

## **WINNETKA HOCKEY PLAYER SKILL DEVELOPMENT GUIDE**

The Winnetka Hockey Club's goal for each current or potential travel level player is for that player to have fun playing the game of hockey and to develop/improve his or her skills during the hockey season. To accomplish this task of skill development, *each coach is being given a set of "Core Skills" that need to be taught so that each player can properly progress to the next age level.* These Core Skill requirements should be accompanied by a set of drills designed to instill these skills. They should be incorporated into the practice plan at every practice. Variations of these drills should be carried over to older age groups to insure mastery.

To be clear, other general skills must be taught at each level, but the below described Core Skills will define the Winnetka Player. Coaches must teach the players on their team the Core Skills to ensure that each player can develop properly and progress to the next level of hockey.

In addition to the Core Skills, we have also included a list of "General Skills" players at any given level coaches should be teaching and refining. It is the responsibility of each coach to assess the players on his or her team and ensure that they are teaching the kids the skills each player needs to develop at game of hockey.

Lastly, coaches should take an active role in instructing every player proper form and technique. Kids cannot learn if coaches are not continually teaching kids how to properly execute drills and techniques. A player that is executing a drill incorrectly or with bad form will not properly develop and progress.

### **General Practice Note**

*Coaches should strive to ensure players are active for the majority of each practice session and avoid the archaic practice in which kids spend time standing in line waiting to participate in drills.* Coaches should aim to have much more activity 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. *All of these are important skills and it is imperative that coaches consistently maximize the minutes of activity and the number of repetitions.* Keep in mind that players are more likely to successfully execute skills when they have been given many repetitions in practice. In addition, ice is a valuable and scarce commodity, thus, coaches should maximize their time on the ice with quality drills.

Coaches should utilize small area games on a consistent basis. Small area games incorporate fun with practicing skills while allowing a coach to teach basic concepts.

Coaches should also remember that fun is a key component of youth sports, and that practices and games must be fun in order for players to continue working hard to acquire and improve skills.

### **Excellent Additional Resource**

[http://assets.ngin.com/attachments/document/0066/4690/Skill\\_Progression\\_Manual\\_FINAL.pdf](http://assets.ngin.com/attachments/document/0066/4690/Skill_Progression_Manual_FINAL.pdf)

### **I. Core Skills**

#### **Mite House - Core Skills**

1. KNEES BENT/CHEST UP - Every aspect of skating (whether starting, stopping, crossing over, pivoting) can only be done properly with bent knees and chest up. A simple drill to form this base is wall sits followed by a 50% effort cross ice skate with long strides. The players line up against the boards doing wall sits with knees bent and chest up. They hold this pose for 30 seconds and then cross the ice at 50% speed maintaining the exact same posture. Do 8-10 reps of this.

2. HEAD UP - It's imperative to develop this concept early. It will be difficult for most mite house players to accomplish this while moving but the base should be laid. A simple drill is stationary stickhandling while players simultaneously calling out the number of fingers a coach is holding up, forcing the players to stickhandle with their heads up. Do 8-10 reps.

### **Mite Travel - Core Skills**

1. KNEES BENT/CHEST UP - Same drill as described in Mite House Core Skills but 100% effort on the cross ice skate making the drill a race. A player can only "win" the race if they maintain the knees bent/head up form.

2. HEAD UP - Similar drill as drill as described in Mite House Core Skills. Players skate forward with puck while watching movement of coaches stick calling out 'up' or 'down' as coach either raises or lowers his stick. This can be done straight ahead or while maneuvering through cones.

### **Squirt Travel - Core Skills**

1. CROSSOVER - Every crossover, whether skating backward or forward, is an opportunity to gain speed on the opposition. This power crossover is accomplished by driving the inside leg under the outside leg, not by lifting the outside leg over. A proper demonstration must be given to the players accompanied simple circle skating drills with laser focus on this concept of inside leg drive. Of course, this should be done with knees bent/chest up.

2. HEAD MAN THE PUCK - Players must learn at this age that the puck moves faster than any skater. A simple tool to prove this point is to have the team's fastest player 'race' a pass from one player to another from blue line to blue line in the neutral zone. The gap in speed should illustrate this concept. There are an unlimited number of drills to practice this concept.

### **Peewee Travel - Core Skills**

1. CROSS DIRECTIONAL AGILITY - Players at this age need to be able to move backward/forward and side to side smoothly, both with and without the puck. An ideal drill is the iron cross executed inside a face-off circle. When done with a puck the same number of fingers identification can be used to emphasize the head up concept.

2. GIVE and GO HOCKEY - It is imperative at this age players understand this concept. Specifically, the advantage gained by passing around a defender to an open player and then moving past this defender to receive a pass back versus trying to skate or deek past the defender. It is the root of properly played hockey and is applicable to all virtually every situation in all 3 zones. Similar to head manning the puck there are countless drills to teach this concept.

## **II. General Skills**

Please note that the listed skills at each level build off of the skills for the prior level. In addition to refinement of skills taught at the prior level, the below listed italicized skills are new skills that should be taught. The hope is that as players progress to the next level and coaches have a uniform understanding of what was previously taught and the players are proficient at certain general skills.

## **Mite Travel - General Skills**

- (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

## **Team Concepts Mite Players Should 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.

## **Squirt Travel - General Skills**

- (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 Concepts Squirt 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*

**Pee Wee Travel - General Skills**

- (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 Concepts Pee Wee 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*

### **Bantam Travel - General Skills**

- (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 Concepts Bantam 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*