

SEASON PLANNING

Season planning means organizing the entire hockey season. The key is to plan and then be flexible! Start with an overall plan of the progression of skills you will teach, physical training, mental preparation, and time for fun and relaxation. Then feel free to make adjustments, as appropriate, throughout the season.

For good coaches, planning is a never-ending process. These coaches plan and evaluate throughout the entire season. The master plan is an indispensable tool, which can be used in a variety of ways: as a commitment for the team and players; to conduct periodic evaluations; to motivate players by showing them their progress; and much more.

Planning will also permit you to gain credibility in the eyes of your players and their parents since it will show you undertake coaching in a professional manner.

STEPS IN PLANNING A PRACTICE

As a coach, you need to know how to most effectively use the available time you have for practices. A good starting point is to follow the five steps outlined here:

- Set Overall Goals
Statements of the philosophy of ice hockey and the desired results for your players.
- Set Specific Goals
Realistic, achievable and measurable goals.
- Build in the Principles of Effective Practices
The activities and characteristics of an effective practice.
- Consider the Psycho-Social Aspects and the Bio-Physical Aspects of your players
The people skills and the physical and technical skill elements.
- Design the Practice
The key elements that make up a practice.

Following the above outlined steps is a good way to start.

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PRACTICE PREPARATION AND PLANNING

A certain amount of planning is necessary to ensure a successful practice. In order that 100% of your ice time is used well, and the objectives for each lesson are met, the following guidelines are provided:

- Objectives of the practice must be clear in your mind
- Make sure the content of the practice is appropriate for your players
- Review all the teaching points to ensure you are familiar with the practice
- Break skills down into the smallest possible parts
- Check the amount of time available for each drill
- Keep explanations very brief
- Have a copy of the practice with you to refer to during the practice
- Make sure the necessary teaching aids are in place
- Explain to any assistant coaches their duties and the overall practice

TEACHING STATIONS

The most effective way to teach the basic skills of ice hockey is to divide your group of players up into small manageable groups. The number of groups you use depends upon:

- Total number of players (try to divide them evenly)
- The different skill levels of the players
- Number of assistant coaches available for the practice
- Amount of different skills you intend to teach
- The amount of ice available (full ice vs. half ice)
- The length of the ice session