



Westwood Hockey Association – Coaches Tool Box

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1. Introduction:

Coaches can have a profound impact on young players which has the potential to affect their confidence and how they develop over time. The Westwood Hockey Association is aiming to ensure that the Association along with all coaches in the program has a very positive impact on young players by encouraging them and ensuring that the playing environment is positive at all times.

2. Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to provide the coaches in the Westwood association with a set of base fundamentals and philosophy for coaching from the initiation level up through Midget/junior. The document has not been designed to be used as a rigid coaching manual but to provide a base set of fundamentals for each individual coach to build from.

3. Westwood Hockey Association Coaching Philosophy:

“To provide a leadership, guidance and learning through a consistent approach based on key coaching fundamentals to ensure Westwood players continue to have fun, become more complete players and have every opportunity for success.”

The Philosophy is built around providing a platform for the coaches and players in Westwood Hockey to gain a better understanding of the game and become more complete players and continue to have fun playing hockey by receiving a consistent base message from year to year.

“Success leads to increased interest and a heightened willingness to learn”

4. Value:

The value of developing the base fundamentals will benefit the players directly by having consistent base messaging. Once these base fundamentals are mastered it will give each Team/Coach/Player the opportunity to build from there. As player progresses up through the



divisions we should see the development of a better understanding of the game and stronger more complete players overall.

“Players Learn best when expectations are clearly explained, demonstrated and practiced in a positive atmosphere”

5. Player Development Breakdown

The Westwood Hockey Association supports Hockey Canada’s Player development philosophy which was developed to provide a guideline to coaches in developing seasonal plans. The system was designed to be heavily weighted on strong fundamentals and skill development in the early stages (initiation to novice) and then begin to transition to more Individual/team tactics/strategy as he player progresses to the later levels. Hockey Canada believes that Coaches must emphasize fundamental skill development as the backbone to all practices.

The following Tables outline player development by division in accordance with Hockey Canada based on the five key components listed and defined below:

- Technical Skills – Fundamental skills that are required to play the game (skating, shooting, passing and checking)
- Individual Tactics – Actions by one player using a combination of technical skills to create an opportunity or take away and advantage.
- Team Tactics – Collective action of 2 or more players using technical skills to create an opportunity or take away and advantage.
- Team Play – A pattern of play where all players’ movements are coordinated to accomplish an offensive or defensive objective.
- Strategy – Selection of team play systems to be utilized based on collective strengths of the team used to neutralize the opposition.

The table also includes a breakdown of player development by division in accordance with the five key components for the Westwood Hockey Association. The Westwood breakdown mirrors Hockey Canada’s expectations with the exception of more emphasis on direct skill development from the Atom to Midget Levels.

<i>Initiation</i>	<i>Hockey Canada (%)</i>	<i>Westwood (%)</i>
Technical Skills	85	85
Individual Tactics	15	15
Team Tactics		
Team Play		
Strategy		

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<i>Novice</i>	<i>Hockey Canada (%)</i>	<i>Westwood (%)</i>
Technical Skills	75	75
Individual Tactics	15	15
Team Tactics	10	10
Team Play		
Strategy		

<i>Atom</i>	<i>Hockey Canada (%)</i>	<i>Westwood (%)</i>
Technical Skills	50	60
Individual Tactics	20	20
Team Tactics	15	10
Team Play	10	5
Strategy	5	5

<i>Pee Wee</i>	<i>Hockey Canada (%)</i>	<i>Westwood (%)</i>
Technical Skills	45	50
Individual Tactics	25	25
Team Tactics	10	10
Team Play	10	10
Strategy	10	5

<i>Bantam</i>	<i>Hockey Canada (%)</i>	<i>Westwood (%)</i>
Technical Skills	40	45
Individual Tactics	15	15
Team Tactics	20	15
Team Play	15	15
Strategy	10	10

<i>Midget</i>	<i>Hockey Canada (%)</i>	<i>Westwood (%)</i>
Technical Skills	35	40
Individual Tactics	15	15
Team Tactics	20	20
Team Play	15	15
Strategy	15	10

The Westwood Hockey Association expects all Coaches in its Hockey programs to use the player development breakdown listed above as a guideline when planning their season.



6. Key Coaching Fundamentals

*“Create a system where players are given the skills to **READ** the situation and **REACT** in a positive and effective manner”*

The Westwood Hockey Association wants to develop players that have the skills, knowledge and ability to *READ* and *REACT* to the various situations they will encounter during the game of hockey. Being able to *READ* and *REACT* is in a large part “the recognition of a situation that a player has seen many times and applies a learned response based on his or her experience”. The ability to *REACT* in an effective manner is directly related to the level of skill of the player.

It is essential for players to develop great skating and puck handling skills so that they are able to *REACT* and execute these skills in game situation.

In support of the player development breakdown outlined above, the Westwood Hockey Association has adopted the following Key Coaching Fundamentals. It is the expectation of Westwood Hockey that each Coach within the association adopts and incorporates these fundamentals in accordance with the player development breakdown for their team.

The lists provided below are not considered to be exhaustive but do cover the key fundamentals that must be included in each Coaches yearly development plan.

a. Skill Development

Coaches need to concentrate the bulk of their practice time to developing the skills listed below. The goal is to develop your players so that these skills can be performed at very fast or near “game speed” and intensity. Good ice utilization and many repetitions are essential for young players master a skill and reach their potential.

- i) Balance and Agility
- ii) Skating
- iii) Puck Control
- iv) Passing and receiving
- v) Shooting
- vi) Checking
- vii) Goaltending



b. Understanding the Game

The concepts of Read and React and Time and Space are consistently talked about at high levels of hockey. A strong understanding of these concepts helps the player react to situations like offensive and defensive puck support, play away from the puck (giving ice, taking ice), as they occur. Some refer to this as “Hockey Sense”. These concepts have been embodied in the implementation of the Forward 1, Forward 2, and Forward 3 system as opposed to the traditional RW, LW, and C strategy. Coaches need to incorporate game like situation drills into their yearly development plans which help build these skills. Repetition is again a valuable tool in developing these skills and enabling players to:

- i) “Read and React”
- ii) Understand offensive and defensive puck support
- iii) Understand how to play away from the puck

The following section provides an overview of the Forward 1, Forward 2, and Forward 3 system.

F1, F2, F3 allows the player to be interchangeable. This means the three forwards on the ice take on different roles and are not designated to stay on one side of the ice, or in one specific area. The only time the terminology RW, LW, C is pertinent is when a face off occurs.

Note: Defensemen are identified as D1 and D2

How it Works.

Players are designated as F1, F2 and F3 upon crossing the blue line into the offensive or defensive zone. In the neutral zone, “clean slate” occurs. In this area of the ice there is no player designation. The first forward to cross either the offensive or defensive blue line is f1, the second player is F2 and the third player is F3.

Example:

Forechecking strategy

- F1: pressure the puck carrier/puck.
- F2: read and support F1.
- F3: stay high in the zone, read the play and be opportunistic.

Defensive Zone Play

- F1: puck support until the puck is cleared from the zone.



- F2: slot coverage and on rotation point coverage.
- F3: point coverage and on rotation slot coverage.
- D1: puck/player pressure and on rotation net coverage.
- D2: net coverage and on rotation puck/player pressure.

c. Value of “Team”

Westwood Hockey Association expects its Coaches to help build passion for the game in all players within the association. Coaches will be expected to promote the concepts of fairness and a sense of team. That all players are valued and that everyone has contributed to the overall team effort every night.

- i) Passion
- ii) Teamwork
- iii) Respect and Support
- iv) Fairness

7. Resources

a. Coach Mentoring Program

The purpose of the Coach Mentoring Program is to provide all Westwood Coaches with several options of support.

- **Resource Coach**

The Coach Committee along with the coordinators will appoint a Resource Coach for each division. The role of the Resource coach will be to communicate and support team coaches within his division.

- **Coach Evaluation**

- **Peer Evaluation**

Peer evaluations will be conducted by the Resource Coach.

- **Self Evaluation**

Self evaluations will be conducted by the individual coaches through discussion with their Resource Coach.



b. “Chalk Talks”

- **Informal Division Sessions**

Each Resource Coach will hold monthly informal sessions with the coaches within his division to share ideas and discuss successes and failures.

- **External Sessions**

The Coaches Committee will also schedule several sessions where external experts will be brought in to discuss coaching strategy/theory.

c. Technical Resources

- **Practice Strategies**

- ½ Ice
- Full Ice

- **Online Resources**

- **Coaches Club (www.coachesclub.ca)**
- **ABC’s of Coaching (www.hockeycoachingabcs.com)**
- **CBC Sports “Think Hockey” (<http://www.cbc.ca/sports/hockey/hockeynightincanada/thinkhockey/>)**
- **Westwood Hockey, “Coaches Corner” (www.westwoodhockey.com)**



APPENDIX 1 – Practice Strategies



APPENDIX 2 – Coach Self Evaluation



APPENDIX 3 – “The Art of Puck Possession”



APPENDIX 4 – Practice Planning Sheets