




ACE Program Handbook

A Publication Of The USA Hockey Coaching Education Program



The USA Hockey Coaching Education Program is Presented By  **EASTON**

USA Hockey Coaching Education Program

ACE Program Handbook

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A special thank you to all of the District ACE Directors and Coaches Section members who contributed to the creation/revision of the ACE Program Handbook.

Welcome to the ACE Program

On behalf of USA Hockey, thank you for accepting the position of Association Hockey Director-ACE for your local association. As Association Hockey Director, you are a vital communication link between your local association and USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program. USA Hockey wants to support you in your new position. We will hold an ACE Training Session in your area, where you will learn about the ACE Program and your role in it. Your District Associate Coach-in Chief-ACE will work closely with you to keep you informed of the latest coaching information, which you will be able to share with your association's coaches. We will make it possible for you to track the coaching certification requirements in your association. We will make presentation materials regarding Parent Awareness available to you in order that you may present this information to your parents and coaches. Our ACE Newsletter will be sent to you so that you will get the latest information from USA Hockey.

This manual is designed to help you in your efforts to serve as your Association's Hockey Director. Good luck, and thanks again for your service to USA Hockey and to your local association.

This is USA Hockey

USA Hockey, Inc., is the National Governing Body for the sport of hockey in the United States. Its mission is to promote the growth of hockey in America and provide the best possible experience for all participants by encouraging, developing, advancing and administering the sport.

USA Hockey is the official representative to the United States Olympic Committee and the International Ice Hockey Federation. In this role, USA Hockey is responsible for organizing and training men's and women's teams for international tournaments, including the IIHF World Championships and the Olympic Winter Games. Closer to home, USA Hockey works with the National Hockey League and the National Collegiate Athletic Association on matters of mutual interest.

USA Hockey's primary emphasis is on the support and development of grassroots hockey programs. USA Hockey is divided into 12 geographical districts throughout the United States.

Each district has a registrar to register teams; a referee-in-chief to register officials and organize clinics; a coach-in-chief to administer educational programs for coaches; a risk manager to oversee liability and safety programs; and a skill development program administrator to facilitate learn-to-play programs for youth players and their parents.

For players, USA Hockey annually conducts regional and national championship tournaments in various age classifications; sponsors regional and national player identification and development camps; studies and makes recommendations for protective equipment; distributes Hat Trick, Playmaker and Zero Club Awards; and provides an insurance program that includes excess accident, general liability and catastrophic coverage.

For coaches and officials, USA Hockey conducts clinics and produces training manuals and videos through the Coaching Education Program and the Officiating Education Program. USA Hockey also promotes uniformity in playing rules and the interpretation of those rules.

USA Hockey has not forgotten parents, supplying this vital segment of the hockey family with a “Parent’s Introduction To Youth Hockey” brochure, which includes tips on buying equipment, rules of the game and the role of parents in youth sports.

USA Hockey also publishes *USA Hockey Magazine*, the most widely circulated hockey publication in the world, which is sent to the household of every registered member as a benefit of membership. The organization’s official website, usahockey.com, also provides up-to-the-minute coverage of news and events.

In December 1994, USA Hockey introduced its official inline hockey program – USA Hockey InLine – to provide structure and support for the growth of the sport across America.

USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program

Purpose Statement

The objective of the Coaching Education Program is to improve the caliber and quality of coaching in amateur hockey. Five levels of achievement have been established to educate and train each coach, from the beginner to the highly skilled expert.

The Coaching Education Program is committed to developing coaches who will be effective instructors and role models through a comprehensive education program at all levels of play. The program emphasizes fundamental skills, conceptual development, sportsmanship and respect for your teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, parents and off-ice officials.

Thirteen District Coaches-in-Chief use coaching education personnel to conduct the first three progressive levels of instructional coaching clinics. The Coaches-in-Chief themselves organize and conduct the more advanced Level 4 clinics, while the Director of the Coaching Education Program conducts the highest Level 5 clinic. All registered Level 1-3 coaches are required to attend a clinic or recertify their status every three years, and Level 4 & 5 coaches require no additional recertification.

Coaching Education Program personnel have developed a full range of instructional materials for coaches to use on the ice, as well as in the classroom. The materials are also used by the Player Development Program and the International Ice Hockey Federation. Materials include clinic manuals, PowerPoint presentations and training videos.

Coaching Education Requirements

USA Hockey requires that the following set of coaching education levels must be the minimum criteria for districts and/or affiliates. It must be clearly understood that coaching education requirements must be monitored and enforced by all districts and affiliates. All

coaches must have their USA Hockey Coaching Education Program card by January 1 of the current season.

<u>Level Of Play</u>	<u>Coaching Education Program Level</u>
8 & Under (Mite)	Level 1
10 & Under (Squirt)	Level 2 <i>(Prerequisite Level 1)</i>
12 & Under (Pee Wee)	Level 3 <i>(Prerequisite Level 1 and 2)</i>
14 & Under (Bantam)	Level 3 <i>(Prerequisite Level 1 and 2)</i>
16 & Under (Midget)	Level 3 <i>(Prerequisite Level 1 and 2)</i>
18 & Under (Midget)	Level 3 <i>(Prerequisite Level 1 and 2)</i>
Midget I (Tier I & Tier II National Tournament-bound)	Level 4 <i>(Prerequisite Level 1, 2 and 3)</i>

<u>Level Of Play</u>	<u>Coaching Education Program Level</u>
High School	Level 3 <i>(Prerequisite Level 1 and 2)</i>

<u>Level Of Play</u>	<u>Coaching Education Program Level</u>
Junior C	Level 3 <i>(Prerequisite Level 1 and 2)</i>
Junior A & B	Level 4 <i>(Per individual league guidelines)</i>

<u>Level Of Play</u>	<u>Coaching Education Program Level</u>
Girls/Women 8 & Under	Level 1
Girls/Women 10 & Under	Level 1
Girls/Women 12 & Under	Level 2 <i>(Prerequisite Level 1)</i>
Girls/Women 14 & Under	Level 3 <i>(Prerequisite Level 1 and 2)</i>
Girls/Women 16 & Under	Level 3 <i>(Prerequisite Level 1 and 2)</i>
Girls/Women 19 & Under	Level 3 <i>(Prerequisite Level 1 and 2)</i>

Coach Registration

All ice hockey coaches as well as instructors of USA Hockey programs shall be registered for the current season (before the start of the season) in order to be eligible to coach/instruct in any regular-season activities (practices, clinics, games, tournaments, try-outs, etc.), state, district, regional playoff, national championships

or in the USA Hockey Player Development Programs. There will be an annual fee to register the coaches (heads and assistants) and instructors. Coaches may register as participants online at usahockey.com or through a local association/member program (refer to Section I Participant Registration). Junior coaches shall register with and through their teams with the Junior Registrar.

Ice hockey coaches (except for Juniors) shall be listed on the team roster as approved by the District Registrar. All registered coaches as well as instructors shall receive a USA Hockey membership card, a subscription to the *USA Hockey Magazine*, the *USA Hockey Annual Guide*, the *USA Hockey Official Playing Rules Book* and insurance coverage (See Registration, Individual Players, Coaches, Instructors). *Note: All USA Hockey Coaching Education Program Instructors and National Player Development Camp coaches will be exempt from the annual participant registration fee, but must complete the participant registration process.*

All ice hockey coaches and instructors of registered USA Hockey youth/high school, disabled, girls'/women's 19 & under and below programs must properly wear an ice hockey helmet during all on-ice sessions, including practices, controlled scrimmages and coach and referee clinics (seminars).

Registration, education and other requirements for inline coaches are as provided in the InLine Rules and Regulations.

Level of Play & Coaching Education Program Level Requirements

Education level and coaching prerequisite requirements are noted in the Coaching Education Chart. These requirements must be strictly adhered to.

Evidence of Level

All USA Hockey coaches will possess a USA Hockey Coaching Education Program card with a valid verification sticker. Coaches must have the CEP card in their possession for all USA Hockey games.

It is the responsibility of the local association to identify those coaches who do not meet the certification requirements. All coaches have until December 31 of the current season to attend a USA Hockey coaching clinic(s) to become properly certified at the level of play that they are coaching. During this time, and prior to the start of each game, coaches shall indicate their current coaching certification status on the scoresheet, regardless of their certification level.

Beginning January 1 of the current season, prior to the start of each game, all coaches present, from each team, are required to sign the designated area of the scoresheet in order to verify the accuracy of the playing roster, as it appears on the scoresheet, for that game. In addition, all coaches must include their USA Hockey Coaching Education Program (CEP) card number, their CEP level (Levels 1-5 and the year their CEP level was attained. The CEP card number, level and year attained shall be printed legibly next to the coach's signature (except for Juniors).

If a coach cannot produce his/her current USA Hockey Coaching Education Program Card prior to the start of the game, it must be noted on the official game scoresheet.

Continuing Education Requirement

All coaches below Level 4 shall progress through the Coaching Education Program, attending a coaching clinic at least once every three years through Level 3. After a coach has completed Level 3, the coach shall do one of the following within three years to maintain certification: attend another Level 3 clinic, take a USA Hockey Continuing Education Course (i.e. attend a High Performance Workshop, complete the online Level 3 Recertification program), or attend a Level 4 clinic. Once Level 4 is achieved, there is no further requirement for recertification.

If a coach's certification below Level 4 was received more than 3 years from the current season, the card is rendered invalid/expired (i.e. a sticker issued in the 2003-04 season expired on December 31, 2006.) Level 1 or 2 coaches must attend a clinic at the next level and Level 3 coaches must choose one of the certification options in order to reactivate their status.

Penalty and Enforcement

All coaches must be certified at the proper CEP level for the level of play in which he/she is coaching beginning January 1 of the current season. It is the responsibility of the District/Affiliate to have a documented policy in place regarding non-compliance. The District/Affiliate will determine what the penalty shall be to the individual coach who fails to produce a current coaching education card with appropriate verification of level. It will be the responsibility of the local association registering the team to enforce the District/Affiliate policy. Non-compliance penalties for Junior coaches will be determined by the Junior Council.

Under-Age Coaches

1. Student Coach
A player age 13 through 17 who is properly registered with USA Hockey.
2. Qualifications
 - Must attend a training session conducted by the local hockey association.
 - Must always be under the supervision of a carded, screened adult coach during all practices, clinics, tryouts and in the locker room.
 - May help out at practices, clinics, try-outs only. (May not participate as a player in scrimmages or games when acting as a STUDENT COACH).
 - May not act as a head coach or an assistant coach during practices or games.
 - May be on the bench during games with an adult. The STUDENT COACH will count as one of the maximum of four Team Officials allowed on the bench.
 - Must wear a helmet with full face shield, gloves and skates while on the ice. Must wear helmet during games while on the bench.
 - May only work with players at least one full playing age level down (e.g., a Pee Wee-age player may act as a STUDENT COACH at the Squirt or Mite level).
 - The organization that is using the STUDENT COACH must provide a form indicating on what team he/she is participating as a STUDENT COACH, and, if applicable,

what team he/she is properly registered/rostered as a player. A model form is available on the usahockey.com web site.

- Upon reaching the age of 18, the STUDENT COACH must comply with the USA Hockey Screening Program and meet the USA Hockey Coaching Education Program requirements which will qualify him/her to act as an assistant or head coach.

Coaching Ethics Code

All USA Hockey coaches and instructors must abide by the USA Hockey Coaching Ethics Code, and understand that violations may result in full or partial forfeiture of coaching privileges in programs, at sites or events under USA Hockey's governance. The Ethics Code Agreement states that the coach and/or instructor has read and will abide by USA Hockey's Coaching Ethics Code. Ice hockey coaches and instructors need only have to sign this commitment each hockey season. All coaches have an obligation to be familiar with USA Hockey's Coaching Ethics Code, or as it may be amended from time to time. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of an ethical standard is not itself a defense to a charge of unethical conduct (See USA Hockey Coaching Ethics Code Booklet). All registered USA Hockey ice hockey coaches and instructors of USA Hockey programs must sign the Coaching Ethics Code Agreement in order to be eligible to coach or instruct in any regular season activities (practices, clinics, games, tournaments, tryouts, etc.), State, District, Regional, Playoff, National Championships or in the USA Hockey Player Development Program.

Codes of Conduct

COACHES' CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Winning is a consideration, but not the only one, nor the most important one. Care more about the child than winning the game. Remember players are involved in hockey for fun and enjoyment.
2. Be a positive role model to your players, display emotional maturity and be alert to the physical safety of players.
3. Be generous with your praise when it is deserved, be consistent, be honest, be fair and just and do not criticize

players publicly. Learn to be a more effective communicator and don't yell at players.

4. Adjust to personal needs and problems of players. Be a good listener. Never verbally or physically abuse a player or official. Give all players the opportunity to improve their skills, gain confidence and develop self-esteem. Teach the basics.
5. Organize practices that are fun and challenging for your players. Familiarize yourself with the rules, techniques and strategies of hockey, encourage all your players to be team players.
6. Maintain an open line of communication with your players' parents. Explain the goals and objectives of your association.
7. Be concerned with the overall development of your players. Stress good health habits and clean living.

To win the game is great; to play the game is greater; to love the game is the greatest of all.

PARENTS' CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Do not force your children to participate in sports, but support their desires to play their chosen sport.
2. Children are involved in organized sports for their enjoyment. Make it fun.
3. Encourage your child to play by the rules. Remember children learn best by example, so applaud the good plays of both teams.
4. Do not embarrass your child by yelling at players, coaches, or officials. By showing a positive attitude toward the game and all of its participants, your child will benefit.
5. Emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit your young athlete. Deemphasize games and competition in the lower age groups.
6. Know and study the rules of the game, and support the officials on and off the ice. This approach will help in the development and support of the game. Any criticism of the officials only hurts the game.

7. Applaud a good effort in victory and in defeat, and reinforce the positive points of the game. Never yell or physically abuse your child after a game or practice, it is destructive. Work toward removing the physical and verbal abuse in youth sports.
8. Recognize the importance of volunteer coaches. They are very important to the development of your child and the sport. Communicate with them and support them.
9. If you enjoy the game, learn all you can about the game, and volunteer!

PLAYERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Play for FUN!
2. Work to improve your skills.
3. Be a team player—get along with your teammates.
4. Learn teamwork, sportsmanship and discipline.
5. Be on time for practices and games.
6. Learn the rules, and play by them. Always be a good sport.
7. Respect your coach, your teammates, your parents, opponents and officials.
8. Never argue with officials' decisions.

Sexual Abuse Policy

It is the policy of USA Hockey that there shall be no sexual abuse of any minor participant involved in any of its Sanctioned Programs, its Training Camps, Hockey Clinics, Coaches Clinics, Referee Clinics, Regional and National Tournaments or other USA Hockey events by an employee, volunteer, or independent contractor. Sexual abuse of a minor participant occurs when an employee, volunteer or independent contractor touches a minor participant for the purpose of causing the sexual arousal or gratification of either the minor participant or the employee, volunteer or independent contractor. Sexual abuse of a minor participant also occurs when a minor player touches an employee, volunteer or independent contractor for the sexual arousal or sexual gratification of either the minor participant or the employee, volunteer or independent contractor, if the touching occurs at the request or with the consent of the employee, volunteer or independent contractor. Neither consent of the player to the sexual contact, mistake as to the participant's age, nor the fact that the sexual contact did not take place at a hockey function are defenses

to a complaint of sexual abuse. Upon proof of violation of this policy, the violator will be permanently banned or suspended from USA Hockey sanctioned programs and/or the programs of its Affiliate Associations.

Screening Policy

It is the policy of USA Hockey that it will not authorize or sanction in its programs that it directly controls any volunteer or employee who has routine access to children (anyone under the age of majority) who refuses to consent to be screened by USA Hockey before he/she is allowed to have routine access to children in USA Hockey's programs. Further, it is the policy of USA Hockey that it will require its affiliates to adopt this policy as a condition of its affiliation with USA Hockey. A person may be disqualified and prohibited from serving as an employee or volunteer of USA Hockey if the person has:

1. Been convicted (including crimes, the record of which has been expunged and pleas of "no contest") of a crime of child abuse, sexual abuse of a minor, physical abuse, causing a child's death, neglect of a child, murder, manslaughter, felony assault, any assault against a minor, kidnapping, arson, criminal sexual conduct, prostitution related crimes or controlled substance crimes;
2. Being adjudged liable for civil penalties or damages involving sexual or physical abuse of children;
3. Being subject to any court order involving any sexual abuse or physical abuse of a minor, including but not limited to domestic order or protection;
4. Had their parental rights terminated;
5. A history with another organization (volunteer, employment, etc.) of complaints of sexual or physical abuse of minors;
6. Resigned, been terminated or been asked to resign from a position, whether paid or unpaid, due to complaint(s) of sexual or physical abuse of minors; or
7. Has a history of other behavior that indicates they may be a danger to children in USA Hockey.

Physical Abuse Policy

It is the policy of USA Hockey that there shall be no physical abuse of any participant involved in any of its Sanctioned Programs, its Training Camps, Hockey Clinics, Coaches Clinics, Referee Clinics, Regional and National Tournaments or other USA Hockey events by any employee, volunteer or independent contractor. Physical abuse means physical contact with a participant that intentionally causes the participant to sustain bodily harm or personal injury. Physical abuse also includes physical contact with a participant that intentionally creates a threat of immediate bodily harm or personal injury. Physical abuse does not include physical contact that is reasonably designed to coach, teach or demonstrate a hockey skill. Permitted physical conduct may include, but is not necessarily limited to, shooting pucks at a goaltender, demonstrating checking and other hockey skills, and communicating with or directing participants, during the course of a game or practice, by touching them in a non-threatening, non-sexual manner.

Core Values

The following core values of USA Hockey are adopted to guide the Association's members in its planning, programming and play, both now and in the future.

SPORTSMANSHIP: Foremost of all values is to learn a sense of fair play. Be humble in victory, gracious in defeat. We will foster friendship with teammates and opponents alike.

RESPECT FOR THE INDIVIDUAL: Treat all others as you expect to be treated.

INTEGRITY: We work to foster honesty and fair play beyond mere strict interpretation of the rules and regulations of the game.

PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE AT THE INDIVIDUAL, TEAM, AND

ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS: Each member of the organization, whether player, volunteer or staff, should seek to perform each aspect of the game to the highest level of his or her ability.

ENJOYMENT: It is important for the hockey experience to be fun, satisfying and rewarding for the participant.

LOYALTY: We aspire to teach loyalty to the ideals and fellow members of the sport of hockey.

TEAMWORK: We value the strength of learning to work together. The use of teamwork is reinforced and rewarded by success in the hockey experience.

Chapter 1

**ACE Program
Personnel**



ACE Program Personnel

Director, Coaching Education Program: The Director, Coaching Education Program is a staff member of USA Hockey and works out of the national office. This person oversees all aspects of the Coaching Education Program, including the ACE Program.

National Coach-in-Chief: The USA Hockey National Coach-in-Chief is a position appointed by the Executive Director of USA Hockey and is subject to the approval of the Board of Directors. This person shall, in cooperation with the Executive Director, supervise the activities of the Coaching Education Program and the district coaches-in-chief and assist in the development and preparation of material for the USA Hockey Coaching Education Program.

National ACE Director (*aka National Associate Coach-in-Chief—ACE*): The Coaches Section will appoint a National ACE Director responsible for the ACE Program. This appointment is subject to the approval of the Executive Director of USA Hockey. This position is under the supervision of the USA Hockey Director of the Coaching Education Program and the National Coach-in-Chief. The National Associate Coach-in-Chief—ACE will assist in the development and presentation of materials for the USA Hockey ACE Program.

District ACE Director (*aka District Associate Coach-in-Chief—ACE*): There will be one District ACE Director responsible for the ACE Program for each registration district. In many cases, this individual may also be a District Associate Coach-in-Chief. The District ACE Director will be appointed by the District Coach-in-Chief, subject to the approval of the USA Hockey Director of the Coaching Program and the National Coach-in-Chief. This individual will be responsible for the supervision/training and administration of the District ACE Program.

Affiliate ACE Coordinator: In multi-affiliate districts, the District ACE Director, in cooperation with the Affiliate CEP Director and the Affiliate President, may choose to appoint an Affiliate ACE Coordinator. The Affiliate ACE Coordinator will be responsible for supervision, training and administration of the Association ACE personnel and programs.

Association Hockey Director—ACE: Each Association (sub-affiliate) will have a Hockey Director who is responsible for the distribution of USA Hockey material and information. This is perhaps the most important link in the USA Hockey Coaching Program chain. This individual will be appointed by the local association and will work closely with District/Affiliate ACE personnel.

The District ACE Director and the Affiliate ACE Coordinator

The Association Hockey Director is responsible for the implementation of the USA Hockey Coaching Education Programs through a network of Association Hockey Directors—ACE. The objective is successful implementation of parent and coaching education and player skill development at the local hockey association level.

ESSENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide leadership, organization and training to the Association Hockey Director/ACE Coordinator to implement ACE programs.
 - a. Train and assist local Association Hockey Director/ACE Coordinators with implementation of ACE programs.
 - b. Work with local Association Hockey Director/ACE Coordinators to establish the following ACE initiatives at the local hockey association:
 - i. Educational training for parents and coaches
 - ii. Player skill development through USAH skill development and cross-ice programs and local skill development sessions
 - iii. CEP training and certification requirements
 - iv. Increasing practice-to-game ratios
 - v. Local association skill development training sessions for coaches
 - vi. Coach mentoring
 - vii. Coaching resource library
2. Participate in the on-going development of the hockey education programs.
 - a. Member of the affiliate development committees
 - b. Collect feedback from local Association Hockey Directors/ACE Coordinators

- c. Assist with improvements to existing programs and the development of new programs
3. Assist USA Hockey District Coach-in-Chief with communication and promotion of tools and resources to assist coaches in teaching fundamental skills.
 - a. Assist with distribution of various training materials
 - b. Communicate and promote development/training opportunities for coaches

QUALIFICATIONS

- Coaching experience and level 3 or 4 CEP certification
- Hockey Director or Association ACE Coordinator experience
- Local Hockey Association Board experience
- Communication skills
- Organizational, planning and execution skills

Chapter 2

**Association
Hockey Director**



Association Hockey Director

The Association Hockey Director—ACE is an experienced individual with a strong coaching background who serves as the administrative link to USA Hockey and its Coaching Education Program (CEP). In their role, Association Hockey Directors organize and manage CEP requirements, assist the local association in the development of a well-trained coaching staff, promote parent education and provide clear goals and objectives for player skill development.

WHO ARE THE ASSOCIATION HOCKEY DIRECTORS?

The Association Hockey Director is an individual within a local association who has a strong coaching background, hockey knowledge and commitment to the sport. This person must be able to communicate a long-term vision of these goals and objectives and be able “to sell” them to the association. As part of the communication skills needed, the Association Hockey Director must be comfortable educating coaches, players, parents and association board members. Effective administrative skills are essential to ensure that the association coaches meet the CEP certification requirements. This person must have a strong inclination toward skill development of players in the association and exhibit a “love of the game.”

WHAT ARE THE JOB RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ASSOCIATION HOCKEY DIRECTOR?

- Plan, organize and execute periodic skills workshops for coaches, players and parents.
- Evaluate practice sessions and provide feedback to coaches to improve the coaching capability of local association coaches.
- Establish and maintain a resource center for coaches, players and parents that includes USA Hockey materials.
- Communicate certification requirements to local association coaches and ensure compliance with USA Hockey and affiliate certification levels.

- Communicate with the District ACE Director, their Affiliate ACE Coordinator, and USA Hockey on all issues related to coaching at the local association level.
- Encourage local association to implement the USA Hockey skill development and cross-ice programs. Ensure that the local association is promoting age-specific skill development in all of their programs.
- Communicate USA Hockey's player development opportunities to players, parents and coaches.
- Deliver parent education programs to the local association.

WHY IS THE ASSOCIATION HOCKEY DIRECTOR CRITICAL TO THE USA HOCKEY COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM?

USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program has effectively created an instructional curriculum to provide coaches throughout the country with the training needed to meet the certification requirements for a USA Hockey program. The CEP program does not, however, provide a direct link to the individual coach at the local association level. The Association Hockey Director is designated to provide that critical link for those administrative and coaching functions that will deliver the programs, and implement the objectives, taught in the CEP coaching clinics.

The Association Hockey Director solidifies USA Hockey's commitment to skill development as a primary goal of coaching. The position additionally helps formalize the responsibilities and organizational structure of the coaching program within the local association. The ACE program assists the association in creating and reaffirming roles, responsibilities and performance criteria for their coaches. Finally, the Association Hockey Director provides the essential communication link to the coaches at the local level. This consistent communication about the goals and objectives of USA Hockey will develop better coaches, provide better continuity of coaching skills and ultimately develop better hockey players.

Chapter 3

**Working
With The Local
Association**



Working With The Local Association

One of the Association Hockey Director's most important jobs is to assist the local association in developing a well-trained coaching staff. One way to accomplish this is to present periodic coaching workshops within the local association. There are many ways to accomplish this. In general, the workshops should be tailored to meet the specific needs of your association. Try to take advantage of local "hockey resources" (such as college or pro coaches) as presenters. Some generic guidelines are listed below.

Workshop Facilitator:	Association Hockey Director
Group Leaders:	Association Hockey Director and Associate Head Official
Participants:	Association coaches and local officials
Length of Workshop:	1.5 hours
Workshops Per Year:	2
Scheduling of Workshops:	1st Workshop – before start of the season 2nd Workshop – mid-season or before tournament play

FIRST WORKSHOP AGENDA

- Rule changes
- Points of emphasis
- View video on rule changes
- View Heads Up Hockey video
- Cover first aid procedure for games
- Discuss bench decorum for coaches and officials' game ethics
- Cover proper communication techniques

SECOND WORKSHOP AGENDA

- Discuss how the season is going and issues/concerns from both officials and coaches
- Discuss any safety problems
- Discuss communication issues
- Special issues surrounding tournaments, playoffs, and the system to be used in educating coaches, players, parents, officials and administrators
- Issues surrounding the play of the games
- Issues surrounding parents
- Recommendations for rule changes, new rules or videos

OTHER POSSIBLE WORKSHOP TOPICS

- USA Hockey and Affiliate Guide books
- Introduce and sign coaches code of ethics
- Core requirements
- Rules for travel permits
- Rostering, player movement procedures and deadlines
- Penalty for abuse of officials
- Pyramid of development, discussion of other sports
- Association philosophy; playing time, practice curriculum, 1/2 or shared ice, attendance, tardiness, & discipline matters
- Set ground rules and expectations, duties, responsibilities of head & assistant coaches and team manager.

Heads Up Hockey

The Heads Up Hockey Program has been developed by USA Hockey's Safety and Protective Equipment Committee in conjunction with the National Hockey League. The purpose of the program is promote a safer, smarter, better way of playing hockey emphasizing principles of safety, protection and prevention, sportsmanship, teamwork and fun at every level of the game. Your coaches should be aware of this program and should incorporate it into their practices.

INCORPORATING HEADS UP HOCKEY INTO YOUR ASSOCIATION

The following is a recommended way to incorporate Heads Up Hockey material into your association.

1. Show the Heads Up Hockey Challenge Video at the beginning of each season during the:
 - Association Coaches Meetings
 - Parent and Player Orientation Meeting
 - Association Team Meetings
2. At the beginning of each season, plan on incorporating Heads Up Hockey into practice sessions. Also, recognize and take advantage of teachable moments.
3. At each of these Heads Up Hockey sessions include:
 - 5 minute (maximum) pre-session talk with Q & A
 - 10 minute on-ice drill
4. A total of five Heads Up Hockey sessions are suggested.

Evaluating Coaches & Providing Feedback

The Association Hockey Director position evaluates local association coaches. The Association Hockey Director should review coaching applications and ensure that the coaching philosophy is consistent with USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program philosophy and values. The skills progression for player and coach development is separated into multiple components and should be used as a foundational guide for the Association Hockey Director's evaluation of coaches. The evaluation components include teaching ice hockey in an age-specific progressive manner which include, but are not limited to the following:

- Knowledge of the Game
- Goal Setting
- Individual Hockey Skills
- Team Play
- Nutrition
- Fitness & Training
- Injury Prevention
- Sports Psychology
- Character Development and Life Skills

Other areas for coach evaluation and feedback are:

- Utilization of ice
- Specific drills for goaltenders, defense, forwards
- Evaluation of practice plans
- Setting up and evaluation of off-ice conditioning
- Providing mentoring opportunities in the development of coaches
- Bench management
- Parent education
- Development of players to prepare them for the next level
- Effective education techniques for education of players
- Ethics and Code of Conduct
- Safety
- Players enjoyment of the game

Establishing and Maintaining a Resource Center for Coaches

There are many resources available today for coaches to further their education and to become better hockey coaches. USA Hockey encourages all Association Hockey Directors to establish and maintain a library of these resources for their coaches to use. Some of the available resources are listed below.

HEADS UP HOCKEY

To purchase Heads Up Hockey program materials contact USA Hockey to order the package of materials. This kit includes:

- Challenge Video
- Coaching Guide
- Informational Brochure
- Quick Reference Card
- Poster

ACE DIRECTOR PACKAGE

For more information and/or to purchase the Association Hockey Director's package (including videos and publications) contact USA Hockey at (719) 576-8724 or visit us online at usahockey.com.

USA Hockey Publications and Videos

To order official training videos and publications from USA Hockey as well as game scoresheets please call (888) 806-7337 or visit usahockeywear.com.

PRINTED MATERIALS

Hockey Drill Book: A comprehensive selection of 200 drills that cover all the fundamentals. Includes diagrams and descriptions for each drill.

Coaches Planning Book: New practice planning book.

Level 1 Skill Development Manuals: Set of six manuals including an instructor's guide book, program overview and four handbooks of step-by-step practice plans.

Level 2 Manual: Handbook that covers methods of effective coaching, individual skill techniques and organizing for the season.

Level 3 Manuals: Book that features chapters on offensive and defensive play, as well as goaltending and sport psychology.

The Hockey Coaches Manual: Complete with step-by-step diagrams, this book helps coaches set up a season-long program and walks them through a host of dryland and on-ice training regimens that will help build team cooperation and enhance individual ability.

The Hockey Play Book: This guide features systems for defensive, offensive and special-teams situations as well as teaching methods and drills, accompanied by more than 500 diagrams.

Hockey Drills For Puck Control: Improve your puck control skills with these 70 ice-tested drills.

Introduction to Body Contact: Teaching proper techniques to safe body contact.

Advanced Body Contact: Builds on the foundation provided in *Introduction to Body Contact*.

Coaching Youth Hockey: A great resource for youth hockey coaches and parents working with 6- to 14-year-old athletes. Contains more than 40 practice drills and 140 illustrations. The information covers both ice and inline hockey.

Coaching For Character: A valuable tool to help coaches understand the basic principles of sportsmanship. The responsibilities of coaches as models and educators are brought to life through real-life situations that confront them on and off the ice.

Skill Progression For Player and Coach Development: Age-appropriate skill progression drills for players. Established coaching education curriculum levels.

Half-Ice Drill Book: A variety of half-ice drills suitable for a wide age range.

Heads Up Hockey Posters: Reinforces the Heads Up Hockey program and promotes safe hockey (2 posters).

USA Hockey Small Area Competitive Games Handbook and CD: This book includes a flexxCOACH CD and is designed to help coaches create drills that emulate game situations.

Total Hockey Conditioning: For players and coaches from youth hockey right up to the professional level.

MULTIMEDIA

USA Hockey Skills and Drills DVD: One of USA Hockey's most ambitious projects ever, this DVD-Rom is an encyclopedia of hockey skills, that will help organize practices and teach the sport correctly to players at all age and skill levels.

USA Hockey Small Area Competitive Games Handbook and CD: This book includes a flexxCOACH CD and is designed to help coaches create drills that emulate game situations.

USA Hockey Practice Plan CDs: These materials assist in developing coaches on a progressive hockey curriculum based on fundamental skill development. Set of 4 (Mite, Squirt, Peewee, Bantam/Midget)

Hockey Parents: It's up to all of us to make hockey a fun and enjoyable experience for everyone.

Challenge Videotape: Provides useful information to help you and your team play safer, smarter, better hockey.

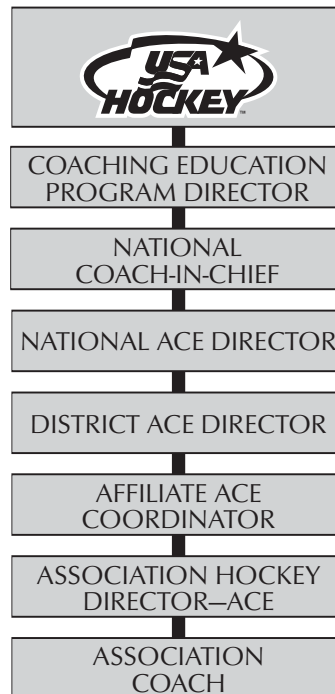
Chapter 4

Lines of Communication



Lines of Communication

One important reason that USA Hockey created the ACE Program was to establish a direct line of communication between USA Hockey and the local association coaches. Here's how it works. Let's say that a coach has a question about his certification status. He can contact his Association Hockey Director. If his Association Hockey Director cannot answer the question, the Association Hockey Director will contact the Affiliate ACE Coordinator. If the Affiliate ACE Coordinator cannot help, he/she will contact the District ACE Director, who in turn can contact the National ACE Director. At some point along the chain, the local coach's question will be answered, and/or the problem solved.



This lines of communication work both ways. The ACE Program gives USA Hockey a way to reach local association coaches directly with important information. USA Hockey will periodically send information through the ACE Program regarding coaching certification, clinics or just interesting information regarding coaching hockey. You will also receive the USA Hockey ACE newsletter.

Youth hockey coaches are the foundation of USA Hockey. The lines of communication established through the creation of the ACE Program are an important part of the success of USA Hockey at the local level.

Chapter 5

**Program
Implementation**



Program Implementation

One of the responsibilities of the Association Hockey Director is to promote skill development and the cross-ice programs. This topic should be discussed at local ACE clinics and be promoted throughout your association.

Skill Development Program

BUILDING A FOUNDATION

The USA Hockey Skill Development Program is designed to meet the needs of the beginning player. Players as young as three years old, to players in their teens can benefit from the program's emphasis on fun and skills. Basic skills will be taught in a non-competitive environment. Fun, physical development, skill acquisitions and teamwork will be stressed. The program enables participants to become contributing members of a team effort; to develop self-confidence; and to experience the sense of personal achievement.

THE GAME IS FUN

While ice hockey requires a great deal of skill, the proper instruction and attitude make the game fun and rewarding. Coaches should place a primary emphasis on skill development and a de-emphasis on excessive competition and a "win-at-all-costs" attitude at the beginning levels.

The Skill Development Program incorporates the most current and innovative ideas available today. It represents the best methods of starting beginning players on the right path to an enjoyable experience in our sport.

The Skill Development Program lesson plans have been tested and have proven successful in every type of community setting. The established program objectives are:

- To have fun while playing hockey and engaging in physical activity
- To learn the basic skills required to play the game of hockey
- To develop an understanding of basic teamwork through participation in a variety of activities and adapted game situations
- To create and refine basic motor patterns
- To be introduced to the concepts of cooperation and fair play

BASIC HOCKEY SKILLS AND MUCH MORE

USA Hockey’s Skill Development Program has four levels of instruction (Books A, B, C and D) designed for beginning hockey players. Each classification represents a different level of skill progression.

At the beginning of the program, players are evaluated according to ability and placed in the appropriate program level.

Each level consists of 20 lesson plans that follow a defined path of progression. As players move through the program, they improve both hockey skills and self-confidence.

The program focuses primarily on the basic hockey skills – skating, stick-handling, passing and shooting. Each skill is introduced and refined in a progressive “one-step-at-a-time” manner.

Players participate in practice drills as well as informal and modified games. Players are soon proficient enough to master new skills, which keep the game fun to play.

Although the main emphasis is on fun and progressive skill development, the Skill Development Program also allows youngsters to experience:

- Cooperation
- Fitness
- Fair play
- Safety

INSTRUCTORS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE

Leadership is the key to the Skill Development Program. In addition to developing players’ hockey skills and promoting physical fitness,

instructors are responsible for encouraging initiative, stimulating interest in the sport and instilling a desire for continued participation. Each instructor is called upon to:

- Be an effective leader and teacher
- Be a model of cooperation and fair play
- Provide a positive, non-competitive atmosphere
- Provide instruction in a way that motivates and challenges
- Develop players' self-respect and self-discipline

USA HOCKEY MAKES YOUR SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM EASY

The overall success of the program relies on the leadership and teaching abilities of the instructors. We've developed an eight-hour instructional clinic designed to ensure that instructors are fully prepared to present a successful program.

USA Hockey has piloted this program throughout the country and the results have been tremendous. The instructional package consists of six manuals:

- One manual provides the organizational and administrative details of the program.
- One manual explores the special teaching considerations for the specific skill level of the group.
- Four manuals provide the instructor with the step-by-step lesson plans. There is one manual for each of the four program levels.

The future of our sport lies within our youth. USA Hockey understands the important role it plays in helping beginning hockey players to develop responsible playing attitudes. A well-run Skill Development Program will foster enjoyment of hockey by our young players and ensure the growth of our sport and your association.

Cross-Ice Program

The USA Hockey Cross-Ice program is based on a model of practicing and playing hockey across the ice surface as compared to practicing and playing lengthwise along the full length of the ice surface. This cross-ice practicing and playing model has been used in many of the leading hockey nations in the world for a number of years and has stood the test of time. It has been shown that

children who begin their hockey training in this environment have an outstanding hockey experience.

Parents may ask, “Why should my child play cross-ice?” I want my child playing full ice like the professionals do, because I want my child to experience “real hockey.”

To help address these questions, let’s think about how long it will take a child trying to skate with a puck while performing a drill from one end of the rink to the other. How much energy will this require? Will the player’s decision-making skills be enhanced more in the close action of the smaller cross-ice surface or in the wide-open area of the full-ice surface? In which situation will the child be more involved in the action?

A recent USA Hockey study shows that in an average 60-minute running time hockey game between 6-8 year old children, the average player had possession of the puck for 20.7 seconds. USA Hockey also completed a very comprehensive study at the 2002 Olympic Games in Salt Lake City involving the top National Hockey League and international professional players and no player exceeded 85 seconds of puck possession time in any one game. In a 60-minute youth game, the actual playing time of the game was 20 minutes and 38 seconds. Taking this into consideration, the individual player is only on the ice every third or fourth shift depending on how many players are on the team, resulting in even less ice time. Youth players average less than 0.5 shots per game, while junior and professional players average only 1-5 shots per game.

The study concluded that:

- For young players in the “full-ice game model” of development, the youngest players would require 180 games and the older youth players would require 80 games to enjoy 60 minutes of actual puck possession time to execute their stick-handling, passing, pass receiving and shooting skills.
- Professional and international players would require 60 games to ensure 60 minutes of puck control skill development.

Many players never touched the puck in the game, especially in youth hockey.

USA Hockey firmly believes that by giving children the opportunity to participate in the cross-ice hockey program, which supports cross-ice practicing and playing, that their enjoyment of hockey as well as their hockey skills will be greatly enhanced.

To help you further understand the benefits of the cross-ice practicing and playing model, some of the advantages are listed below.

PRACTICING

- The children have more energy with which they can improve their skills when they are skating 85 feet across the ice surface as opposed to the 200 foot length of the ice surface.
- Group sizes become smaller, which means learning and teaching will become more effective.
- The close feeling of belonging to a team will motivate a child to participate with even greater enthusiasm.
- Drills designed according to the varying skill level of players within the group are easier to organize.
- More puck contact, resulting in improved puck control skills.
- More repetition/frequency in drills in one ice session.
- Decision-making skills are enhanced, as more decisions must be made more frequently at a higher tempo.

ACTUAL GAME

- Playing on a smaller rink results in increased puck possession time for each player.
- Individual technical skills develop more quickly.
- More frequent line changes in the game means more ice time for each player.
- Line changes are made quickly since the players are directly beside the playing surface.
- Each player's activity increases greatly.
- Scoring skills are enhanced since the players have more shooting opportunities.
- The goalkeeper's reading of the game and reaction to changing game situations becomes more effective.
- More repetition for goalkeepers.
- The game is full of continuously changing situations.

- The speed in playing situations increases, which will require quicker mental and physical reactions by the players.
- Due to increased tempo, all of the team members take part in solving the playing situations, which leads to a sharing of responsibilities between players.
- The feeling of being an important part of the action increases because of the small size of the rink.
- Hockey sense, or understanding the principles of the game, is being developed at a young age.
- There are no unnecessary breaks in the game (i.e. off-sides, icing).

GENERAL ORGANIZATION

- More efficient use of ice time and space.
- The size of the rink is in proportion with the size of the players.
- USA Hockey recommends that teams play with two or three units of four or five players and one goalkeeper, which results in each player having more ice time.
- More ice time for practicing and playing is made available to more teams within a single association.
- Many teams can practice together by sharing the ice surface.

GENERAL SPIRIT OF PARTICIPATION AND FUN

- More children get a chance to play ice hockey.
- More children will experience a feeling of success when playing hockey.
- The same exciting and fun environment as in a “real” game is created.
- More and less gifted children will benefit from close/tight action on the ice.
- Children are excited and motivated to continue playing hockey.
- Hockey will be more appealing and rewarding to a wider range of children and their parents.

Player Development Program

The Association Hockey Director is involved in player development on several levels. Their first priority is to promote skill development

within their own association. They are also involved in choosing, educating, and coordinating coaches, which has a dramatic impact on all players. The Association Hockey Director also acts as their association's liaison with the USA Hockey Player Development Program. They are charged with the task of working with their associations' coaches to identify players capable of playing on the international stage. The following is a brief description of the Player Development Program and Select Camps.

USA HOCKEY PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CAMPS

Each summer USA Hockey conducts Select Player Development Camps for young athletes from throughout the country. The athletes are chosen from tryouts conducted within USA Hockey Districts, with some slots reserved for at-large selections. The goal is to attract the best players, in their specific age group, to our national program.

The purpose of the Camps is to identify, train, educate and evaluate our best athletes. Individuals are selected by Districts to compete in the week-long event. During this week, players are evaluated by our national scouting program, college and junior recruiters and professional scouts. The competition gives each player the opportunity to measure themselves against others their age, gain knowledge about their development and to be exposed to outstanding coaching. At times, teams will be chosen from certain Camps for international competition.

The program is not a tryout for our National Team Development Program in Ann Arbor. By the same token, our national staff does take part by testing our athletes physically and mentally, conducting lectures and evaluating their ability.

The format of each program creates a very competitive atmosphere. This is to provide a setting with which athletes will compete at their highest level. It is not a tournament, but rather a grueling week of training and competition meant to showcase our players. It is essential that all participants, particularly staff, understand that while they have been recommended by their district, they are part of the USA Hockey National Player Development Program while at the camps. Rules that have been put in place must be followed and all must work together for a successful program.

Parent Awareness Program

BUILDING STRONG HOCKEY COMMUNITIES

The youth hockey team has three essential groups of personnel – it begins with the athletes, is educated and led by coaches, and is supported by parents. USA Hockey and its districts/affiliates do an excellent job at educating coaches, who in turn mentor and teach athletes. Currently, parent education is occasional at best and more often than not, parents are left out of the educational loop.

Mothers and fathers are left to navigating the complex world of youth sports often without expert and ethical guidance.

Consequently, parents are left to be labeled “problems,” rather than being coached to play their important role of foundations for excellent athletic accomplishments. Without family education and positive parental participation, hockey communities are unable to fulfill their optimal potential (i.e. participation, perseverance, fun and player development).

Association Hockey Directors around the country are in the unique position to provide credible information and education to hockey parents in their communities and local associations. While this might seem like an overwhelming task, the ACE program has designed a comprehensive and user-friendly approach to hockey parent education. Association Hockey Directors have two key responsibilities during this process:

1. Directly educate parents through community discussions and information dissemination, and,
2. Educate and empower coaches to conduct effective parent meetings.

ASSOCIATION HOCKEY DIRECTOR AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

With strong leadership from the District Associate Coach-In-Chief and a little effort from local hockey programs, parents of 8 and under (mites) to 18 and under (midgets) can be empowered to make good decisions at the rink. Optimal parent education takes a triadic approach to building positive parent behaviors:

1. Education
2. Behavioral Contracting
3. Awareness/Message Reinforcement

EDUCATION

Often parents display more anxiety than their kids throughout the youth sports experience. Much of this stems from the intense emotions they feel toward their child and their child's well-being. There are certainly great desires to be able to provide the "right" opportunities for their child, yet knowing what is "right" can be a great challenge. Without guidance, adults often treat youth sports as an adult enterprise, failing to make modifications because children are involved rather than adults. Therefore they behave as if they were at NHL games rather than youth sporting events. At a NHL game, big hits and fights are often seen as entertainment, playing through significant injuries are signs of courage, heckling the officials is a favorite American pastime, and success is measured by the box score (i.e. goals, +/-, assists, and saves = success). Not only are all of these perspectives unhealthy in a youth sports setting, but they also inhibit athletes' abilities to develop optimally as hockey players and as citizens.

The USA Hockey Parent Education presentation addresses these sentiments. It is important during the education of parents to remind them of why kids participate, enjoy and thrive in youth sports: to have fun, to learn new skills, and to hang out with friends. It is equally important to share with adults "how" to create optimal youth sports environments. In essence, what are the actions of optimal hockey parenting? The actions can be separated into three phases:

1. Preparing to play – i.e. encourage support of teammates, coaches and officials, check equipment with your child before leaving the house, and say, "Have fun!"
2. Game/practice-time behaviors – support all participants in the game, reinforce effort and attitude in our language (i.e. say, "good work," "way to communicate," "nice pass.") and have only positive things to say at the rink.
3. Conversation for the ride home – discuss the process of hockey rather than the outcome and focus on enjoyment and positive memories.

Lastly, the USA Hockey Coaching Education Program discusses the coach-parent relationship and adult roles at youth hockey games. Ultimately, parent education should create a common philosophy and language that can be shared by parents, coaches, and administrators throughout the season.

BEHAVIORAL CONTRACTING

The second step in the commitment by a local community to develop optimal youth hockey environments is sharing USA Hockey's Code of Conduct. This is done by asking all adults to read and sign a code of conduct. The code not only reinforces the USA Hockey parent education message, but also, much like a post-game handshake, it is an important symbol of commitment to the lessons learned in sports that extend beyond the playing field. The USA Hockey Parent Code of Conduct builds off of the basic principles of positive youth sport environments.

AWARENESS/MESSAGE REINFORCEMENT

Even the best educational messages fail to thrive if they are not reinforced regularly. This concept is highlighted by NHL players practicing skills as simple as passing and skating throughout the season. While these are skills that were mastered a long time ago, if they are not practiced, their quality will diminish as time goes by. The messages of the parental education presentations and behavioral contracts can be reinforced daily by items such as the "Relax It's Just a Game" posters and public service announcements and the "Zero Tolerance" posters. By having these messages in every rink and available on hockey program websites, parents are regularly reminded of the concepts that make hockey a great learning environment for youth. Parents spend a great deal of time sitting in rinks drinking hot coffee and waiting for the action to begin. If facilities are outfitted with posters and informational brochures, (such as USA Hockey's Parent's Introduction to Youth Hockey) parents will pass the time reading them and being reminded of the educational message. Increasing awareness is at the heart of long-term behavioral change.

Association Hockey Directors are in the unique position to be able to begin the parental education process in associations around the country. Association Hockey Directors should familiarize themselves with all of the materials previously mentioned. They have been designed to be both educationally sound and simple to use.

For a copy of the USA Hockey/ACE Parent Education presentation and supporting materials, contact USA Hockey.

THE PARENT MEETING: Empowering Coaches

Most parents will be actively involved in their child's youth sports activities. Pre-season parent meetings are essential for coaches to choose how parents are involved in their children's hockey throughout the season. Taking an opportunity to formally address parents improves communication between coach and parents, heightening a coach's ability to be successful during the season and, ultimately, leaving greater potential for an enjoyable coaching experience.

While this importance of good communication between parents and athletes is obvious, it is important to appreciate that holding a parent meeting can be a daunting task. It is fair to assume that a volunteer, non-professional coach might have some anxiety when standing before his/her peers to tell them their coaching philosophies, how parents ought to act in and around the rink, and to ask for them to trust them with their kids. Although these are very real concerns, they must be overcome in order to create an optimal youth sports environment. Prior to holding a parent meeting, a coach should take some time to organize a clear agenda and be prepared to speak with confidence.

A parent meeting is designed to provide the coach a forum to review the key topics for the season, both on and off the ice. It is the opportunity for the coach to discuss candidly with the parents their role and responsibilities as part of the team. Parents need to be reminded or educated on the balance of sports and home life, the responsibilities and acceptance of discipline, the manner in which they can effectively interface with the coach in the course of their role as the coach and the responsibilities of the players to the team and their teammates.

The parent meeting provides a coach the opportunity to discuss the philosophies and objectives and what the expectations and outcomes should be for the player and the team for the year. Additionally, it is the opportunity to let the parent know how to measure progress and success and what accountabilities the coach has in that definition of success. Finally, it gives the coach the time to let the parents know that they will be a good steward and role model in their child's development, enjoyment and safety. Hockey is a game, that when managed correctly, can be a tremendous life experience development tool for the player. The coach wants both him or herself and the parents with the same agenda concerning

the welfare of the player. The only way to do that is to communicate and the only way to communicate is to meet. Effective communication at the beginning of the season is excellent prevention for minimizing inappropriate parental behaviors at practices and games.

A parent meeting should be well-planned and user-friendly enough to accommodate both novice coaches and coaches with many years of experience. The tendency in planning a meeting will be to attempt to cover too much information. The question to consider is not, "How much would I like to share with the parents?" but rather, "How much would I like them to learn?" The following are some elements that should be included in a pre-season parent meeting.

Explain the Objectives of Youth Hockey

- Fun
- Skill Development
- Socialization
- Safety
- Participation/a life-long passion for hockey

Information About Your Program

- Playing time
- Attendance expectations
- Rules and regulations
- Code of conduct
- Cuts
- 24-hour rule for discussing concerns (never at the rink)

Introduce Your Style of Coaching

- Positive approach
- What can parents expect – vocal, quiet, always encouraging
- Encourage parental reinforcement and support

Recruit Positive Parental Involvement

- Define roles
- Introduce the code of conduct
- Highlight game-time responsibilities
 - ◆ Support players
 - ◆ Model behaviors

These are essential elements that ought to be considered and prepared for well in advance of hosting a parent’s meeting. If all of these issues are addressed in a clear, concise and confident manner, a strong foundation for successful communication will be established. The following is a sample agenda that can be adopted, and modified if necessary, for coaches in preparing for a preseason meeting.

PARENT MEETING – SAMPLE AGENDA

1. Introductions
2. Basics of Hockey
3. Injury Prevention/Management
4. Equipment Needs
5. Program Goals
6. Child’s Responsibilities
7. Parent’s Responsibilities
8. Schedule for Season
9. Team Policies and Rules
10. Closing Remarks

USA Hockey is a leader in youth sport coach education. Through ACE initiatives, USA Hockey also has the potential to serve as a leader of youth sport parent education. Coaches, parents and athletes are the most critical to a youth hockey team. ACE’s parent education enhances communication, education and awareness, ultimately empowering coaches to teach effectively, and even more important, allowing athletes the opportunity to reach their potential.



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