



INTERNATIONAL
ICE HOCKEY
FEDERATION

INTERNATIONAL ICE HOCKEY FEDERATION

COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

FOREWORD

As indicated in the Statutes and Bylaws of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF), the mission of the IIHF is to develop the game globally. The IIHF strategy ICE26 further mentions targeted development as one of its priorities, highlighting that the IIHF will provide support to its Member National Associations (MNA) in an efficient way in multiple different development areas. While the IIHF is to support its membership, the MNAs have the duty of supporting their clubs and membership.

Coaches play a crucial role in the development of ice hockey as they are the ones to have the most influence on players, both on and off the ice. It is of utmost importance that the coaches are provided with the opportunity for quality education across the world. This guiding resource, the IIHF Coach Education Framework (CEF), has the purpose of supporting the MNAs in their efforts of designing or refining Coach Education Programs.

In addition to the above-mentioned goals, the CEF aims to provide clarity on what know-how and competence is required at the different stages of the coaching pathway, ease the recognition of prior learning and education, when coaches work abroad and give the basis for further Coach Education Program assessments and consultation, coach education content production and, for example, a design and execution of MNA Coach Developer Programs.

The CEF, which is very much built based on the core competencies of coaches, serves the purpose of being the foundation for coach education. However, it alone does not cover all that matters. The MNAs are highly encouraged to use all the development opportunities and resources provided by the IIHF, to utilise the help offered by other organizations nationally, to direct sufficient resources towards coach and player development and to develop their own people such as Coach Developers.

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INTRODUCTION

The IIHF Coach Education Framework (CEF) has been developed to support IIHF Member National Associations (MNAs) in their efforts to educate and develop coaches, ensuring the long-term growth and success of ice hockey worldwide. In alignment with the IIHF's mission and the ICE26 strategy, the CEF provides guidance for MNAs to design and refine their coach education programs, helping them build structured and effective learning pathways for coaches. Recognizing that each country has its unique context and needs, the CEF, much like the Coach Development Framework (CDF), outlines key principles that can be applied across all IIHF MNAs to establish high-quality coaching standards.

Coaches play a crucial role in the development of players, having an impact not only on their technical skills but also on their emotional, social, and physical growth. Quality coaching contributes to the growth of the game through player retention. As emphasized in the CDF, quality coaching ensures that players have challenging yet enjoyable experiences, creating an environment that encourages them to remain engaged. In other words, player retention is a primary measure of quality coaching. To achieve this, MNAs must support their coaches and clubs, helping them establish structured and engaging development programs that encourage continued participation.

The CEF was developed through an extensive process involving coach education experts from MNAs and educational institutions as well as coaches. The objective has been to create a resource which is evidence-based through academic research but also acknowledges the practical needs. As a result, the framework directly addresses the needs and challenges identified by MNAs, coach developers and coaches. The CEF provides MNAs with valuable guidance and resources, enabling them to make strategic decisions on resource allocation, develop education programs that align with the needs of coaches and players as well as offer clear development pathways for coaches at different stages of their careers.

A fundamental principle of effective coach education is that it should be adaptable and inclusive, addressing the individual requirements, entry points, and learning needs of participating coaches. The CEF supports MNAs in designing new programs or refining existing ones, ensuring that their education frameworks align with international best principles. Before introducing new elements to a coach education program, it is advisable for MNAs to first evaluate and review their existing structures. This assessment should be followed by engagement with stakeholders, ensuring that any changes made are well-supported, increasing buy-in and ownership of the program.

Collaboration with local clubs is also essential, as clubs are uniquely positioned to provide daily mentoring and assessments for coaches within a real-world coaching environment. These

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efforts should be linked to the national coaching education framework and supported through a Coach Developer Program. A well-structured Coach Education Program not only enhances coaching quality but also provides coaches with employment opportunities while contributing to broader social benefits such as community development, networking, and health promotion.

The CEF encourages MNAs to take a strength-based approach when evaluating their coach education and development programs. By identifying what is working well, what improvements can be made, and what additional opportunities exist, MNAs can systematically improve their programs to meet both the IIHF Minimum Participation Standards (MPS) and the Minimum Development Standards (MDS). Through its structured framework, practical content, and emphasis on competency development, the CEF provides a comprehensive roadmap for MNAs to develop high-quality, sustainable coaching education programs that contribute to the overall growth and success of ice hockey worldwide.

The IIHF CEF is a competence-based framework where the identified core competencies of coaches are the foundation for the development progression. The assessment of coaches is informed by the core competencies. Coaches demonstrate an integration of knowledges, skills and attitudes which are observable, and assessable. Key to effective coach development is the progressive development of every coach. The education and development of coach developers and their competencies are not the focus of the IIHF CEF and hence coach developers are only referred to on occasion in this framework document.

The IIHF Coach Education Framework is just one of the key resources from the IIHF on coach education and development. The IIHF Coach Development Framework, the IIHF Player Development Guide, and the IIHF Coach Education Framework are complementary resources. It is strongly recommended to use all three documents when planning, creating, evaluating, and improving an MNA's coach education program.

1. COACH PATHWAYS

There is a multitude of different pathways for people to find their way into coaching, then continue on the pathway of a coach based on their own interest and competency for coaching. The pathway of a coach is determined through prior learning, knowledge and experience the person brings into coaching, as well as their interest to coach ice hockey players at a certain performance level, domain and category and their engagement with professional development opportunities for coaches.

Some will start coaching young children as a coach new to ice hockey because their own child starts playing ice hockey and the team coach needs additional help. From this starting point they might continue their development path as a coach still with players at the beginner towards intermediate skill level, slowly moving towards coaching adolescent participants. They might decide to stay within the intermediate skills level and with adolescent participants or then decide to slowly migrate towards coaching adult participants in the intermediate skill level. It is also possible for them to decide to continue coaching children in the beginner skill level for the extension of their coaching career, becoming an expert coach in this environment.

Another person might start very similarly but identifies early on that they want to coach emerging players at the advanced skills level and proceed from there towards performance players and even high-performance players at the elite skill level.

Yet another coach might be coaching multiple teams across different performance levels, domains and categories.

Demands on the coach in a high-performance coaching environment are arguably different to the demands on a coach within the participation environment. The IIHF CEF will provide guidance, suggestions and information for a wide range of possible development paths coaches will find themselves on.

At one point some coaches might identify that they no longer interested in coaching daily but that they would rather continue in a leadership position within the club environment such as the Head of Coaching or Player Development.

All these paths are open to people in ice hockey coaching, and they are all tailored based on the needs and interests as well as capabilities of the person.

Coach pathways are not pre-determined nor are they fixed. It is up to each coach individually to identify where their interests and competencies are within the coaching environments. Rarely does a coaching path follow a linear progression from working with children to adolescents and then adults, or from beginner to high-performance levels.

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A key focus of the IIHF CEF is to support coaches in becoming athlete-centered, ensuring they meet the needs of the athletes they work with. This includes players from diverse ethnic backgrounds, cultures, and players with disabilities.

The IIHF CEF builds on the work of the IIHF CDF and the IIHF PDG (see details in Chapters 7.1 and 7.2).

The outcomes of quality coaching are the development of confidence and competence for lifelong participation in sport as well as increased retention of players in the sport.

Player pathways are described in detail in the IIHF Player Development Guide (IIHF PDG; <https://www.iihf.com/en/statichub/19981/player-development-guide>) and a short overview is presented in chapter 7.2.

1.1 COACHES PATHWAY STORIES

The following coach pathway stories are examples of active coaches who are sharing their own development path within ice hockey coaching. They share what has been central to their development, influenced their coaching behaviours and competencies, their coaching philosophy as well as the potential struggles and challenges they faced during their coaching careers.



Tommi Niemelä

Head Coach Ilves Tampere,
Finnish Men's Top league, Finland

I started playing ice hockey as a child and continued to play until I was about 23 years old. I played first in the Finnish U16, U18 and U20 top leagues until I started playing professionally in men's leagues in Finland but also abroad in Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and in Germany. Already while I was playing coaching was on my mind and I started studying coaching after a severe injury brought my playing career to a sudden stop.

My coaching journey is marked by slow and steady development – what is built slowly and firmly does not collapse easily. At the same time when I started my coaching studies, I started coaching U11 juniors. It was important to me to learn how to teach all the basics first. From the U11's I continued slowly up the age groups through to U16 and up to U20. This was followed by coaching the Finnish Junior National Teams. I coached my first professional team as an assistant coach and now I am in my fifth year as a Head Coach in professional ice hockey.

Most relevant for my development as a coach have been my studies. During the studies I had the opportunity to coach and learn while doing. The teaching was also very good and supported my development.

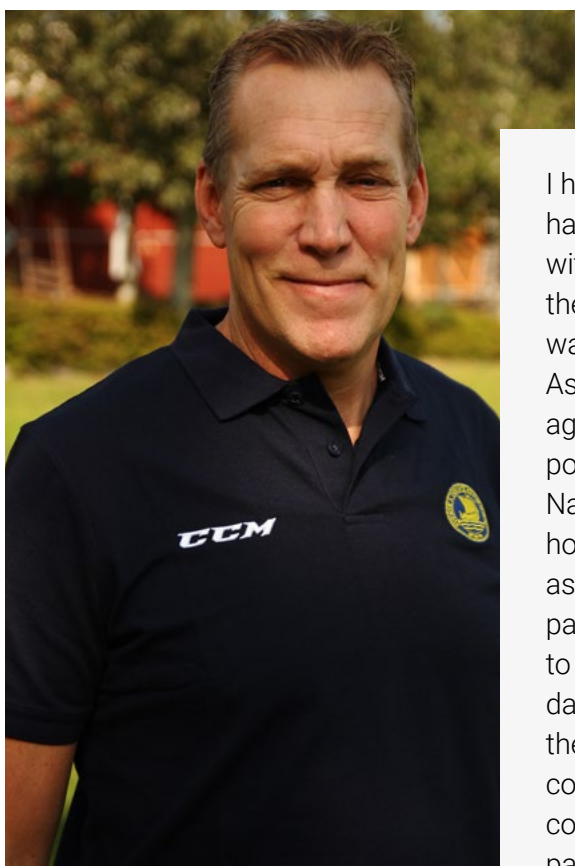
Most challenging on my coaching journey has been to coach full-time on a low salary. Especially at the beginning of the coaching career the economic burden on a coach is heavy.

An important lesson I learned on my coaching journey was to be patient. It is essential to first take time yourself to learn everything, this supports in becoming able to handle everything that you will face.

My advice to someone who is considering starting to coach is to get a theory basis for everything and to have the courage to try it out in practice.

Central for my coaching is a focus on development.

One aspect of my coaching philosophy is a focus on the individual player and that success is achieved through development.



Morgan Johansson

Head Coach U16 Women's
National Team, Sweden

I have come to coaching ice hockey through having a background as an ice hockey referee within the Swedish Top league as well as for the IIHF, but I also played ice hockey until I was 20 years old. The Swedish Ice Hockey Association approached me about two years ago and asked whether I would consider the position as Head Coach for the U16 Women's National Team. After I stopped playing ice hockey, I attended coaching training as well as referee training. I continued on the referee path for several years but eventually shifted to coaching. This was especially due to my daughter starting to play ice hockey. I was the coach for her team for eight years. I didn't continue coaching any team after I stopped coaching my daughter's team. Many years passed until I was offered the U16 Women's National Team Head Coach position. I have completed the entire Swedish coach education program within eight months. Those were eight intense but fun months.

Most relevant for my development as a coach has been the opportunity to develop people. I love leadership and working with people is exciting. As a referee you are not part of a winning or losing team, you do not participate in ice hockey to win. I missed this being part of a team and the winning since I stopped playing. Winning certainly is wonderful, losing on the other hand is terrible. It is something else to be part of a team and to be able to influence the results both on and off the ice.

Most challenging for me on my coaching journey was not to yell at referees ;)

An important lesson I have learned on my coaching journey is that as a coach it can at times be challenging to communicate with the players how the game should be played. I feel rather confident that I know the game of ice hockey well but conveying to players how I would like the game to be played is difficult. As a coach one can only influence the game to a limited degree.

My advice to people who consider starting to coach is: Do it! It doesn't matter how old you are but being a coach is fun and inspiring. It is great to be part of a team, and do not hesitate to sign up for an education.

Central aspects in my coaching are that I want to be perceived as a person who is responsive, invite dialogue and wants to create commitment instead of monologue. I communicate clearly the goals and vision, so that each individual player understands their part and role. Transparency and openness increase participation.

My coaching philosophy has three central aspects, joy, hard work and that success is built from a defensive game. Offense wins games, defence wins championships.

Last but not least I want to tell people, don't hesitate, sign up for coaching training, its fantastic fun.

**Daniela Wiedemann**

Head Coach of the Skating School at the Augsburg Ice Hockey Club, Germany

I played as a defender for 10 years in the women's national league (2nd division) for ESV Königsbrunn. While playing I helped at the same time at the skating school in Augsburg and supported the coaching team. This was my entry into coaching. Besides helping at the skating school and actively playing ice hockey, I further completed my professional education as a kindergarten teacher. Because of my job as an educator, it is very important to me to support the development of children. I am in a very fortunate position to be able to combine my hobby with my job. After I completed my coaching training with the German Ice Hockey Federation in 2015, I took over the main responsibilities for the skating school in Augsburg. I still enjoy this work very much.

As a coach it has always been and to this day is particularly important to me to constantly develop myself and be open to other perspectives and new approaches. Exchanging ideas with colleagues, taking part in continuing education courses, and reading specialist books are some of my ways to continuously develop myself as a coach.

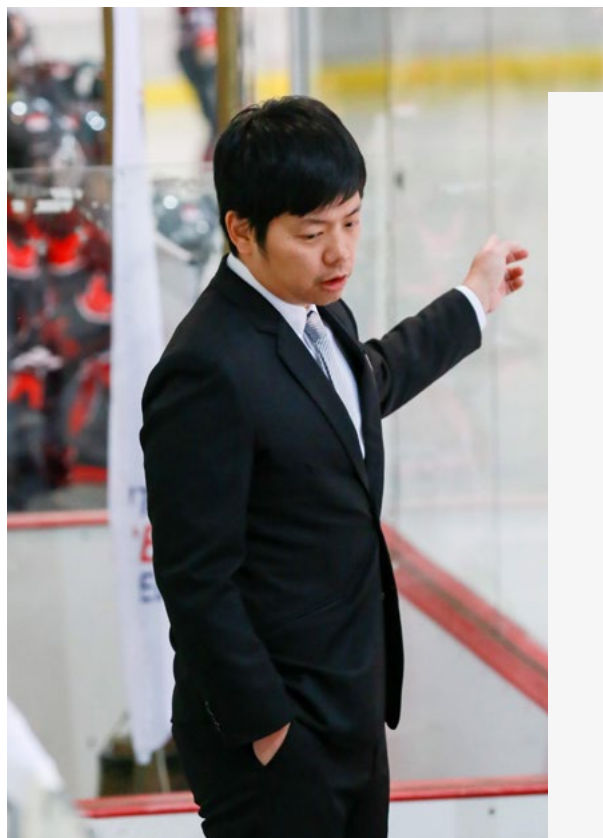
The biggest challenges for me in my coaching journey have been recognition as a coach and been taken seriously as a coach. Especially in my early days, I was often asked where the coach was and then laughed at when I revealed that I was the coach. The selection as Young Talent Trainer of the Year in 2023 was not only a huge honor to me but an important signal to the ice hockey world on the importance of the work coaches at the grassroots level are doing.

An important lesson of my coaching journey has been that it's worth pursuing one's own goal, working consistently towards it, and not letting minor obstacles or setbacks throw one off track. This is also an important lesson for the children later in life. I want to be a role model in this regard.

It was and is always important to me to be aware that I can make a significant contribution to supporting children in their development. Children are not small adults. They need a lot of patience, appreciation, and trust. I have found that, especially for this age group, it is not so important how well a coach can play ice hockey, but rather how he or she approaches and engages with the children. So, I would advise anyone who is considering starting to coach ice hockey to just go ahead and try it.

It is important to me as a coach to constantly develop myself and be open-minded. While being the best version of myself I can appropriately develop each child and meet their individual needs. Social skills are, in my opinion, the most important aspect. We work with people, and therefore it is essential to engage with others, communicate a lot, and encourage interaction between the players. As a coach of very young children, I see myself as a guide. Of course, I take the lead and set a certain course, but within this framework the children have many opportunities to try things out – so they can develop into athletes who can make decisions and find creative solutions. It is important to me that the children come to training with a certain level of motivation and want to try things out. Only then can they generate appropriate performance later in ice hockey and life.

Central aspects of my coaching philosophy are fair play and team spirit – I model this for the children and demand it from them, too. In my opinion it is essential that the children learn with joy and have fun together, this is the only way to ensure that children want to come back to ice hockey training again and again.



Andrew Yin (AnChung Yin)

Chinese Taipei – Head Coach
women's National Team program
2014-2024

Currently I am working for the Chinese Taipei Ice Hockey Federation in the International Department.

In 1991 my family immigrated to Vancouver Canada, I was 11 years old at that time. Ice hockey is a big thing in Canada, so I first became a fan and then I also started playing. I moved back to Chinese Taipei for university in 2001; while studying I did miss ice hockey. One day, I saw people skating on campus with hockey sticks, that is when I found out there is inline hockey in Taipei and that is how I started getting involved in ice hockey/inline hockey.

One of my university inline hockey teammates was teaching kids skating at that time, and one day he asked me if I would be interested in coaching inline hockey. He had plans to gather all the kids that he had been teaching skating into an Ice/Inline hockey club, I said yes, and my coaching journey began.

I have been coaching kids in inline hockey since 2004. At that time there was only a 20x40 ice rink in Taipei, so ice hockey wasn't really a thing. In December 2005, the Taipei arena (Olympic sized ice hockey arena) opened, and ever since then ice hockey has been growing in Chinese Taipei.

In 2006 the IIHF Asian Development ice hockey camp was held in Taipei, I participated as a team coach, and that's when my ice hockey coaching career started. A year later the Chinese Taipei Ice Hockey Federation hired an Experienced International Ice Hockey coach (coach K) as head coach for the ice hockey national team program, and in 2008, they sent a U18 team to participate in the IIHF U18 World Championship Division 3 in Mexico City. During that tournament I was the assistant coach to Coach K. Thinking back today, I realize that I gained so much knowledge on coaching during that tournament from Coach K, other teams, and the players. It was my first IIHF championship and 17 years later, I think it is still the most eventful tournament I've ever participated in. On the 1st day of the tournament, there was a CO leak from the ice resurfacer which caused the tournament to be paused and got the players sick from lack of oxygen. After a couple days the tournament resumed, I remember very clearly that during a pre-game off-ice warm-up, the opposing team walked by and called our players "losers!", of course our players got upset and I had to calm them down. During that game, in the 1st period, because we're not used to all the physicality, we were afraid to go into corners and make body contact, and as a result we were down 3-1 at the

end of the 1st period. During the following intermission, I decided to fire-up the players. I reminded them how they called us "losers" at warm-up, and I showed them that hitting is not scary by hitting the locker room wall and broke through it. We ended up winning that game 5-3 and that is when I realized how motivation is a very important skill in coaching!

Since 2008, I've been part of the national team program, but it was only open for males. In 2014, the Federation started the women's program to compete in IIHF tournaments. At the Women's Challenge Cup of Asia 2025, I became the Head Coach of the Women's National Team. I knew girls needed a different coaching approach, and I'm still learning to get better at it to this day. For the past nine years I've been the Head Coach of the Women's program, during that period, I also participated in the IIHF LTP program in Finland, NHL camps in Shanghai and hockey camps in Canada and Korea.

For my development as an ice hockey coach people certainly have been most relevant. One meets so many people along the way, with some you agree, with some you disagree but there is always something you can learn from every person you meet. It might be something you like, then you incorporate it in your own coaching, or something you don't, then you make sure to never do that in your own coaching.

Most challenging for myself on my coaching journey has been to keep myself motivated, keep the fire burning. The danger is that you will feel like you're running the same drills, saying the same things over and over again, which will make you uninspired, you settle for a boring routine.

Some of the most important lessons I learned on my coaching journey have been:

1. You need to take breaks from hockey!! There is an old saying in Mandarin “休息是為了走更長遠的路” which means “Taking a break is to walk longer”.
2. Learn from others, don't copy! What works in the NHL might not work for you!
3. Listen to the players, sometime players know better.

My advice for a person who considers starting coaching ice hockey is as follows:

1. Always keep learning!! From other coaches, from the internet or from players, try new things! and always challenge yourself.
2. Be practical!! Set realistic goals!
3. Top hockey countries are not always right.

Central for my coaching is that I believe people skills come first. One can have all the knowledge in the world, but after all, you need the players (people) to buy-in to what you are trying to preach.

My coaching philosophy is about coaching people first. You can know every system and drill, but without trust and connection, none of it will stick. I believe in listening, staying practical, constantly learning, and leading by example. Motivation, adaptability, and empathy are key to helping players grow – on- and off-the ice. At the end of the day, coaching isn't just about building better players—it's about building better people.

Something I would like to share with others: Don't be afraid to start small—every great coach was once a beginner. Stay humble, stay curious, and never stop learning. Surround yourself with people who challenge you, and don't be afraid to try, fail, and adjust. And most importantly, enjoy the ride—because coaching can be one of the most rewarding journeys you'll ever take.



Tim Stapleton

Assistant coach, Chicago Fury AAA (players born 2014 and 2015) (2014's) and Garden Ice Wolves AA 10U

I played College hockey at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. Following college hockey, I played ice hockey for 13 Years on a professional level at the NHL, AHL and KHL. I am the first Filipino American to play in the NHL.

I started coaching last year (2024) when my 10-year-old son started to play full ice hockey as opposed to cross ice.

Due to this rather recent involvement in coaching I don't have a strong coaching background. This is still a new experience for me. I'm learning a lot from former teammates who are now coaches. My approach is shaped by my experience as a player—I try to communicate with young athletes the way I would have wanted coaches to communicate with me.

So far, most relevant for me on my coaching journey has been communication. I communicate with other coaches on a weekly basis. Whether it's during practices or games, I try to gather ideas and suggestions based on their experiences. I'm learning that there's a real difference between coaching and teaching—and being able to do both effectively is what I believe separates a good coach from a great one.

Most challenging for me so far has been that first and foremost, it's important to understand the age and developmental stage of these kids. At the end of the day, they're still kids—and what matters most is that they love hockey and want to improve. I also remind myself that they may not see the game the same way I do. So, if they don't grasp something right away, I can't let that frustrate me as a coach. I'm learning to give them space to be creative first, and then teach based on what they see, rather than imposing my perspective too early.

Most important lesson on my coaching journey so far has been that the game is played a bit differently today compared to when I played. The overall skill level is much higher, and there's a greater emphasis on allowing players the space to make mistakes and learn from them.

My advice for someone thinking about starting to coach is this: Just because you've played the game doesn't necessarily mean you know how to coach or teach it. It's important to ask questions and learn from other coaches—even those who haven't played hockey. Coaches from all sports can offer valuable insights and perspectives.

What's central for me in coaching is creating an environment where both personal development and learning can thrive—for the players and myself. I'm still new to coaching, so I place a strong emphasis on learning facilitation, not just teaching skills, but helping players discover the game through creativity, exploration, and feedback. I try to approach each session with curiosity, both in how I can improve and how I can better understand my players' perspectives. People skills are also crucial. I communicate regularly with other coaches, take in their insights, and try to build strong relationships with the kids. I want them to feel heard, supported, and challenged in a positive way. Program leadership, for me, means creating

structure without being rigid—balancing development with enjoyment so kids stay engaged and passionate about hockey. When it comes to sport and performance IQ, I recognize that the game has evolved. Players today are more skilled, and the game allows more room for mistakes and creativity. That shift pushes me to coach with patience and flexibility, encouraging kids to play freely before stepping in to teach from what they show me. Ultimately, personal development—my own and my players’—is at the core. I don’t pretend to have all the answers, and I’ve learned that asking questions, staying open, and listening are just as important as any drill or tactic.

My coaching philosophy is rooted in connection, development, and perspective. I believe in building strong relationships with players—earning their trust and understanding who they are as individuals, not just athletes. I approach coaching with a player’s mindset, often reflecting on how I would have wanted to be coached. I aim to communicate clearly, stay patient, and let players be creative before stepping in to guide. I also recognize that coaching is different from playing. That’s why I constantly seek feedback, ask questions, and learn from others—even coaches from outside of hockey. Of course, all of this is shaped by the age group I work with—10U players.

2. CORE COMPETENCIES

The core competencies as identified in the IIHF Coach Development Framework (IIHF CDF; see details in chapter 7.1) form the foundation for the IIHF CEF. The five core competencies are a combination of capabilities, abilities, knowledge and skills which are the base of quality coaching. They define the essential coaching knowledge in more detail. Essential coaching knowledge consists of interpersonal, intrapersonal and professional knowledge (details in Chapter 7.1). Figure 2 provides an overview of the core competencies and their respective focus sub-competencies.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	PEOPLE SKILLS	PROGRAM LEADERSHIP	LEARNING FACILITATION	SPORT AND PERFORMANCE IQ (ICE HOCKEY SPECIFIC AND GENERAL)
Continuous improvement and reflection Growth mindset Coaching philosophy Well-being and self-care	Caring and positive relationships Emotional intelligence Mutual trust Respectful communication Support of staff and other coaches	Team culture Responsibilities for team and program management Program stability and growth Core values and standards Traditions	Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) Athlete outcomes (competence, confidence, connection, character, caring & compassion, creativity) Optimal learning environments Principles of learning Practice design	Technical skills Tactical skills Rules Physical training and conditioning Rest and recovery Injury prevention Sport psychology Nutrition

Fig. 2 Depicts the core competencies and their sub-competencies.

These competency areas are defined in detail in Table 2.1. They build the framework for coach development. They are further used in assessment processes to identify on which competency areas a coach needs to further focus on in their development and in which they have already achieved satisfactory competency for the respective education level. The continuous development of a coach's capabilities, abilities, knowledge and skills and the resulting consistent application of these during their work with players results in quality coaching.

2.1 COACH COMPETENCY LEVELS

The core competencies serve as the basis for coach education and to guide coaches through a structured progression of knowledge, skills, capability and behaviours - referred to as "competence levels" development. These five levels are novice coach, intermediate coach, competent coach, advanced coach and expert coach (see Fig. 2.1).

COACH COMPETENCY LEVELS				
Novice Coach	Intermediate Coach	Competent Coach	Advanced Coach	Expert Coach

Fig. 2.1 Coach competency levels

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It is important to note that these competence levels should not be mistaken for specific coaching roles or job titles. Rather than defining hierarchical positions or authority within a team or club, each level highlights distinct areas of professional and personal development.

By focusing on personal development, people skills, program leadership, learning facilitation, and sport and performance IQ, this framework enables coaches at any stage in their careers to continuously improve and contribute to a positive, athlete-centred environment.

In general, when talking about coaches or referring to a person who is coaching, the term coach is most widely used, indicating the job/profession/task the person is doing, and not to the expertise level. The expertise or competence level of a coach is identified through the coach competence levels. A coach new to coaching is most likely considering their competency on the level of a novice coach, but may have intermediate, advanced, or even master-level competency in some sub-areas of the core competencies due to prior education, work experience, or involvement in other professional roles. This needs to be recognized during initial competency assessment and informs the development needs of each individual coach. Hence it is of importance that the coach education program utilizes a form of personal development plan connected to the coach core competencies to assess the developmental needs of the coach in question.

Table 2.1 Coach core competency levels with detailed description

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COACH COMPETENCY LEVEL: NOVICE COACH

PEOPLE SKILLS	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	PROGRAM LEADERSHIP	LEARNING FACILITATION	SPORT AND PERFORMANCE IQ
Caring and positive relationships Builds healthy relationships with athletes, staff and other stakeholders and contributes to creating a positive and open environment.	Continuous improvement and reflection Recognizes the value of continuous learning and professional growth. Utilizes relevant development opportunities to enhance coaching knowledge. Interacts with other coaches to exchange ideas and experiences.	Team culture Promotes positive interactions within the team. Promotes trust, respect and inclusivity.	Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) Recognizes the basic principles of LTAD. Identifies the importance of aligning player development with age-appropriate goals.	Technical skills Recognizes basic ice hockey techniques. Provides feedback to players on their technical competencies
Emotional intelligence Listens and supports others. Recognizes and regulates own emotions.	Growth mindset Recognizes that challenges and feedback are opportunities for learning and growth.	Responsibilities for team and program management Contributes based on competency. Identifies basic roles and expectations.	Athlete outcomes (competence, confidence, connection, character, caring & compassion, creativity) Supports safe and organized sessions that promote learning and enjoyment. Provides positive, and encouraging feedback to athletes.	Tactical skills Recognizes basic ice hockey principles (defence and offence).
Mutual trust Recognizes the need to create an environment of mutual trust.	Coaching philosophy N/A	Program stability and growth Recognizes that there is a basic structure and purpose of the program. Follows established program strategies under guidance.	Optimal learning environments Supports the development of positive, safe and enjoyable ice hockey environments, by following established guidelines.	Rules Becomes familiar with the basic rules of the game for the respective age group, fair play, and uses appropriate language with game officials.
Respectful communication Practices clear, honest and respectful language.	Well-being and self-care Recognizes that well-being and self-care is part of good coaching.	Core values and standards Recognizes the program's core values and basic standards. Demonstrates respectful and ethical behavior in interactions.	Principles of learning Supports learning by helping to set up safe and engaging practice conditions.	Physical training and conditioning Recognizes the importance of physical fitness and its impact on player performance.
Support of staff and other coaches Assists and collaborates with the coaching team.		Traditions Recognizes and follows the foundational traditions in team and club setting.	Practice Design N/A	Rest and Recovery Recognizes the importance of rest and recovery (nutrition and sleep) and its impact on player performance.
				Injury prevention Identifies potential risks for injuries in the practice environment.
				Sport psychology Provides positive feedback and praise effort to foster a supportive environment. Is aware of the athlete-centered approach in coaching.
				Nutrition Recognizes the importance of hydration and a balanced diet and its impact on player performance.

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

COACH COMPETENCY LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE COACH

PEOPLE SKILLS	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	PROGRAM LEADERSHIP	LEARNING FACILITATION	SPORT AND PERFORMANCE IQ
Caring and positive relationships Identifys and aligns personal core values with the program's values, supports athletes in developing their values, and demonstrates respect, fairness and integrity in all interactions to enhance trust within the team.	Continuous improvement and reflection Strives for self-improvement by identifying specific areas for growth. Reflects on interactions with colleagues and athletes to identify areas for improvement. Incorporates feedback from peers and supervisors to refine coaching skills. Participates in coach development activities.	Team culture Supports the execution of team building sessions throughout the season. Reinforces trust, respect and inclusivity.	Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) Identifies the physical, cognitive, and emotional needs of players at the current LTAD stage. Aligns developmental activities with player development stages.	Technical skills Demonstrates and gives feedback on basic ice hockey techniques. Explains the difference between skill and technique
Emotional intelligence Recognises the needs of others. Identifies and responds to athletes' emotional needs.	Growth mindset Recognizes the concept of a growth mindset and its role in personal improvements. Recognizes the role of reflection for personal improvement.	Responsibilities for team and program management Supports overall with team and program management through administrative tasks.	Athlete outcomes (competence, confidence, connection, character, caring & compassion, creativity) Develops awareness on the 6 C's and how they support individual athlete development in collaboration with the whole coaching team Identifies differences among athletes and adapts feedback to their needs.	Tactical skills Is able to recognize and explain the four roles in ice hockey (offense with the puck, offense without the puck, defense at the puck, defense away from the puck).
Mutual trust Supports the creation of an open and trusting team environment.	Coaching philosophy Recognizes the importance of having a coaching philosophy and starts developing one to guide decisions and align with personal and program values.	Program stability and growth Applies basic methods for tracking individual session outcomes. Supports program goals by contributing to operational tasks under supervision. Identifies basic progress markers to monitor short-term development within the program.	Optimal learning environments Creates a learning environment that minimizes external distractions. Selects and applies appropriate teaching methods for different contexts. Plans and executes drills that align with player needs. Designs drills that facilitate specific skill development.	Rules Is able to explain the basic rules of the game for the respective age group.
Respectful communication Communicates appropriately with others. Recognizes the importance of asking questions and listening. Engages in two-way communication.	Well-being and self-care Aims to balance coaching, workload, and personal life effectively.	Core values and standards Aligns personal behavior with the program's core values and standards in daily coaching practices. Supports athletes in understanding and upholding the team values.	Principles of learning Recognizes the importance of reflection for development during and after practices. Communicates instructions taking the developmental stage of players into consideration Identifies basic measures of progress and develops simple markers for tracking improvement. Encourages players to reflect on their learning during and after practice sessions through guided questioning.	Physical training and conditioning Conducts safe and appropriate training sessions based on the two key principles of consistency and discipline.

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

COACH COMPETENCY LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE COACH

PEOPLE SKILLS	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	PROGRAM LEADERSHIP	LEARNING FACILITATION	SPORT AND PERFORMANCE IQ
Support of staff and other coaches		Traditions	Practice Design	Rest and Recovery
<p>Supports other coaches and staff of the team through performing and executing assigned tasks carefully.</p> <p>Supports Novice Coaches.</p> <p>Provides feedback and support to peers.</p>		<p>Identifies key traditions and contextual elements of ice hockey that are relevant to the team.</p> <p>Encourages players to appreciate traditions as part of their context.</p>	<p>Identifies purpose for the session and possesses foundational competence in executing pre-designed practices, adapting if necessary.</p>	<p>Promotes the importance of rest and recovery (nutrition and sleep) and its impact on player performance.</p>
				Injury prevention
				<p>Applies basic first aid skills when necessary.</p> <p>Implements warm-up routines to minimize injury risks.</p> <p>Enforces injury prevention rules, including prohibiting injured players from participation.</p>
				Sport psychology
				<p>Applies basic sport psychology techniques in coaching.</p> <p>Creates a safe and supportive environment to enhance athlete well-being.</p>
				Nutrition
				<p>Promotes the importance of a balanced diet, and hydration, and emphasises the avoidance of nutritional supplements and fast food (food first approach).</p>

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

COACH COMPETENCY LEVEL: COMPETENT COACH

PEOPLE SKILLS	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	PROGRAM LEADERSHIP	LEARNING FACILITATION	SPORT AND PERFORMANCE IQ
Caring and positive relationships	Continuous improvement and reflection	Team culture	Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD)	Technical skills
Demonstrates the importance of caring and respectful relationships and interactions to further develop strong and supportive networks within the team. Models integrity and respect in all relationships within the team.	Identifies opportunities for self-development and professional growth. Participates actively in professional development opportunities and encourage others to do the same. Guides other staff in their development through mentoring and feedback.	Organizes team building sessions throughout the season. Is sensitive and responds proactively to other events that occur within the team and the organization. Builds team culture grounded in values.	Sets basic developmental goals tailored to individual and group needs. Designs, implements and adapts training programs aligned with LTAD stages.	Is able to explain and implement the process of skill acquisition and game transfer. Sets session goals to meet the needs of the players. Designs practices with appropriate skill development.
Emotional intelligence	Growth mindset	Responsibilities for team and program management	Athlete outcomes (competence, confidence, connection, character, caring & compassion, creativity)	Tactical skills
Resolves conflicts in a positive manner. Demonstrates empathy, tolerance and connection with different cultural identities.	Applies growth mindset principles when supporting athletes and staff in their development. Reflects on coaching sessions and feedback to identify areas for growth and improvement. Models a growth-oriented attitude by seeking and incorporating constructive feedback. Explains how growth mindset practices benefit individual and team development.	Leads team planning and supports club program management. Defines and communicates clear roles and responsibilities to other team staff.	Organizes sessions effectively to align with developmental goals of individual athletes and the team through acknowledging the 6 C's Observes and analyzes individual player performance to provide targeted feedback that fosters learning. Communicates expectations that challenge and inspire athletes.	Has tactical knowledge and can design practices tailored to individual strengths and weaknesses according to the four roles of ice hockey.
Mutual trust	Coaching philosophy	Program stability and growth	Optimal learning environments	Rules
Creates an open and trusting team environment.	Communicates the current philosophy effectively to athletes, staff, and stakeholders to create alignment and understanding.	Sets and communicates clear team goals. Develops and implements plans to align practices with program goals and growth strategies. Gathers and analyzes progress data to report and make informed adjustments to support program stability.	Creates appropriate player-centred practice and game environments. Evaluates the effectiveness of learning environments and adjusts accordingly.	Knows the rules. Ensures that players are introduced to the rules based on their domain requirements.
Respectful communication	Well-being and self-care	Core values and standards	Principles of learning	Physical training and conditioning
Asks questions and listens. Engages effectively in two-way communication with relevant stakeholders. Establishes clear, consistent, open and respectful team communication.	Prioritizes well-being by scheduling time for self, family, and friends to maintain balance. Applies self-care strategies to maintain mental and physical health. Models healthy self-care habits to athletes and staff.	Aligns team and program values with broader organizational goals. Embeds core values and standards into the team's identity and daily practices. Demonstrates appropriate personal conduct that reflects the program's values. Supports athletes in identifying and developing team values.	Incorporates opportunities for players to reflect on their learning and development. Monitors and adjusts practices based on player feedback and observed outcomes. Recognizes how athletes learn and improve through the environment. Applies various learning principles to reinforce skill acquisition.	Designs and monitors conditioning programs tailored to player needs, based on physiological principles.

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

COACH COMPETENCY LEVEL: COMPETENT COACH

PEOPLE SKILLS	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	PROGRAM LEADERSHIP	LEARNING FACILITATION	SPORT AND PERFORMANCE IQ
Support of staff and other coaches		Traditions	Practice Design	Rest and Recovery
Provides guidance and instruction to novice coaches and intermediate coaches in coaching expertise development, as well as in other situations where support is needed. Leads and supports coaching staff effectively.		Integrates traditions into team identity and culture while questioning outdated practices. Incorporates and adapts traditions to align with the team needs and goals.	Designs practice sessions with specific goals based on long-term player development. Incorporates opportunities for players to take ownership in their development. Reviews and redesigns practices based on player-needs and feedback.	Accounts for rest and recovery (nutrition and sleep) in program scheduling. Guides players in basic recovery strategies.
				Injury prevention
				Evaluates the safety of the practice environment and equipment. Incorporates injury prevention exercises into regular training sessions. Supervises team staff to ensure compliance with safety protocols.
				Sport psychology
				Through coaching behaviours promotes competence, autonomy and relatedness (self-determination theory) in athletes to influence intrinsic motivation.
				Nutrition
				Develops meal plans for tournaments and away games. Is aware of the risks around the use of supplements (Anti-Doping). Integrates nutritional guidance into coaching practice. Engages an expert when and where needed.

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

COACH COMPETENCY LEVEL: ADVANCED COACH

PEOPLE SKILLS	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	PROGRAM LEADERSHIP	LEARNING FACILITATION	SPORT AND PERFORMANCE IQ
Caring and positive relationships Models positive and caring relationships for others within the program. Guides other coaches and staff in fostering trust, respect, and integrity in relationships. Shows strong communication, empathy, and conflict-resolution skills to manage and guide complex team interactions effectively. Promotes a culture of mutual respect and care across the organization.	Continuous improvement and reflection Develops and implements long-term growth strategies for personal and professional development. Mentors peer coaches, fostering their professional growth and reflective practices. Encourages and facilitates a positive community of practice where coaches share philosophies and collaborate. Scopes and participates in advanced professional development activities tailored to individual and team needs.	Team culture Sustains and evolves team culture long-term.	Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) Monitors and adapts player development continuously, ensuring alignment with LTAD principles. Mentors other coaches in applying LTAD principles effectively. Reviews and refines development plans systematically based on feedback and data.	Technical skills Analyzes and optimizes technical skills for individual players.
Emotional intelligence Anticipates to resolve conflicts in a positive manner. Demonstrates and promotes empathy, tolerance and connection with different cultural identities.	Growth mindset Creates learning environments that emphasize effort, persistence, and adaptability. Promotes growth mindset principles as a foundation for long-term development and resilience. Mentors athletes and staff to adopt growth-oriented approaches in their roles. Evaluates and refines team practices to ensure alignment with growth mindset principles.	Responsibilities for team and program management Analyses and adapts team and program management.	Athlete outcomes (competence, confidence, connection, character, caring & compassion, creativity) Monitors the 6 C's continuously and adjust practices as needed. Aligns team practices with a focus on fostering holistic athlete development Mentors other coaches in implementing practices that promote the 6 C's.	Tactical skills Utilizes tactical planning with opponent analysis for strategic advantage including special teams. Adapts tactical play during the game if necessary.
Mutual trust Establishes trust as a core value in team culture. Sustains trust in high-pressure environments.	Coaching philosophy Refines and adapts coaching philosophy through reflection and feedback to address evolving needs.	Program stability and growth Evaluates program strategies and recommends refinements to promote growth and sustainability. Mentors other coaches in aligning their practices with program goals and long-term development plans.	Optimal learning environments Leads and is responsible for optimising the learning environment for a group of teams within an age category.	Rules Thoroughly understands rules and leverages them to enhance team competitiveness.
Respectful communication Demonstrates and supports the implementation of effective questioning. Resolves communication challenges.	Well-being and self-care Ensures consistent scheduling of time for self, family, and friends. Fosters a team culture of social support, health and balance. Supports other coaches on managing workload and prioritizing well-being. Incorporates well-being and self-care strategies into coaching routines.	Core values and standards Evaluates how effectively the team and staff uphold the program's core values and standards and makes adjustments accordingly. Mentors other coaches in integrating core values into their coaching practices and leadership styles.	Principles of learning Adapts learning environments and techniques to meet diverse athlete needs and developmental stages. Mentors other coaches in their application of learning principles.	Physical training and conditioning Creates training plans which integrate physical training and on-ice training into long-term player development. Coordinates with a S & C expert if such is available to work with players/team on a regular basis.

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

COACH COMPETENCY LEVEL: ADVANCED COACH

PEOPLE SKILLS	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	PROGRAM LEADERSHIP	LEARNING FACILITATION	SPORT AND PERFORMANCE IQ
Support of staff and other coaches		Traditions	Practice Design	Rest and Recovery
Develops support frameworks for staff growth.		Evaluates the relevance of existing traditions and adapt them to the team's developmental stage. Influences the evolution of traditions to support inclusive and effective ice hockey practices. Shapes traditions, ensuring alignment with ethical standards and performance goals.	Utilizes principles of periodization to design practices for the whole season. Makes adjustments if necessary during the practice. Critically reviews and redesigns practices based on player-needs and Key Performance Indicators (KPI). Engages players by involving them in the practice planning process.	Accounts for rest and recovery (nutrition and sleep) in seasonal planning.
				Injury prevention
				<p>Designs training programs that incorporate injury prevention strategies.</p> <p>Is aware of injury mechanics and related advanced prevention strategies.</p> <p>Communicates effectively with doctors and physiotherapists about player injuries and readiness to return.</p> <p>Develops tailored injury prevention plans for individual players.</p> <p>Leads the implementation of safety measures in team settings.</p>
				Sport psychology
				<p>Integrates comprehensive psychological tools to optimize individual and team performance.</p> <p>Fosters a culture of psychological resilience and holistic development.</p>
				Nutrition
				<p>Thoroughly understands WADA – Anti-Doping and NADA rules.</p> <p>Aligns advanced nutritional strategies with performance objectives.</p> <p>Consults with a nutrition expert to provide players with nutritional guidance.</p>

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

COACH COMPETENCY LEVEL: EXPERT COACH

PEOPLE SKILLS	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	PROGRAM LEADERSHIP	LEARNING FACILITATION	SPORT AND PERFORMANCE IQ
Caring and positive relationships Mentors coaches and staff in building and maintaining caring and positive relationships. Leads initiatives to establish a culture of respect and trust within the organization. Evaluates and enhances relationship-building practices to align with team and organizational needs. Influences broader coaching communities by sharing effective strategies for building trust and fostering collaboration.	Continuous improvement and reflection Promotes lifelong learning through mentorship on an organizational level. Influences the broader coaching community by organizing and evaluating professional development programs.	Team culture Shapes the culture at organizational level long-term.	Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) Oversees the design and execution of LTAD strategies at a club or organizational level. Critically evaluates LTAD strategies to ensure evidence-based and effective practices.	Technical skills Leads the innovation and dissemination of technical skill development.
Emotional intelligence Anticipates and responds to resolve conflicts in a positive manner. Demonstrates and promotes empathy, tolerance and connection with different cultural identities. Supports others in their emotional intelligence development.	Growth mindset Designs and implements strategies that embed growth mindset principles across teams and the organization.	Responsibilities for team and program management Evolves team and program management.	Athlete outcomes (competence, confidence, connection, character, caring & compassion, creativity) Oversees, evaluates and guides the integration of the 6 C's across the organization and utilizes new strategies for improvement. Leads the development of coaching practices to balance and enhance athlete outcomes across the organization.	Tactical skills Develops innovative tactical systems and mentors others in their implementation. Based on key tactical principles facilitates decision making by players.
Mutual trust Creates an open and trusting working environment. Supports others in fostering trust.	Coaching philosophy Models the application of a mature and consistent coaching philosophy in decision-making and team leadership. Mentors other coaches in creating and refining their own coaching philosophies.	Program stability and growth Designs strategies based on data and research to ensure program growth and sustainability on an organizational level for long-term impact.	Optimal learning environments Leads the development of learning environments at an organisational level. Guides coaches in designing, evaluating, and improving optimal learning environments.	Rules N/A
Respectful communication Supports others in resolving communication challenges.	Wellbeing and self-care Leads and promotes initiatives that advocate for well-being and self-care policies and practices within the organization. Promotes organizational practices that support mental health. Mentors coaches and staff in integrating well-being into their professional and personal lives.	Core values and standards Critiques and refines organizational values to ensure relevance and impact. Leads initiatives to align team and organizational practices with core values while fostering a culture of respect and excellence.	Principles of learning Leads the design and implementation of learning environments across the organization. Evaluates and refines organizational approaches to learning to ensure they align with best principles.	Physical training and conditioning Creates club wide strength and conditioning plans and supports other coaches in this area.

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

COACH COMPETENCY LEVEL: EXPERT COACH

PEOPLE SKILLS	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	PROGRAM LEADERSHIP	LEARNING FACILITATION	SPORT AND PERFORMANCE IQ
Support of staff and other coaches		Traditions	Practice Design	Rest and Recovery
Mentors other coaches.		Shapes the culture at organizational level long-term. Critiques and evaluates traditions within ice hockey to determine their relevance in modern environments. Mentors other coaches in balancing respect for traditions with innovation in the organization.	Evaluates and guides other coaches in creating innovative and effective practice sessions. Stays current and is on top of new trends in ice hockey and beyond, to innovate practice design.	Creates club wide rest and recovery plans and supports other coaches in this area.
				Injury prevention
				Creates comprehensive and innovative injury prevention systems. Influences injury prevention policies and standards. Consults with experts to stay updated on best practices. Supports other coaches on implementing injury prevention strategies.
				Sport psychology
				Creates club wide sport psychology guidelines and supports other coaches in this area.
				Nutrition
				Creates club wide nutrition guidelines and supports other coaches in this area.

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

CORE COMPETENCY: PEOPLE SKILLS

	NOVICE COACH	INTERMEDIATE COACH	COMPETENT COACH	ADVANCED COACH	EXPERT COACH
Caring and positive relationships	Builds healthy relationships with athletes, staff and other stakeholders and contributes to creating a positive and open environment.	Identifies and aligns personal core values with the program's values, supports athletes in developing their values, and demonstrates respect, fairness and integrity in all interactions to enhance trust within the team.	Demonstrates the importance of caring and respectful relationships and interactions to further develop strong and supportive networks within the team. Models integrity and respect in all relationships within the team.	Models positive and caring relationships for others within the program. Guides other coaches and staff in fostering trust, respect, and integrity in relationships. Shows strong communication, empathy, and conflict-resolution skills to manage and guide complex team interactions effectively. Promotes a culture of mutual respect and care across the organization.	Mentors coaches and staff in building and maintaining caring and positive relationships. Leads initiatives to establish a culture of respect and trust within the organization. Evaluates and enhances relationship-building practices to align with team and organizational needs. Influences broader coaching communities by sharing effective strategies for building trust and fostering collaboration.
Emotional intelligence	Listens and supports others. Recognizes and regulates own emotions.	Recognize the needs of others. Identifies and responds to athletes' emotional needs.	Resolves conflicts in a positive manner. Demonstrates empathy, tolerance and connection with different cultural identities.	Anticipates to resolve conflicts in a positive manner. Demonstrates and promotes empathy, tolerance and connection with different cultural identities.	Anticipates and responds to resolve conflicts in a positive manner. Demonstrates and promotes empathy, tolerance and connection with different cultural identities. Supports others in their emotional intelligence development.
Mutual trust	Recognizes the need to create an environment of mutual trust.	Supports the creation of an open and trusting team environment.	Creates an open and trusting team environment.	Establishes trust as a core value in team culture. Sustains trust in high-pressure environments.	Creates an open and trusting working environment. Supports others in fostering trust

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

CORE COMPETENCY: PEOPLE SKILLS

	NOVICE COACH	INTERMEDIATE COACH	COMPETENT COACH	ADVANCED COACH	EXPERT COACH
Respectful communication	Practices clear, honest and respectful language.	Communicates appropriately with others. Recognizes the importance of asking questions and listening. Engages in two-way communication.	Asks questions and listens. Engages effectively in two-way communication with relevant stakeholders. Establishes clear, consistent, open and respectful team communication.	Demonstrates and supports the implementation of effective questioning. Resolves communication challenges.	Supports others in resolving communication challenges.
Support of staff and other coaches	Assists and collaborates with the coaching team.	Supports other coaches and staff of the team through performing and executing assigned tasks carefully. Supports Novice Coaches. Provides feedback and support to peers.	Provides guidance and instruction to novice coaches and intermediate coaches in coaching expertise development, as well as in other situations where support is needed. Leads and supports coaching staff effectively.	Develops support frameworks for staff growth.	Mentors other coaches.

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CORE COMPETENCY: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

	NOVICE COACH	INTERMEDIATE COACH	COMPETENT COACH	ADVANCED COACH	EXPERT COACH
Continuous improvement and reflection	<p>Recognizes the value of continuous learning and professional growth.</p> <p>Utilizes relevant development opportunities to enhance coaching knowledge.</p> <p>Interacts with other coaches to exchange ideas and experiences.</p>	<p>Strives for self-improvement by identifying specific areas for growth.</p> <p>Reflects on interactions with colleagues and athletes to identify areas for improvement.</p> <p>Incorporates feedback from peers and supervisors to refine coaching skills.</p> <p>Participates in coach development activities.</p>	<p>Identifies opportunities for self-development and professional growth.</p> <p>Participates actively in professional development opportunities and encourage others to do the same.</p> <p>Guides other staff in their development through mentoring and feedback.</p>	<p>Develops and implements long-term growth strategies for personal and professional development.</p> <p>Mentors peer coaches, fostering their professional growth and reflective practices.</p> <p>Encourages and facilitates a positive community of practice where coaches share philosophies and collaborate.</p> <p>Scopes and participates in advanced professional development activities tailored to individual and team needs.</p>	<p>Promotes lifelong learning through mentorship on an organizational level.</p> <p>Influences the broader coaching community by organizing and evaluating professional development programs.</p>
Growth mindset	<p>Recognizes that challenges and feedback are opportunities for learning and growth.</p>	<p>Recognizes the concept of a growth mindset and its role in personal improvements.</p> <p>Recognizes the role of reflection for personal improvement.</p>	<p>Applies growth mindset principles when supporting athletes and staff in their development.</p> <p>Reflects on coaching sessions and feedback to identify areas for growth and improvement.</p> <p>Models a growth-oriented attitude by seeking and incorporating constructive feedback.</p> <p>Explains how growth mindset practices benefit individual and team development.</p>	<p>Creates learning environments that emphasize effort, persistence, and adaptability.</p> <p>Promotes growth mindset principles as a foundation for long-term development and resilience.</p> <p>Mentors athletes and staff to adopt growth-oriented approaches in their roles.</p> <p>Evaluates and refines team practices to ensure alignment with growth mindset principles.</p>	<p>Designs and implements strategies that embed growth mindset principles across teams and the organization.</p>

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CORE COMPETENCY: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

	NOVICE COACH	INTERMEDIATE COACH	COMPETENT COACH	ADVANCED COACH	EXPERT COACH
Coaching philosophy	N/A	Recognizes the importance of having a coaching philosophy and starts developing one to guide decisions and align with personal and program values.	Communicates the current philosophy effectively to athletes, staff, and stakeholders to create alignment and understanding.	Refines and adapts the coaching philosophy through reflection and feedback to address evolving needs.	Models the application of a mature and consistent coaching philosophy in decision-making and team leadership. Mentors other coaches in creating and refining their own coaching philosophies.
Well-being and self-care	Recognizes that well-being and self-care is part of good coaching.	Aims to balance coaching, workload, and personal life effectively.	Prioritizes well-being by scheduling time for self, family, and friends to maintain balance. Applies self-care strategies to maintain mental and physical health. Models healthy self-care habits to athletes and staff.	Ensures consistent scheduling of time for self, family, and friends. Fosters a team culture of social support, health and balance. Supports other coaches on managing workload and prioritizing well-being. Incorporates well-being and self-care strategies into coaching routines.	Leads and promotes initiatives that advocate for well-being and self-care policies and practices within the organization. Promotes organizational practices that support mental health. Mentors coaches and staff in integrating well-being into their professional and personal lives.

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

CORE COMPETENCY: PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

	NOVICE COACH	INTERMEDIATE COACH	COMPETENT COACH	ADVANCED COACH	EXPERT COACH
Team culture	Promotes positive interactions within the team. Promotes trust, respect and inclusivity.	Supports the execution of team building sessions throughout the season. Reinforces trust, respect and inclusivity.	Organizes team building sessions throughout the season. Is sensitive and responds proactively to other events that occur within the team and the organization. Builds team culture grounded in values.	Sustains and evolves team culture long-term.	Shapes the culture at organizational level long-term.
Responsibilities for team and program management	Contributes based on competency. Identifies basic roles and expectations.	Supports overall with team and program management through administrative tasks.	Leads team planning and supports club program management. Defines and communicates clear roles and responsibilities to other team staff.	Analyses and adapts team and program management.	Evolves team and program management.
Program stability and growth	Recognizes that there is a basic structure and purpose of the program. Follows established program strategies under guidance.	Applies basic methods for tracking individual session outcomes. Supports program goals by contributing to operational tasks under supervision. Identifies basic progress markers to monitor short-term development within the program.	Sets and communicates clear team goals. Develops and implements plans to align practices with program goals and growth strategies. Gathers and analyzes progress data to report and make informed adjustments to support program stability.	Evaluates program strategies and recommends refinements to promote growth and sustainability. Mentors other coaches in aligning their practices with program goals and long-term development plans.	Designs strategies based on data and research to ensure program growth and sustainability on an organizational level for long-term impact.

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CORE COMPETENCY: PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

	NOVICE COACH	INTERMEDIATE COACH	COMPETENT COACH	ADVANCED COACH	EXPERT COACH
Core values and standards	<p>Recognizes the program's core values and basic standards.</p> <p>Demonstrates respectful and ethical behavior in interactions.</p>	<p>Aligns personal behavior with the program's core values and standards in daily coaching practices.</p> <p>Supports athletes in understanding and upholding the team values.</p>	<p>Aligns team and program values with broader organizational goals.</p> <p>Embeds core values and standards into the team's identity and daily practices.</p> <p>Demonstrates appropriate personal conduct that reflects the program's values.</p> <p>Supports athletes in identifying and developing team values.</p>	<p>Evaluates how effectively the team and staff uphold the program's core values and standards and makes adjustments accordingly.</p> <p>Mentors other coaches in integrating core values into their coaching practices and leadership styles.</p>	<p>Critiques and refines organizational values to ensure relevance and impact.</p> <p>Leads initiatives to align team and organizational practices with core values while fostering a culture of respect and excellence.</p>
Traditions	<p>Recognizes and follows the foundational traditions in team and club setting.</p>	<p>Identifies key traditions and contextual elements of ice hockey that are relevant to the team.</p> <p>Encourages players to appreciate traditions as part of their context.</p>	<p>Integrates traditions into team identity and culture while questioning outdated practices.</p> <p>Incorporates and adapts traditions to align with the team needs and goals.</p>	<p>Evaluates the relevance of existing traditions and adapt them to the team's developmental stage.</p> <p>Influences the evolution of traditions to support inclusive and effective ice hockey practices.</p> <p>Shapes traditions, ensuring alignment with ethical standards and performance goals.</p>	<p>Shapes the culture at organizational level long-term.</p> <p>Critiques and evaluates traditions within ice hockey to determine their relevance in modern environments.</p> <p>Mentors other coaches in balancing respect for traditions with innovation in the organization.</p>

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CORE COMPETENCY: LEARNING FACILITATION

	NOVICE COACH	INTERMEDIATE COACH	COMPETENT COACH	ADVANCED COACH	EXPERT COACH
Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD)	<p>Recognizes the basic principles of LTAD.</p> <p>Identifies the importance of aligning player development with age-appropriate goals.</p>	<p>Identifies the physical, cognitive, and emotional needs of players at the current LTAD stage.</p> <p>Aligns developmental activities with player development stages.</p>	<p>Sets basic developmental goals tailored to individual and group needs.</p> <p>Designs, implements and adapts training programs aligned with LTAD stages.</p>	<p>Monitors and adapts player development continuously, ensuring alignment with LTAD principles.</p> <p>Mentors other coaches in applying LTAD principles effectively.</p> <p>Reviews and refines development plans systematically based on feedback and data.</p>	<p>Oversees the design and execution of LTAD strategies at a club or organizational level.</p> <p>Critically evaluates LTAD strategies to ensure evidence-based and effective practices.</p>
Athlete outcomes (competence, confidence, connection, character, caring & compassion, creativity)	<p>Supports safe and organized sessions that promote learning and enjoyment.</p> <p>Provides positive, and encouraging feedback to athletes.</p>	<p>Develops awareness on the 6 C's and how they support individual athlete development in collaboration with the whole coaching team</p> <p>Identifies differences among athletes and adapt feedback to their needs.</p>	<p>Organizes sessions effectively to align with developmental goals of individual athletes and the team through acknowledging the 6 C's</p> <p>Observes and analyzes individual player performance to provide targeted feedback that fosters learning.</p> <p>Communicates expectations that challenge and inspire athletes.</p>	<p>Monitors the 6 C's continuously and adjust practices as needed.</p> <p>Aligns team practices with a focus on fostering holistic athlete development.</p> <p>Mentors other coaches in implementing practices that promote the 6 C's.</p>	<p>Oversees, evaluates and guides the integration of the 6 C's across the organization and utilizes new strategies for improvement.</p> <p>Leads the development of coaching practices to balance and enhance athlete outcomes across the organization.</p>
Optimal learning environments	<p>Supports the development of positive, safe and enjoyable ice hockey environments, by following established guidelines.</p>	<p>Creates a learning environment that minimizes external distractions.</p> <p>Selects and applies appropriate teaching methods for different contexts.</p> <p>Plans and executes drills that align with player needs.</p> <p>Designs drills that facilitate specific skill development.</p>	<p>Creates appropriate player-centred practice and game environments.</p> <p>Evaluates the effectiveness of learning environments and adjusts accordingly.</p>	<p>Leads and is responsible for optimising the learning environment for a group of teams within an age category.</p>	<p>Leads the development of learning environments at an organizational level.</p> <p>Guides coaches in designing, evaluating, and improving optimal learning environments.</p>

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

CORE COMPETENCY: LEARNING FACILITATION

	NOVICE COACH	INTERMEDIATE COACH	COMPETENT COACH	ADVANCED COACH	EXPERT COACH
Principles of learning	Supports learning by helping to set up safe and engaging practice conditions.	Recognizes the importance of reflection for development during and after practices. Communicates instructions taking the developmental stage of players into consideration Identifies basic measures of progress and develops simple markers for tracking improvement. Encourages players to reflect on their learning during and after practice sessions through guided questioning.	Incorporates opportunities for players to reflect on their learning and development. Monitors and adjusts practices based on player feedback and observed outcomes. Recognizes how athletes learn and improve through the environment. Applies various learning principles to reinforce skill acquisition.	Adapts learning environments and techniques to meet diverse athlete needs and developmental stages. Mentors other coaches in their application of learning principles.	Leads the design and implementation of learning environments across the organization. Evaluates and refines organizational approaches to learning to ensure they align with best principles.
Practice Design	N/A	Identifies purpose for the session and possesses foundational competence in executing pre-designed practices, adapting if necessary.	Designs practice sessions with specific goals based on long-term player development. Incorporates opportunities for players to take ownership in their development. Reviews and redesigns practices based on player-needs and feedback.	Utilizes principles of periodization to design practices for the whole season. Makes adjustments if necessary during the practice. Critically reviews and redesigns practices based on player-needs and Key Performance Indicators (KPI). Engages players by involving them in the practice planning process.	Evaluates and guides other coaches in creating innovative and effective practice sessions. Stays current and is on top of new trends in ice hockey and beyond, to innovate practice design.

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

CORE COMPETENCY: SPORT AND PERFORMANCE IQ (ICE HOCKEY SPECIFIC AND GENERAL)

	NOVICE COACH	INTERMEDIATE COACH	COMPETENT COACH	ADVANCED COACH	EXPERT COACH
Technical skills	Recognizes basic ice hockey techniques. Provides feedback to players on their technical competencies	Demonstrates and gives feedback on basic ice hockey techniques. Explains the difference between skill and technique	Is able to explain and implement the process of skill acquisition and game transfer. Sets session goals to meet the needs of the players. Designs practices with appropriate skill development.	Analyzes and optimizes technical skills for individual players.	Leads the innovation and dissemination of technical skill development.
Tactical skills	Recognizes basic ice hockey principles (defence and offence).	Is able to recognize and explain the four roles in ice hockey (offense with the puck, offense without the puck, defense at the puck, defense away from the puck).	Has tactical knowledge and can design practices tailored to individual strengths and weaknesses according to the four roles of ice hockey.	Utilizes tactical planning with opponent analysis for strategic advantage including special teams. Adapts tactical play during the game if necessary.	Develops innovative tactical systems and mentors others in their implementation. Based on key tactical principles facilitates decision making by players.
Rules	Becomes familiar with the basic rules of the game for the respective age group, fair play, use appropriate language with game officials.	Is able to explain the basic rules of the game for the respective age group.	Knows the rules. Ensures that players are introduced to the rules based on their domain requirements.	Thoroughly understands rules and leverages them to enhance team competitiveness.	N/A
Physical training and conditioning	Recognizes the importance of physical fitness and its impact on player performance.	Conducts safe and appropriate training sessions based on the two key principles of consistency and discipline.	Designs and monitors conditioning programs tailored to player needs, based on physiological principles.	Creates training plans which integrate physical training and on-ice training into long-term player development. Coordinates with a S & C expert if such is available to work with players/team on a regular basis.	Creates club wide strength and conditioning plans and supports other coaches in this area.
Rest and Recovery	Recognizes the importance of rest and recovery (nutrition and sleep) and its impact on player performance.	Promotes the importance of rest and recovery (nutrition and sleep) and its impact on player performance.	Accounts for rest and recovery (nutrition and sleep) in program scheduling. Guides players in basic recovery strategies.	Accounts for rest and recovery (nutrition and sleep) in seasonal planning.	Creates club wide rest and recovery plans and supports other coaches in this area.

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

CORE COMPETENCY: SPORT AND PERFORMANCE IQ (ICE HOCKEY SPECIFIC AND GENERAL)

	NOVICE COACH	INTERMEDIATE COACH	COMPETENT COACH	ADVANCED COACH	EXPERT COACH
Injury prevention	Identifies potential risks for injuries in the practice environment.	Applies basic first aid skills when necessary. Implements warm-up routines to minimize injury risks. Enforces injury prevention rules, including prohibiting injured players from participation.	Evaluates the safety of the practice environment and equipment. Incorporates injury prevention exercises into regular training sessions. Supervises team staff to ensure compliance with safety protocols.	Designs training programs that incorporate injury prevention strategies. Is aware of injury mechanics and related advanced prevention strategies. Communicates effectively with doctors and physiotherapists about player injuries and readiness to return. Develops tailored injury prevention plans for individual players. Leads the implementation of safety measures in team settings.	Creates comprehensive and innovative injury prevention systems. Influences injury prevention policies and standards. Consults with experts to stay updated on best practices. Supports other coaches on implementing injury prevention strategies.
Sport psychology	Provides positive feedback and praise effort to foster a supportive environment. Is aware of the athlete-centered approach in coaching.	Applies basic sport psychology techniques in coaching. Creates a safe and supportive environment to enhance athlete well-being.	Through coaching behaviours promotes competence, autonomy and relatedness (self-determination theory) in athletes to influence intrinsic motivation.	Integrates comprehensive psychological tools to optimize individual and team performance. Fosters a culture of psychological resilience and holistic development.	Creates club wide sport psychology guidelines and supports other coaches in this area.
Nutrition	Recognizes the importance of hydration and a balanced diet and its impact on player performance.	Promotes the importance of a balanced diet, and hydration, and emphasises the avoidance of nutritional supplements and fast food (food first approach).	Develops meal plans for tournaments and away games. Is aware of the risks around the use of supplements (Anti-Doping). Integrates nutritional guidance into coaching practice. Engages an expert when and where needed.	Thoroughly understands WADA – Anti-Doping and NADA rules. Aligns advanced nutritional strategies with performance objectives. Consults with a nutrition expert to provide players with nutritional guidance.	Creates club wide nutrition guidelines and supports other coaches in this area.

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

As already mentioned, coaches on their development journey find themselves at different levels with respect to their expertise level concerning the different core competencies. Hence it is of importance to assess a coach's competency levels at the beginning of their education journey and throughout to ensure that areas needing improvement are emphasized throughout the development process.

2.2 EXAMPLE COACH COMPETENCY STORIES

The example stories for a novice, intermediate, competent, advanced, and expert coach below provide examples of how a coach emulates their coaching competencies in their daily coaching work, at all times recognizing the individual needs of their players and adjusting their coaching to meet those. As a reminder, a coach can have varying competence levels in the different core competencies based on their prior learning, education, work experience and capabilities.

NOVICE COACH

A Day in the Life of a Novice Coach:

Coach Alex's Story

Coach Alex begins each practice by greeting every player with a smile and a quick “How are you today?” Although still new to coaching, Alex understands that caring and respectful communication forms the foundation of a positive team environment. Before stepping onto the ice, Alex checks in briefly with the assistant coach, confirming the day's objectives and making sure everyone feels included.

During practice, Alex uses straightforward drills to introduce basic skating and puck-handling skills, as well as game-based activities to create versatile learning environments for the players. If a player struggles, Alex slows down the pace and demonstrates the technique step by step, providing simple, encouraging feedback like “Great job getting lower on that turn!” Mistakes are seen as learning opportunities, and Alex's priority is to create a safe, supportive atmosphere. When frustrations arise—maybe a player misses several shots in a row—Alex listens empathetically, offering calm reassurance and practical tips.

After each session, Alex pauses to reflect on what went well and what could be improved, whether it's better explaining a drill or reinforcing team values like fair play. Off the ice, Alex stays open to new ideas by reading coaching articles and checking in with more experienced staff for insights. Though still mastering the basics of ice hockey's technical and tactical aspects, Alex's genuine care and willingness to learn lay a solid foundation for growth as a novice coach. This includes recognizing the individual needs of his players and using appropriate pedagogical strategies to support their learning.



INTERMEDIATE COACH

A Day in the Life of an Intermediate Coach:

Coach Bella's Story

Bella arrives at the rink with a clear plan in mind, having moved beyond the purely reactive style of her novice days. Before practice, she briefly reviews the weekly training goals—focusing on skill refinement, consistent effort, and positive team culture. She's also taken on some administrative tasks, such as updating player attendance and noting each athlete's progress in passing accuracy or skating endurance.

When the team hits the ice, Bella balances skill development with engaging, small-area games. She notices if a player looks anxious or lacks motivation, taking a few moments at the bench for a supportive chat. Where Bella used to simply demonstrate drills, she now encourages players to think tactically - asking questions like "How can we create more passing options in the offensive zone?" She also mentors a Level 1 assistant coach, letting them lead warm-ups or run short drills while Bella observes and offers constructive feedback afterward.

After practice, Bella shares her observations with the head coach and fellow staff, noting any recommended adjustments to future sessions. She's also more conscious of guiding players toward healthy habits off the ice—reminding them about rest, balanced nutrition, and ongoing skill practice. Bella's growth is evident in the way she mixes supportive coaching with clear expectations, laying strong groundwork for continued team development. She further pays special attention to not only prepare for but continuously implement pedagogical strategies which support individual player development.



COMPETENT COACH

A Day in the Life of a Competent Coach:

Coach Morgan's Story

Coach Morgan has evolved into a leader who shapes each practice around the bigger picture—long-term goals, individual player needs, advanced tactics, and staff mentorship. Before the players arrive, Morgan holds a quick planning chat with the assistant coaches, ensuring everyone knows their roles. Once on the ice, she runs more complex drills, focusing on situational awareness (e.g., how to handle odd-man rushes or set up precise break-outs). She frequently challenges the team to adapt, stopping a drill mid-flow to ask, “What options did you have for passing lanes there?”

Morgan also pays close attention to team dynamics: if she notices conflicts or a dip in morale, she'll address it calmly but firmly, keeping the conversation solution focused. Her role isn't just about teaching hockey skills; it's about fostering leadership qualities among her older players and coaching staff. She'll often debrief with assistant coaches' post-practice, identifying what worked, what didn't, and how to not only refine drills and game-based practices but also to support the individual development of each player for the next session.

An added layer of Morgan's day involves integrating off-ice elements such as basic sport psychology principles, ensuring that players build not only physical but also mental resilience. By connecting daily practice details to the broader season plan, Morgan maintains overall program continuity. She's both an on-ice strategist and a supportive mentor who guides her team—and fellow coaches—toward greater confidence, creativity, and character.



ADVANCED COACH

A Day in the Life of an Advanced Coach:

Coach Jordan's Story

Coach Jordan exemplifies a blend of tactical sophistication and human-centered leadership. Early in the day, he might meet briefly with the training staff to align on players' physical conditioning and any ongoing injury concerns. On the ice, his practice sessions are designed to push boundaries—high-tempo drills mimicking real-game pressure as well as challenging game-based activities, combined with strategic pauses where Jordan invites athletes to diagnose issues themselves.

Having experienced the pitfalls of rigid coaching in the past, Jordan now adapts fluidly. If a practice seems too easy, he modifies the constraints to up the challenge; if players look frustrated, he offers calm, constructive feedback that focuses on the positive steps they've already taken. This balance of empathy and high standards defines his coaching style. He also mentors his assistant coaches, observing how they communicate and organize drills, then following up with targeted feedback that sharpens their coaching instincts.

Outside of practice, Jordan stays connected with broader club activities—whether it's coordinating with a sports psychologist for mental-skills workshops or discussing new nutritional guidelines with the team. He sees himself as part of a larger coaching ecosystem, where continuous learning and shared expertise elevate everyone's performance. Jordan's advanced-level coaching approach seamlessly weaves pedagogical competency, individual player development, tactical rigor, mental preparation, and leadership development into each practice session.



EXPERT COACH

A Day in the Life of an Expert Coach:

Coach Taylor's Story

As an expert coach, Coach Taylor is recognized not just within her team but across the club for her transformative impact. She starts the day by checking in with multiple age-group coaches, ensuring the broader development pathway remains consistent. Taylor firmly believes that expert coaching includes empowering others, so she holds short, targeted workshops on topics like updated pedagogical insights, offensive strategies or new research in sport psychology.

When her own team hits the ice, Taylor's calm authority sets the tone. She uses a challenging combination of game-based activities and situational drills that require players to think critically on the fly, often pausing to ask, "What are we missing here?" This sparks collaborative problem-solving, pushing players to find solutions rather than wait for a top-down directive. Off the ice, she takes time to consult with analytics staff, reviewing performance trends and identifying areas for improvement, be it decision-making by players, puck possession late in games or penalty-kill efficiency.

Taylor's influence extends beyond tactics; she collaborates with the club's leadership on everything from facility upgrades to community outreach programs that promote hockey at the grassroots level. Other coaches actively seek her guidance, knowing she combines research-based innovations with a people-first philosophy. In her drive for excellence, Taylor never loses sight of the athletes' holistic well-being, making her approach both cutting-edge and deeply respectful of individual needs.



Summary: A Balanced Progression from a Novice Coach to an Expert Coach

Each level's story maintains a focus on healthy, realistic coaching practices without emphasizing early or late work hours. The coach evolves from a warm, curious novice coach to an intermediate coach who balances skill-building and basic leadership, then to a competent mentor and organizer. At the Advanced Coach level, coaching becomes both strategic and empathetic, integrating advanced training techniques with real-time adaptability. Finally, the expert coach leads at both team and organizational levels, driving innovation, mentorship, and holistic athlete development. This balanced approach shows that coaches at higher levels can be both highly effective and mindful of the broader well-being of players, staff, and themselves.

3. COACH EDUCATION PROGRAM DESIGN

The aim of this framework is to provide guidance for the design and delivery of coach education within MNAs but is at the same time flexible enough so that individual needs and circumstances of MNAs can be considered. In addition to providing guidance on design and delivery of coach education program, it functions as a tool to evaluate and assess the quality of an already existing coach education program of an MNA.

3.1 HOW TO GET STARTED

To run a coach education program, each MNA needs to thoroughly evaluate its existing coaching workforce and their educational needs. These needs are shaped by the composition of the player pool within the MNA and its clubs, as well as the current coach developer and educator workforce. Additionally, ice hockey growth plans need to be taken into consideration when evaluating the current workforce of coach developers and coaches. If the MNA and clubs are targeting to grow the player pool within the nation, this has a direct implication on the need for more coaches, more coach developers and additional coach education program offers.

It is important to note that the designing of coach education programs does not need to be done alone. The IIHF highly encourages the MNAs to utilize IIHF development and education programs as well as cooperation with local education institutions, organizations, national governing bodies within the sport landscape as well as international organizations, such as the International Council for Coaching Excellence and the World Anti-Doping Agency.

3.2 GOALS OF A COACH EDUCATION PROGRAM AND DESIRED LEARNING OUTCOMES

The goals of a coach education program are to develop coaches who will create effective learning environments for players to thrive in, and to cater to the different needs of the participating coaches. The goals of the coach education program are hence intrinsically linked to the desired learning outcomes and the core competencies of coaches. Through implementing a competency-based coach education program coaches will develop, nurture and transform their coaching capabilities.

3.3 DEFINING ASSESSMENT BASED ON DESIRED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Instead of moving directly from desired learning outcomes to content creation, it is crucial to determine how learning of the coaches will be assessed. The learning outcome is what the coach will be able to do upon completion of the coach education and hence it is important to be able to assess knowledge, skill and behaviour change. For example, a written exam will only assess knowledge, and thus on-site assessment for skill and behaviour changes is required. Different assessment methods can and should be used within the coach education program, these can include for example, formative, peer-led, portfolio-based assessment. More information on assessment can be found in chapter 6.

3.4 DESIRED LEARNING OUTCOMES BASED ON THE CORE COMPETENCIES

The learning outcomes for each coach education program level have been designed based on the Core Competencies (as already described in Chapter 2).

Core competencies

- Personal development
- People skills
- Program leadership
- Learning facilitation
- Sport and Performance IQ

Core competencies reflect what the coach should be able to do once they have completed the respective coach education level. Desired learning outcomes further provide the participating coaches with insights on the contents covered as part of the coach education level, and the coach developers with a tool to assess a coach's competency against. However, it is necessary to recognize that learning and development is a continuous process which is not limited to when a coach attends a formal coach education program but includes all learning situations. Coach Developers therefore will assess development and learning progression in collaboration with the coach.

All MNAs have their own context, and the number of levels and scope may depend on the financial resources, number of coach developers, coaching workforce and the number of players. In the beginning, a two-level coach education program might suffice. This two-level coach education program can then be extended to a three-level education program when possible and needed. Regardless, the MNAs have a responsibility to develop ice hockey in their nation and therefore should start with something small rather than not have anything.

MNAs with a larger coach workforce as well as a coach developer numbers, and a bigger player pool might decide to directly implement a three-level coach education program.

See chapter 4 for example coach education program structures.

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To achieve the identified learning outcomes of the coach education program it will take a certain amount of time. The more time is allocated for each level the deeper each core competency can be focused on, and coaches will develop their competencies. For this reason, no hour duration is allocated to each level, however, the coach education program has to comply to the IIHF MPS. Development of expertise and learning does not follow a linear progression, and this document does not assume so.

The Learning Outcomes have been identified for Novice Coach, Intermediate Coach and Competent Coach to align with the 2-level and 3-level Coach Education Program structures presented in this document. The Learning Outcomes for each core competency progress and deepen from Novice Coach to Competent Coach.

Learning Outcomes: What Novice Coaches Aim to Achieve

Develop People Skills: Communicate clearly, show empathy, and build mutual trust.

Foster Personal Growth: Embrace continuous learning, reflection, and self-care.

Lead Within a Program: Support the team's culture, values, and established guidelines.

Facilitate Effective Learning: Align practice activities with age-appropriate goals and ensure a safe, positive environment.

Enhance Ice Hockey-Specific Knowledge: Recognize key technical and tactical principles, describe essential rules, and emphasize holistic player well-being.

Demonstrates good conduct and adherence to the IIHF Integrity Pillars.

Learning Outcomes: Intermediate Coaches Aim to Achieve

Strengthen People Skills: Align personal and team values, build trust, and respond to players' emotional needs with respectful, two-way communication.

Advance Personal Growth: Utilize reflection and feedback to refine coaching methods, begin shaping a personal coaching philosophy, and maintain work-life balance.

Support Program Leadership: Assist in creating a positive team culture and help manage administrative duties while reinforcing core values and traditions.

Facilitate Development: Recognize players' LTAD stages, adapt practices to individual needs, and encourage reflective learning that enhances the 6 C's.

Increase Ice Hockey-Specific Knowledge: Provide constructive feedback on fundamental technical skills and tactics, understand the rules, emphasize conditioning, injury prevention, and the importance of balanced nutrition and recovery.

Applies IIHF Integrity pillars consistently in practice and guides players and others towards good conduct at all times.

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Learning Outcomes: Competent Coaches Aim to Achieve

Refine People Skills: Maintain respectful, culturally aware interactions, build trust, and mentor staff.

Advance Personal Development: Model a growth mindset and uphold a clear coaching philosophy.

Lead Successful Programs: Coordinate team culture and goals, manage responsibilities, and embed core values to ensure ongoing stability and growth.

Facilitate Meaningful Learning: Align sessions with LTAD principles, the 6 C's, and learning theories to maximize player development.

Deepen Sport Knowledge: Strengthen technical, tactical, and physical training expertise; proactively integrate safety, supports basic psychological needs, and nutrition to support holistic player performance.

Exercises good conduct at all times and integrates education on the IIHF Integrity pillars for players and other stakeholders consistently in practice.

These Learning Outcomes are informing assessment which focusses on evidencing learning and development progression of a coach.

3.5 COACH DEVELOPMENT

The athlete-centred coach takes the needs and abilities of their players as a priority during the development process, as well as taking care of their own well-being to be able to execute their job to the highest professional standard.

The following chapter will focus on how coaches learn, acquire knowledge, transform and apply their knowledge in their everyday working environment.

The development path of a coach from novice or beginner stage with no or only little coaching experience to an expert coach takes a long time, is a non-linear process and includes formal, non-formal and informal learning.

For coach development to be effective, it has to meet the needs of the learners, in this case the coaches. Coaches should also be encouraged to take ownership for their own development. This will increase their motivation, interest and willingness to develop and become better as coaches and human beings. Effective coach development equips the coach with competencies, abilities, knowledge and skills to develop players in their charge and provides the coaches with information for their coaching context. Expert coaches might hold a formal coach education/development certification degree equivalent to the Expert Coach category, but this does not necessarily apply to all. Other expert coaches might not have attended a formal coach education/development opportunity within their sports federation targeted at this high level but have acquired their expertise through informal (e. g., on-the-job learning, watching videos)

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and non-formal (e. g., coaching symposium) learning situations. It is the decision of the MNA what type of education path (formal, informal, non-formal and any combination thereof) needs to be completed by coaches in order to be deemed an expert coach.

3.6 COACHING ENVIRONMENTS

Most coaches work mainly in either one of the two coaching categories, participation or performance. Here they work with players in different domains, children, adolescents, adults, emerging players, performance players or high-performance players (see Fig. 3.6). However, some coaches might work with several teams across coaching categories and domains, which directly informs the depth and breadth of their required core competencies and essential coaching knowledge.

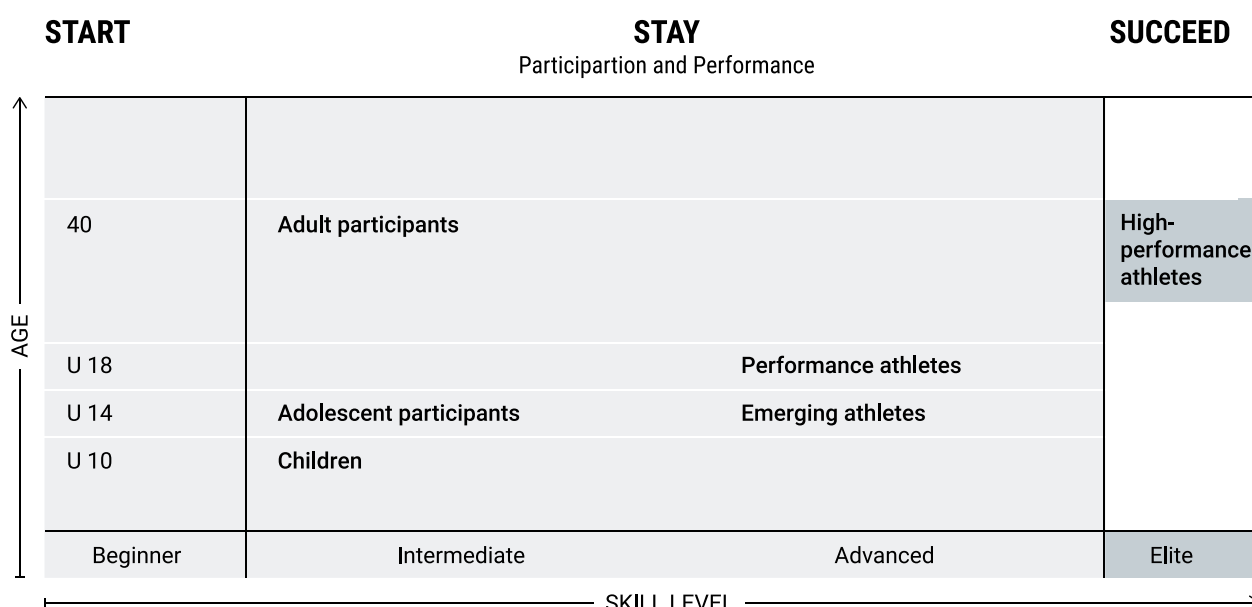


Figure 3.6. Coaching categories and domains as identified in the IIHF PDG.

So, coaches are coaching in a recreational, developmental or high-performance context. The demands on the knowledge and expertise, the what- and how-to coach, differ between these contexts, hence it is important for coaches to continuously engage in continuous professional development, and for the coach education program to reflect this need and to offer courses and modules to coaches in these contexts to support their expertise development.

Table 3.6 Examples of formal, non-formal and informal learning

Mediated Learning	Unmediated Learning:
<p>Formal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach education • Coaching degrees • Coach certification or re-certification courses <p>Non-Formal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinics • Symposia • Conferences • Continuous professional development • Mentoring agreement 	<p>Informal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reflection • Observing other coaches • Reading coaching related literature • Watching videos • Podcasts • Discussions with other coaches • Everyday experiences

Coaches develop their coaching expertise over a long period through application of a combination of different learning methods. This includes self-reflection, identification of own strengths and weaknesses and areas for development, as well as overseeing their own learning.

Examples of preferred learning methods of coaches are:

- Mentoring by an expert coach
- Peer-and self-assessment
- Reflection
- Practical work-experiences
- On-the-job training
- Practical assessment
- Evaluation and feedback
- Self-assessment

This is not to say that formal coaching degrees and coach education courses are not valuable learning methods, but the delivery method of these formal learning opportunities is often not meeting the needs of the coaches. Coaches very often prefer learning methods where knowledge is connected to practice. An online survey is an easy and inexpensive way to shed light onto the previous knowledge and experience of the coaching force within an MNA and of the preferred way of learning of the coaches. The MNAs could send out a short online survey to all registered coaches to collect valuable information when planning their Coach Development Program, syllabus and course design. This would help the MNAs during the design process of the Coach Development Program to incorporate a degree of flexibility and choice into the program, to recognize that coaches come to coaching with diverse backgrounds and prior expertise and experience.

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The strength of formal coach education is that the materials used, the content provided and the learning situations that are created are vetted by coach education professionals. When attending a formal coach education program coaches find themselves among other like-minded coaches who are driven by the passion to better themselves. This creates the opportunity for meaningful discussions, exchange of ideas and learning from each other. It is also a time effective way to develop oneself because of the pre-designed content and structure of formal coach education, which eliminates the need for coaches to search for reliable and high-quality information themselves.

3.7 ASSESSMENT

At this point it is vital for the MNA to assess their own coach education program to ensure alignment between the MNA coach education program content and the proposed IIHF Coach Education Program content, specifically concerning the core competencies and knowledge areas. Through assessment of the coach education programming MNAs are in a position to make necessary adjustments and improvements to their programming to raise the quality of coaching workforce in particular as well as ice hockey in general.

3.8 ADULT LEARNING PRINCIPLES – RELEVANT TO PROGRAM DESIGN

For the coach education program to be engaging for the participating coaches it is recommended that adult learning principles are incorporated in the coach education program design. This will increase engagement as well as a change of mind-set by coaches towards formal coach education and additionally increase transfer of the learned into practical application consistently. This is where a well-educated coach developer workforce comes into play. Coach Developers facilitate learning.

These adult learning principles are:

- learning needs are met.
- have an input on content.
- learning preferences are recognized.
- have an input into the course design.
- are treated as individuals.
- can transfer newly learned information to their coaching environment.
- can apply theoretical knowledge in a practical environment.
- can demonstrate their abilities.
- can learn where and when it suits them.
- previously acquired knowledge and capabilities are acknowledged.
- are challenged with new concepts.
- see the relevance of the material to their own work.
- new knowledge is built on current knowledge.
- helps coaches solve problems.
- critically reflects on and assess own development and practice.
- receive feedback that is constructive, regular, frequent.
- are actively involved in their learning.

When designing a coach education program, it is essential to keep these adult learning principles in mind to ensure that the end-product meets these.

3.9 COACH DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Figure 3.9 below shows a development process example which can be used in the coach development process to identify the individual development needs of a coach.

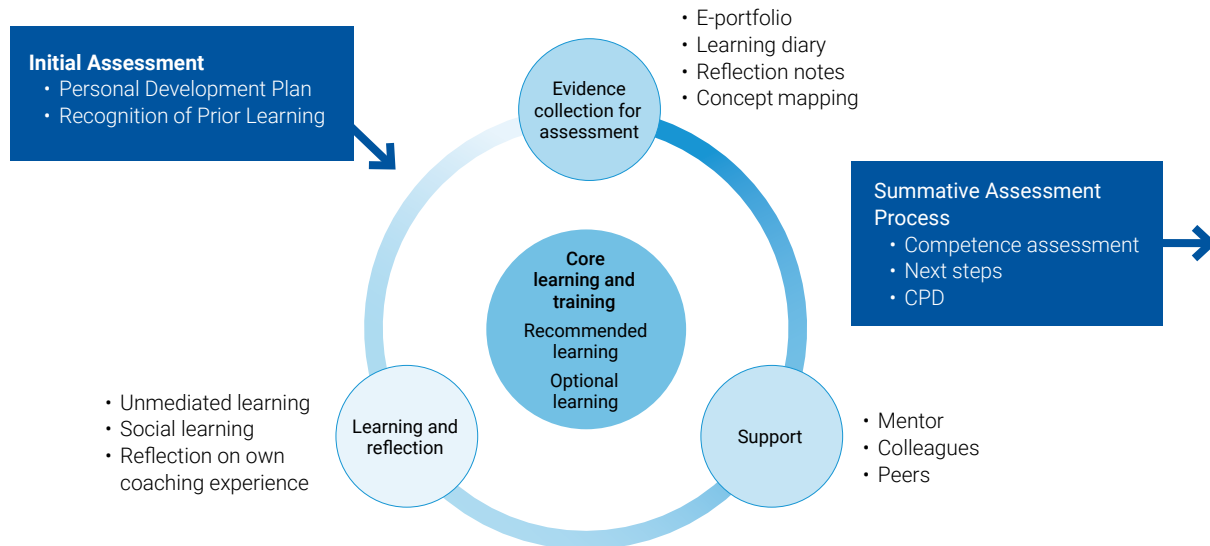


Fig. 3.9 Development process for coaches (adapted from UK Coaching).

During the Initial Assessment the coach and the coach developer together assess the current development stage of the coach and recognize prior learning. This can be achieved through discussions, reflective practice, evidence production by the coach through a portfolio, peer-review feedback on coaching practice, peer-observations, as well as practice-based interviews. Following this initial assessment and the recognition of prior learning an individual Personal Development Plan for the coach is created by the coach in collaboration with the coach developer. The information gathered through this process identifies the core learning and training needs of the coach, as well as provides guidance on additional recommended and optional learning. The core learning and training is supplemented through learning and reflection processes as well as by support through others. Throughout the whole process the coach collects evidence for assessment and when they consider themselves ready for assessment, they will agree with the coach developer on the summative assessment process, undergo the competence assessment which includes self-assessment, discuss next steps and engage in continuous professional development.

4. EXAMPLE COACH EDUCATION PROGRAM STRUCTURE

As has already been emphasized earlier, the IIHF Coach Education Program example is based on the identified core competencies of coaches, as well as the domains the coaches are working in, the participation and the performance domains. However, instead of organising parallel education streams for coaches working in one or the other domain, it is suggested that coaches working in a specific stream will attend separate sessions/modules, where details of their specific domain and how this informs their competencies will be covered. See the IIHF PDG for details concerning player pathways.

The desired learning outcomes guide the assessment and the content of coach education programs. Regardless of the resources available, curricula should always be based on the five competence levels, creating a progression in the competency development. The presented coach education program levels are not linked to an accreditation scheme. It is the responsibility of the MNA to ensure that their coach education program meets national or association coach education requirements.

It is advisable to structure the content of each level in the coach education program so that face-to-face events are distributed over a period of time in-between which the coach is applying the newly learned materials in their own setting for practice and practical experience to occur and learning to settle, this will be supported through reflection, constructing knowledge in collaboration and cooperation with peers and the coach developer, and through various feedback methods. Possible topics for individual sessions in the each of the levels of the coach education program are provided below. Even though the topics for each level are the same, the knowledge, skills and competencies in each core competency are successively deepened.

MNAs are further encouraged to utilize different e-learning opportunities such as a learning management system (LMS) to offer the opportunity for online self-study, online discussion forums and additional self-study opportunities. The LMS can further be utilized as a portfolio tool for the coaches to collect evidence of their continuous development.

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4.1 2-LEVEL COACH EDUCATION PROGRAM

The example provided here is of a 2-level coach education program (Table 4.1) which is suitable for MNAs with limited resources concerning coach education programming, their coach developer workforce, as well as with fewer coaches and player numbers. Sufficient time should elapse between a coach attending and completing the Level 1 education before embarking on their development journey by attending Level 2. Suggested topics for education sessions are shown in table 4.2.

Table 4.1 Example 2-level Coach Education Program

Desired learning outcomes coach competency level Novice Coach	Desired learning outcomes coach competency level Intermediate Coach
Learning Outcomes: What Novice Coaches Aim to Achieve	Learning Outcomes: What Intermediate Coaches Aim to Achieve
Develop People Skills:	Strengthen People Skills:
Communicate clearly, show empathy, and build mutual trust.	Align personal and team values, build trust, and respond to players' emotional needs with respectful, two-way communication.
Foster Personal Growth:	Advance Personal Growth:
Embrace continuous learning, reflection, and self-care.	Utilize reflection and feedback to refine coaching methods, begin shaping a personal coaching philosophy, and maintain work-life balance.
Lead Within a Program:	Support Program Leadership:
Support the team's culture, values, and established guidelines.	Assist in creating a positive team culture and help manage administrative duties while reinforcing core values and traditions.
Facilitate Effective Learning:	Facilitate Development:
Align practice activities with age-appropriate goals and ensure a safe, positive environment.	Recognize players' LTAD stages, adapt practices to individual needs, and encourage reflective learning that enhances the 6 C's.
Enhance Ice Hockey-Specific Knowledge:	Increase Ice Hockey-Specific Knowledge:
Recognize key technical and tactical principles, understand essential rules, and emphasize holistic player well-being.	Provide constructive feedback on fundamental technical skills and tactics, understand the rules, emphasize conditioning, injury prevention, and the importance of balanced nutrition and recovery.
Integrity	Integrity
Demonstrates good conduct and adherence to the IIHF Integrity Pillars.	Applies IIHF Integrity pillars consistently in practice and guides players and others towards good conduct at all times.

Table 4.2 Suggested topics for the 2-level coach education program

Suggested topics are:	
Suggested topics level 1	Suggested topics level 2
Interpersonal knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Relationship building, feelings, empathy • Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization, practice planning - Learning and teaching • Communication – Listening, speaking and non-verbal communication • Trust • Creating a safe, positive and enjoyable training and competition environment • Player well-being 	Interpersonal knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Relationship building, Feelings, empathy • Leadership • Communication – Listening, speaking and non-verbal communication • Trust • Creating a safe, positive and enjoyable training and competition environment • LTAD stages, athlete-centred coaching
Intrapersonal knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reflection • Values and ethical principles • Self-awareness 	Intrapersonal knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reflection • Values and ethical principles • Self-awareness • Coaching philosophy • Work-life balance
Professional knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice Hockey fundamentals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic technical and tactical principles, practice plans and drill design - Ice hockey rules • Age- and developmental stage appropriate sessions 	Professional knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice Hockey Fundamentals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic technical and tactical principles, practice plans and drill design - Ice Hockey rules • Rest and recovery • Nutrition • Injury prevention
Integrity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse and Harassment education • Anti-Doping • Competition manipulation • Ethics 	Integrity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse and Harassment education • Anti-Doping • Competition manipulation • Ethics

Based on the initial assessment and the identification of learning objectives for each coach it is possible to create an individualized education path for each coach.

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

4.2 3-LEVEL COACH EDUCATION PROGRAM

The 3-level coach education program (Table 4.3) is applicable for MNAs with a larger coach developer workforce as well as a fairly well-developed coach education program and larger coach as well as player numbers. Suggested coach education program session topics for 3-level coach education program are depicted in table 4.4.

Table 4.3. Example 3-level Coach Education Program

Desired learning outcomes coach competency level Novice Coach	Desired learning outcomes coach competency level Intermediate Coach	Desired learning outcomes coach competency level Competent Coach
Learning Outcomes: What Novice Coaches Aim to Achieve	Learning Outcomes: What Intermediate Coaches Aim to Achieve	Learning Outcomes: What Competent Coaches Aim to Achieve
Develop People Skills:	Strengthen People Skills:	Refine People Skills:
Communicate clearly, show empathy, and build mutual trust.	Align personal and team values, build trust, and respond to players' emotional needs with respectful, two-way communication.	Maintain respectful, culturally aware interactions, build trust, and mentor staff.
Foster Personal Growth:	Advance Personal Growth:	Advance Personal Development:
Embrace continuous learning, reflection, and self-care.	Utilize reflection and feedback to refine coaching methods, begin shaping a personal coaching philosophy, and maintain work-life balance.	Model a growth mindset and uphold a clear coaching philosophy.
Lead Within a Program:	Support Program Leadership:	Lead Successful Programs:
Support the team's culture, values, and established guidelines.	Assist in creating a positive team culture and help manage administrative duties while reinforcing core values and traditions.	Coordinate team culture and goals, manage responsibilities, and embed core values to ensure ongoing stability and growth.
Facilitate Effective Learning:	Facilitate Development:	Facilitate Meaningful Learning:
Align practice activities with age-appropriate goals and ensure a safe, positive environment.	Recognize players' LTAD stages, adapt practices to individual needs, and encourage reflective learning that enhances the 6 C's.	Align sessions with LTAD principles, the 6 C's, and learning theories to maximize player development.
Enhance Ice Hockey-Specific Knowledge:	Increase Ice Hockey-Specific Knowledge:	Deepen Ice Hockey-Specific Knowledge:
Recognize key technical and tactical principles, understand essential rules, and emphasize holistic player well-being.	Provide constructive feedback on fundamental technical skills and tactics, understand the rules, emphasize conditioning, injury prevention, and the importance of balanced nutrition and recovery.	Strengthen technical, tactical, and physical training expertise; proactively integrate safety, supports basic psychological needs, and nutrition to support holistic player performance.
Integrity	Integrity	Integrity
Demonstrates good conduct and adherence to the IIHF Integrity Pillars.	Applies IIHF Integrity pillars consistently in practice and guides players and others towards good conduct at all times.	Exercises good conduct at all times and integrates education on the IIHF Integrity pillars for players and other stakeholders consistently in practice.

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

Table 4.4 Suggested topics for the 3-level coach education program

Suggested topics are:		
Suggested topics level 1	Suggested topics level 2	Suggested topics level 3
Interpersonal knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Relationship building, feelings, empathy • Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization, practice planning - Learning and teaching • Communication – Listening, speaking and non-verbal communication • Trust • Creating a safe, positive and enjoyable training and competition environment • Player well-being 	Interpersonal knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Relationship building, Feelings, empathy • Leadership • Communication – Listening, speaking and non-verbal communication • Trust • Creating a safe, positive and enjoyable training and competition environment • LTAD stages, athlete-centred coaching 	Interpersonal knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Relationship building, Feelings, empathy • Leadership • Communication – Listening, speaking and non-verbal communication • Trust • Creating a safe, positive and enjoyable training and competition environment • LTAD stages, athlete-centred coaching • Mentor others • Growth mind-set • Holistic player development • Sport psychology
Intrapersonal knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reflection • Values and ethical principles • Self-awareness 	Intrapersonal knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reflection • Values and ethical principles • Self-awareness • Coaching philosophy • Work-life balance 	Intrapersonal knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reflection • Values and ethical principles • Self-awareness • Coaching philosophy • Work-life balance
Professional knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice Hockey fundamentals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic technical and tactical principles, practice plans and drill design - Ice hockey rules • Age- and developmental stage appropriate sessions 	Professional knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice Hockey Fundamentals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic technical and tactical principles, practice plans and drill design - Ice Hockey rules • Rest and recovery • Nutrition • Injury prevention 	Professional knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice Hockey Fundamentals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic technical and tactical principles, practice plans and drill design - Ice Hockey rules • Rest and recover • Nutrition • Injury prevention
Integrity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse and Harassment education • Anti-Doping • Competition manipulation • Ethics 	Integrity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse and Harassment education • Anti-Doping • Competition manipulation • Ethics 	Integrity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse and Harassment education • Anti-Doping • Competition manipulation • Ethics

4.3 COACH EDUCATION PROGRAM PRACTICALITIES

Coach education program practicalities refer to duration, length, delivery methods, session content and other criteria which need to be identified by the MNA before the coach education program can be rolled out. It is essential that the MNA engages trained coach developers for the facilitation and delivery of the coach education program. Trained coach developers are essential for the facilitation and delivery of the coach education program anchored in educational design, utilizing a broad variety of educational methods to facilitate learning.

Level 1 course

Duration: MNA decision

Outcomes to be achieved: see chapter above

Essential content to be covered: see chapter above

Proposed delivery method: e.g., face-to-face workshop (practical and classroom setting), distance learning (workbook and online), practical coaching (logbook/portfolio)

Supplemental materials for delivery: based on the topics, delivery methods applied, group and location

Session content, delivery style, assessment and certification criteria: to be designed by MNA

Level 2 course

Duration: MNA decision

Outcomes to be achieved: see chapter above

Essential content to be covered: see chapter above

Proposed delivery method: e.g., face-to-face workshop (practical and classroom setting), distance learning (workbook and online), practical coaching (logbook/portfolio)

Supplemental materials for delivery: based on the topics, delivery methods applied, group and location

Session content, delivery style, assessment and certification criteria: to be designed by MNA

Level 3 course

Duration: MNA decision

Outcomes to be achieved: see chapter above

Essential content to be covered: see chapter above

Proposed delivery method: e.g., face-to-face workshop (practical and classroom setting), distance learning (workbook and online), practical coaching (logbook/portfolio)

Supplemental materials for delivery: based on the topics, delivery methods applied, group and location

Session content, delivery style, assessment, and certification criteria: to be designed by MNA

4.4 ADDITIONAL COACH EDUCATION PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

In addition to completing the appropriate coach education program level coaches might be required to complete additional courses or present certificates or proof of attendance to meet minimum requirements.

Integrity

The IIHF is fully committed to protecting ice hockey, its players, coaches, officials and fans against any form of cheating or abuse. In addition, it is the IIHF's top priority to strengthen the ethics in the sport and to tackle any ethical misconduct.

The IIHF CEF integrates integrity education into the structure of the coach education program, to ensure that each coach is equipped with the right tools to create safe, positive and effective ice hockey environments for each participant.

The IIHF is constantly and diligently implementing structures and creating rules to enhance and promote integrity in the sport of ice hockey. All IIHF integrity rules and programs are contained within the IIHF Integrity Hub.

Separate integrity sessions are part of the Coach Education Framework but all four integrity pillars are also integrated into the core competency education areas of the IIHF CEF, e.g., anti-doping will find its way into the professional knowledge area as part of nutrition and recovery education, competition manipulation as well as abuse and harassment will find its way into the program leadership core competency area as part of the team culture and core values and standards education.

The IIHF Integrity education encompasses education on the four integrity pillars: Anti-Doping, competition manipulation, abuse and harassment and ethics (Fig. 4.4). Despite the direct integration of these four integrity pillars into the core competencies, it is emphasized here, that the coach education program of every MNA should also include stand-alone sessions in every competence level on each of the four integrity pillars, this is to ensure that the integrity topic receives the attention within coach education that it needs. Concerning the coverage of the four integrity pillars through stand-alone sessions, it is at the liberty of the MNA whether to utilize IIHF education materials for this, or materials from other organizations such as the nation's Olympic Committee, anti-doping organization or other organizations which provide education on the four integrity pillars for coaches.



Anti-Doping



Competition
Manipulation



Harassment
& Abuse



Ethics

Fig. 4.4 IIHF Integrity Pillars.

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

Safeguarding

Depending on national law, coaches working with minors need to present a clearance to work with children. This could additionally relate to the necessity to attend a specific safeguarding course.

Minimum age for coaching

Adherence to national law and guidance concerning a minimum age for coaching is mandatory when rolling out a coach education program.

For example:

A U8 team might be coached by a 16 years and older coach, but a U13 team should be coached by a coach 18 years or older. This is to ensure that the age gap between players and coaches is sufficiently wide.

First Aid

Considering the possibility for injuries and the need to administer First Aid in training and some competition situations it is recommended to make basic First Aid training mandatory for all coaches.

Concussion awareness

Concussions are an unfortunate part of ice hockey. They can occur in training and competition situations. It is recommended that coaches attend concussion awareness training to be able to always prioritize the health and well-being of their players.

Code of conduct

Codes of conduct are setting behavioural standards for coaches, requiring them to conduct themselves appropriately in all coaching related situations.

Complaints handling

Provide coaches with information concerning the complaints handling procedure and the Member Protection Policy if such exists.

Accreditation/registration

In many sports and countries accreditation is still part of the sport system, however, many have changed to a registration system for coaches. Completing formal coach education and other mandatory requirements will lead to being registered. Registration is often linked to fulfilling minimum requirements as a coach and has a limited duration. Re-accreditation is one method to recognize the importance of continuous professional development, ongoing coaching expertise and practice, and to offer coaches the opportunity to keep on coaching. This can be linked to a renewal of the Coaching Code of Conduct/Ethics, as well as safeguarding and First Aid education.

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

Continuing professional development

Coaches like professionals in other sectors should be required to continuously develop their expertise and competencies, to maintain their registration status. However, this should not be linked with the requirement of coaching at a higher participant performance level. Many coaches want to develop their competency for the participation level they are coaching at.

Recognition of prior learning

People come to coaching with various backgrounds and capabilities. It is recommended to recognize prior learning and capabilities of the coach education participants and identify their competence and capability areas. For example, prior learning could include a university degree or practical experience such as being in a leadership position at a company or being a certified nutritionist.

Instead of excusing these coaches from the education sessions it is suggested to integrate them into the delivery and utilize their knowledge and experience to enrich the education sessions and support the development of the other coaches. This will be beneficial for the coach education participant with prior knowledge as they help with delivery, they will also develop themselves.

Recognition of prior MNA coach education/certification levels

For coaches who are moving from one MNA to another MNA and possess a coaching qualification, it is recommended that the new MNA recognizes the previously accomplished coach education. Ownership of the process is with the new MNA and it is highly recommended that the MNAs cooperate in this process. It is important to assess the coach's competence level and to ensure that the coach is able to coach within the ice hockey culture and requirements of the new MNA.

It is important to recognize that coach education levels may not equate between the MNAs. For example, a Level 3 in one MNA might not be a Level 3 in another. It is up to the new MNA to assess the contents and scope of the old MNAs level 3 and then determine its equivalency to the new MNAs coach education program.

Another possibility, in addition to the previous point, is to mandate coaches from abroad to obtain a guest coaching licence for example for two years before they need to complete their respective coaching education level.

It is further recommended to require coaches to stay up to date with changes that are going on within ice hockey as well as coaching development by attending further professional development opportunities.

5. DELIVERY

The delivery of the coach education program is in the hands of each individual MNA because the IIHF is in a supportive position for MNAs by making tools and materials available, but MNAs have the responsibility to execute the education offering. This is because delivery is dependent of the coach education program structure, the content, but especially dependent on the size of the coach developer workforce within each MNA.

5.1 PLANNING OF THE LEARNING PROCESS

The goal of the education is that the learned content finds its way into practice.

The learning process structure is based on the identified learning outcomes. The coach developer's task is to get familiar with the teaching plan, the learning outcomes and the content of the education sessions and then plan the facilitation of learning.

Consideration should be given to whether it would be possible that coaches study some of the materials and content in their own time, can some of the materials be studied before a face-to-face event, what needs to be learned in practice, why is it necessary to meet face-to-face, as well as for which parts of the education the group members can be used for. While going through these planning steps, it is important to connect the assessment process to the learning process. It is also necessary at this point to already plan which working/teaching/learning methods will be used. The best plans change with the situations and are based on the needs of the learners.

5.2 COACH DEVELOPERS

The continuous development of coaches is supported by Coach Developers. Coach Developers are people who coach the coaches and therefore support their development. They can either work directly for the MNA or work in a club or associations as Head of Coaching or Head of Coach Development.

Coach Developers are working with coaches to support their learning within formal, informal and non-formal settings. Coach Developers facilitate the development and learning of coaches by applying a number of different facilitation and delivery methods in a wide variety of settings and contexts within or outside the coach education program. Central to coach development is on-the-job learning. This happens when coaches are doing their job.

For additional information concerning Coach Developers, their competencies and capabilities please see the ICCE Coach Developer Framework.

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

Coach Developer Workforce

It is strongly recommended that each MNA builds a Coach Developer workforce who oversees Coach Education Program Delivery as well as program content design. The size of the Coach Developer Workforce is dependent on the size of the MNA, the number of coaches within the education program as well as the identified need of the players.

5.3 ADULT LEARNING PRINCIPLES – RELEVANT TO DELIVERY

As has earlier been pointed out, it is essential in the program design phase to ensure adult learning principles are met. These are also essential for the delivery of individual sessions of the coach education program. Individual sessions which are designed with adult learning principles in mind will increase coach engagement, transfer to practice and motivation for learning and development.

5.4 EXAMPLE STRUCTURE OF FORMAL EDUCATION SESSIONS

To meet the varying development needs of coaches concerning the core competencies, it is suggested that the content is broken into modules. This allows for flexible delivery, and participation in formal coach education, and supports continuous professional and personal development. Formal education is supplemented by informal and non-formal development opportunities such as seminars, conferences, symposia, reflection, observation of other coaches, podcasts, reading, videos, and more.

5.5 RESOURCES AND COURSES

It is suggested to use a mixture of formal and informal learning. Some resources and content can be provided freely to the coaches to support their continuous development without being part of the formal coach education and lead to completion of a level education and registration. This freely available content should be compiled and approved by the association to ensure its quality. It is also advisable to utilize content and materials from the IIHF as well as other providers, e.g., the national Anti-Doping organization and others.

Furthermore, it is suggested that the coach education program could be organized in blended fashion, mixing face-to-face and online delivery.

5.6 SESSION DELIVERY

Sessions can be delivered utilising different methods of delivery. It is the task of the coach developer to design education sessions utilizing a number of different delivery methods to facilitate learning.

- Facilitated discussions
- Problem solving exercises, where learners can utilise their prior knowledge and experience
- Small group work
- Group discussions
- Peer-to-peer collaboration
- Scenario-based learning
- Role-playing
- Case studies
- Sharing of experiences and questions
- Interweaving of discussions sections with exercises for practical application
- Questioning
- Game-based sessions
- Reflective and reflexive exercises
- Micro-teaching/coaching exercises
- Peer-feedback
- Presentation
- Lecture
- Workshops
- Community of practice
- Debates

5.7 OTHER IMPORTANT DETAILS

It is important to ensure that additional important information concerning the coach education program is available to coaches. This would include information on the duration of the registration/accreditation, whom coaches are allowed to coach with level 1, 2 and 3, when they need to attend a course to keep registration/accreditation, recognition of prior learning, how often coach education courses will be organization, where and other essential information that might be of importance.

6. ASSESSMENT

The assessment of coaches can take varied forms, from formative to summative assessment, through quizzes, surveys, reflections, interviews, observations, or other testing formats. Often assessment is used to identify whether a coach has achieved a certain level of standards. These standards are connected to quality assurance, and upon meeting the standards the coach is certified to continue coaching in the role, domain and category they completed the education in. The proposition concerning assessment within a coach education program is that it should support continuous learning and development, and assessment opportunities should be used to move learning and development forward. Assessment should always be competency based, meaning that a coach should demonstrate their coaching competency in an applied setting, e.g., assessing a coach through observation of a practice instead of a written examination. Assessment should be flexible, meet the needs of the coach and the situation as well as the reason for completion of a professional development opportunity, such as for re-accreditation purposes, for employment reasons or to fulfil national qualification standards.

In a formal assessment the coach should be assessed based on how they apply their learning in a practical context.

6.1 KEY POINTS OF OUTCOME-BASED ASSESSMENT

A few critical points need to be taken into consideration when applying outcome-based assessment in the coach education program.

- Focus should be on the coach in the assessment process
- Only content, which was covered in the course should be assessed, or content, behaviours, knowledge, capabilities and skills which have been agreed upon between the assessor and the coach
- Assessment criteria need to be clear to the assessor and shared with the coach
- Coaching behaviour, knowledge, capabilities and skills should be assessed
- Assessment should take place in the coaches own coaching environment or should be as close to it as possible
- The assessment should be used as a development and learning opportunity for the coach

6.2 ASSESSMENT METHODS

A brief overview on different assessment methods is provided below to ease selection of the appropriate method for the circumstances at hand.

Assessment of Learning

Assessment of Learning (AoL) is widely completed at the end of course as part of the coach education program. AoL usually consists of an examination (written test; theoretical knowledge examination) or observation at the end of the learning interval (summative assessment), where a coach demonstrates the application of course content in their own environment, or in a test environment. Summative assessment is widely used for certification purposes within coach education.

Assessment for Learning

Assessment for Learning (AfL) is, unlike AoL, continuously applied during the learning and development process of a coach, to assess competence development towards the identified learning goals (learning outcomes) as identified at the beginning of the education. In AfL the initial competencies, skills, behaviours and attitudes of a coach are identified and compared to the learning objectives and goals as identified for the education. Then the coach together with the coach developer identifies how to close the gap between the existing level of competencies and the desired level of competencies. Throughout the learning process the coach and the coach developer together assess progress and step towards closing the gap between the competency and the set goals, this is mainly accomplished through formative assessment tasks. Another central tenet of AfL is the provision of feedback that is given by the coach developer to the coach to move learning forward. AfL further provides the coach developer with information on the progress of the coaches in their learning and the ability to clear up any misconceptions which might arise around a certain topic or theme, which can then be addressed by the coach developer during the coach education session. Formative assessment can further consist of peer-feedback, self-evaluation as well as the already mentioned coach developer feedback. Through self-evaluation the coach is themselves part of the assessment process as well as in charge of it and determines through comparison of the learning goals and their current level of development in which direction to steer their learning process.

Assessment as Learning

The central principles of Assessment as Learning (AaL) are that learning happens through assessments. AaL requires coaches to oversee their own learning process, develop capabilities to judge their own work critically and identify ways to improve it. AaL encourages coaches to apply the course content directly in their own environment (coaching practice) and evaluate afterwards how well they did compared to the learning goals, assessing their own work and identifying ways to improve it.

7. RELEVANT AND EXISTING RESOURCES

Existing IIHF resources which provide additional important information and knowledge for coach education are the IIHF Coach Development Framework (IIHF CDF) and the IIHF Player Development Guide (IIHF PDG). Both resources can be found in their full extent on iihf.com. Below are the most important parts of both resources concerning the development of the IIHF Coach Education Framework reproduced.

7.1 IIHF CDF

The IIHF CDF is a guiding tool for IIHF MNAs to be utilised in the creation of coach development programs. It provides information and knowledge on what the IIHF considers quality ice hockey coaching, best principles for Coach Development Programs, provides guidance for MNAs when developing their own Coach Development Programs, offers guidance when developing an existing Coach Development Program, offers guidance concerning certification and recertification standards offers guidance on the integration of a coach development program into a National Qualification Framework, and supports the work within an MNA when striving to recognize coaching as a fully recognized profession.

The IIHF CDF has been developed based on the vision and the guiding principles of the IIHF. The IIHF urges all MNAs and clubs to support and incorporate the vision and guiding principles outlined in the IIHF CDF into daily practices, competition, as well as in the decision-making processes of MNAs and clubs.

The IIHF CDF is promoting the following guiding principles:

- Players are provided with a safe and enjoyable development environment
- Long-term player development is prioritised over short-term performance results
- Athlete-centred coaching, with consideration of individual player needs, occurs in every practice and game
- Coaches create quality training sessions
- Respect the Game: Fair play, integrity, anti-doping and ethics guide coaching actions of all stakeholders
- Coaches are committed to and demonstrate life-long learning and continuous development

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Essential Coaching Knowledge

Quality coaches possess what is called essential coaching knowledge. This consists of interpersonal knowledge, intrapersonal knowledge and professional knowledge (Fig. 7.1). Essential coaching knowledge is developed over time, through potential experience as a player, coaching, organised coach education, observation of other coaches, networking and knowledge sharing, and using resources such as books, publications, podcasts and videos.

Interpersonal Knowledge – How to coach

Interpersonal knowledge, also called interpersonal skills, is defined as the ability of a coach to make connections with other people. This refers to players, coaching staff, officials, administrators, parents and other ice hockey stakeholders that a coach regularly interacts with. Interpersonal knowledge includes emotional intelligence and thus the ability to understand feelings, motivations and needs of others. It includes effective communication, listening skills, responsibility and building caring relationships founded on mutual trust with all involved in the sporting context.

Intrapersonal Knowledge

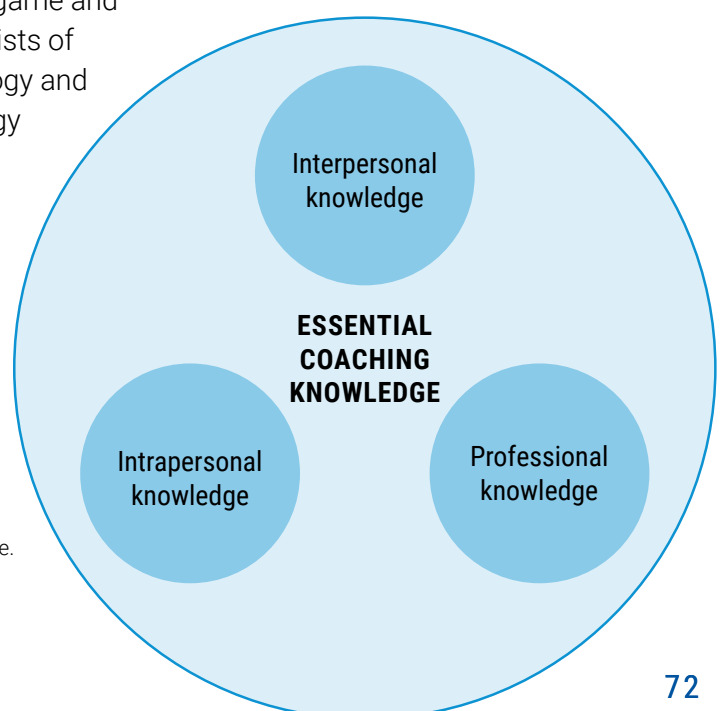
Knowing yourself is referred to as intrapersonal knowledge. It is defined as the ability of a coach to self-reflect, apply introspection, be self-aware, use self-talk and to be true to one's own coaching philosophy, values and ethical principles. Intrapersonal knowledge is self-awareness that provides the foundation for continuous improvement as a coach. It also includes emotional intelligence and the ability to react with sensitivity to the needs of others.

Professional Knowledge – What to coach

Professional knowledge is knowledge of the game and how to teach it. Also termed 'what to coach' knowledge, it consists of sport-specific knowledge, general sport knowledge and teaching knowledge. The sport-specific, ice hockey in this case, knowledge includes awareness of technical and tactical skills, rules of the game and its traditions. The general sport knowledge consists of subjects such as nutrition, conditioning, physiology and sport psychology. Teaching knowledge, pedagogy and andragogy, refers to knowledge on how to effectively design and deliver optimal learning environments and experiences.

Effective coaching is: The consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge to improve players' competence, confidence, connection, and character in specific coaching contexts (Côté & Gilbert, 2009).

Fig. 7.1 The make-up of Essential Coaching Knowledge.



IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

Coaches create effective training sessions for their players when they consistently combine their interpersonal, intrapersonal and professional knowledge in the design process of those sessions.

Core Competencies

Core competencies define the essential coaching knowledge in more detail. Competencies are a combination of capabilities, abilities, knowledge and skills needed for quality coaching. The IIHF CDF identifies five core competencies.

Personal Development

Continuous improvement and reflection, growth mindset, coaching philosophy, well-being and self-care.

People Skills

Caring and positive relationships, emotional intelligence, mutual trust, respectful communication, support of staff and other coaches.

Learning facilitation

Long-term athlete development, athlete outcomes (competence, confidence, connection, character, caring & compassion, creativity), optimal learning environments, principles of learning and practice design.

Program Leadership

Team culture, responsibilities for team and program management, program stability and growth, core values and standards, traditions.

Sport and Performance IQ (ice hockey-specific and general)

Ice hockey technical and tactical skills, rules, physical training and conditioning, rest and recovery, injury prevention, sport psychology, nutrition.

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

7.2 IIHF PDG

The IIHF Player Development Guide (PDG) is one such coach development resource that provides coaches and persons interested in becoming a coach with examples, knowledge and ideas for best principles and practice sessions. This is to contribute to their work in developing players with fun and engaging training sessions that are based on the developmental stage of the players.

Player Development Pathways

The IIHF PDG recognizes that there are three potential phases in a player's pathway:

Start: Every player starts at some point

Stay: Players continue to develop and play the game throughout their lives

Succeed: A very small number of players that play professionally

See Fig. 7.2 for possible player pathways.

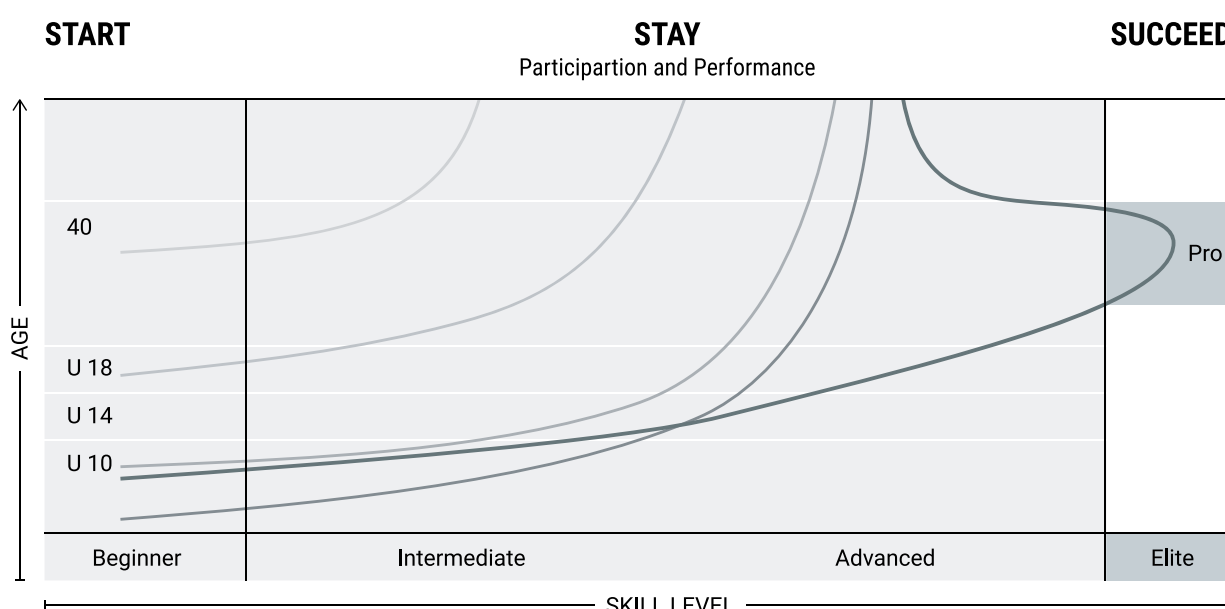


Fig. 7.2 Displays the different possible player pathways within ice hockey.

Start Phase

All players, independent of their age, have a starting point in their ice hockey player life span. Some start when they are young, maybe at around 4 years of age, others start when they are 35 or even 55 years of age. The objective of the practice sessions for players in the start phase, considered to be beginners, is to have enjoyable experiences and to learn the basic skills of the game.

Instead of being simply age-focused, the IIHF PDG concentrates on developmentally appropriate skill-levels. However, it should be recognized that, at every level, a varying range of skill will be demonstrated by the participants.

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

Stay Phase

The stay phase, which ideally means life-long participation in ice hockey, includes the intermediate and the advanced ice hockey skill levels. Players in the stay phase might choose to play ice hockey on a recreational level or might attempt to play on a more advanced level preparing themselves for the succeed phase. This means that training environments need to be offered which cater and are suitable to the developmental needs of each player.

Ideally players, who have played ice hockey in the succeed phase, on the international stage, return to the stay phase after their career and choose to continue to participate in ice hockey on a recreational level.

The Hockey for Life summary document can be found on iihf.com

Succeed Phase

The succeed phase is only reached by very few players. This phase is composed of players competing on the highest professional and international level within ice hockey.

Skill levels

The IIHF PDG, instead of being simply age-focused, concentrates on developmentally appropriate skill-levels. However, it should be recognized that, at every level, there will be varying range of skill demonstrated by the participants.

The skill levels are:

Beginner:

Players normally aged U10, emphasis on participation and the need to learn fundamental movement and ice hockey skills through fun games and drills

The Beginner Stage Summary Document can be found on iihf.com

Intermediate:

Normally aged U14, emphasis on participation and performance, focus still on fun overall development, on and off the ice, with increased focus on ice hockey-specific training and tactics

The Intermediate Stage Summary Document can be found on iihf.com

Advanced:

Normally aged U18, emphasis on performance and/or high-performance, focus heavily on ice hockey-specific training accompanied by well-planned and executed supportive off-ice training

The Advanced Stage Summary Document can be found on iihf.com

IIHF COACH EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

Elite:

Professional players of “open ages” – in general good enough to play at this level, normally aged 20 years and older. At least at this point, it is not seen as the IIHF’s mandate to provide guidance on player development at the elite level. This is to be taken care of by professional Clubs and National Teams.

The IIHF PDG is not a set of rules or mandates; it is a guideline that supports the development of ice hockey players to reach their full potential. Through the guidelines of the IIHF PDG, players will be holistically developed through the application of appropriate developmental practices and trainings, on and off the ice.

8. SUMMARY

The IIHF CEF represents a comprehensive effort to support MNAs in creating effective, flexible, and meaningful coach education programs. While this framework outlines a structured approach to developing coaching competencies, it acknowledges a central truth: no education program is ever perfect. Perfection is not the goal—progress is. Starting somewhere, however modestly, is better than not starting at all.

Throughout this framework, it has been emphasized that there is no single pathway to becoming a coach. Just as each player's development is unique, so too is every coach's journey. Some coaches may come from elite playing backgrounds; others may step onto the bench to support a child's beginner team. Both are valid and valuable. What matters most is not where the coach begins, but who they are becoming along the way.

That is why the CEF places high importance not only on professional and technical knowledge, but on the personal development of coaches as good human beings. Coaches influence players far beyond the ice. They shape character, foster values, and model ethical behaviour. Ice hockey needs coaches who are empathetic, reflective, and principled leaders—not just tacticians.

The cornerstone of effective coaching in today's environment is athlete-centredness. Coaches must learn to listen, to adapt, and to meet players where they are. Developing a culture of care, respect, and trust is just as important as designing practice drills. The greatest success lies not just in athletic performance, but in long-term engagement, confidence, and personal growth of each participant.

In this spirit, assessment practices within coach education must move away from rigid testing and instead become competency-based, practical, and tailored to individual development. Knowing oneself—as the great strategist Sunzi emphasized in *The Art of War*—is essential. For MNAs and for coaches alike, self-awareness is the beginning of wisdom. When a coach understands their own values, limitations, and strengths, they are better equipped to support their players and handle the inevitable challenges of the sport. In knowing oneself, there is no fear of a thousand battles.

Finally, the CEF firmly rejects dogmatism in coach education. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. The most effective learning is learner-centred, context-sensitive, and inclusive. Flexibility, curiosity, and openness to change are qualities that must be embedded not only in coaches, but also in the very structure of the education systems.

In summary, building a coaching culture in ice hockey requires more than technical standards and course hours. It requires a shared commitment to continuous learning, ethical conduct, inclusion, and above all, the development of people—on and off the ice. The CEF provides a strong foundation, but it is up to each MNA and each coach to bring it to life with purpose and integrity.

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