



Coaches Handbook

Youth Travel

October 22, 2008

Wayzata Youth Hockey Association

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Wayzata Youth Hockey Association

Introduction

The following pages represent the dedicated efforts of past and current members who have donated their time to help build Wayzata into the successful 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!

-Coaches Committee

Wayzata Youth Hockey Association

Wayzata Hockey Philosophy

Hockey is a team sport. But, the fundamental and essential building block of good hockey teams is players with excellent hockey skills – skating, stick-handling, passing, shooting, and (at later levels for boys) checking. At the WYHA, 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 promoted by our varsity high school coach and 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 WYHA. By progressive, we mean that our players' skills will be developed commensurate with their age, size and ability as they advance through the WYHA. The WYHA 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 player development committee, the coaches committee, our veteran coaches and the entire board are committed to helping all of our coaches develop their players' hockey skills.

-Player Development Committee

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Statement of Coach's Support

In consideration of our coaches loyalty and commitment to the Wayzata Youth Hockey Association, we, the Board of Directors, committee members, and all those involved, directly or indirectly, agree to support our coaches at all levels, and encourage both parents and players to also be a positive influence.

**President
Wayzata Youth Hockey Association**

Coach's Code of Ethic 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 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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Coaches Grievance Procedure

If you, as a coach in WYHA 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!

Coach » Team Manager » Parent » Level Coordinator » Board of Directors

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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Practice/Scrimmage/Game Rules and Guidelines

A. Rules

1. Skill clinics are mandatory - all players and designated coaches are required to attend.
2. Teams will be assigned and charged for practice time at the Dryland training facility. Teams must make every attempt to use this development resource whenever possible.
3. Any cancellation of a skill clinic or team ice time in favor of a scrimmage at another location will not be tolerated.
4. No scrimmages until one week of practices have been completed and until the team book has been signed by registrar.
5. NO tournaments or jamborees allowed two weeks before District 3 playoffs (Exception is Bantam A VFW Playoffs).
6. NO team is allowed to participate in any scrimmage, tournament, jamboree and/or trips after District, Regional or State Tournaments unless the team qualifies for a National tournament. In other words, when the season is over, the season is over!
7. 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.
8. 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 |

C. 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 every attempt to utilize assigned time at the Dryland facility.
2. It is recommended that a maximum of 4-5 tournaments, jamborees and/or "road trips" per season. Of the 4 to 5 tournaments, jamboree and / or road trips only two should be out of town.

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Coaches Guidelines for Success

CEP

Coach Certification applies to 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 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 (2) card must not be expired. The dated sticker is the year you were certified - this is good for 3 years. Any cards dated 2000-01 or earlier are now EXPIRED and must be re-certified at that level or higher.

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.

Association training sessions for coaches

Skating
Stickhandling
Puck Control

Flexxcoach – This is a software program that contains a variety of drills that coaches can use to develop practice plans. There are enough memberships available for one coach from each travel team. Contact your level coordinator for password information.

Player evaluations – Use a checkbox type system to evaluate each player on predefined skills based on the Developmental Plans for each level. The document would be reviewed with the player showing their various strengths and areas where improvement can be made. Performing these evaluations throughout the year the player will be able to see how they are progressing.

Town meetings for coaches – The idea here is to hold meeting, with the head coaches, throughout the year on various topics and to seek input on what does and does not work and entertain new ideas.

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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 then 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 week 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.

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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 travel 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 the forward and defense positions. For Pee Wee A and above, player positions are left up to the coach, but, will be encouraged by the Coaches Committee and Player Development Committee to rotate players to different positions.

RULE: Squirts and Pee Wee B and C must rotate defense to forward and/or 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, Bantam A’s and Jr. Gold can play one goalie during district, region and state play.

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, PeeWee A, Bantam 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.

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Rostered Skaters

Under 4.02 of WYHA Statement of Policies and Procedures only rostered members of the Wayzata Youth Hockey A or B travel teams may be on the ice during a team's practice. The only exception being if the team is short a goalie, they may call upon a goalie rostered on another WYHA 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. As far as goalies go don't go outside your division within your level, i.e. Pee wee A with Pee wee B1 or B2 or even Pee wee B1 with a B2 team.

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Squirt 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 face-offs

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

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- 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

Minnesota Hockey HEP Skill Resources are also available online at:

<http://www.minnesotahockey.org/hep>

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Peewee Level Developmental Plan

Peewee 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 walls

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

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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

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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

Minnesota Hockey HEP Skill Resources are also available online at:

<http://www.minnesotahockey.org/hep>

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Bantam 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

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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 vice versa
Pushing the puck while skating forward
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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

Minnesota Hockey HEP Skill Resources are also available online at:

<http://www.minnesotahockey.org/hep>

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

In our 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 turn the bottom hand over for increased leverage.

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Russo's Golden Rules for Defensemen

Reprinted from Lets Play Hockey
John Russo I.

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 Peeewe's) 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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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 faceoffs. 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 linemates ahead that are open, then move quickly to join the rush. Don't force passes to covered linemates 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 linemates 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 on 1 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 linemates and other teammates. It is one of the most important parts of

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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.

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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 20+ “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 (PeeWees and Bantams).

Combined special team percentage at or above 105%

Exemplarily sportsmanship that adheres to the standard set by the WYHA

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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Goalie Clinic Information

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

Frequency: Approximately 14 in-season clinics

When: See WYHA Web Site for Clinic Dates and Times

Lead Instructor: Jason Muthart

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. In consideration of such a requirement, the team's designated goalie coach will not be required to attend the skills clinics.

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 **top priority** of the WYHA.

Goalie equipment available for checkout through WYHA. Please call Jon Almquist (763)475 0122 or 612 877 0830) with your questions.

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

Special Note: If in conflict for goalies, goalie clinics take priority over skills clinics and practices (not including scrimmages)

Page Revised: October 2008

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Skill Clinic Information

1. Skill Coaches:
Squirt – Terry Zimmer
Peewee – John Maruk
2. 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!
3. The Skill Coach is the lead instructor. Team coaches will assist and play a more active role during this season's skill clinics.
4. It is **mandatory** that a Team coach attend the skills clinic **and assist** the skills 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.
5. A skill clinic will count as a “**team practice**” in determining team's 2:1 practice to game ratio.
6. Skill clinics are **mandatory** - all players and coaches are required to attend just like a team practice.
7. Skill clinics cannot be canceled under any circumstance unless in conflict with a district or tournament game.
8. Any cancellation of a skill clinic in favor of a non-district or non-tournament game is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
9. For scheduling purposes, skill clinics take top priority. Absolutely, positively NO CANCELLATIONS! Skill development is the #1 priority of the WYHA.

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Team/Parent Meeting

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