



NRS Coaching Manual Rink Hockey

An important note from National Roller Sports (NRS)

The purpose of this handbook is to provide coaches with important information and guidance to help them achieve the NRS's foundational goals of skill development, teamwork and good sportsmanship.

The NRS strives to improve each player's skill level, and enhance their enjoyment of the game, while helping them to develop both mentally and physically.

Important! This Handbook is not a replacement for the rules.

- This handbook is not a replacement for the NRSA Rulebook. The current rink hockey rules will govern all games played by the NRSA unless they are superseded by a change made specifically by the organization.
- The addition, deletion, and modification of the NRSA house rules are continuous work in progress by the league's Board of Directors.
- It's expected that all participants will become familiar with the changes outlined in the NRSA Rulebook. No allowances will be made for the ignorance of the rules.
- League Managers and Directors assume no responsibility for any claims arising through the operation of the League and its functions.
- The Coach's Handbook will assist coaches in their duty of being role models and mentors, and to help coach the participants to the best of their ability.

INTRODUCTION:

This National Roller Sports (NRSA) Coaching Ethics Code ("Code") intends to provide standards of ethical conduct for coaches involved with NRS and its member organizations. It provides General Principles and Ethical Standards which cover many situations encountered by coaches, with its principal goals being the welfare and protection of participants with whom coaches' work.

In addition to the Code, the SafeSport program provides resources for the safety of all involved in the game. For more information, go to

<https://nationalrollersportsassociation.org> .

Coaches will respect and protect human and civil rights and not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.

Coach Eligibility Requirements: Note that all coaches need to have completed these items before becoming a certified National Roller Sports coach:

- Become an NRS member.
- Review the NRS Coaches Manual
- Obtain certification of completion for NRS Coaches Exam
- Obtain and maintain updated certification of SafeSport.
- Complete background check

Two Key Contacts for Coaches:

Your role as a head coach is to be responsible for the conduct of the team and its volunteers. If at any time you witness or hear about conduct that is concerning, please contact the appropriate level of authority as dictated below.

1. **Your Hockey Director.** This is your source for on-rink hockey related questions and/or concerns.
2. **NRS Offices.** SafeSport issues, along with player wellbeing and safety concerns, must be brought to the attention of National Roller Sports.

First Practice/Game of the Season

Introduce yourself and other coaches to the players and parents in the room. Let everyone know that you're happy to be starting out the season and you look forward to having a fun year together. Have the players introduce themselves one at a time. Be warm and welcoming. List your 3 or 4 most important expectations you have of the players, families and the team.

Some examples:

- Please have your player at games and practices on time:
 - Ensure they are dressed and ready at least 10 minutes prior to the start of practices and at least 20 minutes prior to the start of games.
- Sportsmanship - treat everyone in the building with respect:
 - Teammates • Coaches • Opponents • Fans • Referees • League officials.
- Pass the ball • Stick down, Head up • Have fun!

Practices/Games General

In the rink before the game, or practice, take the time to visit with a handful of your players personally to get to know them a little. A few questions you can ask:

- What's their hockey background?
- How long have they been playing rink hockey for?
- What are they doing over the summer?
- What other sports do they play?
- Favorite hockey (World class or local) player?

Later in the season, you might ask them questions relating to your team:

- What do you like most about playing on our team?
- What do you think we could do differently?

- Would they like to play a different position?

Ultimately, your players are going to perform better if they feel like their coach is interested in them as people. You'll also know a little more about what makes them tick as players. You don't have to get to every player at every game. They'll appreciate it and so will you! Make sure to keep the room fun and lighthearted most of the time. Let the kids play music for part of the time if they like. Encourage some laughs and good-natured fun. Of course, when it's time to talk about the game or practice, you can get a little more serious.

Session Plans

Some coaches prefer to establish a season plan as the season kicks off. The advantage of having a season plan is that it enables you to outline the accomplishments you aim for the team and players by the season's end. It serves as a valuable reference point to structure game plans and practice sessions throughout the year.

For younger age groups, a well-thought-out plan ensures that players learn fundamental skills and concepts progressively throughout the season, leading to improvement by the end. In the older divisions, your plan might involve teaching advanced game strategies to perform well in playoffs. Regardless of the scenario, a season plan serves as an excellent tool to guide you as you work with your players throughout the season. Some basic season plan elements:

- Skating
 - Forwards
 - Backwards
- Stick handling
 - Passing
 - Shooting
- Strategy
 - Possession team
 - Make less skilled players better by engaging better skilled players as leaders.
- Team rules
 - High level of sportsmanship
 - Provide feedback to your coaches.

It's very important to plan your practices in advance. Unplanned practices at their best are just busy time for the team and at their worst, cause the players to sit around while you try to figure out what to do.

A good approach to planning your practices is to come up with a few drills that meet your agenda and use one or two of them only depending on how the flow of the practice goes. Provide yourself with a couple of options.

Often, you can develop your own drills based on intuition. Sit down with a pen and a few pieces of paper. What simple drill can you come up with that will help the kids develop the skills or the know how to do what your team needs? Give it a try.

Before The Game

Before the game, address the team with 2-3 key points you'd like them to focus on, keeping your pregame chat concise, ideally within 3-4 minutes. Emphasize the importance of having fun and maintaining respect for everyone in the building. Encourage team fellowship by having all players get dressed in the same area.

Ensure your players are prepared well in advance, with water and all their gear on, at least 10 minutes before the preceding game concludes. Hold the players at the door until you confirm that the game is over and the teams before having left the bench area. This ensures a smooth transition and a timely start for your team.

Typical warm up consists of:

- Free skate no ball
 - Forwards
 - Backwards
- Free skate with ball
- Wagon Wheel Drill
 - 1/2 rink drill
 - Players start out in two lines in each corner.
 - 1st player in 1st line skates up boards to just below center rink before turning towards net.
 - 1st player in 2nd line passes ball to skater for shot on net.
 - 1st player in 2nd line then skates to just below center rink before turning towards boards.
 - Repeat

Be sure to remind your players not to shoot the ball at the goalie's head during drills. Also remind players not to shoot the ball when goalie is turned around or players are behind the net during warm up.

End your warmup at least one minute before center pass so that you can do a few important pregame things:

- Pre-game chat with team to get them fired up.
- Assign positions.
- Announce starting lineup.
- Let the players do a cheer.
- This is particularly important to the younger players, and it is a lot of fun!

During The Game

You are the leader of your team during games. Make sure to act like one. You must be aware of what's happening on the playing surface and on your bench. Here are a few reminders:

- When possible, have coaches open and close gates for players.
- Don't allow non-players or non-coaches on or around the bench.
- Try to keep water off the floor in the bench area to avoid slipping etc.

Maintaining consistent communication with players is crucial for coaches to keep them informed about their performance. Adhering to the widely endorsed 3-1 ratio in coaching programs, aim to acknowledge and highlight three positive aspects of each player's performance during the last 2 or 3 shifts. Following this, identify one area where improvement is possible, offering encouragement and guidance in that specific aspect.

While providing feedback, it's essential to keep the atmosphere light on the bench. Creating a fun environment and fostering a positive attitude among players is part of your role. In simple terms, your job involves keeping the kids informed, helping them enhance their skills, and ensuring they feel like integral members of the team. Always engage in conversations with your players. As a rule of thumb, aim to have 1-2 of these constructive conversations with each player during each half. It's achievable and valuable practice!

After The Game

Be sure to have players do a handshake with the opposing team and thank the refs with a handshake. After the game be sure to have your team meet, review what went well according to the pregame plan and what didn't. Emphasize the positive and particularly where lesser skilled players made an impact and acknowledge higher skilled players who helped their teammates succeed. Don't forget to thank the goalie as well.

Goaltenders

In some teams, there are players who eagerly embrace the role of being the goalkeeper for the entire season, showcasing the necessary skills. However, other teams may find themselves without a designated goalie, leading to a rotation of goalkeeping duties among team members. It's not uncommon for many players to be hesitant about taking on the goalie position. Nevertheless, it's a reality that must be addressed by the team.

In younger age groups, there are usually a few kids eager to try their hand at playing goalie or even take on the role for several games. On the contrary, recruiting goalies for older teams can be more challenging.

When facing a shortage of volunteers, an effective approach is to openly communicate the issue to the players. Emphasize that playing in the net is a crucial role that needs to be fulfilled, even if it's not the most coveted position. Encourage a collective effort by informing players that everyone will have to take turns in the goalie position, perhaps even having multiple turns. Most importantly, make it enjoyable. This positive approach can be a secret weapon in recruiting goalies.

It's essential to provide extra support to goalies, whether they are full-time, part-time, or occasional players. The goalie position can be stressful, and having a supportive coach can make a significant difference.

Overall, Team Play

Encourage individuals on your team to play a team style game. Higher-skilled players need to involve lesser-skilled players to bring the total team game up a level or two. When a lesser-skilled team plays as a team against a team full of higher-skilled individual players, often, the lesser skilled team with the team game wins. Passing and possession is the best way to build your team game.

End of Season

Expressing gratitude to the kids is highly important. Let them know what an enjoyable year you had and how much you appreciated coaching them. Convey your anticipation of seeing them back at the rink again for the next season. It fosters a positive connection and leaves a lasting impression on the players.

