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USA Hockey Recertification Program Values and Ethics in Coaching

Lesson Workbook



presented by



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Values and Ethics in Coaching

Sports can be a fun and an engaging way for children and youth to learn some important lessons about life. Studies suggest that participation in sports can be very beneficial, fostering responsible social behaviors, greater academic success, and an appreciation of personal health and fitness. Participating on a team also can give children or youth an important sense of belonging.

The atmosphere set by organizations, parents, and coaches is a major factor in determining whether or not youth will have a positive experience in a sports program. A "win-at-all-costs" atmosphere can be harmful to a developing youth.

Few children possess the talent to play competitive sports at the highest level, most will not grow up to be professional athletes. Therefore, coaches must take the perspective that the primary goals of youth sports are to foster the development of general physical competence and to promote physical activity, fun life skills, sportsmanship, and good health.

Coaches or youth sports programs should have clear positive goals about the sports experience, emphasizing fair play and sportsmanship as well as the skills to be taught and the lessons to be learned. With these goals, the "winning at all cost" attitude that leads to a negative atmosphere is held in check, and the learning process is emphasized.

Coaches as Role Models

Children and youth learn "how to play the game" from their coaches and parents. These adults are important teachers and role models, and the atmosphere they create determines whether a child's sports experience is negative or positive. Coaches may have goals for the youth different from those of the youth themselves. Regardless of these goals, it is critical for coaches to nurture a child's ambitions. Coaches must continuously communicate with children to assist them and support their dreams.

A coach is one who teaches a team of players or athletes. As a teacher, a coach needs to be aware that what he or she says and does in this role can have an important impact on the youth. It is important that coaches monitor their own behavior when working in youth sports. Coaches should establish learning goals for their players and for their team. These goals should be about having **fun, learning new skills, and developing friendships**; they should not be about winning.

Coaches can determine if their behaviors are too focused on winning and competition by asking the following questions:

- How do I speak with my players? Do I scream or yell at them often? Or do I talk with them and help them understand their mistakes?
- Do I show respect to officials? Have I ever blamed a loss on an official?
- Do I promote dislike between two teammates to motivate them?
- Do I treat my players differently after a loss than after a win?
- Do I provide team members playing time regardless of how well they do?

The answers to these types of questions will enable coaches to determine if their approach is developmentally appropriate. If coaches find themselves yelling at players, blaming officials for losses, giving preferential treatment to certain players, and/or giving unequal playing time, they may want to re-evaluate their style.

Positive coaches are supportive of their players; that is, they reinforce good skills and encourage youth who make mistakes. To reinforce good skills, coaches should be specific in their praise, not general. For example, a coach who tells a ten-year-old player, "Nice job stickhandling the puck down the ice," is providing supportive and specific information, as opposed to the coach who simply says, "nice job." Positive coaches are also instructive; that is, they spend time with players to show them how to correct their mistakes.

Characteristics of positive coaching as developed by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education are:

- Players come first.
- Positive coaches see themselves first and foremost as educators. They enjoy the sport and they love teaching.
- A positive coach understands the developmental stages of children and youth and uses developmentally appropriate coaching strategies.
- Positive coaches develop character as well as skill.
- Positive coaches make use of "teachable moments." These are game situations in which something significant has just happened (e.g., a nasty foul, a false start, or an accidental collision). Coaches who stop the game and ask their players to think about how they could have behaved in that situation are taking advantage of a teachable moment. Using these teachable moments can build positive character traits in athletes such as determination, courage, empathy, and commitment.
- Positive coaches foster mastery of skills.
- Positive coaches have strong technical knowledge about the sport. They use skill-building drills during practice, reinforce correct skills, and correct mistakes. Positive coaches give technical feedback to youth in an encouraging way. Positive coaches demonstrate technical skills, because children 5 to 12 years old have a difficult time learning through verbal instructions.
- Positive coaches foster internal motivation.
- Positive coaches encourage players to develop internal motivation, rather than rely on external punishments and rewards. Positive coaches listen closely to their players to tap into their internal motivation.
- Positive coaches foster critical self-observation skills.
- Positive coaches help a child discover answers to problems by facilitating the child's problem solving. They ask questions like, "How was that for you?" "How did you feel doing that?" "What did you notice while you were doing that?"
- Positive coaches focus on the learning process.
- They focus on skill development rather than on the outcome of winning.
- Positive coaches reward skill improvement.

- Positive coaches treat their players with respect.
- They do not attempt to motivate through fear, intimidation, or shame.
- Positive coaches remain positive in good times and bad times. They gain the cooperation of their players through encouragement, and treat them as partners working together to achieve their goals.
- Positive coaches honor the game.
- Positive coaches love the sport and share their love of the sport with their players.
- Positive coaches show respect to their opponents, knowing that a worthy opponent will push them and their team.
- Positive coaches understand the important role the officials play and strive to show respect, even when they do not agree with the official decisions.
- Positive coaches demonstrate personal integrity and would rather lose than dishonor the game and their players.

Sports Programs providing a Positive Atmosphere

The goal of USA Hockey's programs is to teach youth life's important lessons and to help them develop personal competencies. As coaches, you have an important role to play in influencing sports programs and organizations. Listed below are some important strategies that youth hockey programs and organizations can employ to promote a positive climate.

- Be inclusive so that everyone has a chance to sign up and to play.
- Have educational workshops for coaches to increase their knowledge about the development of children.
- Provide to players, parents, coaches and officials a clear code of conduct that is enforced. In addition, develop a clear written method for dealing with conflict.
- Balance teams so they are more equally matched in terms of skill level.
- Involve youth in developing and implementing the youth program. Encourage youth to be a part of the decision-making process, and listen to them carefully.
- Finally, programs should be conducted on a youth model rather than an adult/professional model. The main reasons that youth ages five to seventeen play sports are to have FUN and to spend time with their friends. When children play informally, they follow certain roles. First, the sport must be action-filled. Second, everyone must participate regardless of skill level. "Do-overs" are acceptable and keep the less-skilled players engaged. Third, the sport must be exciting. In fact, most of the time, games are organized not to determine a winner but to promote excitement. For example, if scores are being kept, rule modifications are encouraged and often serve to keep the game close and exciting.

Conclusion

When we are caught up in competition, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that sports are supposed to be a FUN, rewarding, and learning experience for youth. As a coach, keep this in mind when you are providing opportunities for children, so they can get the most from their experience.

Checklist of Coaching Effectiveness

Directions: Rate the degree to which each of the listed actions occurred during practices and/or game situations. Use the following 5 point scale where:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree.

Item	Evaluation				
Coaching Role					
1. The benefits (skill, knowledge, fitness and costs - time, money, injury, etc.) of participation in hockey were clearly in mind during planning and coaching time.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My primary purpose for coaching was to maximize the benefits of participation in hockey for all the players.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I used the information on benefits of participation and costs of participation to clarify my goals for the season.	1	2	3	4	5
Organization					
4. I completed a written draft of season goals and objectives to guide the conduct of my practices.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I consciously decided which objectives must be emphasized in the pre, early, mid and late season.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Objective for developing each practice were drawn from those identified and sequenced from pre to late season, and entered on a season calendar.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The objectives selected for my season plan were consistent with the age recommendations for our N-G-B-.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The amount of practice time allocated to each objective was appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5
Skills, Strategies					
9. I was sufficiently familiar with the need for each skill included in my practices and clearly communicated its purpose and described how it is to be executed to my players.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I was able to visualize and recognize the key elements of performance that were present or missing in my players and used them as the basis for my instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I was familiar with the common errors of skill execution and used the players' suggestions for coaching to plan my practices.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I clearly communicated the key points or key elements to be learned for each objective included in my practices.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Practice on an objective was initiated with a brief rationale for why perfecting that skill was important.	1	2	3	4	5

Item	Evaluation				
14. Instruction on one or more "key elements" of an objective was preceded by an evaluation of player abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Instruction did not continue without player attention.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Practice on an objective provided each player with many practice trials.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Accurate feedback was closely associated with each practice trial and was regularly given.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Monitoring player achievement of objectives continued through all practices and games.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Performance expectations set for the players were realistic and attainable.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I communicated through actions and words that I expected each player to succeed in improving their level of play.	1	2	3	4	5
21. My practice would be characterized by others as orderly, safe, businesslike and enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I grouped my players in accordance with their different abilities to practice et he objectives and appropriate "key elements" included in the practices.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Practice sessions were organized to maximize the amount of time that players were practicing "key elements" of skill.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Objectives were broken down as necessary to allow players to achieve them in several successful small steps.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I asked my players questions to determine if they understood the objectives and/or instructions.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Players sensed a feeling of control over their learning which resulted from my emphasis on effort and encouragement.	1	2	3	4	5
27. My practices were pre-planned and included written objectives, time, activities, drills and equipment needs.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I evaluated my practices and incorporated appropriate changes for subsequent practices.	1	2	3	4	5
29. The instructional activities and/or drills I used were selected to provide a setting for achieving one or more objectives.	1	2	3	4	5

Motivation

30. My practices and games resulted in the players achieving many of their goals for participation in hockey.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I taught the players how to realistically define success in hockey.	1	2	3	4	5
32. An expert would agree (upon observing my practices) that I effectively use a positive (vs. negative) coaching approach.	1	2	3	4	5
33. I helped my players set realistic goals.	1	2	3	4	5

Communication

34. There was no conflict between the verbal and non-verbal messages I communicated to my players.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I facilitated communication with the players by being a good listener.	1	2	3	4	5

Item	Evaluation				
Discipline					
36. Accepted behaviors (and consequences of misbehavior) were communicated to players at the beginning of the season.	1	2	3	4	5
37. Players were involved in developing (or confirming) team rules.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Enforcement of team rules was consistent for all players throughout the season.	1	2	3	4	5
Involvement with Parents					
39. Parents of the players were a positive, rather than a negative, influence on player achievement of the season objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
40. When asked to help with a specific task, the parents of the players responded positively.	1	2	3	4	5
41. Each parent learned something significant about their child and/or the game of hockey.	1	2	3	4	5
42. I communicated to the parents my purpose for coaching and the responsibilities I have to the team.	1	2	3	4	5
43. I communicated to the parents the responsibilities of parents and players to the team.	1	2	3	4	5
44. Parents were well informed of the purpose of hockey, potential injuries, practice and game schedules, equipment needs and other information necessary to successful play.	1	2	3	4	5
Conditioning					
45. The physical conditioning procedures I used were appropriate for the age of the players.	1	2	3	4	5
46. Where appropriate, I conducted practices to improve the aerobic and anaerobic energy production systems of the players.	1	2	3	4	5
47. Where appropriate, I conducted practices to improve the muscular system fitness of the players.	1	2	3	4	5
48. I routinely used a systematic warm-up prior to practices and games.	1	2	3	4	5
49. I routinely used a systematic cool-down after practices and games.	1	2	3	4	5
50. Where appropriate, the intensity, duration and frequency of my practices overloaded the muscular and energy systems in a progressive manner.	1	2	3	4	5
51. My conditioning work appropriately simulated the conditions of practice and play.	1	2	3	4	5
Injury Prevention					
52. I followed all recommended procedures designed to prevent injuries associated with the use of improper equipment.	1	2	3	4	5
53. I implemented the recommendations for preventing injuries associated with facilities.	1	2	3	4	5
54. I maintained good control of my players while they were in the arena.	1	2	3	4	5
55. I did not use contraindicated exercises in the warm-up and cool-down periods.	1	2	3	4	5

Item	Evaluation
Care of Common Injuries	
56. I effectively administered first aid as needed.	1 2 3 4 5
57. I established and followed appropriate emergency procedures as they were needed.	1 2 3 4 5
58. I obtained the information necessary to appropriately care for individual players.	1 2 3 4 5
59. I had a well stocked first aid kit at each practice and game including player medical history information.	1 2 3 4 5
60. I have a record of each injury that occurred during the season.	1 2 3 4 5
Rehabilitation of Injuries	
61. I appropriately supervised the rehabilitation of those players who did not need the services of a physician.	1 2 3 4 5
62. None of the players experienced a recurrence of an injury that could be attributed to inappropriate rehabilitation.	1 2 3 4 5
Prevention of Liability Events	
63. I completed the six obligations I have as a coach to preclude liability form injuries.	1 2 3 4 5
64. I am knowledgeable about the type and frequency of injuries that commonly occur.	1 2 3 4 5
Evaluation	
65. I completed an evaluation of player improvement in the performance areas included in my season plan.	1 2 3 4 5
66. I identified the coaching actions (inactions) that appeared most closely related to unmet player expectations.	1 2 3 4 5
67. I made the changes in coaching action needed to improve my coaching effectiveness.	1 2 3 4 5

Please use the following guidelines to determine your level of proficiency as a youth coach. It is suggested that you rate your effectiveness at least twice during each season.

Total Points Possible - 335pts.

If you Scored:

- 300 - 335.....Excellent
- 250 - 299.....Good
- 201 - 249.....Average
- 200 or below.....Need Improvement

