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USA Hockey Recertification Program

Planning and Executing an Effective Practice

Lesson Workbook



presented by



Presenter: Mike Sullivan

Head Coach - Boston Bruins, NHL

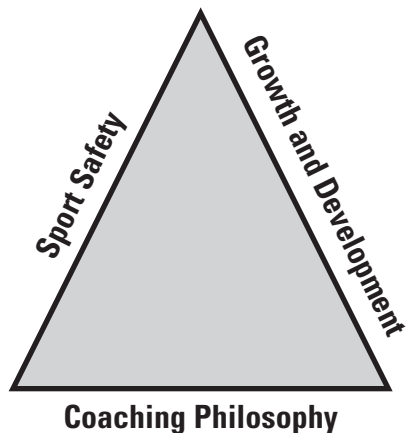
Planning and Executing an Effective Practice

Planning is an essential part of any successful activity. Coaching is no exception, if you and the participants in your program are to achieve the goals you set together, you need to know where you are headed and what you have to do to get there. Planning is NOT complicated. Rather, it is a simple matter of determining priorities and deciding how and when to act on them. But how should you plan? What are the building blocks of a good practice? The purpose of this lesson is to give you some basic information on what goes into planning an effective practice.

The Process of Planning a Practice

Planning a practice is a three-stop process:

- Setting the framework of the individual practice
- Deciding on the content of the individual practice
- Evaluating the individual practice



The Framework

The first step in planning a practice is to establish its framework – to take into account the general factors affecting the practice. In particular, you need to think about the following:

Your personal coaching philosophy. What you do as a coach is simply your coaching philosophy in action – it affects every practice you run.

Growth and development considerations. People's physical, intellectual, social, and emotional capacities are always changing, and what you expect of participants in an individual practice MUST reflect their current level.

Sport safety. Before every practice, you must make sure that the practice environment is safe.

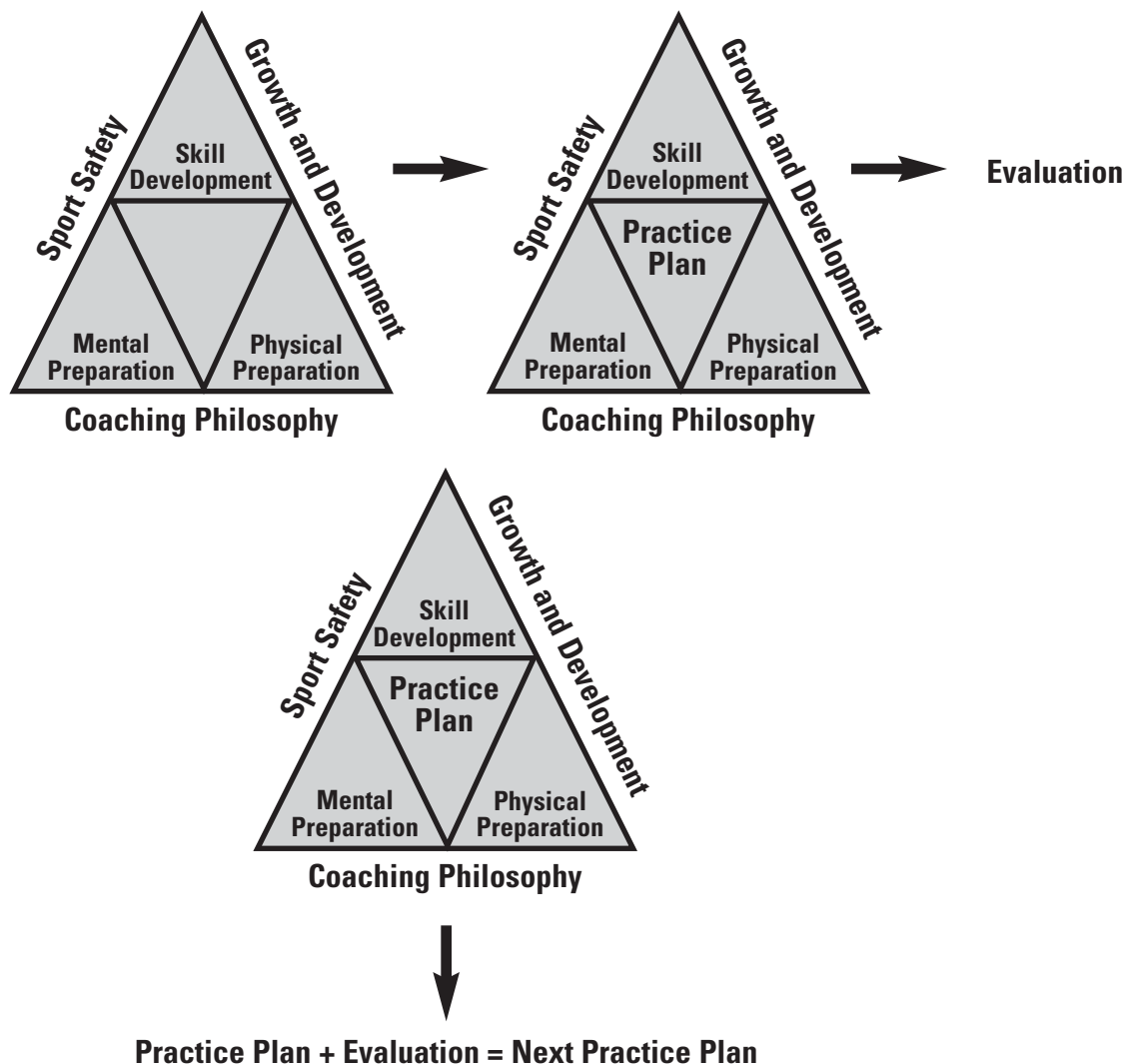
The Content

The second step in planning a practice is deciding on the content of the individual practice.

Such content consists of the following:

- Skill-development activities
 - Skill-development activities are activities that develop technique.
- Physical preparation
 - Physical preparation refers to the physical activities that make up a practice – training the energy systems, working on strength and flexibility, warm-ups and cool-downs.
- Mental preparation
 - Mental preparation refers to the development of certain tactics and strategies.

Closely associated with all these activities is the overall analysis of skills – how you observe and analyze participants' performance.



Evaluation

The third step in planning a practice is evaluation: Gathering specific information about practices and using this information to plan the next practice. This step is crucial, because it allows you to base practices on what you know about previous practices – and so ensures that you plan sound practices.

“Even if you’re on the right track, you’ll get run-over if you just sit there”
Will Rogers from the book “The Edge”

Tips for Running a Quality Practice

Quality instruction is built on six basic principles:

1. Planning what you want to achieve
2. Effective drills
3. Progressional teaching
4. Observing
5. Motivating your players
6. Success in learning by your players

All practices should follow these fundamental steps:

- Set specific objectives for practice.
- Plan the practice with assistant coaches and discuss with players before going on the ice.
- Begin with a proper warm-up, starting with stretching in the dressing room and/or on the ice.
- Teach and practice new skills and plays early in the practice before players become tired.
- The practice should conclude with fun drills which improve players’ conditioning and skills.
- After practice, you should evaluate its effectiveness by getting feedback from players and assistant coaches.

Here are more essential ingredients of a quality practice:

- Make FUN a priority
- Utilize the 100% rule: 100% use of the ice, 100% player participation, 100% effort and 100% coach control.
- Keep players active, not passive.
- Give clear, concise instructions.
- Give positive feedback to team and individuals.
- Treat all players equally
- Focus on practicing a few areas well rather than trying to cover many areas.
- Arrive at the arena early and insist that players be punctual.

Components of a Functional Practice

1. Coaching Initiatives
2. Practice Concepts
3. Technical Skill Concepts - The Athlete
4. Tactical Skill Concepts - Team Play

1. Coaching Initiatives

- Multi-task
- Stretch
- Inspire
- Reward
- **FUN**

While you should establish objectives for your practice such as skill and fitness development, don't forget the main reason players participate is for enjoyment. **FUN** can be an element in every component of your practice, including the warm-up, instruction, skill practice and fitness. Just because a game or drill is **FUN**, does not mean it is unrelated to objectives like skill development. Games can be designed to incorporate fundamental skills such as skating, puck control and checking. Even during **FUN** drills, always use the 100% rule: 100% use of the ice, 100% player participation, 100% effort and 100% coach control.

2. Practice Concepts

- Ice Utilization
- Work: Rest Ratios
- Duration of Drills
- Fundamental Skill Objectives

Understanding Game Characteristics

- Speed
- Tight area game
- East-West vs. North-South
- Puck support vs. Positional play
- Transition
- Loose pucks abound
- Game of possession
- 1 vs. 1 battles

3. Technical Skill Concepts - The Athlete

Pre-requisite Hockey Skills

- Physical Skills
- Skating/Shooting
- Passing/Receiving
- Puck-handling

Intellectual Skills

- Decisions with and without the puck
- Awareness
- Recognizing threats/opportunities
- Exploitation

4. Tactical Skill Concepts - Team Play

Capturing Game Characteristics in Practice

Tactical Skills – The Team

Concepts of team play

- Offensive concepts
 - Speed
 - Possession
 - Pursuit
 - Puck Support
- Defensive concepts
 - Coverage
 - Support

Technical Skill Concepts- The Athlete

Skating

- Circles (Figure 8's)
- Peanuts (Transition)

Passing/Receiving

- Support – be an option for puck carrier (passing lanes)
 - Timing
 - Proper support routes
- Resistance/Possession games

Puck-handling

- Tight areas
- Deception Techniques – delay/escapes/dekes/cut-backs/wide dribbles/use of body

Shooting

- Incorporate scoring attempts

Hockey Sense: Intellectual aspect

- Small games
 - Decision training – Teach players to think and execute faster
 - Place conditions on games
 - Recognize threats/opportunities
- Situations: game-like scenarios

Tactical Skills – The Team

Concepts of team play

- Offensive concepts
- Defensive concepts

Methods of Teaching

Fundamental Skill Drills

- Emphasis on speed
- Incorporate options
- Situations
- Simulate game-like scenarios
- Add/remove players during drill- awareness & exploitation

Small Games

- Decision training

Teaching Tips

- Practice doing things correctly.
- Stop the drill and correct if execution is improper.
- Coaches learn just as much from the players as players learn from the coaches.
- Is the drill accomplishing the objective?
- Are the players being challenged?
- Don't be afraid to make adjustments.

Conclusion

- The coach is primarily responsible for creating the environment in which our kids participate.
- Fundamental skills are the tools players need to master in order to execute team strategy.
- Game Specific – “Practice how you play”.
- Implement the Development Model vs. Pro Sports Model of win at all costs.

Formula for a Functional Practice



“The most wonderful thing about sports is that it allows us to care passionately about something that really doesn't matter!”

Winnipeg Free Press

Drills

Ice Utilization 3



Objective

- Maximizing the time and space allotted

Divide players up into three equal groups. About 5 players per station 7 minutes at each stations total drill time 21 minutes. Drill 1, Fundamental Skill Drill. The first player skates in front of the goalie and in front of the coach, to make a turn, and receive a pass for a redirection in tight on net. Continues to make another tight turn and receive another pass for a second redirection in tight on the net. Then, continues out to the obstacle, jumps the obstacle, continues skating forward to in between the blueline and redline where he makes a tight hockey turn to receive another pass from the other coach, positioned to the left of the goalie for a shot on goal. Drill 2 Tight Area Game. The coach then calls out the different scenario, 1 on 1, 2 on 1, 2 on 2, 3 on 2, 3 on 1. and the players get in position and the coach dumps the puck in off the boards. The players read and react to the situation and try to score at the opposite net. Drill 3 1/2 Ice 2 on 1 on coach. The coach is to play the 2 on 1 in different ways in order to force the players to read and react.(e.g. Go right at the puck carrier, forcing him to pass.)

Key Elements

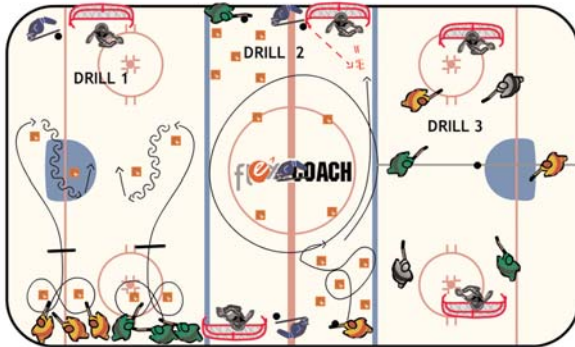
- Skating
- Offensive skill work for forwards
- Awareness
- Puck Control/Passing
- Shooting/Scoring

Goalie

- Up to five goalies can participate in this drill. in addition you can also use shooter tutors, foam pads covering low part of the net or empty nets.

Drills

Ice Utilization 4



Objective

- Maximizing the time and space allotted

Divide players up into three equal groups. Drill 1, Race for the puck. The objective is to design an obstacle course for the players to skate through, and the drill ends with a race for a puck to score a goal. Drill 2, Tight Area Horseshoe. First player in each line carries puck in and around cones. On the whistle, they leave their pucks, explode out of the area and around the horseshoe-receive pass from coach-shot on goal. Drill 3, 3 on 3 Across Ice. Player on each team is on the offensive half and cannot go on the defensive half of the playing area. 1 player on each team is on the defensive half and cannot go on the offensive half of the playing area. 1 player on each team can go on both sides of the playing area. (the Rover)

Key Elements

- Skating
- Compete, Battling 1 on 1
- Quick feet explosiveness
- Offensive creativity
- Read and react to the situation

Goalie

- Up to five goalies can participate in this drill. in addition you can also use shooter tutors, foam pads covering low part of the net or empty nets.

Multi Tasking 3 on 3 Skill



Objective

- Develop Skills and Fundamentals/Hockey Sense

Nets are placed along the boards in the end zone. 8 cones are placed evenly; 4 at the goal line and 4 at the top of the circles. 3 on 3 drill; after making a pass the player must skate to the nearest cone and perform a skill element; in this case it is a tight turn around the cone before the player makes themselves again an available pass receiver.

Key Elements

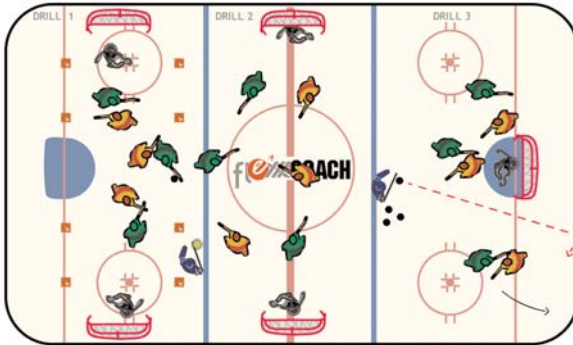
- Passing/Receiving
- Develop skill element
- Creating scoring chances
- Creativity
- Give and go passing

Goalie

- Read the rush, game like situation, puck carrier is under pressure.

Drills

Ice Utilization 6



Objective

- Utilize the ice surface efficiently and effectively

Drill 1: Nets are placed along the boards in the end zone. 8 cones are placed evenly; 4 at the goal line and 4 at the top of the circles. 3 on 3 drill; after making a pass the player must skate to the nearest cone and perform a skill element; in this case it is a tight turn around the cone before the player makes himself again an available pass receiver.

Drill 2: Players divided into 2 teams. Positioned outside the blueline. Start with 3 players from each team in the zone with 2 nets positioned at the side boards. The coach standing just outside the blueline with tennis balls. The coach throws in a ball and the players play a regular 3 on 3 game.

Drill 3: Divide players equally into two groups along the blueline. 3 on 3 attack the same net. The players must exchange the puck with the coach on a change of possession. If the puck comes out of the zone or a goal is scored quickly, the coach can add another puck. Shifts should last 30 seconds.

Key Elements

- Create scoring chances in small area
- Read and react to what's available
- Proper Positioning for good puck support
- Use of your body to create space for your teammates
- Strong on your stick

Goalie

- Up to five goalies can participate in this drill. in addition you can also use shooter tutors, foam pads covering low part of the net or empty nets.

Drills

Puckhandling/Agility



Objective

- Fundamental Skill Development

This drill is a great example of our multi-tasking initiative. Divide the players into two groups positioned at opposite diagonal bluelines with pucks. Place the cones throughout the neutral zone as shown on the diagram please note the two variations and the coach or coaches positioning. The players start stickhandling the puck in and out of the cones, skate out of the cones to the next cone make a tight turn around the cone and skate around the far cone in the neutral zone, pass the puck to the coach in between the top of the circle and the blue line, skate around the cone just above the goal line and receive the puck back from the coach, jump the stick and finish with a shot on goal. The next players starts when the first skates out of the first set of cones and is approaching the next cone or cones.

Key Elements

- Skating
- Balance/Agility
- Passing/Receiving
- Pivots
- Shooting/Scoring

Variations

- Can add two coaches and two cones to perform a transition element forward to backward around the cones. Also add a pivot move forward to backward receive a pass pivot backward to forward and finish with a shot on goal.

Goalie

- Follow skater around the last cone.

Drills

Tight Area Horseshoe



Objective

- Fundamental Skill Drill

2 lines on opposite sides. First player in each line carries puck in and around cones. On the whistle, they leave their pucks, explode out of the area and around the horseshoe—receive pass from coach—shot on goal.

Key Elements

- Puck position – out in front
- Quick feet
- Explosion
- Crossovers/crossunders
- Quick release on shot

Goalie

- In the nets for shots

4 Skill Stations 2



Objective

- Skill and Fundamental Development

Divide the rink up into 4 stations and divide the players evenly.

Station 1 consists of cycling with a high roll misdirect to create a scoring chance utilizing the space behind the puck carrier.

Station 2 consists of puck control in a 1 on 1 situation in a tight area to teach the players to use your body to shield the puck using good positioning, balance and strength.

Station 3 is a to develop good passing and receiving fundamentals with proper weight transfer for hard flat and controlled passes tape to tape.

Station 4 is an excellent skating agility drill that focuses on transition skating with proper pivots from forward to backward and backward to forward while maintaining control and passing of the puck while in motion.

Key Elements

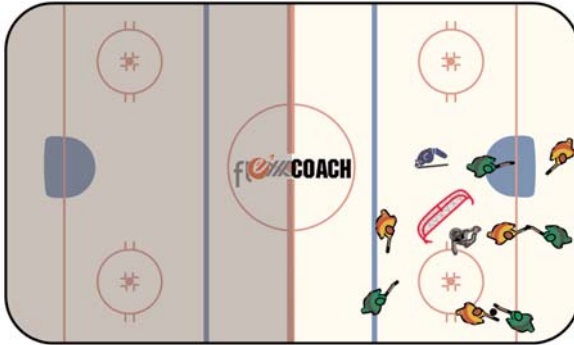
- Passing/Receiving
- Skating Agility
- Puck protection
- Utilizing misdirection/Cycling

Goalie

- Goalies will be needed in the station one drill and the other goalie can be working on the five puck goalie skate or the X skating drill and switch half way through the drill.

Drills

2 on 2 Puck Protection



Objective

- To maintain control of the puck with good support

Place four players in any small area on the ice, with a net; using a border patrol pad or barrier of some sort; closing off a tight area. The four players are to battle 2 on 2 trying to maintain control of the puck while trying to create scoring chances on the goalie in the net.

Key Elements

- Protect the puck
- Mobility/foot work
- Beat pressure
- Create scoring chances
- Give and go passing

Variations

- Can use this as a 1 on 1 to get your players to compete in a tight area

Goalie

- A lot of scoring chances, quick reactions by the goalie. Low coverage, competitive, rebound control.
- Encourage the goalie to play the puck and keep the play moving.

Crossover Course



Objective

- Skating Skills

The nets are placed on opposite sides of the rink in between the blueline and redline, the players are divided into two groups in opposite diagonal corners of the rink at the same side that their net is on. The player starts with crossovers around the four cones placed on that side of the rink and continue skating in behind the goal line or jumps over the obstacle, skates around the cone in the corner receives a pass from the coach skates around the cone placed in the neutral zone between the blueline and redline, makes a move around the other coach at the bottom of the center ice face off circle and finishes with a shot on goal.

Key Elements

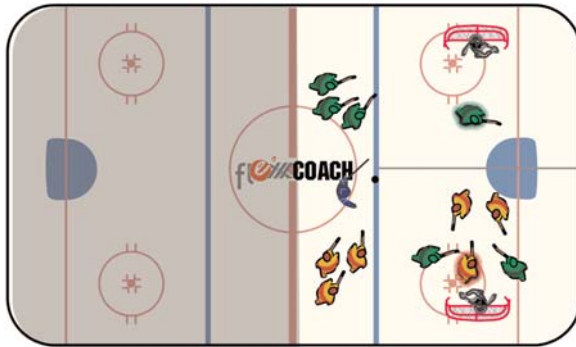
- Skating
- Balance/agility
- Puck handling
- Receiving passes
- Shooting/scoring

Goalie

- In the net working on the 1 on 0's

Drills

2 on 2 Small Game



Objective

- Create Good Scoring Chances, Quick Transition

Position both nets in the end zone along the boards, dividing the ice into half with an imaginary line or with paint on the ice. 3 players on each team. A puck is dumped in by the coach, the team that gains possession goes on the offense. One of the defending players cannot cross mid-ice, however, on the change of possession his teammates can use him for a transition break toward the other net. While the opposite team must keep on defender on the other side of mid-ice.

Key Elements

- Transition
- Create odd man rushes/scoring chances
- Creativity
- Defensive Positioning
- Competitive

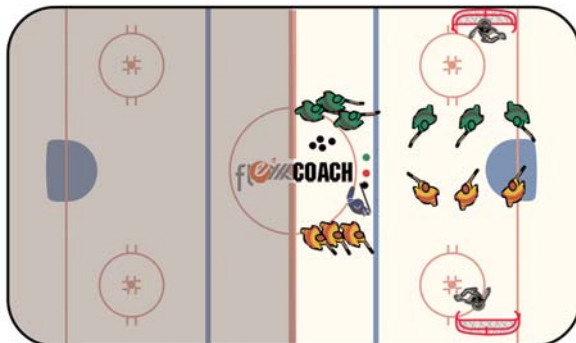
Variations

- This drill can also be a 2 on 2 to create 2 on 1's one player has to stay on his half of the ice.

Goalie

- Read the rush, low net coverage, transition the puck, rebound control in a game like situation.

3 on 3 Game - 3 Colored Pucks



Objective

- Small area games, develop hockey sense

Players divided into 2 teams. Positioned outside the blueline. Start with 3 players from each team in the zone with 2 nets positioned at the side boards. The coach standing just outside the blueline has 3 pucks all of different colors; black, green, red. If the black puck is selected by the coach, the situation is played as a regular game. If the green puck is selected, the coach then designates one net to be scored on by either team. If the red puck is selected the situation is played as a regular 3 on 3 game with a designated scorer assigned to each team. (The players have to adjust to each situation as the coach randomly selects the various colored pucks.)

Key Elements

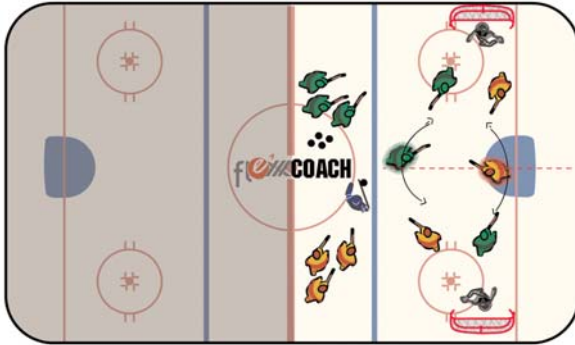
- Give and go passing
- Awareness to different situations
- Protecting the puck
- Ability to work in tight areas
- Create scoring chances

Goalie

- Develop awareness to various situations. Quickness, agility, balance. Quick reaction to a lot of shots.

Drills

3 on 3 Game Rover



Objective

- Transition the puck to Create scoring chances with odd man rushes

Players divided into 2 teams. Positioned outside the blueline. Start with 3 players from each team in the zone with 2 nets positioned at the side boards. Both teams have a defender, offender and a rover. The defender stays on the defensive half of the rink. The offender stays on the offensive half of the rink. The rover can go on both halves of the rink.

Key Elements

- Skating
- Communication
- Protecting the puck
- Create scoring chances
- Give and go tight area situations

Variations

- Can also play this game with one player being the rover going both ways but he can't shoot just has to be a passer.

Goalie

- Develop awareness to various situations. Quickness, agility, balance. Quick reaction to a lot of shots.

On Ice Presentations









On Ice Presentations









On Ice Presentations





