



U9

Coaching

RESOURCE GUIDE

Updated – April 2020





U9 COACHING RESOURCE GUIDE



Introduction

This Resource Guide was developed to aid the Development of Coaches at the U9 level. Coaches at the U7 and U9 levels play a major role in not only the development of young athletes, but they have a major impact on level of enjoyment players have. They contribute to the young athletes first impressions of the game, and affect their passion and interest moving forward.

This guide is meant to show the why and how to positively affect young hockey players, so that they will develop a life long passion for the the game

The Role of the Coach

- Continue developing motor skills (ABC'S=Agility, Balance, Coordination and Speed)
 - ❖ Focus on supporting the complete player not just the athlete training and competition.
 - ❖ Introduce athletic skills in a systematic and timely way
 - ❖ Ensures an early focus on physical literacy - upon which excellence can be built
 - ❖ Encourage the child to practice several sports in order to develop motor skills (jumping, throwing, catching, etc..)
 - ❖
 - ❖ Provides an optimal competition structure for the various stages of athlete development

- Remove the focus of winning at all levels and age.
 - ❖ Focus solely on player development
 - ❖ Stop over-competing & under training
 - ❖ Fundamental movement skills and sport skills are not taught properly. Emphasis should be placed of skill development
 - ❖ Preparation geared to short-term outcomes, and not long term phtsical literacy goals
 - ❖ Introduce notions of decision-making when facing one or more opponents according to the player's roles

- Introduce the fundamentals of hockey (skating, turns, etc.)
 - ❖ Today's game is designed around speed, developing proper skating techniques at an early age is key in their development
 - ❖ Making sure that your athletes can turn, stop and start on both feet is an absolute must
 - ❖ Developing skating techniques in tight places is critical



U9 COACHING RESOURCE GUIDE



- Develop puck control skills (stick handling, passing, shooting)
 - ❖ Let the players develop in a consequence free environment
 - ❖ Stick skills are essential for all players to acquire at an early age
 - ❖ Being able to make “plays” in tight spaces at an early age will increase development significantly

- Develop flexibility and focus on speed (5-6 sec. or less)
 - ❖ Learning how to play with limited time and space
 - ❖ Stops/starts, turns, stick handling and passing/shooting in small areas must be taught at an early age

- Introduce cooperation among teammates. Creating a team player and a good team “culture”
 - ❖ Learning how to become a good team-mate starts at an early age
 - ❖ Place value and insist on the effort and perseverance rather than the results
 - ❖ This can be applied to various situations by creating good habits:
 - Continue even when the game is out of reach
 - Backcheck
 - Complete the drill
 - Get to the puck first
 - Stop at the net
 - Do the drills correctly

 - ❖ Make sure that the environment is that of a healthy competition: the child must see competition as a challenge, not a threat
 - ❖ Show players how to respect others (teammates and opponents)
 - ❖ Help children develop a good team spirit

Coaching Key

A Minor Hockey Association’s success from a coach should be based on 3 main aspects:

- 1) Enjoyment of players coming to the rink everyday
- 2) Improvement of players’ skills
- 3) Developing of players to play at the next level

Focus on Development while emphasizing fun!

Age Appropriate Programming

Our goal is to create an Age Appropriate Program which will enact a cultural change for how players experience the game at the U9 level. This is real hockey even though it may not look like the way you played as parents.

Age Appropriate Programing: Designing hockey programming that is suitable to the **age, size, and skill level** of the participant.

- ❖ Children are not miniature adults
- ❖ Child development is a marathon not a sprint
- ❖ Children should be built into:

People First ➡ Athletes Second ➡ Hockey Players Last

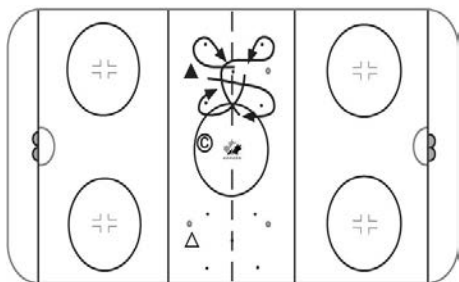
Implementing a deliberate age appropriate program at the **U9** level will give the participants in your association the upper hand in “reaching their potential” as hockey players. The game is about the kids who play, and it is time to give the game back to them.

U9 - PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Based on Hockey Canada’s player development model coaches are to follow the below percentage of time when delivering practices.

Technical Skill (75-85 %): fundamental skills that are required to play the game. Players at this age must develop proper **skating, shooting** and **passing** techniques

Skating

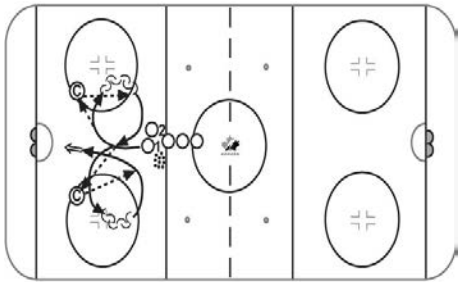


- ❖ Place 5 pucks in circle as shown. Player must skate around each of the outside pucks, and always come back to the middle before skating around one of the outside pucks again.
- ❖ Toes always pointing forward during transitions
- ❖ Add puck for progression

Key Teaching Points

- ❖ Quick feet, stay low for balance
- ❖ Efficient movements; ex.. try to do only 1 crossover to get back to

Shooting

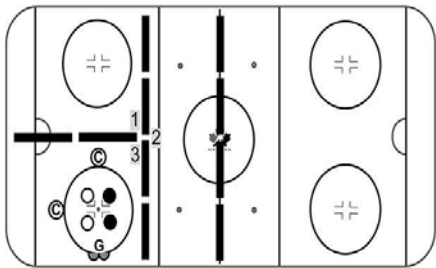


- ❖ Defensemen pass to coach pivot and receive pass back, cross and repeat with second coach and shoot on net
- ❖ Next D leaves when first D passes to the second coach

Key teaching points

- ❖ Toes up ice and keep your speed
- ❖ Keep shoulders square to coaches
- ❖ Pass the puck hard and present your stick where you want the return pass

Passing



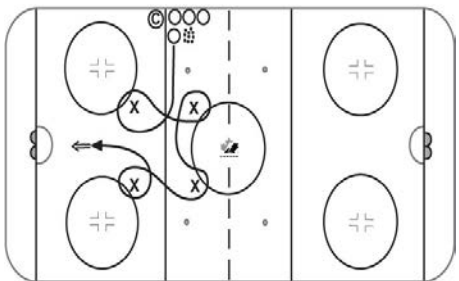
- ❖ Place a net at the bottom of the face-off circle
- ❖ All 4 players start in the face-off circle
- ❖ On the whistle, a puck is dumped in and players play 2 on 2
- ❖ A new puck is dumped in on goals, saves, or pucks that go out of play

Key Teaching Points

- ❖ Compete for the puck
- ❖ Gain puck possession and control
- ❖ Use supportive options
- ❖ Puck protection skills

Individual Tactic (15 %): action by one player using one or a combination of technical skills to create an advantage or take away the advantage of an opponent. (1 vs. 1)

Offensive Tactic

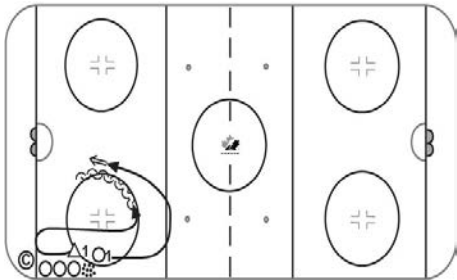


- ❖ Place 4 pylons in a box formation anywhere on the ice
- ❖ Player skates in random pattern with puck around all 4 pylons
- ❖ Finish with shot on net

Key teaching points

- ❖ Fast feet, fast hands
- ❖ Deception, fakes creativity

Defensive Tactic



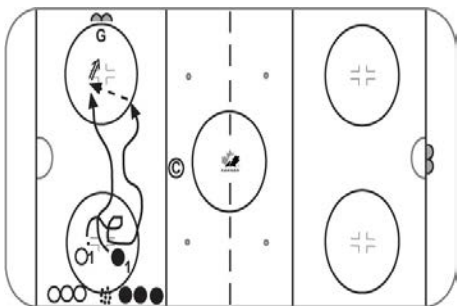
- ❖ Players line up on half wall at hash marks
- ❖ Offensive play skates with puck, tags the blue line and then turns to attack net
- ❖ Defensive player must tag goal line, and then jump up to close the gap to play the 1 on 1

Key Teaching Points

- ❖ Turn head prior to turning up ice to see the play
- ❖ Stick on Stick, Stick on puck
- ❖ Close gap as quickly as possible.

Team Tactic (0-10 %): collective action of two or more players using technical skills and / or individual tactics to create an advantage or take away the advantage of an opponent. (3 vs. 2)

Offensive Team Tactic

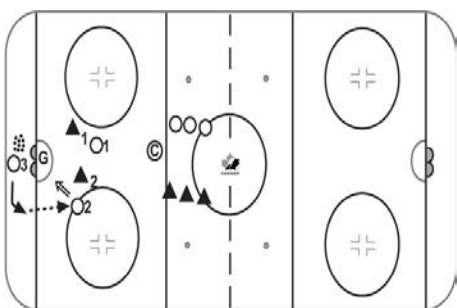


- ❖ Coach on side boards at hashmarks with pucks. Players lined up on either side of coach, net on side boards on opposite side of the ice
- ❖ Players start on stomach, coach dumps puck in circle, players play keep away 1 on 1. On whistle, players then attack net on far side 2 on 0
- ❖ Once goal is scored or coach blows whistle players have to tag posts, then race back to far side

Key Teaching Points

- ❖ Compete level, puck protection then teamwork

Defensive Team Tactic



- ❖ Player behind net with pucks
- ❖ 2 offensive players and 2 defensive players in front of net
- ❖ Player behind net can't come in front of goal line, Offensive players can't go higher or wider than the dots in the circles
- ❖ Player behind net gets 3 passes out front to try and score.
- ❖ After 3 passes are made, exchange players

Key Teaching Points

- ❖ Offence get open, keep stick free
- ❖ Defence tie up stick, stay on defensive side
- ❖ Compete, fight for space



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Team Play System (0 %) – a pattern of play in which the movement of all players is integrated in a coordinated fashion to accomplish an offensive or defensive objective. (2-1-2 forecheck)

- ❖ Focus for this age group should be on developing the appropriate skills necessary to enjoy the game
- ❖ Learning the proper techniques will enable the athletes to build confidence and enjoy the game more
- ❖ Each team tactic/system comes down to individual skills. Being able to play within a team system requires the athletes to be able to perform all necessary skills to perform the tactic.
- Ex... a defenseman must learn to skate backwards, pivot to both sides, control a puck, control a puck with their head up, find an outlet and make a pass before they are able to conduct a breakout pass

Strategy (0 %) – the selection of team play systems in order to impose upon the opposition, the style of play and tactics which will build on the coach’s, team strengths and neutralize those of the opponent while at the same time taking advantage of the opponent’s weaknesses.

- Teaching at this age should focus on developing creativity in the athletes
- We want to build players who can think on their feet and react to all situations
- Being creative and learning how to make “plays” in a consequence free environment is the ultimate learning experience for young players
- Letting them “Figure it Out” for themselves is the goal.
- Give them the tools and watch them use them. Let them have freedom to try new things and make mistakes

U7	U9
85 % - Technical Skills	75 % - Technical Skills
15 % - Individual Tactics	15 % - Individual Tactics
0 % - Team Tactics	10 % - Team Tactics
0 % - Team Play Systems	0 % - Team Play Systems
0 % - Strategy	0 % - Strategy



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PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PYRAMID



Seasonal Structure

The role of the Seasonal Structure is to make sure that the Athletes are learning new skills and developing throughout the season. Focus is placed on supporting the complete player not just the athlete training and competition. Athletes are training to develop rather than training for competition. A plan needs to be set in place to ensure the athletes are progressing in their development, and not focused on competition or game play results

- ❖ Introduce athletic skills in a systematic and timely way
 - Progress from week to week and month to month
 - Add new skills/ variations to ensure progression
 - Start off with simple and add more complicated/ difficult skills and drills once they have mastered them
 - Give them time to Figure Out the skill, then move on and add something new.
 - Focus on skill mastery rather than speed of the drill- let them start slow and build from there

SEPTEMBER

-Technical Skills - Introduce
 Skating
 - Agility
 - Balance
 - Coordination
 Puck Control
 - Stationary & Moving
 Fun Games

OCTOBER

-Technical Skills – Introduce / Develop
 Skating
 - Agility
 - Balance
 - Coordination
 Puck Control
 - Stationary & Moving
 Fun Games

NOVEMBER

-Technical Skills – Introduce / Develop
 Skating
 - Agility
 - Quickness
 - Speed
 Puck Control
 - Moving
 - Dukes
 Passing
 - Stationary
 Fun Games

DECEMBER

Technical Skills – Develop
 Skating
 - Agility
 - Quickness
 - Speed
 Puck Control
 - Moving
 - Dukes
 Passing
 - Stationary
 Fun Games

JANUARY

Technical Skills - Refine
 Skating
 - Agility
 - Quickness
 - Speed
 Puck Control
 - Moving
 - Dukes
 Passing
 - Stationary / Moving
 Fun Games



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FEBRUARY

Technical Skills – Develop / Refine

Skating
- Quickness
- Speed

Puck Control
- Stationary/ Moving
- Deker

Passing
- Stationary / Moving

Individual Tactics - Introduce

1 on 1's

Give and Go's
- Stationary / Moving
- Deker

Passing
- Moving

MARCH

Technical Skills – Develop / Refine

Skating
- Quickness
- Speed

Puck Control
- Stationary/ Moving
- Deker

Passing
- Stationary / Moving

Individual Tactics - Develop

1 on 1's

Give and Go's
- Stationary / Moving
- Deker

Jamborees / Festivals
• 3 on 3
• 4 on 4
• Half ice / Cross ice

APRIL

Jamborees / Festivals

• 3 on 3
• 4 on 4
• Half ice / Cross ice

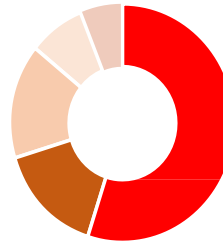
MAY / JUNE / JULY / AUGUST

Off season

Multisport Activities

FUN!!!

SEASONAL STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN CHART



35% - Introducing Technical Skills

35% - Developing Technical Skills

15% - Refining Technical Skills

10% - Introducing Individual Tactics

5% - Developing Individual Tactics

The U9 Practice Environment

It is important for all our coaches to create a positive environment for all players. Children that play and practice in a fun learning environment will strive to get better and continue to play the game. Coaching at the U9 level is all about the kids being engaged and active.

It is critical at this age for kids to have fun. But fun doesn't mean undisciplined or unstructured play or practices.

- Fun is challenging
- Engaging
- Fun is what unlocks the key to learning.

Players that have fun will want to return, and by getting them to return we can further their development.

Development Through Practice

Skill development, as well as having fun, is the #1 goal of a U9 practice. Athletes who have the fundamental skills will increase their confidence which will allow them to enjoy the game more

- Teach skills not only for technique, but also for results.
 - ❖ Tell them why they are working on certain skills. Video evidence is a great tool to explain why they are working on skills
 - ❖ This will allow them to develop Hockey IQ



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- Repetition helps players to become consistent performers
 - ❖ Give them enough time/ reps to learn the drill properly
- Results happen when repetition of technique can be mastered so technique can be incorporated into drills and ultimately into games
 - ❖ Once they have mastered a skill, incorporate new aspects of the skill and add difficulty
 - ❖ Start small and build on the basic skills

5 Key Points to Consider in Skill Development

- 1) **Technique:** Practice needs to be done in progression. Start with the basics and let them develop the basics before moving on
 - ❖ If you can't do it standing still
 - ❖ You can't do it moving
 - ❖ You can't do it to beat an opponent
- 2) **Practice**
 - ❖ Practice at a speed so players can learn – Don't worry about speed, work on repetition and technique first
 - ❖ Work on the same skills in a variety of drills – Don't be afraid to challenge players. You can work on the same skill 2-3 practices in a row with different drills. This will keep them engaged in their own development
 - ❖ Players need to learn at a speed where they can practice, think and create without worrying about making mistakes
 - ❖ Let them make mistakes, lose the puck etc. They will get better by doing and trying
- 3) **F.I.O:** Figure it Out
 - ❖ Figure It Out means creativeness and improvisation – Creativity doesn't happen when we are telling them what to do all the time. They need to be able to FIO for themselves
 - ❖ If players are attached to the outcome; ie worried about making a mistake, they will not fully realize their potential to be creative.
 - ❖ They need to let go! – If they are not losing the puck or falling down, they can go faster. Let them push themselves!
 - ❖ Create or set up the drill, then let players decide the patterns – Set the parameters, then let them loose
 - ❖ Creativity is what creates Hockey IQ. We want to develop players who can think on their feet, not Robots!
- 4) **Practice with Purpose and Speed**
 - ❖ Once technique has been practiced it then has to be done with purpose. Use drills that take the technique and apply them to situations that require a game like purpose and speed



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- ❖ Practice with purpose then has to be done at speed, **GAME SPEED**
- ❖ When stickhandling can be done with purpose and speed it can then be done without thinking.
- ❖ It then happens automatically and deception and creativity can come into play.
- ❖ When they are good enough, take away the pylons and add coaches or other players to put the puck carrier under stress

5) Game Application

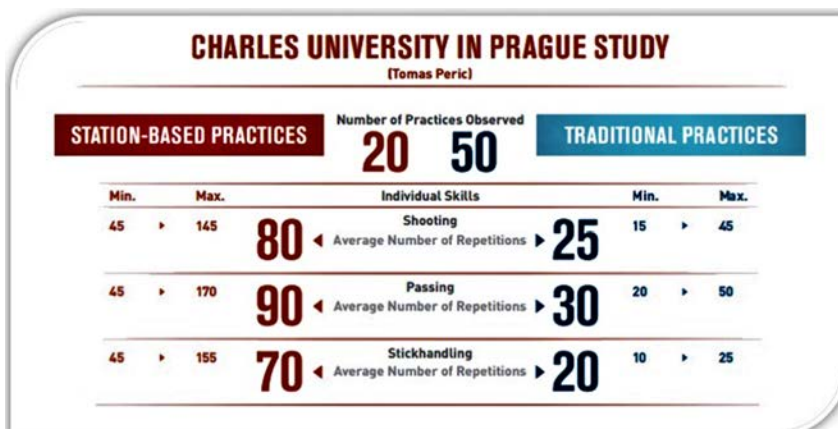
- ❖ Once they have technique-> once they have practiced-> once they have figured it out with purpose and speed -> then comes the most important aspect of all -> Game Like Application
- ❖ It is very important to progress to drills that will also have game applications. Players love to know how they can apply what they have been working on
- ❖ Puck protection is key. Start with the skill then progress to game like pressure situations where the player is under stress

What a U9 Practice Looks Like

As coaches navigate through the U9 Hockey Model we have set priorities to simplify what is being worked on and in what format. Focussing on Skill Development will ensure that players are receiving an age appropriate start to reaching their potential as a player.

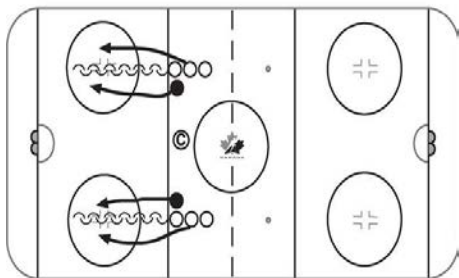
Stations

Using stations in practice means that players will get more opportunities for individual coaching during a practice. Using stations will allow coaches to work on several different skills throughout the practice, which will allow the players to get more repetitions. And more repetitions mean more development. Moving a player from station to station allows for better time utilization. Less ice time is wasted setting up drills. With more kids on the ice, associations have the ability to lower costs or increase ice touches with an increase in development. Kids are three times more active than in traditional practices



Fun & Enjoyment

- Keeping players engaged in the practice is a must at the U9 Level.
- Standing around and waiting for their turn allows them to wonder and lose focus
- Teach skills and tactics but remember it is a game that teaches so much more....
- Make it a good place for kids to be
- Create stations that allow them to have fun. They can work on skill development in a fun station without them knowing they are working on their skills



Tag

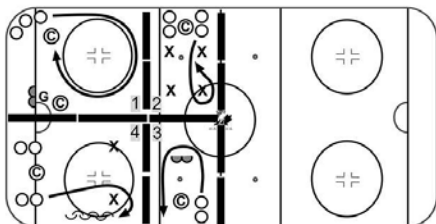
- ❖ Players line up outside blue line on both sides of the ice
- ❖ On coaches' signal, 3 players go at a time, with one player skating backwards the entire time and other two skating forward trying to tag the backward skater
- ❖ Whoever tags the backward skater then becomes the backward skater and the other two try to tag that player

Key Teaching Points

- ❖ Quick feet, agility, lateral skating

Skill Acquisition

- When teaching hockey players puck skills, at any age and skill level, it is not necessary to break down skills into the most finite movements
 - Coaches need to be realistic and teach what they are capable of teaching
 - Rarely does an entire group of players handle the puck the same – nor should we expect them to
 - Adapt your instruction to enhance each players' individual puck skills.
 - Technical knowledge is most useful for the coach (for skill analysis and correction)
 - Overly technical approaches are not beneficial to most players!
 - Let them be kids and have fun with it
-
- Coaches can split the ice up to work on one particular skill at a time



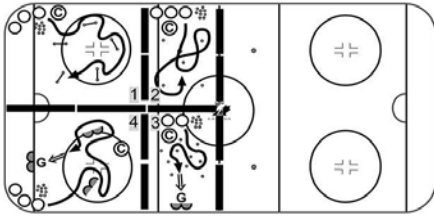
- ❖ 4 stations designed to work on 4 different aspects of the skating stride
- ❖ Or, players can work on 4 different drills all working on the same aspect of the skating stride
- ❖ Players get more reps on the same skill



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- Coaches can split the ice up to work on different skills



- ❖ 4 stations designed to work on 4 different skills
- ❖ Designed to teach several skills throughout the practice
- ❖ Allows for high reps of different skills to keep the players engaged

Error Detection and Correction

- Station work allows for a more hands on approach to practice
- Increased Coach to Player Ratios allow coaches the flexibility to correct skills/techniques as the players are doing the drills
- Rule modifications can be made depending on what the coach wants to teach, including individual skills and tactics
- The most effective way to teach the basic skills of hockey is to divide your total group of players up into smaller manageable groups.

Coach Development within error detection

- Not all coaches are strong at teaching all aspects of skill development
- Placing coaches with skills/ drills they are confident with creates a positive coaching environment
- Coaches who are strong in certain areas can use their strengths to work with a specific skill
- Some coaches are better skaters, which will allow them to properly teach skating mechanics. This also applies to other skills- puck control, SAG, compete etc...
- Allowing coaches to teach to their strengths allows the players a more engaged development opportunity
- Confident coaches = confident teaching- which leads to Player Development

Maximize Activity to Build Confidence

- The use of stations allows more players to be involved in drills
- The more engaged the athletes are, the more likely they will enjoy their experience
- The more stations you are able to use (dependant on #of coaches) the more skill development you are able to do
- This will allow a higher number of repetitions of each drill, resulting in more experience and more practice time
- Players at this age learn through repetition
- More repetition = more skill development= more confidence- which will ultimately lead to more enjoyment of the Game
- **Repetition**
- **Development**
- **Confidence**
- **FUN!!**

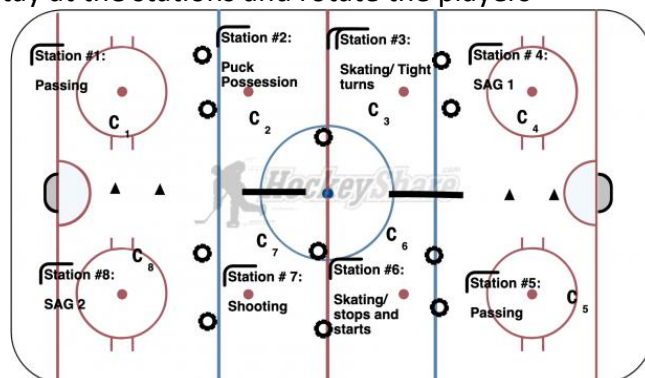
Shared Ice

Shared Ice Practices consists of 2 or more teams on the ice at the same time working together to maximize player development. This is used to develop efficient use of ice time and to maximize development while decreasing ice costs. Emphasis is placed on technical skill fundamentals which will translate into technical skill and individual tactic drills.

One of the most common complaints heard in discussions concerning minor hockey is “there just isn’t enough ice time”. This complaint is voiced by administrators, coaches, parents and players alike.

➤ Shared Ice Best Practices

- ❖ Practice two teams together. Coaches from 2 or more teams can work together to come up with the drills for the practice. This will encourage idea sharing, team work and MHA driven development within the practice
- ❖ Coaches can also take turns running the practices. This is a good way to learn new drills, that you can incorporate in to your repertoire
- ❖ Treat the players as one big group as in a hockey school, with 30+ kids and 6 – 8 coaches, the ice time can be run very efficiently.
- ❖ You can run 1 coach per station which would enable you to have more stations, which means more development opportunities
- ❖ Invite another team to your full ice practice and vice versa, that way you get more ice time, but no extra cost.
- ❖ Practice together for half the practice and then utilize half ice after that if desired. It is a great way to get full ice skating drills in if you need.
- ❖ Utilize stations to work on technical skills. This is the best way to work on several aspects of skill development in one practice
- ❖ Use skating drills that emphasize quickness
- ❖ Use puck control drills that emphasize handling the puck in a confined area.
- ❖ Use passing drills that require quick, short passes
- ❖ Use drills that help players to read and react quickly.
- ❖ Rotate stations quickly to keep intensity up.
- ❖ Use fun / competitive games to mimic real game situations
- ❖ Have coaches stay at the stations and rotate the players





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Goalies

How a player gets their first experience of goaltending in hockey is crucial.

If a beginner has fun while developing the fundamental skills and building confidence in their ability to perform those fundamental skills, there is a strong probability that player will go on to enjoy goaltending and hockey for many years. One of the big declines is the number of players who want to play goalie each year. This is due to them not having fun in the position, and not getting the coaching/ attention that they need to make it a fun position.

Goaltending is a critical aspect of team play and requires direct & consistent unique coaching skills. As forwards and defenders get specific coaching for their respective positions, goalies require the same attention and guided skill development. Coaches feel that they need to be “Goalie people” or ex Goalies in order to teach the position. This is not always the case. Teaching the position at the U9 level is about teaching the very basic fundamentals, and making sure that they are having fun. Kids at this age want to feel the puck hitting their pads and them making saves

Fundamentals

- Let players experiment playing the position.
- No full time goalies
- Demonstrate basic stance
- Train the child to keep his eyes on the puck
- Show the child how to move about while in the upright position
- Teach the child how to stay square to the puck
- Teach the child how to always keep his stick on the ice.

Goalie Coaching Basics

- **Stance**
 - ❖ Athletic position: feet slightly wider than shoulder width
 - ❖ Weight balanced on the balls of feet and on inside edges of skates – knees, shoulders, toes aligned
 - ❖ Stance should feel comfortable
 - ❖ Knees and waist positioning slightly bent to match shin and spine angle
 - ❖ Hand positioning: gloves parallel, forward and relaxed in peripheral view
 - ❖ Catching glove open and out in front
 - ❖ Chin down and eyes on the puck
- **Skating**
 - ❖ Goaltenders should be encouraged to be good skaters, if not the best on the team
 - ❖ Goaltender-specific skating drills should focus on developing **inside edge work**.



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- ❖ The key is to advance the goaltenders ability to **move in a quick, efficient and balanced manner**
- ❖ In addition to “Team Skating” goalies must also be doing goaltender specific skating skills. They need to learn how to do
 - **“C” Cuts** - Skate blades stay on ice at all times
 - ❖ Forward C-cut: Weight is on heels of skates to push forwards staying on your inside edges
 - ❖ Backward C-cut: weight is on toes pushing backwards
 - ❖ When to use it: to control angle and depth in the crease and combined with other skating movements (t-push, shuffle, slide) i.e. coming out of the crease or backwards movement for a breakaway
 - **T-Push**
 - ❖ Start in stance
 - ❖ Eyes first towards target – turn head
 - ❖ Lead foot pointed towards target (lead toe pointed to destination)
 - ❖ Back leg pushes
 - ❖ Stop on lead foot
 - ❖ Back to stance
 - ❖ When to use it: travel longer distances when there is time for goaltender to get set (angle, square, depth) i.e. puck goes from D to D along the blue line
 - **Shuffles**
 - ❖ Start in stance
 - ❖ Weight on inside edge of push leg
 - ❖ Take weight off of inside edge of glide leg
 - ❖ Toes remain forward
 - ❖ Push leg extends and returns to stance position
 - ❖ When to use it: short distances when there is less time for goaltender to get set (staying on angle and square to the puck), tracking the puck behind the goal line i.e. player is carrying the puck in the zone and goalie must stay square
 - **Pivot**
 - ❖ Start in stance
 - ❖ Lead leg performs backward C-Cut then T-push or Shuffle
 - ❖ Back leg push or shuffle
 - ❖ When to use it: travel longer distances to adjust angle and depth to stay square i.e. puck is passed diagonally East to West and goaltender must move and change angle & depth



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➤ **Butterfly**

- ❖ Usage depends on size of goalie & distance / angle of puck from crease
- ❖ Upper body is the same as stance
- ❖ Knees in, Toes out, Butt up
- ❖ Pads loose enough to be able to rotate. Seal the ice – staying flat
- ❖ Stick on ice slightly angled (deflecting pucks)

INCORPORATING GOALIES INTO PRACTICE

- Your goalie will improve doing team drills, but if you make time for one drill per practice, you will be able to give them the attention they deserve
- Set aside 10 minutes (1 drill) for your goalies per practice
- Skating: Goaltenders priorities should be goalie-specific skating, when not doing so they should join in team skating drills for conditioning
- Passing: Goaltenders should focus on goalie-specific passing drills when the team is doing passing drills
- Space out your shooters
- Communicate to goalies what their roles are for certain drills
- Game type situation drills

Small Area Games

Practice time is where most players develop their skills. In a normal game players receive 15-20 minutes of ice time, whereas they receive 50 minutes in practice. Using small areas and short shifts, players are challenged to read and react quickly under pressure and by doing so they learn to think and see the ice better. Small area competitive games not only force players into tight competitive quarters, they also encourage players to battle hard for the puck while at the same time having a great deal of fun. Similar to how kids used to play growing up on Outdoor Rinks.

Utilizing small area competitive games provides many other advantages. First and foremost, the games are designed to provide an environment to help players in their ability to make quick decisions. Small area games also simulate game shifts and provide an excellent form of conditioning in practice.

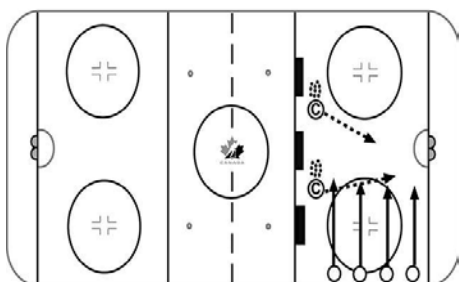
Through practice, puck possession time and overall skill development can take place at a far more rapid rate than simply playing games. And by utilizing small area games in practice, you'll find both skill development and fun taking place simultaneously.

Key Factors to SAG's

- Limited attention span
- Need games as well as skill development
- Often need to learn by doing vs listening
- Teach fundamentals at all practices
- After skills are learned, introduce drills that are game like and FUN. SAG's will encourage them to compete
- "Read and react" is teachable; decision making is an important part of the game. This is best done by SAGs
- Competitive hockey drills done in a smaller than normal playing area
- SAG's can be cross ice, neutral zone, corners - depending on what coaches are trying to teach
- Usually fewer players participating but with a higher and consistent intensity. Lots of puck touches.
- Designed to simulate possible game-like situations that players can experience and learn from
- Teach kids how to compete; this needs to be done in practice: Play how you practice
- Within the context of the SAGs you can teach individual and team skills/
- Players experiment and teach themselves. They learn to Figure it Out
- Great for 1/2 ice or shared ice practices
- **Decrease the Space! Increase the Pace!**
- **Most love to play!!**
- **SAG's = Skill Development combined with FUN!!!**

Small Area Games can be used to teach many different Skills and or Tactics. There is no real limit on what can be done. Coaches need to have a plan on what they want to work on, and make sure to emphasize it in the drill

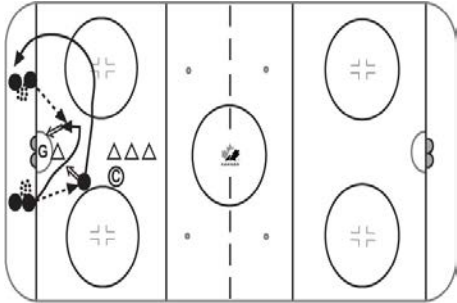
Skating



Asteroids

- ❖ Coaches and a few players will line up along the top of the zone with tennis balls
- ❖ Players will line up on the boards and skate from one end to the other while coaches shoot tennis balls across the zone.
- ❖ The goal of each player is to make to the end without being hit on the skates with a puck or ball.
- ❖ Last person standing wins

Shooting

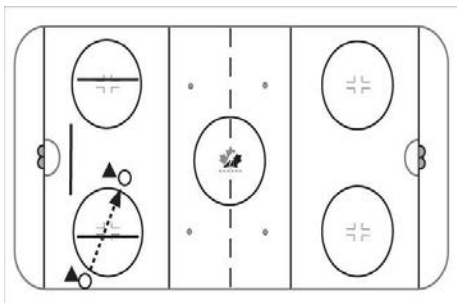


- ❖ Defence in front of net, a line of forwards on the goal line off to each side
- ❖ Starts as a 2 on 1 with pass from below the goal line to a forward in front for shot on net
- ❖ After the initial shot, the passer then goes net front to get a pass from the opposite side
- ❖ After shot, that passer then goes net front to get pass from other side. This is a continuous drill

Key Teaching Points

- ❖ Quick release
- ❖ D stick in lanes and active
- ❖ Quick pass, keep stick on ice and free

Passing

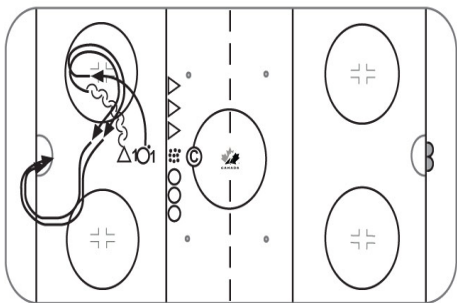


- ❖ Three obstacles are placed around the zone. 2 cones or tires can be placed 4-5 feet apart to create the obstacles
- ❖ Players play 2 on 2 in the zone and must pass through the obstacles (cones or tires) to one another to score points.

Key Teaching Points

- ❖ Move your feet to find open space
- ❖ Support your partner and use all of the ice
- ❖ Sticks in passing lanes

Offensive Tactic

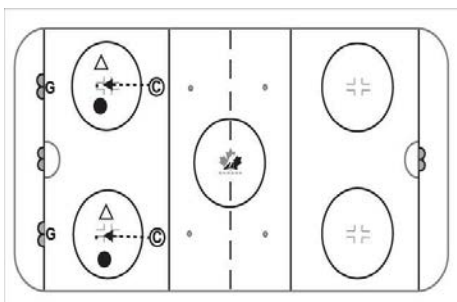


- ❖ One player on offense and one player on defense
- ❖ Offensive player starts with the puck, defensive player is between him and the net
- ❖ Defenseman wins if they strip the puck from offensive player and skates it over the blue line. Offensive player wins if they can skate it through the blue paint of the crease

Key teaching points

- ❖ Defensive player starts with a good gap.. Keep stick on the ice, and on puck
- ❖ Offensive player needs to protect the puck and take the puck to the paint

Defensive Tactic

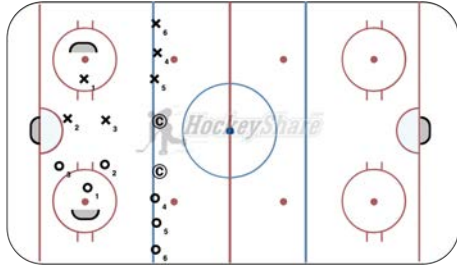


- ❖ One player is the offensive player for the whole drill and one defensive player... they can alternate each time
- ❖ Offensive player starts with the puck and when coach blows whistle, players leave their puck and offensive player picks up new puck spotted by coach. Defensive player reacts

Key Teaching Points

- ❖ Offensive player tries to get to all pucks as quickly as possible and attack the net. They need to take the puck to the net and protect it as well
- ❖ Defensive player tries to keep a tight gap laterally and horizontally. Stay defensive side, use stick and practice good 1-1 individual defensive tactics

Decision Making



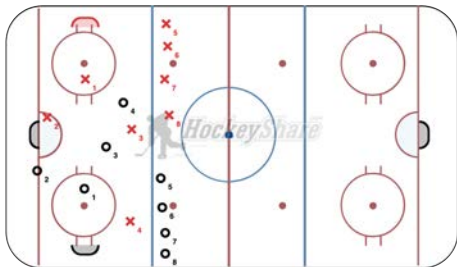
Double Trouble

- ❖ 3 x's against 3 o's cross ice
- ❖ Coach x pass to x players- Coach o passes to o players
- ❖ 2 pucks are in play
- ❖ Players have to decide how they want to play
- ❖ Do they want to play 3 on zero and try to score or do they want to keep a defender or 2 back to play defense
- ❖ First team to 5 wins

Key teaching point

- ❖ They have to decide how they want to play, while working on skill and tactical development

Supporting the Puck



Ace in the Hole

- ❖ 4 x's vs 4 o's cross ice
- ❖ There always has to be at least one designated player in their team defensive circle- x1 and o1
- ❖ If x1 or o1 receives the puck, they must skate the puck out of the circle and a teammate must take their place in the circle

Key teaching point

- ❖ Players will learn how to support the puck making sure that the puck carrier is not the last person back

Fun



Rugby or Soccer

- ❖ Players play Soccer or Rugby 3 on 3 cross ice
- ❖ Players are only allowed to use their hands
- ❖ Must make 3 passes before they can score

Key teaching points

- ❖ Players will work on their skating, hand eye coordination and balance all while have some fun

Goalie



- ❖ Coach shoots puck on either net at random
- ❖ Goalies are trying to score on opposing net through their rebound control
- ❖ Both goalies must be aware of puck off of shot or rebound from other Goalie
- ❖ Game is best of 7- then switch sides

Key teaching points

- ❖ Compete on shot and on rebound from opposing goalie
- ❖ Rebound control. Try to place the puck where you want it to go
- ❖ Control. Always stay in control. Make the first save
- ❖ Focus!



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Game Play

Parents and coaches need to think long term and not worry too much about children being the best player on the ice in U9 hockey. Putting young players in a competitive environment too early will compromise the child's development. Children should only be placed in to competitive situations that suit their skill level and abilities. Parents and coaches must be realistic about what children should be able to do all age levels.

Too much focus is being placed on positional development. The focus for coaching at the U9 Level should be placed on

➤ Skill Development

- ❖ Developing all the skills needed to play the game
- ❖ Balance and Agility
- ❖ Edge Control
- ❖ Starting and Stopping
- ❖ Forward Skating and Striding
- ❖ Backward Skating
- ❖ Turning and Crossovers
- ❖ Stationary Puck Control
- ❖ Moving Puck Control
- ❖ Stationary Passing and Receiving
- ❖ Moving Passing and Receiving
- ❖ Shooting
- ❖ Individual Offensive Tactics
- ❖ Individual Defensive Tactics

➤ Creativity

- ❖ Players at this age need to be free to learn for themselves. To learn from their mistakes, and try new things
- ❖ Creativity is developed when they are free to use the skills they were taught in a consequence free environment
- ❖ Number of puck battles is significantly increased. They need to learn from a young age how to play in a small space. Being able to win puck control and move it quickly to a teammate is essential
- ❖ Same is true on the defensive side of the puck. They need to learn how to engage on a puck carrier and force them to a low scoring area
- ❖ Being able to make plays and protect the puck in traffic is a huge difference maker on kids succeeding at higher levels.
- ❖ Limited Time and Space promotes more effective passing, receiving and support.
- ❖ There is less time and space, which increases the frequency of making hockey decisions.



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- ❖ This provides a better environment for teaching ice awareness and boosts hockey sense.
- ❖ Higher intensity level of competition. Which leads to greater Development

➤ **Situational Awareness**

- ❖ Supporting the puck both offensively and defensively is key at this age group
- ❖ At the beginning of the year you will see all 8 players around the puck at all times. The key is to teach them how to spread out and when/ where to make plays

Offensively

- ❖ Players need to learn how to support the puck carrier
- ❖ Spreading out and finding areas close enough to the puck that they are a threat to the opposition
- ❖ Teaching them to support the puck within 8-10 feet of the play is crucial for developing Hockey IQ
- ❖ Moving their feet when the puck is on their stick is a great asset to have at a young age
- ❖ Moving their feet and getting open when they don't have the puck is also just as important
- ❖ Playing with speed can be taught by having them move the puck and themselves quickly to get up the ice. Ex...Give and Go's, or supporting the rush is a fundamental tactic that can be developed from an early age

Defensively

- ❖ Learning how to defend both offensively (offensive half) and defensively are fundamental tactics that can be taught early on
- ❖ Angling- being able to use body and stick position to force the opponent to a low scoring area
- ❖ Basic 1 on 1's- basic skills to learn how to defend
 - Body on body and stick on stick
 - Stick check
 - Stick lift
 - Puck removal
- ❖ Basic coverage of a defender- Learning how to play on the defensive side of your opponent- between your net and the opposition at all times
- ❖ Escape moves- learning how to get away from your opposition on transition of the puck from defense to offense
- ❖ Puck retrievals- which lead to breakouts and offensive half attacks



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➤ Play Inside the Dots

- ❖ Players need to learn at an early age to bring the puck inside the dots offensively
- ❖ Taking the puck to the scoring zone in order to create offensive opportunities
- ❖ Less time and space increases the frequency and speed of making hockey decisions (read and react).
- ❖ Puck control and puck protection skills are enhanced resulting in more confidence

➤ Team Concept

- ❖ Place value and insist on the effort and perseverance rather than the results.
- ❖ This can be applied to various situations by creating good habits
- ❖ Continue even when the game is out of
- ❖ Make sure that the environment is that of a healthy competition: the child must see competition as a challenge, not a threat.
- ❖ Show players how to respect others (teammates and opponents)
- ❖ Help children develop a good team spirit. Ex... I congratulate my teammates after a nice play.

“You have to be able to make plays in pretty small areas. The more you practice in small spaces the better off you are.”

Sidney Crosby, Canadian National Men’s Team



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Resources

HEO U9 Web site

www.hockeyeasternontario.ca/

HEO has created a page designed for the new U9 programming. It includes:

- U9 Policy and Resource guide
<http://www.hockeyeasternontario.ca/docs/U9%20Hockey%20Resource%20Guide-%20HEO.pdf>
- U9 Coaching Resource Guide
- Alternative Coaching Resources
http://www.hockeyeasternontario.ca/pages/coach/coach_resources.htm
- U9 Videos
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UClc6D9wLXpCkGsA2ETjpkhg>

Hockey Canada

Hockey Canada has designed resources to help U9 coaches with both their yearly planning, and individual practice plans. These ice-session plans are available through several different platforms:

- Hockey Canada Network

The Hockey Canada Network gives coaches and players the tools to succeed with drills, skills, videos, practice plans and articles on your tablet or phone. Coaches at the U7 and U9 levels are able to view all U9 content for free without having to purchase the premium version. With your account you can sign up for Push Notifications- Hockey Canada will send out Monthly Practice plans at the beginning of each month straight to your smart phone. It includes:

- ❖ 3,250+Articles
- ❖ 1,500+Drills
- ❖ 850+Videos
- ❖ 430+Series
- ❖ 200+Game Clips
- ❖ 100+Plans

The Hockey Canada Network app is available for iOS and Android devices. Download it now for free from the Apple App Store or Google Play and start exploring videos and articles:

<https://www.hockeycanadanetwork.com/>



U9 COACHING RESOURCE GUIDE



➤ Drill Hub

Hockey Canada Drill Hub is a resource for players and coaches of all levels. It has a growing library of drill videos, diagrams and descriptions categorized by skills, age group and other criteria. Drill Hub is free to use. With your free Drill Hub account you can:

- ❖ Search for drills by entering a key word, or words, into the search field.
- ❖ You can filter the drills by using the category selector.
- ❖ Adding and removing drills from your practice plan
- ❖ Shar your practice plans with other coaches

<https://www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/hockey-programs/drill-hub>

➤ U9 Practice Plans

Hockey Canada has created 32 U9 Practice Plans for all coaches to use. These plans are designed to help coaches Develop their Athletes throughout the year. The Practice Plans can be found at:

<https://www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/hockey-programs/drill-hub/under-9>

NCCP Instructional Stream Clinics

The NCCP Instructional Stream is a series of practical clinics from Hockey Canada, certified by the Coaching Association of Canada, that provide training and/or certification in a variety of technical/tactical areas.

These clinics are designed for coaches. They focus on developing the knowledge and skills required to teach age appropriate skills in accordance with Hockey Canada's LTPD model.

Clinics are 3 hours duration, 1.5 hours in class followed by 1.5 hours on ice, and are delivered by trained Hockey Canada skills instructors.

Clinic streams are comprised of three levels - Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3.

All Instructional Stram Clinics are free for coaches to attend. HEO will also run these clinics within an MHA for it's coaches. The MHA is responsible for providing Ice and Class time, all other costs are covered by HEO

The Clinics

➤ Skating

The Skating Instructional Stream clinic provides coaches the tools and skills required to teach skating in a progressive manner, from skills to tactics, to players of all ages. Coaches will gain insight into the need to consider skill development plans and how to use effective drills and teaching techniques for skill improvement.



U9 COACHING RESOURCE GUIDE



➤ Skills

The Skills Instructional Stream clinic provides coaches the tools and skills required to teach puck related skills to players of all ages in a progressive manner, which means you'll learn how to teach by building from skills to individual tactics. Coaches will gain insight into the need to consider skill development plans and how to use effective drills and teaching techniques for skill improvement. Level 1 starts with focusing on individual puck control skills only with levels 2 and 3 adding puck skills that involve one or more players and begin to contribute to tactics.

➤ Developing Defensemen

In this clinic series, coaches learn how to teach defensemen specific skills in a progressive manner. The ability to contribute offensively and defensively is the foundation for all defensemen. A defenseman's overall ability is directly related to their performance in skating, puck control, shooting, and checking. This fundamental connection between a defenseman's overall ability and their individual skills means coaches need to create development plans for their defensemen and dedicate adequate time to the instruction of defense specific skills in practices.

➤ Developing Checking Skills

The Checking Instructional Stream clinic provides coaches the tools and skills required to teach the complete checking skill set in a progressive manner, from skills to tactics, to players of all ages. Coaches will gain insight into the need to consider skill development plans and how to use effective drills and teaching techniques for checking skill improvement. The Checking Level 1 clinic is embedded in the Coach 2 and Development 1 clinics so coaches having taken those clinics are considered trained in Checking Level 1.

➤ Goaltending

The Goaltending Instructional Stream clinics are designed to teach coaches how to teach goaltenders. And we stress this very important point...they are for all coaches, not just goalie coaches. The topics covered in these clinics form a valuable information base for head and assistant coaches. And given the vast majority of minor hockey teams do not have a goalie coach it becomes critical that at least one coach on a team has taken some training and understands the position and the required skills.

➤ Shooting & Scoring

The Shooting & Scoring Instructional Stream clinics are designed to teach coaches how to teach shooting and scoring skills to their players. This clinic series looks at all types of shots and



U9 COACHING RESOURCE GUIDE



shooting scenarios for all positions...forwards and defencemen. In addition the clinic covers the various scoring situations that players need to understand and identify within the game.

➤ Small Area Games

The use of games in practice is an effective teaching tool. Small area games, in various forms, provide players game like situations in which they can apply skills, tactics and strategies they are learning. Games not only provide players opportunities to refine and put their skills into practice but they also can be used to teach skills and tactics. Topics for the Small Area Games clinic is as follows: