



NRS Coaching Manual Inline 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 NRS Rulebook. The current roller hockey rules will govern all games played by the NRS unless they are superseded by a change made specifically by the organization.
- The addition, deletion, and modification of the NRS 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 NRS 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 (NRS) 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 puck • 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 inline for?
- What are they doing over the summer?
- What other sports do they play?
- Favorite hockey (NHL/PIHA) 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 pucks
 - Forwards
 - Backwards
- Free skate with pucks
- 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 puck 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 puck at the goalie's head during drills. Also remind players not to shoot the puck when goalie is turned around or players are behind the net during warm up.

End your warmup at least one minute before puck drop 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.
- Split your defense and forwards into even numbers or as close to even numbers as possible.
- 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.

Detailed Practice plans by age range

8-and-Under | Skill Progressions for Youth Hockey

8U SKILL PROGRESSION:

At the 8-and-Under level, coaches should focus on teaching age-appropriate concepts and skills so that children have an enjoyable hockey experience while also developing as players and young people.

8U FOCUS POINTS:

- Fun
- Engagement
- Active Practices
- Age-Appropriate Training (includes skills and concepts)

8U FUN:

8-and-Under coaches should never underestimate the value of having fun. While this is true at all ages, it is especially true at this age, where the hockey-for-life seed is planted. If it's not consistently fun at this age, the novelty of the sport will wear off and the young player(s) may eventually quit. Players at this age should have fun every time they are on the rink.

8U ENGAGEMENT:

Coaches should recognize the importance of engagement. It goes hand-in-hand with fun, but it's more than just fun. It's targeting the optimal skill level for each player – not too easy and not too hard. It's designing small games that do the teaching. The players don't need a coach to provide feedback. The games themselves give players the opportunity to successfully demonstrate targeted skills and concepts. The coach becomes the facilitator – less talking from the coach and more learning by doing.

8U ACTIVE PRACTICES:

Practices at this age level should include a high amount of activity and a low amount of rest. Players should not spend large amounts of time standing in line, waiting to participate in drills or games. Coaches should strive to design practices in which players are active for most of the practice.

Coaches should set goals related to the amount of activity they expect each player to achieve in a practice (e.g., each player will be active for 40 minutes in a 60-minute practice). While the activity level is not the only crucial component on which coaches should focus, it is important in the long-term development process, as coaches must remember that players learn by doing (more than by watching or listening). Designing practices with high activity levels and opportunities for many repetitions is very important at this age. Refer to the Player Activity Chart found on the free Mobile Coach

App and at admkids.com under Coaches/Repetition for a form to evaluate the developmental opportunities that occur for players in practice and in games.

8U STATION-BASED PRACTICES:

Station-based practices are an excellent way to accomplish these high-activity goals. Coaches are encouraged to split the rink into 4-6 areas with an age-appropriate skill, drill, or game to be practiced in each area. A typical station-based practice would include six stations with 6-10 players at each station. While coaches have some flexibility when it comes to the duration of time that players spend at each station, 6-8 minutes is a good guideline for players at the 8-and-Under level. Coaches should restrict the instructional part to less than a minute for each station. Players should practice the desired skill at each station, with coaches making sure that each player is active most of the time, thus receiving a high number of repetitions.

Coaches may have to be creative to ensure that all players spend more time practicing the desired skill rather than waiting in line to participate. Coaches are encouraged to use a stopwatch to determine the amount of time a player is active and count the repetitions performed by an individual player at each station. NRS has many of these station-based practice lesson plans available on the free Mobile Coach App and at www.admkids.com.

8U AGE-APPROPRIATE TRAINING:

8-and-Under coaches must determine what skills and concepts are appropriate for the kids in their program to learn and understand. Most would not expect a second grader to be taught sixth-grade math. The same should hold true for the skills and concepts related to 8-and-Under hockey. First, coaches must determine whether the players are ready to learn the desired skill or understand the desired concept. Second, they should decide whether the skill or concept is truly important for an 8-year-old.

Teaching players the right thing at the right age is crucial in their development. Cross-rink hockey, or hockey on a smaller surface (half-rink), is an important part of age-appropriate training for 8-and-Under players. Using a smaller surface offers several benefits, including increased puck battles, increased puck-touches for all players, puck carriers will have to avoid more players in the small areas, etc. All these benefits are extremely important in the long-term development of each player.

8U PRACTICE FOCUS:

Practices should focus on (percentage of time listed after each):

1. Individual skill improvement (hockey skills, activities, and games) — 85%
2. Hockey sense (teaching of concepts through small area games) — 15%
3. Systems (team-play training) — 0%

8U SMALL AREA GAMES:

Coaches should utilize small area games on a consistent basis in every practice for fun, practicing skills and teaching basic concepts. These games should be included in station-based practices and there should be a variety of games for 8-and-Under players. The number of players, rules of the game, and size of the game area should be varied with each game. Coaches might also opt to use blue (lightweight) pucks, balls or ringette rings to change the dynamic of the game. Refer to the Small Area Competitive Games Handbook for age-appropriate small area games.

8U OPTIMAL WINDOWS OF TRAINABILITY:

For 8U players to maximize their ability and reach their potential, it's important for youth coaches to do the right thing with young athletes at the right time. Focusing on these key components at the appropriate age will give the young athletes the best opportunity to achieve their potential as they progress through their teenage years. Researchers have concluded that players in this age classification should spend time developing the following capabilities related to their long-term development:

1. **Speed** — constant stopping, starting, changing direction, and puck races in small areas.
2. **Suppleness (Flexibility)** — perform a variety of activities and exercises through a full range of motion.

8U PLAYER KNOWLEDGE:

8-and-Under players are not at a cognitive level where they should be lectured on the following topics; however, throughout the course of playing hockey at this level, they should learn:

1. **Puck Pursuit** – Players should be taught to pursue the puck aggressively and engage in battles to gain possession of the puck.
2. **Puck Support** – Players should learn to make themselves available to receive a pass from a teammate. This is the beginning of the idea of “getting open.”
3. **Acceptable On-Rink Conduct** – Acceptable conduct should be taught and reinforced. Unsportsmanlike conduct is the broad term covering this topic, but acceptable conduct should relate to teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, etc. This is the beginning of teaching players to be good sports and to respect everyone involved with the game.
4. **Allowable Contact with Opponents** – Players should learn what types of physical contact are allowed with an opponent. Players should learn the importance of having their stick on the rink in puck battles, so that good body-contact habits are established early. The players should also begin to learn the types of physical contact that are not allowed, such as body checking, checking from behind, slashing, tripping, etc. While these young players are not at an age where they should be lectured as to the types of illegal contact, they should be made aware when they have made contact in a way that violates the rules.

8U INDIVIDUAL HOCKEY SKILLS:

Players must learn and master:

1. **Skating -**
 - a. ready position
 - b. edge control
 - c. forward start
 - d. forward stride
 - e. controlled stop: two-foot and one-foot snowplow
 - f. controlled turn
 - g. forward crossover
 - h. backward skating
 - i. backward stop
2. **ABCs of skating –**
 - a. agility, balance, coordination
 - b. speed drills
3. **Puck Control -**
 - a. lateral (side-to-side) stickhandling
 - b. front-to-back stickhandling.
 - c. diagonal stickhandling
 - d. attacking the triangle
4. **Passing and Receiving -**
 - a. forehand pass
 - b. backhand pass
 - c. receiving a pass properly with the stick
5. **Shooting -**
 - a. wrist shot
 - b. backhand
6. **Body Contact -**
 - a. stick on puck
 - b. stick lift
7. **Goaltending -**
 - a. At this level, coaches should not designate full-time goaltenders so that players may begin the development of skills that will help improve their long-term skating and athleticism. These are crucial for goaltenders as they progress to higher age levels.

8U TEAM CONCEPTS:

While the teaching curriculum recommends that no time be spent on teaching systems related to team-play in 8-and-Under hockey, players should begin learning important skills and basic concepts that will be important when they get to an age where systems and team-play takes on added importance. Players should learn and understand:

1. **Puck Pursuit** – Players should pursue the puck aggressively and engage in battles to gain possession of the puck.
2. **Puck Support** – Players should learn to make themselves available for a pass whether they are close to the puck or further away. This is the beginning of near- and far-support concepts, as well as creating and finding passing lanes.

8U PLAYER SAFETY:

Players should be in practice and game environments where their health and well-being is a priority. Expectations related to safe practices and acceptable on-rink conduct should be taught and reinforced with the young players.

8U HOCKEY ENVIRONMENT:

Players should be in an environment where:

- **The practices and games are fun.** Young players should enjoy each session and they should want to return for the next one.
- **Making mistakes is okay.** Mistakes are common and a part of sports. Maintaining the confidence to attempt new skills or moves is important to developing those skills, as is continuing to work on correcting mistakes.

8U CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND LIFE SKILLS:

Players must learn:

- They are part of a team and are expected to follow team rules.
- to have respect for their teammates, coaches, opponents, officials, and parents.
- to always try their best.
- the foundation of a strong work ethic by consistently participating in practices with a high level of activity.

10-and-Under | Skill Progressions for Youth Hockey

10U:

At the 10-and-Under level, coaches should focus on the following age-appropriate concepts and skills so that players enjoy the experience and develop both as hockey players and as young kids.

10U FOCUS POINTS:

- Fun
- Engagement
- Active Practices
- Age-Appropriate Training
- Basic Hockey Knowledge

10U FUN:

These players are entering the Golden Age of Skill Development, and coaches should ensure that every session, both on-rink and off-rink, is fun for the players. Hockey is a game that requires a tremendous amount of skill to be proficient at any level, and developing this skill takes a substantial amount of time. If fun is not incorporated into every practice and game, then many players will not invest the amount of time necessary to develop their skills. Fun is a crucial component in the long-term athlete-development process. A lack of fun can limit the potential of many young players by deterring them from fully engaging or causing them to quit.

10U ENGAGEMENT:

Coaches should recognize the importance of engagement. It goes hand-in-hand with fun, but it's more than just fun. It's targeting the optimal skill level for each player – not too easy and not too hard. It's designing small games that do the teaching. The players don't need a coach to provide feedback. The games themselves give the players opportunities to successfully demonstrate targeted skills and concepts. The coach becomes the facilitator – less talking from the coach and more learning by doing.

10U ACTIVE PRACTICES:

Coaches should strive to activate players for most of each practice session and avoid the archaic practice in which kids spend much of their time standing in line waiting to participate in drills. These archaic practices activate players for only 12-15 minutes in a 60-minute practice.

Coaches at the 10-and-Under age level should aim to have much more activity than this for each player in each practice. Coaches should also consider the number of repetitions that each player executes while performing the desired skills in practice. Coaches are encouraged to take a statistical look at their practices.

This includes analyzing the number of minutes each player is active, the number of shots each player takes, the number of passes each player makes, how many shots each goaltender faces, etc. All of these are important skills, and it is imperative that coaches consistently maximize the minutes of activity and the number of repetitions. Refer to the Player Activity Chart found on the free Mobile Coach App and at admkids.com under Coaches/Repetition for a form to evaluate the developmental opportunities that occur for players in practice and in games.

Station-based practices are an effective way to teach 10-and-Under players the skills they need, while also maximizing the activity level and increasing the number of repetitions for each player. Coaches might consider modifying the stations to better fit their players' needs, however high activity levels and age-appropriate skills must remain the focus.

10U AGE-APPROPRIATE TRAINING:

Coaches must be very careful when determining what is appropriate for the 9- and 10-year-olds in this age group. It's not what the adults want them to be doing at this age that matters. Instead, it should be about what the players are ready to do at this age. Although these players should be ready to learn more of the rules and concepts related to the game, skill development is still the top priority. Players will begin learning and executing skills and concepts related to team play.

10U GOLDEN AGE OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

Players between the ages of 8-12 are considered to be in the Golden Age of Skill Development. This is the prime age period for kids to acquire and develop athletic skills. Coaches of players who are in this age range should spend most of the practice time working on skill development.

Although skill development should be a focus at other ages, too, there is no better time than during this Golden Age of Skill Development to optimally affect the long-term skill development of each player.

10U RULE KNOWLEDGE:

While players at this age will be able to understand more of the game's rules, coaches must recognize that these players are at an age where skill development must be the priority. All practices should reflect this. Players should gain knowledge related to the rules of the game using small games and drills. Young players learning by playing small games are a far more effective teacher than being told the rules (learning by doing rather than learning by listening).

Coaches must be patient throughout this learning process and allow players the opportunity to make mistakes and then encourage them to try again. Failing to create an excellent learning environment can stifle creativity, confidence, learning, and a player's work ethic.

10U PRACTICE FOCUS:

Practices should focus on (percentage of time listed after each):

1. Individual skill improvement (hockey skills, activities, and games) — 75%
2. Hockey sense (teaching concepts through small area games) — 15%
3. Systems (team-play training) — 10%

While these percentages are approximations, they emphasize the key principle that individual skills are the most important part of development at this age and that most of the practice should be spent improving those skills. The percentages also indicate that hockey sense and concepts are still more important than systems and team-play training.

10U SMALL AREA GAMES:

Coaches should utilize small area games on a consistent basis in every practice for fun, practicing skills and teaching basic concepts. As young hockey players age, they will be increasingly able to understand important concepts related to the game. Rather than telling players how to play each situation, small area games provide a great opportunity to let a game teach the desired concept(s).

Players learn the desired concept by playing the game within its parameters; it challenges players to find their own solutions, increasing their confidence and retention. Consistent use of these games is important in the development of hockey sense for each player. They should be playing a variety of games and, in each case, figuring the game out on their own. Coaches should not be telling players how to play. The number of players, rules of the game, and size of the game area should be varied with each

game. Coaches might also opt to use pucks, balls, or ringette rings to change the dynamic of each game. Refer to the Small Area Competitive Games Handbook for age-appropriate small area games.

10U OPTIMAL WINDOWS OF TRAINABILITY:

For players to maximize their ability and reach their potential, it's important for youth coaches to do the right thing with young athletes at the right time. Focusing on these key components at the appropriate age will give the young athletes the best opportunity to achieve their potential as they progress through their teenage years.

Researchers have concluded that players in this age classification should spend time developing the following capabilities related to their long-term development:

1. **Speed** – constant stopping, starting, changing direction, and puck races in small areas.
2. **Suppleness (Flexibility)** – perform a variety of activities and exercises through a full range of motion.
3. **Skill Acquisition and Development** – science has shown this is the prime age for children to acquire and develop sport skills, therefore it's known as the Golden Age of Skill Development.

10U INDIVIDUAL HOCKEY SKILLS:

Players must learn and master:

1. **Skating** -
 - a. ready position
 - b. edge control
 - c. forward start
 - d. forward stride
 - e. controlled stop:
 - i. two-foot
 - ii. one-foot snowplow
 - f. controlled turn
 - g. forward crossover
 - h. backward skating
 - i. backward stop
2. **ABCs of skating:** agility, balance, coordination, and speed drills.
 - a. one-foot stop
 - b. backward crossover
 - c. mohawk turn
3. **Puck Control** -
 - a. lateral (side-to-side) stickhandling
 - b. front-to-back stickhandling
 - c. diagonal stickhandling
 - d. attacking the triangle
 - e. puck protection
 - f. change of pace

- g. toe drag
 - h. give and take
 - i. accelerating with the puck (one-hand carry)
4. **Passing and Receiving -**
- a. forehand pass
 - b. backhand pass
 - c. receiving a pass properly with the stick
 - d. saucer pass (forehand and backhand)
 - e. receiving a pass properly with the skate
 - f. indirect pass
5. **Shooting -**
- a. wrist shot
 - b. backhand
 - c. flip shot
 - d. screen shot
 - e. deflection
 - f. off rebound
6. **Body Contact -**
- a. stick on puck
 - b. stick lift
 - c. poke check
 - d. gap control concept
 - e. body positioning and angling

10U TEAM PLAY:

Players must learn and understand:

1. Offensive Concepts
 - a. 2-on-1 situations
 - b. 1-on-1 situations

10U CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND LIFE SKILLS:

Players must learn to:

- demonstrate high levels of sportsmanship.
- have respect for their teammates, coaches, opponents, officials and parents.
- balance family, school and other activities.
- be on time for practices and games.

12-and-Under | Skill Progressions for Youth Hockey

12U:

At the 12-and-Under level, coaches should focus on the following age-appropriate concepts and skills so that players enjoy the experience and develop both as hockey players and as young kids.

12U FOCUS POINTS:

- Fun and Engagement
- Active Practices
- Age-Appropriate Training
- Skill Development
- Body Contact/Body Checking

12U FUN AND ENGAGEMENT:

It's important for coaches to understand that 12-and-Under players are in the Golden Age of Skill Development, which is a crucial time in the long-term development of a player. Coaches should also remember that fun is a key component of youth sports, and that practices and games at the 12-and-Under level must be fun for these players to continue working hard to acquire and improve skills. When coaches can deliver the appropriate level of skill development for each player, then players have an excellent opportunity to engage. Engagement occurs when players can successfully execute the targeted skills within an environment that still provides an appropriate challenge level (i.e., not too easy, not too hard). Finding the appropriate balance between success and challenge for each player can be an ongoing challenge for coaches, but providing the optimal blend should always be the goal. Remember, fun and engagement are important factors in the development process. Coaches should never underestimate the importance of each.

12U ACTIVE PRACTICES:

While a 12-and-Under practice shouldn't be as active as an 8-and-Under practice, coaches must still seek to increase the amount of time players spend participating in drills and small games in each practice session (rather than standing and watching). Players are more likely to successfully execute skills when they have been given many repetitions in practice. Coaches should consider designing practices with high activity levels each week so that players have ample opportunity to practice the targeted skills. Coaches should also design practice sessions that are not as high in activity level, but instead require the players to go hard for short intervals with appropriate rest to follow each interval. Coaches should strive to find the optimal work-to-rest ratio in any of these practices. Refer to the Player Activity Chart found on the free Mobile Coach App and at admkids.com under Coaches/Repetition for a form to evaluate the developmental opportunities that occur for players in practice and in games.

12U AGE-APPROPRIATE TRAINING:

Players in the 12-and-Under age classification are at a sensitive stage in their development. Two aspects of their game need special attention: body contact and skill development. Coaches at this level must be extra careful when determining what is appropriate for 12-and-Under players to learn. On-rink skills and drills must be age-appropriate, and coaches should spend considerably more time developing players' skills rather than teaching systems. Small games should be used to teach appropriate concepts such as understanding the game. Improving hockey sense takes on a heightened priority at this stage.

12U SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

Since 12-and-Under players are in the Golden Age of Skill Development (ages 8-12), coaches must maximize the skill development that occurs during this period. While skill development can occur during later years, the opportunity for positively affecting the long-term development of a player is never greater than in this age period. Players should be allowed to focus on developing all their hockey skills at this age. The development of these skills takes a tremendous amount of time and the time invested at this age will pay great dividends later. Players who are allowed to spend large amounts of time acquiring and developing skills at this age will have an advantage in later years over many players who did not have this opportunity.

12U PRACTICE FOCUS:

Practices should focus on (percentage of time listed after each):

1. Individual skills (hockey skills and activities) — 65%
2. Hockey sense (teaching of concepts through small area games) — 25%
3. Systems (team-play training) — 10%

While these percentages are approximations, they emphasize that individual skill development remains the highest priority at this stage, and most of the practice time should be spent improving skills. The percentages also indicate that hockey sense and concepts are still more important than systems and team-play training at 12-and-Under.

12U SMALL AREA GAMES:

Hockey sense becomes a more important focus at this age level.

Hockey sense includes the ability to understand important age-appropriate hockey concepts and execute tactics related to these concepts. Rather than telling players how to play each situation, small area games provide a great opportunity to let a game teach the desired concept(s). Players learn the desired concept by playing the game within its parameters; it challenges players to find their own solutions, increasing their confidence and retention. Consistent use of these games is important in the development of hockey sense for each player. They should be playing a variety of games, and in each case, figuring the game out on their own. Coaches should not be telling players how to play. The number of players, rules of the game, and size of the game area should be varied with each game. Coaches might also opt to use pucks, balls, or ringette rings to change the dynamic of each game. Small area games are great teaching tools that also create a fun and competitive environment. Refer to the Small Area Competitive Games Handbook and the Small Area Competitive Games 2 book for age-appropriate small area games.

12U OPTIMAL WINDOWS OF TRAINABILITY:

For players to maximize their ability and reach their potential, it's important for youth coaches to do the right thing with young athletes at the right time. Focusing on these key components at the appropriate age will give young athletes the best opportunity to achieve their potential as they progress through their teenage years. Researchers have concluded that players in this age classification should spend time developing the following capabilities related to their long-term development:

1. **Skill Acquisition and Development (for boys and girls)** – Science has shown this is the prime age for children to acquire and develop sport skills, therefore it's known as the Golden Age of Skill Development.
2. **Speed (for girls)** – This is prime time to increase speed by improving the stride length and stride frequency through drills requiring high velocity for shorter intervals of time.
3. **Stamina (for girls)** – This is prime time to improve the endurance of each female athlete (the ability to sustain prolonged physical or mental effort).

The factors affecting long-term development differ slightly for boys and girls at this age level.

12U INDIVIDUAL HOCKEY SKILLS:

Players must learn and master:

1. **Skating -**
 - a. ready position and the ability to find this strong position when engaged in body contact
 - b. edge control
 - c. forward start
 - d. forward stride
 - e. controlled stop: two-foot and one-foot snowplow
 - f. controlled turn
 - g. forward crossover
 - h. backward skating
 - i. backward stop
 - j. **ABCs of skating:** agility, balance, coordination, and speed drills
 - k. One-foot stop
 - l. backward crossover
 - m. mohawk turns
 - n. lateral skating
 - o. backward cross-under start
 - p. backward two-skate stop
 - q. backward power stop (one skate)

2. **Puck Control -**
 - a. lateral (side-to-side) stickhandling

- b. front-to-back stickhandling
 - c. diagonal stickhandling
 - d. attacking the triangle
 - e. puck protection
 - f. change of pace
 - g. toe drag
 - h. give and take
 - i. accelerating with the puck (one-hand carry)
 - j. change of direction
 - k. backward puck control
 - l. fakes and deception while stickhandling
 - m. puck off the boards
3. **Passing and Receiving -**
- a. forehand pass
 - b. backhand pass
 - c. receiving a pass properly with the stick
 - d. saucer pass (forehand and backhand)
 - e. receiving a pass properly with the skate
 - f. indirect pass
 - g. receiving a pass properly with the hand
 - h. surround the puck
 - i. one-touch passes
 - j. area passes
4. **Shooting -**
- a. wrist shot
 - b. backhand
 - c. flip shot
 - d. screen shot
 - e. deflection
 - f. off rebound
 - g. snap shot
 - h. slap shot
 - i. fake shots
5. **Body Contact -**
- a. stick on puck
 - b. stick lift
 - c. poke check
 - d. gap control concept
 - e. body positioning and angling
 - f. stick press
 - g. angling

- h. delivering body contact
- i. receiving body contact (contact confidence)
- 6. Goaltending -**
 - a. Positioning
 - b. Proper stance
 - c. Angling
 - d. Movement -
 - i. forward
 - ii. backward
 - iii. lateral
 - e. Save techniques -
 - i. stick
 - ii. gloves
 - iii. body and pads
 - iv. butterfly
 - v. sliding butterfly
 - f. recovery
 - g. stopping the puck behind net
 - h. puck retention
 - i. cradling
 - j. rebound control
 - k. game situations
 - l. screen shots
 - m. walkouts
 - n. wraparounds

12U TEAM PLAY:

Players must learn and understand:

- 1. Offensive Concepts -**
 - a. 2-on-1 situations
 - b. 1-on-1 situations
 - c. triangle offense
 - d. team play in each zone
 - e. face-offs
 - f. zone entry
 - g. power-play concepts
- 2. Defensive Concepts -**
 - a. gap control
 - b. stick on puck
 - c. backchecking
 - d. body position: man-you-net
 - e. basic defensive zone coverage
 - f. defending the middle of the rink
 - g. 1-on-1 and even-numbered situations
 - h. 2-on-1 and odd-numbered situations
 - i. forechecking

- j. man-short concepts
- k. shot blocking

12U SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY:

Players should continue to exhibit the sport and life skills learned at previous levels, as well as learning:

- the benefits of positive comments. All involved should realize that positive comments help reduce stress, enhance positive self-image for individuals and the team, and they can increase the enjoyment of practices and games.
- to balance family, school, and other activities.
- to be on time for practices and games.
- to take responsibility for their performance and actions at games, practices, school, and home.
- that alcohol and drugs can negatively impact a player. This includes the player's performance and quality of life.
- to be good teammates who encourage each of his or her teammates.

14-and-Under | Skill Progressions for Youth Hockey

14-and-Under:

At the 14-and-Under level, coaches should focus on the following age-appropriate concepts and skills so that players have a good experience and develop as hockey players and young teenagers.

14U FOCUS POINTS:

- Fun and Engagement
- Practice Activity and Structure
- Age-Appropriate Training
- Body Contact/Body Checking
- Skill Development
- Team Play

14U FUN:

These young athletes have many recreational and free-time options. It's essential that 14-and-Under players still enjoy hockey practices and games to keep them involved in the sport and continuing their development. These early teenage years can provide many challenges for coaches and players alike. It's imperative that coaches are aware of these physical and emotional challenges, but that they also realize there is an excellent opportunity for development at this age. With the increased opportunities for players of this age, fun must remain at the forefront.

14U ENGAGEMENT:

When coaches can create the optimal challenge level, where each player is able to demonstrate success while still having an appropriate level of difficulty, engagement can and will occur for each player. Coaches who incorporate fun into practice and find the optimal challenge level for each player create the ideal environment for long-term development. The challenge for coaches is that this optimal level will vary from player to player. Coaches will have to be very creative when trying to individualize practices so that the optimal skill level can be targeted for each player. When engagement occurs, players can see their own improvement and maximize their development as they are working at the appropriate level.

14U PRACTICE ACTIVITY AND STRUCTURE:

Coaches' designing practices should aim for an appropriate work-to-rest ratio for players of this age. This ratio should be used when the intensity of a drill allows for players to go hard for short periods of time. Players of this age are now able to utilize their anaerobic energy system. Coaches should also consider using practices with high activity levels as they continue to hone the skills of these players. Coaches must recognize the need for an adequate work-to-rest ratio in many practices but must also be able to adapt if the practice requires an especially high activity level. Refer to the Player Activity Chart found on the free Mobile Coach App and at admkids.com under

Coaches/Repetition for a form to evaluate the developmental opportunities that occur for players in practice and in games.

14U AGE-APPROPRIATE TRAINING:

As stated at previous levels, coaches must carefully determine the skills, concepts, and team systems on which to focus. The proper ratio of these three components is critical. Teams at this level should increase the amount of time they spend focused on team play, however most of the time in practices should still be spent on improving individual skills and understanding concepts.

14U SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

As players get older, the number of skills, concepts, and systems to be taught throughout a season increases. They are now at an age where the time spent teaching team-related systems will increase. However, coaches are reminded that most of the practice time should be spent improving the individual skills and understanding the level of age-appropriate concepts.

14U TEAM PLAY:

The amount of time spent working on team-related concepts and systems should increase from previous age classifications. Players should learn different forecheck systems, defensive-zone coverages, power-plays, etc. More importantly, in each case, players should be taught the concepts within each of those systems. Why is the player being asked to do what he or she is doing within the system? What is the opponent being forced to do? Players should be taught the answers to these questions. This will allow them to read and react appropriately to situations they encounter in games. Understanding and applying a concept, as opposed to just repeating an action, is crucial in the improvement of a player.

14U PRACTICE FOCUS:

Practices should focus on (percentage of time listed after each):

1. Individual Skills (hockey skills and activities) — 50%
2. Hockey Sense (teaching of concepts through small area games) — 35%
3. Systems (team play training) — 15%

While these percentages are approximations, they emphasize that individual skills are the most important part of development at this age and that most of the practice time should be spent improving them. The percentages also indicate that teaching hockey sense is still as important as teaching systems and team-play training.

14U SMALL AREA GAMES:

Hockey sense is of even greater importance at this age level. Hockey sense includes the ability to understand important age-appropriate hockey concepts and execute tactics related to these concepts. Rather than telling players how to play each situation, small

area games provide a great opportunity to let a game teach the desired concept(s). Players learn the desired concept by playing the game within its parameters; it challenges players to find their own solutions, increasing their confidence and retention. Consistent use of these games is important in the development of hockey sense for each player. They should be playing a variety of games and, in each case, figuring the game out on their own. Coaches should not be telling players how to play. The number of players, rules of the game, and size of the game area should be varied with each game.

Coaches might also opt to use pucks, balls, or ringette rings to change the dynamic of each game. Small area games are great teaching tools that also create a fun and competitive environment. Greater emphasis on competition should begin at this age, and small area games provide a great opportunity for players to experience a competitive environment every day in practice. Refer to the Small Area Competitive Games Handbook and the Small Area Competitive Games 2 book for age-appropriate small area games.

14U OPTIMAL WINDOWS OF TRAINABILITY:

For players to maximize their ability and reach their potential, it's important for youth coaches to do the right thing with young athletes at the right time. Focusing on these key components at the appropriate age will give young athletes the best opportunity to achieve their potential as they progress through their teenage years. Researchers have concluded that players in this age classification should spend time developing the following capabilities related to their long-term development:

1. **Speed (for boys and girls)** – This is an ideal time to increase speed by improving the stride length and stride frequency through drills requiring high velocity for shorter intervals of time.
2. **Stamina (for boys and girls)** – This is an optimal development stage to improve the endurance of each athlete (ability to sustain prolonged physical or mental effort).
3. **Strength (for girls)** – Following puberty, it is the ideal time to improve the strength of an athlete.

*The factors affecting long-term development differ slightly for boys and girls at this age level.

14U INDIVIDUAL HOCKEY SKILLS:

Players should continue developing and mastering the skills listed at previous levels, while adding these new ones:

1. **Skating -**
 - a. ready position and the ability to find this strong position when engaged in body contact
 - b. edge control
 - c. forward start
 - d. forward stride
 - e. controlled stop: two-foot and one-foot snowplow
 - f. controlled turn

- g. forward crossover
 - h. backward skating
 - i. backward stop
 - j. ABCs of skating (agility, balance, coordination, and speed drills)
 - k. mohawk turns
 - l. one-foot stop
 - m. backward crossover
 - n. lateral skating
 - o. backward cross-under start
 - p. backward two-skate stop
 - q. backward power stop (one skate)
 - r. quickness
 - s. speed
 - t. agility
 - u. power
 - v. change of direction
 - w. balance (use of edges)
- 2. Puck Control -**
- a. lateral (side-to-side) stickhandling
 - b. front-to-back stickhandling
 - c. diagonal stickhandling
 - d. attacking the triangle
 - e. puck protection
 - f. change of pace
 - g. toe drag
 - h. give and take
 - i. accelerating with the puck (one-hand carry)
 - j. change of direction
 - k. backward puck control
 - l. fakes and deception while stickhandling
 - m. puck off the boards
 - n. fake shot
 - o. stop and go
 - p. spin around
- 3. Passing and Receiving -**
- a. forehand pass
 - b. backhand pass
 - c. receiving a pass properly with the stick
 - d. saucer pass (forehand and backhand)
 - e. receiving a pass properly with the skate
 - f. indirect pass
 - g. receiving a pass properly with the hand
 - h. surround the puck
 - i. one-touch passes
 - j. area passes
 - k. crisp passes

4. Shooting -

- a. wrist shot
- b. backhand
- c. flip shot
- d. screen shot
- e. deflection
- f. off rebound
- g. snap shot
- h. slap shot
- i. fake shots
- j. one-timers
- k. stick position in scoring areas
- l. shots in close (pull the puck in and get it up)

5. Body Contact -

- a. stick on puck
- b. stick lift
- c. poke check
- d. gap control concept
- e. body positioning and angling
- f. stick press
- g. angling
- h. delivering body contact
- i. receiving body contact (contact confidence)
- j. shoulder check
- k. receiving a body check

6. Goaltending -

- a. Positioning
 - i. proper stance
 - ii. angling
- b. movement
 - i. forward
 - ii. backward
 - iii. lateral
- c. save techniques –
 - i. stick
 - ii. gloves
 - iii. body and pads
 - iv. butterfly
 - v. sliding butterfly.
- d. recovery
- e. puck handling –
 - i. stopping the puck behind net
 - ii. passing the puck.
 - 1. Forehand
 - 2. backhand
 - iii. clearing the puck

1. forehand
2. backhand
- f. puck retention
 - i. cradling
 - ii. rebound control
 1. game situations
 2. screen shots
 - iii. walkouts
- g. wraparounds
- h. breakaways
- i. line rushes (odd and even)
- j. face-offs in the defensive zone
- k. communication with teammates

14U TEAM PLAY:

Players must learn and understand:

1. **Offensive Concepts** –
 - a. 2-on-1 situations
 - b. 1-on-1 situations
 - c. triangle offense
 - d. team play in each zone
 - e. face-offs
 - f. zone entry
 - g. power-play concepts
 - h. offensive principles: pressure, transition, support
 - i. cycling
2. **Defensive Concepts** –
 - a. gap control
 - b. stick on puck
 - c. back-checking
 - d. body position: man-you-net
 - e. basic defensive zone coverage
 - f. defending the middle of the rink
 - g. 1-on-1 and even-numbered situations
 - h. 2-on-1 and odd-numbered situations
 - i. forechecking
 - j. man-short concepts
 - k. shot blocking
 - l. defensive principles: pressure, transition, support
 - m. defensive play in each zone
 - n. boxing out and fronting an opponent

14U SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY:

Players should learn:

- to develop a pre-game routine.
- relaxation exercises.
- to focus on things that can be controlled.
- to give maximum effort at all times.
- to play with poise and confidence.
- to be in control of emotions at all times.
- basic visualization skills.
- the benefits of positive self-talk. Positive comments can reduce stress, enhance self-image and can increase fun at practices and games.
- to set goals, strive to reach those goals and periodically evaluate progress towards those goals.

14U CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND LIFE SKILLS:

Players must learn:

- the importance of honesty and integrity in and away from the arena.
- to accept responsibility for their actions and athletic performance.
- coping strategies to deal with peer pressure and other adversity.
- to balance family, school, sports, social activities, etc.
- to develop a sense of team commitment.
- about adversity and begin developing strategies to deal with it.

16/18-and-Under | Skill Progressions for Youth Hockey

16-and-Under/18-and-Under:

At the 16-and-Under and 18-and-Under levels, coaches should focus on the following age-appropriate concepts and skills so that players have good experience and continue developing as hockey players and teenagers.

16U/18U FOCUS POINTS:

- Fun and Engagement
- Practice Structure
- Age-Appropriate Training
- Skill Development
- Body Contact/Body Checking
- Team Play
- Training
- Learning to Compete

16U/18U FUN:

Players who have reached this level of play should have experienced fun along the way. No one should ever underestimate the value fun has played in the development of these players or will play going forward. These are critical years where the intensity of practices and games will increase, and coaches must find ways to incorporate fun into team practices and activities on a consistent basis. This generation of players has opportunities for activities of all kinds, so if they don't find a satisfactory amount of fun in the practices and games, they may opt to quit.

16U/18U ENGAGEMENT:

Coaches must strive to find the optimal level when determining the targeted skills, concepts and systems that can be taught at this age. When the level is too low, it may lead to boredom, and when the level is too high, it may lead to frustration. Individualizing the targeted level for each player is a mission that, when achieved, can lead to players who are engaged and having fun, and it can therefore maximize their performance. Engagement occurs when the level of play is ideal for each individual player (i.e., not too easy, not too hard). It's important that coaches design practices where the games and drills teach the desired skills and concepts. When players can see and feel success when executing skills and showing that they understand concepts in game-like conditions, then engagement has an opportunity to take place.

16U/18U PRACTICE STRUCTURE:

Practices for players at this age level should be more intense than previous levels while maintaining proper work-to-rest ratios. While skill development is important, executing these skills at higher speeds and in smaller areas with more resistance should be an increased focus. Coaches must aim for proper work-to-rest ratios based on the desired outcomes of the drills performed within a practice. Refer to the Player Activity Chart found on the free Mobile Coach App and at www.admkids.com under

Coaches/Repetition for a form to evaluate the developmental opportunities that occur for players in practice and in games.

16U/18U AGE-APPROPRIATE TRAINING:

Players at this level should learn to compete, learn to train at a higher level, execute skills in traffic at higher speeds and show an ability to understand and execute many concepts and tactics related to the game. The adults involved with youth sports sometimes think these things have been developed earlier in players' careers, when in fact they were simply not ready to do these things at earlier ages. The importance of team-play and related systems increases at this age level. Coaches should teach concepts, tactics and team systems through small games. Players need the opportunity to practice these things in a setting where the game can teach the player and show success and failure. Coaches must remember that making mistakes is a big part of the development process for players. Coaches should create an environment where making mistakes is acceptable.

16U/18U SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

Players at the highest level of hockey continue investing countless hours honing the skills required to be effective at that level. It's no different for a 16/18-and-Under player. They too must continue honing the skating, stickhandling, passing, and shooting skills needed to be an effective player. The ability to execute these skills at higher rates of speed, in smaller areas, and under game conditions is important for the continued development of each player. Teaching players to compete and train are essential components of the development process.

16U/18U TEAM CONCEPTS:

16/18-and-Under players are ready to grasp more team-play concepts and systems than they have before. Coaches should build on the concepts and systems introduced to these players at previous levels. Coaches should spend more time teaching forechecking concepts, power-plays, penalty kills, and defensive-zone coverages. However, practices should include an equal amount of time devoted to skill improvement and understanding of concepts.

16U/18U TRAINING:

Training is a critical component in the development process for 16/18-and-Under players. Players should find themselves in on-rink and off-rink workouts that stretch their limits. Training workouts should challenge players to break through previously established physical and mental limits. Coaches can and should increase the intensity of workouts, utilizing high work levels with proper rest to follow. It's important to remember that these workouts of increased intensity will challenge the athlete. Coaches will need to coach the athlete through the mental challenges as well as the physical challenges.

16U/18U LEARNING TO COMPETE:

One of the misnomers adults associate with youth sports is related to competing. Adults often throw the word “compete” around for players as young as 8-and-Under. The reality is that, because of physical and emotional development, players are not ready for this emphasis on competing until they are in their mid-teens. 16/18-and-Under players are ready, and now they are participating in practices and games with higher intensity levels (faster and more physical). They must execute skills and make quick decisions in this physical environment while keeping their emotions in check. Even though winning is not the only gauge which determines success, players will find themselves in tight games where they are required to execute the skills, tactics and systems which they have learned. Whether they can execute these skills, tactics and systems, and how they deal with success and failure, is part of the process of learning to compete.

16U/18U PRACTICE FOCUS:

Practices should focus on (percentage of time listed after each):

16-and-Under

1. Individual Skills (hockey skills and activities) — 50%
2. Hockey Sense (teaching of concepts through small area games) — 30%
3. Systems (team-play training) — 20%

18-and-Under

1. Individual Skills (hockey skills and activities) — 50%
2. Hockey Sense (teaching of concepts through small area games) — 25%
3. Systems (team-play training) — 25%

While these percentages are approximations, they emphasize that individual skills are the most important part of development at this age and that most of the practice time should be spent improving them. The percentages also indicate that teaching hockey sense is still as important as teaching systems and team-play training.

16U/18U SMALL AREA GAMES:

Hockey sense is of even greater importance at this age level. Hockey sense includes the ability to understand important age-appropriate hockey concepts and execute tactics related to these concepts. Rather than telling players how to play each situation, small area games provide a great opportunity to let a game teach the desired concept(s). Players learn the desired concept by playing the game within its parameters; it challenges players to find their own solutions, increasing their confidence and retention. Consistent use of these games is important in the development of hockey sense for each player. They should be playing a variety of games and, in each case, figuring the game out on their own. Coaches should not be telling players how to play. The number of players, rules of the game, and size of the game area should be varied with each game. Coaches might also opt to use pucks, balls, or ringette rings to change the dynamic of each game. Small area games are great teaching tools that also create a fun and competitive environment. Greater emphasis on competition should continue at this age, and small area games provide a great opportunity for players to experience a competitive environment every day in practice. Refer to the Small Area Competitive Games Handbook and the Small Area Competitive Games 2 book for age-appropriate small area games.

16U/18U OPTIMAL WINDOWS OF TRAINABILITY:

For players to maximize their ability and reach their potential, it's important for youth coaches to do the right thing with young athletes at the right time. Focusing on these key components at the appropriate age will give young athletes the best opportunity to achieve their potential as they progress through their teenage years. Researchers have concluded that players in this age classification should spend time developing the following capabilities related to their long-term development:

1. **Speed (for boys and girls)** – Emphasis should continue increasing speed by improving the stride length and stride frequency through drills requiring high velocity for shorter intervals of time.
2. **Stamina (for boys)** – This is an ideal stage to improve the endurance of each athlete (the ability to sustain prolonged physical or mental effort).
3. **Strength (for boys and girls)** – Following puberty, it's the ideal time to improve the physical strength of an athlete.

The factors affecting long-term development differ slightly for boys and girls at this age level.

16U/18U INDIVIDUAL HOCKEY SKILLS:

Players should continue developing and mastering the skills listed at previous levels, while adding these new ones:

1. **Skating -**
 - a. ready position and the ability to find this strong position when engaged in body contact
 - b. edge control
 - c. forward start
 - d. forward stride
 - e. controlled stop: two-foot and one-foot snowplow
 - f. controlled turn
 - g. forward crossover
 - h. backward skating
 - i. backward stop
 - j. ABCs of skating - agility, balance, coordination, and speed drills
 - k. mohawk turns
 - l. one-foot stop
 - m. backward crossover
 - n. lateral skating
 - o. backward cross-under start
 - p. backward two-skate stop
 - q. backward power stop (one skate)
 - r. quickness
 - s. speed
 - t. agility
 - u. power
 - v. change of direction
 - w. balance (use of edges)
 - x. forward and backward pivots

- y. backward skating with minimal cross-overs
- 2. Puck Control -**
- a. lateral (side-to-side) stickhandling
 - b. front-to-back stickhandling
 - c. diagonal stickhandling
 - d. attacking the triangle
 - e. puck protection
 - f. change of pace
 - g. toe drag
 - h. give and take
 - i. accelerating with the puck (one-hand carry)
 - j. change of direction
 - k. backward puck control
 - l. fakes and deception while stickhandling
 - m. puck off the boards
 - n. fake shot
 - o. stop and go
 - p. spin around
 - q. stickhandling in tight areas
 - r. while skating backward, stickhandle the puck on forehand side of body
- 3. Passing and Receiving -**
- a. forehand pass
 - b. backhand pass
 - c. receiving a pass properly with the stick
 - d. saucer pass (forehand and backhand)
 - e. receiving a pass properly with the skate
 - f. indirect pass
 - g. receiving a pass properly with the hand
 - h. surround the puck
 - i. one-touch passes
 - j. area passes
 - k. crisp passes
- 4. Shooting -**
- a. wrist shot
 - b. backhand
 - c. flip shot
 - d. screen shot
 - e. deflection
 - f. off rebound
 - g. snap shot
 - h. slap shot
 - i. fake shots
 - j. one-timers
 - k. stick position in scoring areas
 - l. shots in close (pull the puck in and get it up)
 - m. adjust angle of shot just prior to shooting

5. Body Contact -

- a. stick on puck
- b. stick lift
- c. poke check
- d. gap control concept
- e. body positioning and angling
- f. stick press
- g. angling
- h. delivering body contact
- i. receiving body contact (contact confidence)
- j. shoulder check
- k. receiving a body check
- l. delivering a body check
- m. hip check
- n. containing/stalling

6. Goaltending -

- 1. Goaltenders should continue to perform skills learned at previous age-levels and become faster, stronger and quieter.
 - a. positioning
 - a. proper stance
 - b. angling
 - c. movement
 - i. forward
 - ii. backward
 - iii. lateral
 - b. save technique
 - iv. stick
 - v. gloves
 - vi. body and pads
 - vii. butterfly
 - viii. sliding butterfly
 - c. recovery
 - d. puck handling
 - d. stopping the puck behind net
 - e. passing the puck
 - i. forehand
 - ii. backhand
 - f. clearing the puck
 - i. forehand
 - ii. backhand
 - e. puck retention
 - i. cradling
 - ii. rebound control
 - iii. game situations
 - iv. screen shots
 - v. walkouts

- vi. wraparounds
- vii. breakaways
- viii. line rushes (odd and even)
- ix. face-offs in the defensive zone
- x. communication with teammates

16U/18U TEAM PLAY:

Players must learn and understand:

1. **Offensive Concepts -**
 - a. 2-on-1 situations
 - b. 1-on-1 situations
 - c. triangle offense
 - d. team play in each zone
 - e. face-offs
 - f. zone entry
 - g. power-play concepts
 - h. offensive principles: pressure, transition, support
 - i. cycling
 - j. puck control
 - k. dump-ins
 - l. attacking the offensive zone
 - m. play away from the puck
2. **Defensive Concepts -**
 - a. gap control
 - b. stick on puck
 - c. back-checking
 - d. body position: man-you-net
 - e. basic defensive zone coverage
 - f. defending the middle of the rink
 - g. 1-on-1 and even-numbered situations
 - h. 2-on-1 and odd-numbered situations
 - i. fore-checking
 - j. man-short concepts
 - k. shot blocking
 - l. defensive principles: pressure, transition, support
 - m. defensive play in each zone
 - n. boxing out and fronting an opponent
 - o. stall/contain

16U/18U SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY:

Players should learn:

- to develop a pre-game routine.
- relaxation exercises.
- to focus on things that can be controlled.
- to give maximum effort at all times.
- to play with poise and confidence.

- to be in control of emotions at all times.
- basic visualization skills.
- the benefits of positive self-talk. Positive comments can reduce stress, enhance self-image and increase fun at practices and games.
- to set goals, strive to reach those goals, and periodically evaluate progress towards those goals.

16U/18U CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND LIFE SKILLS:

Players must learn:

- the importance of honesty and integrity in and away from the arena.
- to accept responsibility for their actions and athletic performance.
- coping strategies to deal with peer pressure and other adversity.
- to balance family, school, sports, social activities, etc.
- to develop a sense of team commitment.
- about adversity and begin developing strategies to deal with it.

