink safety
5. Safety precautions for practices
6. The importance of warming up and cooling down
7. The RICE concept for treating injuries (Rest-Ice-Compression-Elevation)

SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY

Players should continue to exhibit the sport and life skills learned at previous levels, as well as learning:

- the benefits of positive comments. All involved should realize that positive comments help reduce stress, enhance positive self-image for individuals and the team, and they can increase the enjoyment of practices and games.
- to balance family, school, and other activities.
- to be on time for practices and games.
- to take responsibility for their performance and actions at games, practices, school, and home.

- that alcohol and drugs can negatively impact a player. This includes the player's performance and quality of life.
- to be good teammates who encourage each of his or her teammates.

PARENT DEVELOPMENT

Refer to *An American Hockey Parent Handbook* found on the USA Hockey website.

14-and-Under
(Bantams)

14-and-Under (Bantams)

At the 14-and-Under level, coaches should focus on the following age-appropriate concepts and skills so that players have a good experience and develop as hockey players and young teenagers.

FOCUS POINTS

- Fun and Engagement
- Practice Activity and Structure
- Age-Appropriate Training
- Body Contact/Body Checking
- Skill Development
- Team Play

FUN

These young athletes have many recreational and free-time options. It's essential that 14-and-Under players still enjoy hockey practices and games in order to keep them involved in the sport and continuing their development. These early teenage years can provide many challenges for coaches and players alike. It's imperative that coaches are aware of these physical and emotional challenges, but that they also realize there is an excellent opportunity for development at this age. With the increased opportunities for players of this age, fun must remain at the forefront.

ENGAGEMENT

When coaches are able to create the optimal challenge level, where each player is able to demonstrate success while still having an appropriate level of difficulty, engagement can and will

occur for each player. Coaches who incorporate fun into practices and also find the optimal challenge level for each player are creating the ideal environment for long-term development. The challenge for coaches is that this optimal level will vary from player to player. Coaches will have to be very creative when trying to individualize practices so that the optimal skill level can be targeted for each player. When engagement occurs, players are able to see their own improvement and maximize their development as they are working at the appropriate level.

PRACTICE ACTIVITY AND STRUCTURE

Coaches designing practices should aim for an appropriate work-to-rest ratio for players of this age. This ratio should be used when the intensity of a drill allows for players to go hard for short periods of time. Players of this age are now able to utilize their anaerobic energy system. Coaches should also consider using practices with high activity levels as they continue to hone the skills of these players. Coaches must recognize the need for an adequate work-to-rest ratio in many practices, but must also be able to adapt if the practice requires an especially high activity level. Refer to the Player Activity Chart found on the free Mobile Coach App and at admkids.com under Coaches/Repetition for a form to evaluate the developmental opportunities that occur for players in practice and in games.

AGE-APPROPRIATE TRAINING

As stated at previous levels, coaches must carefully determine the skills, concepts, and team systems on which to focus. The proper ratio of these three components is critical. Teams at this level should increase the amount of time they spend focused on team play, however the majority of time in practices should still be spent on improving individual skills and understanding concepts.

BODY CONTACT/BODY CHECKING

Players are now at the age where body checking is allowed in games. Coaches should incorporate drills in practice that teach the skills related to good body contact and body checking. As these are very important skills, these drills should occur in every practice. The drills should focus on balance, stick position, angling, body contact, receiving a body check, delivering a body check, etc. Coaches should also teach players to check with a purpose (that purpose

being to make body contact with the puck carrier in an effort to gain possession of the puck). Therefore, when delivering a body check, players should keep the blade of their stick on the ice and maintain stick-on-stick position. Refer to *Checking the Right Way for Youth Hockey* for information and drills related to body contact and body checking.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

As players get older, the number of skills, concepts, and systems to be taught throughout a season increases. They are now at an age where the time spent teaching team-related systems will increase. However coaches are reminded that the majority of practice time should be spent improving the individual skills and understanding level of age-appropriate concepts.

TEAM PLAY

The amount of time spent working on team-related concepts and systems should increase from previous age classifications. Players should learn different forecheck systems, defensive-zone coverages, power-plays, etc. More importantly, in each case, players should be taught the concepts within each of those systems. Why is the player being asked to do what he or she is doing within the system? What is the opponent being forced to do? Players should be taught the answers to these questions. This will allow them to read and react appropriately to situations they encounter in games. Understanding and applying a concept, as opposed to just repeating an action, is crucial in the improvement of a player.

PRACTICE FOCUS

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

1. **Individual Skills** (hockey skills and activities) — 50%
2. **Hockey Sense** (teaching of concepts through small area games) — 35%
3. **Systems** (team play training) — 15%

While these percentages are approximations, they emphasize that individual skills are the most important part of development at this age and that the majority of practice time should be spent improving them. The percentages also indicate that teaching

hockey sense is still as important as teaching systems and team-play training.

SMALL AREA GAMES

Hockey sense is of even greater importance at this age level. Hockey sense includes the ability to understand important age-appropriate hockey concepts and execute tactics related to these concepts. 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.

Small area games are great teaching tools that also create a fun and competitive environment. Greater emphasis on competition should begin at this age, and small area games provide a great opportunity for players to experience a competitive environment every day in practice. Refer to the *Small Area Competitive Games Handbook and CD* and the *Small Area Competitive Games 2* book for age-appropriate small area games.

OPTIMAL WINDOWS OF TRAINABILITY

In order for players to maximize their ability and reach their potential, it's important for youth coaches to do the right thing with young athletes at the right time. Focusing on these key components at the appropriate age will give young athletes the best opportunity to achieve their potential as they progress through their teenage years. Researchers have concluded that players in this age classification should spend time developing the following capabilities related to their long-term development:

1. **Speed (for boys and girls) –** This is an ideal time to increase speed by improving the stride length and stride frequency through drills requiring high velocity for shorter intervals of time.

2. **Stamina (for boys and girls) –** This is an optimal development stage to improve the endurance of each athlete (ability to sustain prolonged physical or mental effort).
3. **Strength (for girls) –** Following puberty, it is the ideal time to improve the strength of an athlete.

**The factors affecting long-term development differ slightly for boys and girls at this age level.*

PLAYER KNOWLEDGE

Players should know:

1. Rules
   a. face-offs
   b. body contact
   c. offsides
   d. icing
   e. checking from behind
   f. player conduct
2. Common Infractions
   a. unsportsmanlike conduct
   b. body checking, checking from behind and boarding
   c. cross-checking, charging and slashing
   d. head contact, elbowing and high-sticking
   e. tripping, hooking and kneeing
   f. interference and holding
   g. unsportsmanlike conduct, fighting and attempt to injure
3. Penalties
   a. minor
   b. major
   c. misconduct
   d. penalty shot
   e. match

INDIVIDUAL HOCKEY SKILLS

Players should continue developing and mastering the skills listed at previous levels, while adding these new ones:

1. Skating
   a. ready position and the ability to find this strong position when engaged in body contact

b. edge control
c. forward start
d. forward stride
e. controlled stop: two-foot and one-foot snowplow
f. controlled turn
g. forward crossover
h. backward skating
i. backward stop
j. ABCs of skating (agility, balance, coordination, and speed drills)
k. mohawk turns
l. one-foot stop
m. backward crossover
n. lateral skating
o. backward cross-under start
p. backward two-skate stop
q. backward power stop (one skate)
r. quickness
s. speed
t. agility
u. power
v. change of direction
w. balance (use of edges)

2. Puck Control
   a. lateral (side-to-side) stickhandling
   b. front-to-back stickhandling
   c. diagonal stickhandling
   d. attacking the triangle
   e. puck protection
   f. change of pace
   g. toe drag
   h. give and take
   i. accelerating with the puck (one-hand carry)
   j. change of direction
   k. backward puck control
   l. fakes and deception while stickhandling
   m. puck off the boards
   n. fake shot
   o. stop and go
   p. spin around
3. Passing and Receiving
   a. forehand pass

b. backhand pass
c. receiving a pass properly with the stick
d. saucer pass (forehand and backhand)
e. receiving a pass properly with the skate
f. indirect pass
g. receiving a pass properly with the hand
h. surround the puck
i. one-touch passes
j. area passes
k. crisp passes

4. Shooting
   a. wrist shot
   b. backhand
   c. flip shot
   d. screen shot
   e. deflection
   f. off rebound
   g. snap shot
   h. slap shot
   i. fake shots
   j. one-timers
   k. stick position in scoring areas
   l. shots in close (pull the puck in and get it up)
5. Body Contact
   a. stick on puck
   b. stick lift
   c. poke check
   d. gap control concept
   e. body positioning and angling
   f. stick press
   g. angling
   h. delivering body contact
   i. receiving body contact (contact confidence)
   j. shoulder check
   k. receiving a body check
6. Goaltending
   a. positioning
      i. proper stance
      ii. angling
   b. movement
      i. forward
      ii. backward

iii. lateral

c. save technique
   i. stick
   ii. gloves
   iii. body and pads
   iv. butterfly
   v. sliding butterfly

d. recovery

e. puck handling
   i. stopping the puck behind net
   ii. passing the puck
      a. forehand
      b. backhand
   iii. clearing the puck
      a. forehand
      b. backhand

f. puck retention
   i. cradling
   ii. rebound control

g. game situations
   i. screen shots
   ii. walkouts
   iii. wraparounds
   iv. breakaways
   v. line rushes (odd and even)
   vi. face-offs in the defensive zone
   vii. communication with teammates

TEAM PLAY

Players must learn and understand:

1. Offensive Concepts
   a. 2-on-1 situations
   b. 1-on-1 situations
   c. triangle offense
   d. team play in each zone
   e. face-offs
   f. zone entry
   g. power-play concepts
   h. offensive principles: pressure, transition, support
   i. cycling
2. Defensive Concepts
   a. gap control

b. stick on puck
c. back-checking
d. body position: man-you-net
e. basic defensive zone coverage
f. defending the middle of the ice
g. 1-on-1 and even-numbered situations
h. 2-on-1 and odd-numbered situations
i. forechecking
j. man-short concepts
k. shot blocking
l. defensive principles: pressure, transition, support
m. defensive play in each zone
n. boxing out and fronting an opponent

NUTRITION

Players should learn:

1. **Proper Hydration –** Players should learn the importance of proper hydration before, during, and after all games and practices.
2. **Good Eating Habits –** Players should be encouraged to eat good meals and refrain from eating candy and other foods that lack nutritional value.
3. **Recovery Drink –** While there are many recovery drinks on the market, players should be encouraged to drink chocolate milk following any practice or game session.
4. **Eating and Energy –** Players should be introduced to the importance of eating healthy foods that are high in carbohydrates in order to gain long-term energy.

FITNESS AND TRAINING

Players should continue to perform exercises learned at previous age levels, but should also focus on the following:

1. Speed workouts
2. Strength workouts using body weight
3. Range-of-motion exercises
4. Aerobic and anaerobic workouts
5. Off-ice skill development
   a. slide board
   b. stickhandling with various types of balls
   c. shooting range

INJURY PREVENTION

Players should continue to learn more about:

- the Heads Up Hockey Program.
- the importance of hydration.
- safety precautions for practice.
- the importance of warming up with a dynamic warm-up and cooling down with static stretching.
- the RICE concept (Rest–Ice–Compression–Elevation).

SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY

Players should learn:

- to develop a pre-game routine.
- relaxation exercises.
- to focus on things that can be controlled.
- to give maximum effort at all times.
- to play with poise and confidence.
- to be in control of emotions at all times.
- basic visualization skills.
- the benefits of positive self-talk. Positive comments can reduce stress, enhance self-image and can increase fun at practices and games.
- to set goals, strive to reach those goals and periodically evaluate progress towards those goals.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND LIFE SKILLS

Players must learn:

- the importance of honesty and integrity in and away from the arena.
- to accept responsibility for their actions and athletic performance.
- coping strategies to deal with peer pressure and other adversity.
- to balance family, school, sports, social activities, etc.
- to develop a sense of team commitment.
- about adversity and begin developing strategies to deal with it.

PARENT DEVELOPMENT

Refer to An *American Hockey Parent Handbook* found on the USA Hockey website.

16/18-and-Under
(Midgets)

16/18-and-Under (Midgets)

At the 16-and-Under and 18-and-Under levels, coaches should focus on the following age-appropriate concepts and skills so that players have a good experience and continue developing as hockey players and teenagers.

FOCUS POINTS

- Fun and Engagement
- Practice Structure
- Age-Appropriate Training
- Skill Development
- Body Contact/Body Checking
- Team Play
- Training
- Learning to Compete

FUN

Players who have reached this level of play should have experienced fun along the way. No one should ever underestimate the value fun has played in the development of these players or will play going forward. These are critical years where the intensity of practices and games will increase, and coaches must find ways to incorporate fun into team practices and activities on a consistent basis. This generation of players has opportunities for activities of all kinds, so if they don't find a satisfactory amount of fun in the practices and games, they may opt to quit.

ENGAGEMENT

Coaches must strive to find the optimal level when determining the targeted skills, concepts and systems that can be taught at this age. When the level is too low, it may lead to boredom, and when the level is too high, it may lead to frustration. Individualizing the targeted level for each player is a mission that, when achieved, can lead to players who are engaged and having fun, and it can therefore maximize their performance. Engagement occurs when the level of play is ideal for each individual player (i.e., not too easy, not too hard). It's important that coaches design practices where the games and drills teach the desired skills and concepts. When players have the opportunity to see and feel success when executing skills and showing that they understand concepts in game-like conditions, then engagement has an opportunity to take place.

PRACTICE STRUCTURE

Practices for players at this age level should be more intense than previous levels while maintaining proper work-to-rest ratios. While skill development is important, executing these skills at higher speeds and in smaller areas with more resistance should be an increased focus. Coaches must aim for proper work-to-rest ratios based on the desired outcomes of the drills performed within a practice. Refer to the Player Activity Chart found on the free Mobile Coach App and at admkids.com under Coaches/Repetition for a form to evaluate the developmental opportunities that occur for players in practice and in games.

AGE-APPROPRIATE TRAINING

Players at this level should learn to compete, learn to train at a higher level, execute skills in traffic at higher speeds and show an ability to understand and execute many concepts and tactics related to the game. The adults involved with youth sports sometimes think these things have been developed earlier in players' careers, when in fact they were simply not ready to do these things at earlier ages. The importance of team-play and related systems increases at this age level. Coaches should teach concepts, tactics and team systems through small games. Players need the opportunity to practice these things in a setting where the game can teach the player and show success and failure. Coaches must remember that making

mistakes is a big part of the development process for players. Coaches should create an environment where making mistakes is acceptable.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Players at the highest level of hockey continue investing countless hours honing the skills required to be effective at that level. It's no different for a midget-age player. They too must continue honing the skating, stickhandling, passing, and shooting skills needed to be an effective player. The ability to execute these skills at higher rates of speed, in smaller areas, and under game conditions is important for the continued development of each player. Teaching players to compete and train are essential components of the development process.

BODY CONTACT/BODY CHECKING

Players are now at the age where body checking is allowed in games. Coaches should incorporate drills in practice that teach the skills related to good body contact and body checking. As these are very important skills, these drills should occur in every practice. The drills should focus on balance, stick position, angling, body contact, receiving a body check, delivering a body check, etc. Coaches should also teach players to check with a purpose (that purpose being to make body contact with the puck carrier in an effort to gain possession of the puck). Therefore, when delivering a body check, players should keep the blade of their stick on the ice and maintain stick-on-stick position. Refer to *Checking the Right Way for Youth Hockey* for information and drills related to body contact and body checking.

TEAM CONCEPTS

Midget-aged players are ready to grasp more team-play concepts and systems than they have before. Coaches should build on the concepts and systems introduced to these players at previous levels. Coaches should spend more time teaching forechecking concepts, power-plays, penalty kills, and defensive-zone coverages. However, practices should include an equal amount of time devoted to skill improvement and understanding of concepts.

TRAINING

Training is a critical component in the development process for midget-age players. Players should find themselves in on-ice and off-ice workouts that stretch their limits. Training workouts should challenge players to break through previously established physical and mental limits. Coaches can and should increase the intensity of workouts, utilizing high work levels with proper rest to follow. It's important to remember that these workouts of increased intensity will challenge the athlete. Coaches will need to coach the athlete through the mental challenges as well as the physical challenges.

LEARNING TO COMPETE

One of the misnomers adults associate with youth sports is related to competing. Adults often throw the word "compete" around for players as young as the mite age. The reality is that, because of physical and emotional development, players are not ready for this emphasis on competing until they are in their mid-teens. Midget-aged players are ready, and now they are participating in practices and games with higher intensity levels (faster and more physical). They must execute skills and make quick decisions in this physical environment while keeping their emotions in check. Even though winning is not the only gauge which determines success, players will find themselves in tight games where they are required to execute the skills, tactics and systems which they have learned. Whether they are able to execute these skills, tactics and systems, and how they deal with success and failure, is part of the process of learning to compete.

PRACTICE FOCUS

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

16-and-Under

1. **Individual Skills** (hockey skills and activities) — 50%
2. **Hockey Sense** (teaching of concepts through small area games) — 30%
3. **Systems** (team-play training) — 20%

18-and-Under

1. **Individual Skills** (hockey skills and activities) — 50%
2. **Hockey Sense** (teaching of concepts through small area games) — 25%
3. **Systems** (team-play training) — 25%

While these percentages are approximations, they emphasize that individual skills are the most important part of development at this age and that the majority of practice time should be spent improving them. The percentages also indicate that teaching hockey sense is still as important as teaching systems and team-play training.

SMALL AREA GAMES

Hockey sense is of even greater importance at this age level. Hockey sense includes the ability to understand important age-appropriate hockey concepts and execute tactics related to these concepts. 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.

Small area games are great teaching tools that also create a fun and competitive environment. Greater emphasis on competition should continue at this age, and small area games provide a great opportunity for players to experience a competitive environment every day in practice. Refer to the *Small Area Competitive Games Handbook and CD* and the *Small Area Competitive Games 2* book for age-appropriate small area games.

OPTIMAL WINDOWS OF TRAINABILITY

In order for players to maximize their ability and reach their potential, it's important for youth coaches to do the right thing with young athletes at the right time. Focusing on these key components at the appropriate age will give young athletes the best opportunity to achieve their potential as they progress through their teenage years. Researchers have concluded that

players in this age classification should spend time developing the following capabilities related to their long-term development:

1. **Speed (for boys and girls) –** Emphasis should continue on increasing speed by improving the stride length and stride frequency through drills requiring high velocity for shorter intervals of time.
2. **Stamina (for boys) –** This is an ideal stage to improve the endurance of each athlete (the ability to sustain prolonged physical or mental effort).
3. **Strength (for boys and girls) –** Following puberty, it's the ideal time to improve the physical strength of an athlete.

The factors affecting long-term development differ slightly for boys and girls at this age level.

PLAYER KNOWLEDGE

Players should know:

1. Rules
   a. face-offs
   b. offsides
   c. icing
   d. checking from behind
   e. player conduct
   f. related to legal body contact/body checking: checking from behind, contact to the head, elbowing, etc.
   g. required equipment
2. Common Infractions
   a. unsportsmanlike conduct
   b. checking from behind and boarding
   c. cross-checking, charging and slashing
   d. head contact, elbowing and high-sticking
   e. tripping, hooking and kneeing
   f. interference and holding
   g. unsportsmanlike conduct, fighting and attempt to injure
3. Penalties
   a. minor
   b. major
   c. misconduct
   d. penalty shot
   e. match
   f. order that multiple penalties are served

INDIVIDUAL HOCKEY SKILLS

Players should continue developing and mastering the skills listed at previous levels, while adding these new ones:

1. Skating
    a. ready position and the ability to find this strong position when engaged in body contact
    b. edge control
    c. forward start
    d. forward stride
    e. controlled stop: two-foot and one-foot snowplow
    f. controlled turn
    g. forward crossover
    h. backward skating
    i. backward stop
    j. ABCs of skating- agility, balance, coordination, and speed drills
    k. mohawk turns
    l. one-foot stop
    m. backward crossover
    n. lateral skating
    o. backward cross-under start
    p. backward two-skate stop
    q. backward power stop (one skate)
    r. quickness
    s. speed
    t. agility
    u. power
    v. change of direction
    w. balance (use of edges)
    x. forward and backward pivots
    y. backward skating with minimal cross-overs
2. Puck Control
    a. lateral (side-to-side) stickhandling
    b. front-to-back stickhandling
    c. diagonal stickhandling
    d. attacking the triangle
    e. puck protection
    f. change of pace
    g. toe drag
    h. give and take
    i. accelerating with the puck (one-hand carry)

j. change of direction
k. backward puck control
l. fakes and deception while stickhandling
m. puck off the boards
n. fake shot
o. stop and go
p. spin around
q. stickhandling in tight areas
r. while skating backward, stickhandle the puck on forehand side of body

3. Passing and Receiving
   a. forehand pass
   b. backhand pass
   c. receiving a pass properly with the stick
   d. saucer pass (forehand and backhand)
   e. receiving a pass properly with the skate
   f. indirect pass
   g. receiving a pass properly with the hand
   h. surround the puck
   i. one-touch passes
   j. area passes
   k. crisp passes
4. Shooting
   a. wrist shot
   b. backhand
   c. flip shot
   d. screen shot
   e. deflection
   f. off rebound
   g. snap shot
   h. slap shot
   i. fake shots
   j. one-timers
   k. stick position in scoring areas
   l. shots in close (pull the puck in and get it up)
   m. adjust angle of shot just prior to shooting
5. Body Contact
   a. stick on puck
   b. stick lift
   c. poke check
   d. gap control concept

e. body positioning and angling
f. stick press
g. angling
h. delivering body contact
i. receiving body contact (contact confidence)
j. shoulder check
k. receiving a body check
l. delivering a body check
m. hip check
n. containing/stalling

6. Goaltending

Goaltenders should continue to perform skills learned at previous age-levels and become faster, stronger and quieter.

a. positioning
    i. proper stance
    ii. angling
b. movement
    i. forward
    ii. backward
    iii. lateral
c. save technique
    i. stick
    ii. gloves
    iii. body and pads
    iv. butterfly
    v. sliding butterfly
d. recovery
e. puck handling
    i. stopping the puck behind net
    ii. passing the puck
        a. forehand
        b. backhand
    iii. clearing the puck
        a. forehand
        b. backhand
f. puck retention
    i. cradling
    ii. rebound control
g. game situations
    i. screen shots
    ii. walkouts

iii. wraparounds
iv. breakaways
v. line rushes (odd and even)
vi. face-offs in the defensive zone
vii. communication with teammates

TEAM PLAY

Players must learn and understand:

1. Offensive Concepts
   a. 2-on-1 situations
   b. 1-on-1 situations
   c. triangle offense
   d. team play in each zone
   e. face-offs
   f. zone entry
   g. power-play concepts
   h. offensive principles: pressure, transition, support
   i. cycling
   j. puck control
   k. dump-ins
   l. attacking the offensive zone
   m. play away from the puck
2. Defensive Concepts
   a. gap control
   b. stick on puck
   c. back-checking
   d. body position: man-you-net
   e. basic defensive zone coverage
   f. defending the middle of the ice
   g. 1-on-1 and even-numbered situations
   h. 2-on-1 and odd-numbered situations
   i. fore-checking
   j. man-short concepts
   k. shot blocking
   l. defensive principles: pressure, transition, support
   m. defensive play in each zone
   n. boxing out and fronting an opponent
   o. stall/contain

NUTRITION

Players should learn:

1. **Proper Hydration –** Players should learn the importance of proper hydration before, during, and after all games and practices.
2. **Good Eating Habits –** Players should be encouraged to eat good meals and refrain from eating candy and other foods that lack nutritional value.
3. **Recovery Drink –** While there are many recovery drinks on the market, players should be encouraged to drink chocolate milk following any practice or game session.
4. **Eating and Energy –** Players should know the importance of eating healthy foods that are high in carbohydrates in order to gain long-term energy.

FITNESS AND TRAINING

Players should continue performing exercises learned at previous age levels, but should also focus on the following:

1. Speed workouts
2. Strength workouts
3. Range-of-motion exercises
4. Aerobic and anaerobic workouts
5. Off-ice skill development
    a. slide board
    b. stickhandling with various types of balls
    c. shooting range

INJURY PREVENTION

Players should continue to learn more about:

- the Heads Up Hockey Program.
- the importance of hydration.
- safety precautions for practice.
- the importance of warming up with a dynamic warm-up and cooling down with static stretching.
- the RICE concept (Rest–Ice–Compression–Elevation)

SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY

Players should learn:

- to develop a pre-game routine.
- relaxation exercises.

- to focus on things that can be controlled.
- to give maximum effort at all times.
- to play with poise and confidence.
- to be in control of emotions at all times.
- basic visualization skills.
- the benefits of positive self-talk. Positive comments can reduce stress, enhance self-image and increase fun at practices and games.
- to set goals, strive to reach those goals, and periodically evaluate progress towards those goals.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND LIFE SKILLS

Players must learn:

- the importance of honesty and integrity in and away from the arena.
- to accept responsibility for their actions and athletic performance.
- coping strategies to deal with peer pressure and other adversity.
- to balance family, school, sports, social activities, etc.
- to develop a sense of team commitment.
- about adversity and begin developing strategies to deal with it.

PARENT DEVELOPMENT

Refer to *An American Hockey Parent Handbook* found on the USA Hockey website.

Level 1 Clinic Workbook

Level 1 Clinic Workbook

COACHING

1. List some great coaches (include coaches from any sport, current or former).

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2. What are the characteristics of a good coach?

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COMMUNICATION

3. What makes someone an effective communicator? List some of the qualities an effective communicator possesses.

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4. List 10 ways to say “Great job!”

5. Write a few coaching phrases that have a negative or demeaning feel to them. Rewrite each phrase so it has a positive feel.

NEGATIVE	POSITIVE

6. How has communication changed?

7. List the important age-appropriate components related to the age of the players you coach. What are the things that coaches and managers must consider when setting up practices, games, etc., for the players of the age that you will coach?

SELF-REFLECTION

8. Why are you coaching this season?

9. What do you hope to accomplish this season?

10. How are you going to achieve those goals?

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LEADERSHIP

11. What are three areas in which you can improve as a leader?

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12. What are the characteristics of a good drill?

13. What are the characteristics of a good practice plan?

14. What are the characteristics of a good season plan?

15. List topics to be covered in the orientation meeting with parents.

16. List the components of each skill listed below:

Skating:

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_____

Shooting:

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Passing:

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Body Contact/Body Checking:

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SKILLS, TACTICS AND SYSTEMS

17. List as many team-play systems as possible.

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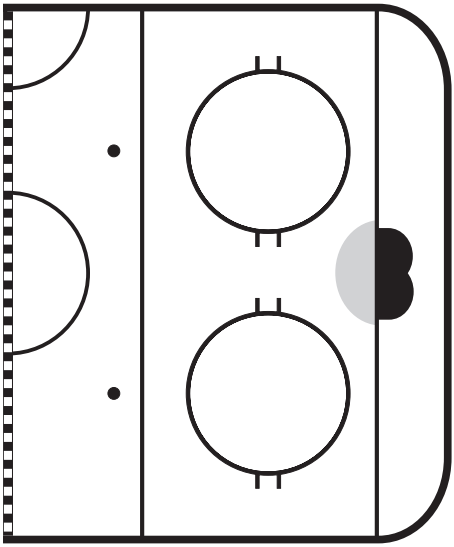
18. Sketch a breakout pattern that your team might use.



19. List the concepts and tactics that players should understand and execute for the breakout pattern that you sketched.

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20. List the skills that are necessary to execute a breakout.

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