



USA Roller Sports
National Governing Body
www.usarollersports.org
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USARS Hockey Committee

What Coaches Should Know

- 1) Communication and Awareness
- 2) Qualities
- 3) Substance Abuse
- 4) Injuries and First Aid

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Part 1-



*Communication And
Awareness*

**Characteristics of a Successful Youth Roller Hockey Program*

- Successful youth roller hockey programs are based on time-honored organizations principles. The following seven ingredients are essential components of such programs.
 - Your coaching philosophy needs to emphasize the interests of the players over winning.
 - Create a sound program to ensure the welfare of your athletes.
 - An informed coach provides the most qualified adult leadership.
 - Teaching based upon developmental progression is a coach's primary responsibility.
 - Consistency and stability result from meticulous organization.
 - The roles of parents and the community as supporters have to be defined.
 - The program needs to be conducted in an environment that promotes safety and fair play.

Success in Youth Roller Hockey is Determined by More Than Won-Loss Records. Principles Such as Organization, the Health and Safety of Athletes, and Coaching Philosophy Have Equal or Greater Importance. Key Components of Successful Inline Programs Are:

1) Youth-Centered Coaching Philosophy

: A successful youth program places the interests of the players ahead of winning. Structure your program to maximize benefits and minimize the risks of participation in Roller Sports.

2) Infrastructure Based on the Athletes' Welfare

: Staff, players, and parents need to know what behavior is -and is not- appropriate. Establish a policy regarding the health, safety and development of your players. This policy statement addresses such issues as the conduct of players and coaches, rules that the team needs to obey, and requirements to protect the health and safety of the athletes. These policies need to be available to all coaches, administrators and parents.

3) Qualified Adult Leadership

: A competent coach is a well informed coach. Take every opportunity to educate yourself. Encourage your staff to do the same. A knowledgeable coach understands conditioning, nutrition, psychology, growth, and first aid-plus the rules, techniques and strategies of roller hockey.

4) Select Drills and Strategies that are Appropriate

: Teach the fundamental skills of roller hockey with enthusiasm. Players need to master the fundamentals before they attempt more complex skills or strategies. Keep offensive and defensive schemes simple. Players learn more quickly when they are presented with strategies and drills that match their developmental levels.

- Is the drill too physically demanding?
- Is the drill or scheme too complex for the layers to understand?
- Does the drill maximize time on task?
- Is the drill unnecessarily risky for players?

5) Organize to Promote Consistency and Stability

:A team that fails to prepare is a team preparing to fail. Staff and players need to prepare for practices and competitions. Coaches can anticipate and prepare for problems both on and off the rink. Among the most common problems are injuries to players, broken or lost equipment, and cancelled games or practices.

6) Define Roles for Parents and Community Supporters

:Make the program part of the community. Hold a pre-season meeting for parents. Share with them the program's philosophy. Encourage parents and community members to become involved. Parents and community members help in a variety of ways.

They can:

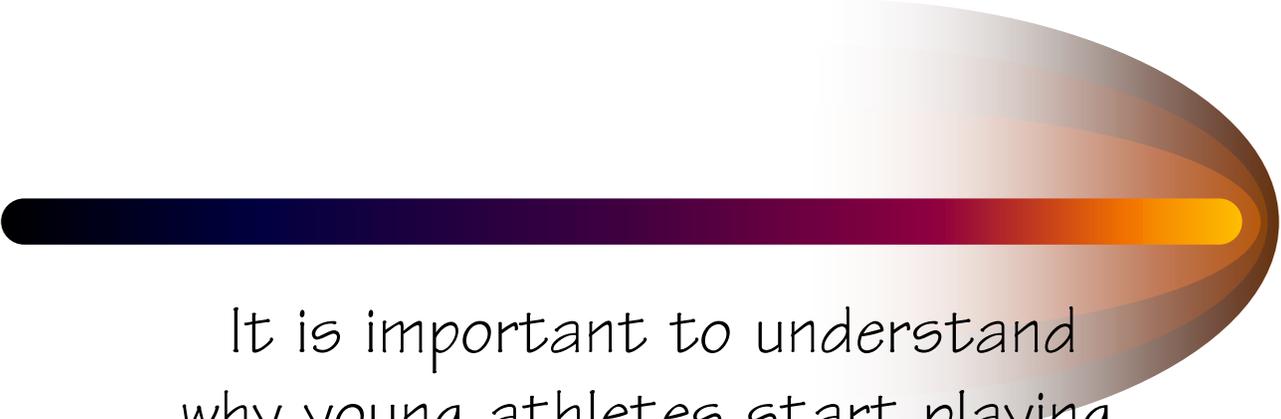
- Become assistant coaches
- Assume administrative roles such as team secretary or treasurer
- Wash team uniforms
- Hold fund-raising campaigns
- Host team socials
- Provide financial assistance for travel, equipment, or other necessities
- Practice and encourage good sportsmanship

7) Create an Environment that Promotes Safety and Fair Play

:On-rink administration affects the health and safety of players. Each program is responsible for providing well-maintained facilities, adequate equipment, and appropriate medical care for participants (when necessary). Be sure to check the rink and equipment before every practice and game. Delegate responsibilities for these tasks to staff and volunteers. This on-rink safety team looks out for hazards, including:

- Faulty or ill-fitting equipment
- They also promote sportsmanship and fair play by establishing a code of conduct for players, staff and parents.

**Fun-The Essential Ingredient in Youth Roller Hockey*



It is important to understand why young athletes start playing, continue playing, and stop playing sports. By knowing what motivates athletes, coaches can provide players with the experiences they are looking for, and avoid experiences that prompt athletes to stop playing.

What Coaches Should Know

- Most youth and scholastic athletes start playing roller hockey because they want to have fun. They continue playing because they are having fun. They stop playing roller hockey because they are not having fun.
- Fun is not simply letting athletes do whatever they want. Fun involves improving skills, learning new skills, being with friends and competing in a safe and encouraging environment.
- If you ask them, young athletes will tell you why they are playing roller hockey. Take the time to get to know the players.
- Coaches have ideas about the experiences players want in roller hockey. Players have their ideas too. When these two sets of ideas agree, satisfaction results. When coaches offer what players do not want, there is dissatisfaction all around. To put the athletes first and to provide what players want, coaches need to know and address the reasons for playing, stated by young athletes are: “fun”, “doing something I’m good at”, “to improve my skills”, “the excitement of competition” and “staying in shape”.
- Notice that winning is not mentioned, although it does show up as number 8 on the top 10 reasons why boys/girls play sports. Thus, coaches who emphasize winning as the reason for playing are doing so inappropriately. Most athletes have fun when they win, but it cannot be the main emphasis of a youth sport program. Bu this list is just a beginning. Ask your athletes why they want to play roller hockey.
- The previous list helps coaches understand what to provide for their players. The following list-the reasons why young athletes drop out of roller hockey-tells coaches what to avoid. The top five reasons why young athletes drop out of roller hockey are “not learning new skills”, “not having fun”, “not feeling a part of the team”, “not exciting” and “not getting enough exercise”.

When Coaches Provide What Young Athletes Seek, the Reasons for Dropping Out Become Moot.

- To keep youths involved in roller sports: emphasize learning new skills and improving existing ones
 - Doing the same drill repeatedly is not an effective way to improve skill. Be creative with drills and skill building. Talk to other coaches and read books so that you are able to teach fundamental hockey skills using different techniques and drills.
- Have fun
 - If you are having fun, chances are the team is too. Laugh with the players and allow them to laugh with each other and you. Coaches can teach players that making mistakes is one of the best ways of learning. Laugh at your own mistakes and encourage the players to do the same. Create a positive environment where your players want to improve and succeed, rather than a negative environment where the players are afraid to fail.
- Maintain a safe environment
 - Do not allow athletes to become involved in careless actions, tricks, pranks, hazing or practical jokes. These often lead to physical and psychological injuries and injured players are more likely to stop playing.
- Challenge the athletes with physical exercises in creative ways
 - Condition athletes both an-aerobically and aerobically, but make the process enjoyable.
- Give players a sense of belonging to the team
 - Treat everyone fairly and equally. Create a low-stress, team environment. Make sure that all players know the team goals. Help the players see how everyone's roles help achieve the team goal. Provide positive feedback-praise and encouragement-to players when they do their part to help the team realize goals.

When coaches put players first-by providing the joy, opportunity, education, excitement, and physical workout that players are looking for-the athletes are more likely to have positive experiences and return to play again next season.

**The Real Meaning of Winning*

Real winning happens when athletes and coaches know they have done their best to achieve individual and team goals.

- Winning occurs when each player gives maximum effort for him or herself and the team.
- Striving to win and the pursuit of victory-and not the final score-are to be the ultimate goals.
- Athletes who improve their skills and learn new ones are winners.
- Winning, for most athletes, involves a balance between sports, school, family life, other recreational activities and religion.
- Win-at-all costs is an attitude that undermines the true meaning of winning.
- The terms win and winning usually describe the final score-the outcome of a game. Coaches need to convince athletes to give their best effort even when the score isn't in their favor.
- If youth and scholastic athletes are to enjoy playing roller hockey, winning has to include effort as an important ingredient. Effort and improvement need to be rewarded.

Coaches Make Athletes Feel Like Winners When They:

- Praise athletes who listen and respond to instruction
- Praise improvements in skill development
- Praise players who persevere and do not give up despite mistakes or losses
- Acknowledge athletes who understand and correctly apply a new strategy in a game situation.
- Commend players for assisting others in learning or improving skills.
- Applaud athletes who suppress their stardom for the welfare of the team.
- Approve of sportsmanship-like acts and call such acts to the attention of the team.
- Compliment athletes who take responsibility for their actions, especially when their actions may have consequences for the team.
- Recognize athletes who demonstrate emotional control in difficult situations.
- Both coach and team lose when players drop out. Successful coaches know that when players drop out, the program loses its influence over them. The physical, social and psychological benefits of roller hockey are no longer available to dropouts. On the other hand, everyone wins when players enjoy the game and return the next season.

“The most interesting thing about sport, at least to me, is the activity of preparation and the aspect of preparation for the games. The thrill isn't winning, it's in the doing.”

Keith Noll

Positive Coaching Includes:

Coaches may have to change their teaching styles (e.g. eliminate abrupt, aggressive coaching styles). They need to develop styles more compatible with the personalities and temperaments of the athletes.

Positive coaching should be the norm.

- Using players as peer coaches may be less intimidating to less skillful, inexperienced players
- Getting team members too concerned about their teammates leads to greater cohesion on the roller hockey rink.
- Encouraging athletes to do their best in practices and games.
- Encouraging players to set personal goals. Reward them for achieving their goals. This helps athletes develop a positive attitude.
- Recognizing effort. Praise athletes who put out extra effort.
- Winning youth or scholastic programs have certain characteristics: players willingly attend practices; they improve their physical, social and psychological skills; the athletes involved strive to do their best in practices and games. In situations where everyone strives for a common cause, winning is a daily occurrence rather than the outcome of a weekly contest.

*SPORTSMANSHIP

Sports do not automatically develop character in athletes. Coaches play an important role in developing good conduct in athletes.

- The key to being a good sport is to be respectful of self and others.
- Coaches can teach good sportsmanship by being a positive role model and by creating a code of conduct that all athletes must follow.
- Examples of good conduct include:
 - Shaking hands with opponents after a game
 - Helping an opponent up after a play
 - Showing concern for injured opponents
 - Accepting all decisions of the referees
 - Encouraging less skilled teammates
 - Congratulating an excellent effort by opponents
- Examples of poor conduct include:
 - Trash talking
 - Causing injury to an opponent on purpose
 - Cheating
 - Blaming losses on others
 - Running up the score against opponents
 - Making fun of a teammate's effort, skill, race, ethnicity or size

- Sportsmanship is an important issue facing all people involved in athletics. Episodes of coaches, parents, and athletes behaving poorly at sporting events, including roller hockey, are frequently reported in newspapers and on television. Good sportsmanship occurs when athletes show respect for opponents, teammates, coaches and officials. In other words, treat others as you would like to be treated.
- As with roller hockey skill, athletes need to be taught positive behavior. Coaches have a responsibility to teach good sport conduct to their athletes. There are many ways coaches can teach sportsmanship to players, but the most important way is to exhibit good conduct. Young players look to their coaches as role models. Coaches who show respect to officials and opposing coaches before, during and after games can expect their players to do the same.
- During practices and games, it is imperative that coaches remain under control while interacting with players, assistant coaches, officials, and opposing coaches. Parents observing the good sportsmanship and attitude of their children's coach soon will understand the responsibility they have to engage in good conduct as spectators.
- Coaches should actively teach sportsmanship to their athletes. Bring examples of the good or poor behavior of professional or college players to practice. Discuss the behavior of these athletes with your team.
- Set up rules of sportsmanship at the beginning of the season. These rules must apply to all athletes on your team in all situations. Reward athletes on your team who behave as good sports. Punish athletes who behave as poor sports. If you let poor conduct happen on your team, you are teaching your athletes that poor conduct is acceptable.
- The following approach was successful for a youth coach who wanted to make sure his players were good sports and respected each player on the team and coaches. At the end of each practice, each player and coach had to shake hands with all the other players and coaches. This way, no one left practice with hard feelings and appreciation was shown for everyone's hard work and effort.

- In summary, try always to:
 - Stress the importance of sportsmanship and cooperation at meetings with parents.
 - Teach athletes to be responsible for their behavior.
 - Teach athletes to be considerate of their teammates and their opponents when they win and lose.
 - Emphasize respecting opponents and officials.
 - Make sure your athletes know and follow the rules of roller hockey.

- Sample Parent Good Conduct Pledge*

- I (We) will not allow ourselves or our families to engage in poor sportsmanship.
- I (We) will encourage all athletes to put forth effort and to do their best at all times.
- I (We) will appreciate all acts of sportsmanship, whether from our team or our opponent.
- I (We) will congratulate all great plays, whether by our team or our opponent.

*Adapted from the Michigan High School Athletic Association

**Building Self-Confidence & Self-Esteem:
“The beauty of sports is that so often you are
called upon to do something beyond your
capabilities-and you do it.”*

- Coaches have a responsibility to help athletes maintain or increase their self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Coaches can increase the self-confidence of athletes by creating successful performances, giving verbal encouragement, by being a good role model and allowing athletes to have fun.

COACHING STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING SELF-CONFIDENCE

1) SUCCESSFUL PERFORMANCES

- Focus practices on developing skills.
- Provide opportunities for athletes to measure their progress by setting attainable goals.
- Stress personal improvement.
- Set realistic expectations for each athlete to experience success.

2) VERBAL ENCOURAGEMENT

- Give technical feedback
- Affirm your belief in the athlete's ability
- Support & encourage your athletes
- Use positive statements such as “I know you can do it!”
- Say something kind to each player before they leave practice or the game (assistant coaches can help with this task).

- 3) **Role Modeling:**
 - Show athletes a confident teammate or elite athlete whom they can emulate.
 - Demonstrate confidence and a positive attitude.
 - Show a confident role model who tries hard and maximizes his or her ability.
- 4) **Positive Emotions**
 - Allow athletes to have fun playing roller hockey.
 - Decrease athletes' worries while playing roller hockey.

Coaches Can Help Increase Self-Esteem by:

- Giving athletes opportunities to succeed
- Helping athletes view themselves as important and successful members of the team
- Showing athletes that you think positively about them as people
- Helping athletes understand that roller hockey is about using their abilities to be the best person they possibly can.

Self-confidence is an ingredient of self-esteem. Self-confidence is the belief that "I can perform this task." Athletes who experience success will feel more confident and be motivated to continue to play. Athletes who experience failure will feel less confident and may be less motivated.

Along with the Strategies on the Preceding Page, Coaches Can Help Build Athletes' Confidence by Doing the Following:

- Greet each athlete as they arrive. This shows you are happy they are at practice.
- Make each athlete feel good about being at practice and competitions.
- Encourage effort without always focusing on the outcome. This allows athletes to feel successful in roller hockey regardless of their ability.
- Give athletes responsibilities. For example, let a different athlete lead stretching drills each practice.
- Invite question. Make sure athletes know they can ask questions if they do not understand your instruction.
- Praise athletes for special things that they do. This gives them support and shows your belief in them as individuals.

Let all athletes know that their value as people does not depend on wins or losses. Remember roller hockey is only one part of an athlete's life.

After a game, review what went right and what areas need improvement. Seek information from the athletes on how they judged their performance. Explain to the team your plans to continue to work for improvement.

Keeping or increasing an athlete's confidence is an important skill in coaching. When athletes feel confident, they will be motivated to practice and continue playing roller hockey.

**Mental Elements of Youth Sports*



- The mental elements of youth sports include the players' ability to pay attention, process information, and make decisions. It is important that youth coaches understand that young athletes cannot process information as readily as adults.
- WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW
 - Young athletes process information more slowly than adults. Limit your comments to one bit of information at a time.
 - If you see the need to make several corrections at the same time, choose the most important item. Leave the rest for another time.
 - The most effective practices imitate game situations. Anticipate situations your athletes will face. Build them into your practices.

Here are some ways to help young athletes pay attention.

- Use simple and direct language when working with athletes:
 - provide only specific information for your athletes to know. Keep it simple. Use simple language that young players will understand. Focus on one piece of information at a time. To correct skills during a drill, focus instruction on one error at a time. Make sure your instructions include information the player can use to correct the error.
- Be sure the athletes understand your instructions:
 - Have players repeat your instructions. Ask them to show you what they are to do as well.
- Decrease talking and increase demonstrations:
 - Young athletes learn best by seeing the skill first. Include plenty of demonstrations in our practices. Demonstrate the skill yourself or use a player who has mastered the move.
- Keep offensive and defensive schemes simple:
 - Stress fundamentals and execution. If you provide too much information to players, they will be overwhelmed. Young athletes often react instinctively, so too much information overloads them. Younger players will understand the fundamentals much better when things are kept simple. Later, you can refine their skills.

**Assisting Athletes With Time Management*

- Athletes face many demands upon their time. If they do not learn to manage their time effectively, athletes will experience stress and potential burnout.
- WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW
 - time management is a skill that has to be taught
 - failing to manage time effectively results in stress and failure to complete tasks.
- Hockey players need to be taught to balance the demands on their time. Practices and games compete with school assignments, leisure time and family activities. Young players need to be allowed to enjoy life. Without knowing how to manage time, athletes often experience failure in the classroom or feel as if they are being excluded from social activities.

BALANCING TIME DEMANDS

- Time management is a strategy. It helps us balance activities we HAVE to do with those that we would LIKE to do.
- Young athletes need time for certain activities. These include:
 - get an appropriate amount of sleep
 - attend 6-8 hours of school per day
 - do homework and study for exams
 - do chores and participate in family activities
- In addition, youth want to:
 - earn money for social activities
 - play sports
 - hang out with friends
 - watch TV or play video games
 - Volunteer in religious organizations and/or community organizations
- participate in other extracurricular activities
- Reducing Time Pressure
 - As with anyone else, when there are too many things to do and not enough time to do everything, athletes feel pressure. Teaching them time management skills reduces this pressure. Athletes feel pressured because they do not use time wisely.
- Contributing Factors Often Are:
 - procrastination
 - poor judgement about the time needed to complete tasks
 - an inability to say NO
 - doing multiple tasks and not focusing on one task at a time.
 - Failing to establish priorities.

**Athletes Must Learn To:*

Identify tasks to be accomplished in a given time, prioritize tasks, allocate a reasonable amount of time to each task and plan their work and work their plan.

- Teaching Effective Use of Time: coaches face the same time management challenges as athletes. Therefore, coaches are in a good position to teach time management skills.
- The following Steps Help Athletes Learn to Use Their Time More Effectively:
 - Determine what is valued (school, family, religion, classes, sports). Give these activities priority.
 - Identify tasks to be accomplished in a given time. (For example, in addition to going to classes, athletes may need to attend a family birthday party, go to church, make pre-prom dinner reservations, and/or start writing a paper for English class).
- Prioritize tasks. If an English paper is due Friday, it may be listed “number one.” This means that athlete starts it on Monday with the first available time.
- Allocate a reasonable amount of time to tasks. Add 15 percent to anticipated time for interruptions or unplanned delays.
- Use a calendar or daily plan sheet. Identify time during the week to work on tasks.
- In other words, plan your work and work your plan!
- Coaches have to be aware of the demands on athlete’s time. For example, time between school and practice can become required study periods. Coaches occasionally may need to shorten or even cancel practice. Athletes then can use the time to complete school assignments or engage in family activities. If coaches think work and family are important in their own lives, they have to respect these elements of athletes’ lives.

**Coaching the Early and Late Maturing Athlete*

- Players differ greatly in physical size, playing experience, and social development. Successful coaches detect these differences and adjust their teaching styles and challenges to the athletes.
- WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:
 - Observe the developmental differences that separate the early and the late maturing athletes on the team.
 - Become familiar with physical and social characteristics associated with early and delayed maturation.
 - Put athletes in positions and situations in which their development will let them succeed.
 - Explain to athletes and parents how developmental differences may keep late maturing players from making major contributions to team goals.
 - Recognize the obstacles that keep late maturing athletes from performing physical tasks.
 - Provide special encouragement and instruction to the late maturing athlete.
 - Discuss each athlete's future potential with them and their parents as physiological changes occur.

- Youth and scholastic programs usually group players by age or grade in school. When eligibility depends upon age, the oldest and most mature athletes dominate. When several ages or grades are combined, the developmental difference among players is even greater. The late maturing athlete may end up feeling unsuccessful or out of place. These players then are at greater risk of dropping out. However, coaches and teammates can provide them support and encouragement that will keep them playing.
- Coaches need to be aware of mismatches. Mismatches can occur in: physical size, strength, endurance, aggressiveness, speed, coordination, the ability to learn, power, experience and the amount of improvement that occurs during a season. When mismatches occur, less mature players may feel psychologically and physiologically intimidated.
- Table 1 and 2 show the differences in height and weight that occur in a normal range of development for boys and girls. The fiftieth percentile means that half the youth are taller and heavier; the other half, shorter and lighter. These numbers also can be thought of as averages. The fifth percentile indicates that only four percent of the boys and girls are shorter and lighter. The ninety-fifth percentile shows that just four percent of the boys and girls are taller and heavier. The “Diff” column reveals the difference between the fifth and ninety-fifth percentiles.

- **Height and Weight**

- Table 1 shows that the greatest difference in height occurs from ages 13 through 15 for boys. According to Table 2, the difference in weight between the lightest and heaviest boys increase each year from age 10 through 18. The biggest difference between the average heights of boys and girls occur between ages 16-18. However, on average, boys become taller than girls by age 14. In weight, boys and girls are similar until puberty. (Puberty occurs on average at 13 in girls and 15 in boys.) In puberty, the accumulated muscle mass of boys and increases in body fat of girls create an average difference of seven pounds in favor of boys. The weight between boys and girls increases throughout the rest of the growing years. By age 18, the average body mass of boys is 42% muscle. Girls typically have 34-36% muscle mass. When boys and girls compete against each other, their ability to produce strength and power may be quite different. This remains true even when the players' weights are comparable. Coaches of co-ed teams must take this into consideration.

- **Body Shape and Composition: In puberty, boys increase muscle tissue, accelerate growth in the trunk and shoulders, and slow growth in the arms and legs.**

- Signs of puberty in boys include:
 - greater width of shoulders in relation to hips
 - the childhood appearance of being all arms and legs with a shape in which the trunk and legs contribute nearly equally to height
 - muscle accumulation in the arms, shoulders, chest, thighs and legs.
- In girls, puberty results in an appearance of:
 - wider hips in relation to shoulders
 - development of secondary sexual characteristics
 - increased muscle and fat accumulation in the legs, buttocks, abdomen and trunk
- Late maturing individuals usually have linear bodies. They have an abundance of skeletal tissue compared to muscle and fat. Such youths also are likely to be hesitant in body-contact drills. Not having muscle and fat to protect the skeleton and nervous system may inflict greater pain on the late maturer during physical contact. Coaches must ensure that protective equipment fits properly. This guarantees coverage for sensitive areas such as shins, thighs, ribs and shoulders.

- **Changes in Strength, Power and Speed**

- Accumulating muscle mass during puberty directly affects an athlete's ability to generate power and speed of movement. Conditioning programs can improve the capacity of both early and late maturing individuals. However, individuals with the greatest muscle mass-early maturers have the advantage. Coaches must be careful to create match-ups involving players of equal ability. Not only are injuries more likely when mismatches occur, but the late maturing athletes end up being overwhelmed in drills involving strength and speed. This can demoralize late maturers and may cause them to drop out of roller hockey.

- **Changes in Coordination, Agility and Rates of Learning**
 - Constantly changing body proportions-especially in the arms, hands, legs, and feet-cause lapses in coordination. Rapidly growing athletes may appear clumsy compared to others who have already gone through their growth spurt. Thus, certain drills and plays will challenge late maturing athletes. For example, situations requiring body control when dodging or rapidly changing directions will be particularly difficult for them. This apparent inability to execute drills and plays may lead coaches-mistakenly- to conclude that late maturing athletes are slow to grasp complex strategies and maneuvers. Coaches should recognize how difficult it is for some athletes to coordinate a rapidly growing body, and coaches should respond with patience. They need to support athletes who try-yet fail- to keep up with earlier maturing teammates.
- **The Role of Experience**
 - Performing a drill seemingly without thinking about it results from repetition. Athletes correctly perform a drill so often that it becomes embedded in their memory. Embedded memories allow athletes to make quick decisions in rapid succession. The early maturing athlete likely has many more experiences of correct action to draw upon. The late maturing player is still trying to learn the basic patterns. Thus, the late-maturing athlete may appear frustrated and confused when having to react quickly to a changing environment.
 - Practices must imitate game situations to athletes for the necessary experience. Late maturing players may need more exposures to identical situations before they can correctly make quick decision in game situations.
- **Mismatches**
 - Youth programs often combine two ages or grades in school. Scholastic football teams may have an age span of four to five years on the same team. In such cases, the differences between early and late maturers are exaggerated. When girls play roller hockey with boys the differences become even greater after puberty. For safety's sake, coaches have to adjust practices and control game situations. The goal is to reduce or eliminate the possibility of mismatches between players.
 - Coaches have options for helping players become successful. Most important, coaches must anticipate and meet the needs of early and late maturing athletes.
- **Coaches do this when they:**
 - Know each athlete's capabilities. Set measurable and attainable goals to increase self-esteem.
 - Recognize and provide additional praise to players who have difficulty as they develop their skills.
 - Challenge skilled, early maturing athletes. Expect them to be teachers, role models, and counselors for other players.
 - Make safety a daily priority. Expect larger, more mature athletes to set the tone. Charge them with eliminating teasing, intimidation, and hazing. Stress that less mature, less talented players are to be respected.
 - Ask the more mature, highly skilled players to involve less skilled players in team activities on and off the rink.
- **Ways to Accommodate Late-Maturing Athletes**
 - Successful coaches adjust their programs to the needs of everyone who wish to play roller hockey.
 - Today's poorly skilled, underdeveloped athletes may become the skilled players of tomorrow. However, this will occur only if they receive guidance, instruction and protection.

**Helping Athletes Cope With Competitive Stress*

• WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW

- Stress caused by roller hockey occurs on and off the rink
- There are many different reasons roller hockey players experience stress.
- Players who are suffering from stress may experience changes to their bodies, negative thoughts or changes in their behavior.
- Setting up effective practices and properly motivating players is one way coaches can help athletes cope with stress.
 - **Negative Self-Talk:** “You idiot, how could you miss that?” “That was a terrible pass!”
 - **Positive Self-Talk:** “Everyone makes mistakes. Relax and focus on the next play.” “Slow down, focus on your timing and rhythm.”
- Stress occurs when the challenge of roller hockey outweighs an athlete’s skill to perform the roller hockey task or when the athlete is expected to perform exceptionally and play an important role in winning the game. For example, players may experience stress if they are scared about making a mistake during practice or games. Stress may happen before, during or after a game.

• Athletes May Experience Stress in Roller Hockey for the Following Reasons:

- Worry about being good enough
- Parents’, coaches’ and teammates’ comments
- Fear of making a mistake
- Not improving or not improving as quickly as someone else
- Time demands of school, sport and a social life
- Pressure to win a game
- Expectations of self and others
- Parents are often sources of stress if their expectations are too great or if they critique the athlete after each game. Parents are most helpful when positive coaching is accompanied by positive parenting.

• Some Athletes May Experience the Following:

- Tight muscles
- Shallow breathing
- Butterflies in their stomach
- Increased heart rate

• Players May Experience Negative Thoughts and Feelings, Such as:

- Loss of confidence
- negative thoughts (I can’t do this)
- Worry about poor performance

- Athletes may Undergo Changes in Their Behavior, including:
 - Not sleeping the night before a game
 - Pacing
 - Not wanting to practice or play roller hockey
 - Changes in friends
- There are different ways coaches can help players deal with stress and perhaps prevent stressful situations from developing. Players may experience stress if they have poor skills or if their skills are not improving fast enough. Coaches need to organize effective practices and effectively teach skills. Coaches should understand, recognize and discuss stress with their athletes. They should provide an environment where players feel comfortable talking to a coach concerning their feelings. The coach also must provide an environment where making a mistake or losing is considered part of the game.
- Sometimes the athletic environment may be a source of stress for the players. You can help players overcome these pressures by properly motivating athletes. You should never punish an athlete for making a mistake, unless it results from a lack of effort. When players are punished for mistakes, they will fear failure. If this happens, they may not put forth their best effort in practice and game. Instead, help athletes learn from mistakes. Athletes should always receive encouragement and positive reinforcement from coaches, from their teammates and from their parents.
- Coaches can teach players coping strategies so the athlete can deal with stressful situations. If the stress causes changes to an athlete's body, they need to learn how to relax through proper breathing. Proper breathing means filling your lungs completely, holding for a few seconds and slowly exhaling. This technique is best used when there is a break in the action.
- Athletes also need to control their self-talk. One way to do this is to have cue words athletes can use to focus their attention. You can also teach athletes how to stop their negative thought. There are three steps to thought stoppage.
 - Identify negative thoughts and the situations in which they occur
 - Interrupt the negative thought by yelling 'stop' in your head
 - Replace the negative thought with a positive one
 - These three steps also are helpful for coaches who become upset with athletes who continue to make the same mistake or with referees who make bad calls.

**The Athlete At Risk Of Dropping Out*

- Athletes participate in sports and drop out of sports for many reasons. Not all drop-outs reflect negatively on the coach or the program. Coaches can positively impact the drop-out rate.
- **WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:**
 - Some athletes enter the program at high risk of dropping out.
 - A certain number of drop-outs are likely, no matter what the coach does to prevent them.
 - Players who drop-out have common characteristics. These include: delayed maturity, small size for age and being forced to play by parents.
 - Successful coaches have low drop-out rates. They modify their coaching styles to meet the needs of a variety of athletes.

Young Athletes Were Asked Why They Dropped Out of Sports Programs. Five of the Top Ten Reasons Were Critical of the Coach and the Way in Which the Programs Were Conducted. The ten most common reasons included:

1. "No longer interested."
2. "Not having fun."
3. "The Sport takes too much time."
4. "The coach played favorites."
5. "The coach was a poor teacher."
6. "I was tired of the sport."
7. "There was too much emphasis on winning."
8. "I wanted to try other activities."
9. "I needed more time for school work."
10. "There was too much pressure."

- **Coaches Keep Players in the Program by:**
 - Getting to know players
 - Learning the characteristics of potential dropouts
 - Working to overcome barriers to participation
- Coaches have the responsibility for determining who stays and who leaves the roller hockey program.
- Athletes who join sports programs and later drop out are a concern to coaches and program sponsors. Drop-outs often are the athletes who could benefit most from playing, and high attrition reflects negatively on adults conducting the program. Most important, athletes who drop out of roller hockey at an early age may never play again. Negative experiences in one sport may carry over to other activities. This may contribute to an inactive lifestyle.
- Many potential players attend the first team meeting and early practices. Coaches who want to keep a large percentage of the players need to become acquainted with their athletes. Getting to know each athlete helps coaches identify those requiring additional attention.

- Characteristics of an Athlete at Risk of Dropping Out of Roller Hockey are:
 - The decision to play was not voluntary (e.g. parents forced the athlete to play.)
 - The player has no friends on the team
 - The first meeting also was the athlete's first exposure to organized roller hockey
 - The athlete is shy, timid and suspicious around other players
 - The player differs from teammates in race, ethnicity, physical size or socioeconomic status
 - The person is sensitive to criticism, especially when other athletes are present
 - The athlete has had previous injuries, which may make the player too cautious and keep him/her from showing his or her full potential.
- Acknowledgement, praise and rewards need to be directed at vulnerable athletes. After identifying athletes at great risk of dropping out, coaches have to step in immediately. Athletes deciding whether to stay in the program form their opinions on a daily basis. Actions by coaches or players that may lead to dropping out must be eliminated. Typical examples include teasing, mismatches in contact drills and criticism in front of other players.
- Acts that Solidify Team Membership include:
 - Praise for improving individual skill
 - Social acceptance by teammates
 - Reaching personal goals
- When players drop out of roller hockey, it does not necessarily reflect negatively on the program. Instead, it may reflect a preference for another sport or less active pursuits. However, athletes leaving the program no longer benefit from it. In other words, roller hockey programs have positive educational effects on players. But athletes need to remain in the program to receive these benefits.
- The coach's leadership style (including manners, attitude and reaction to daily events) also influences players' decisions to stay or drop out. However, other circumstances cause players to consider dropping out. Finances may inhibit full participation; there may not be enough money to buy equipment for everyone. Coaches need to find assistance for these players. (Booster groups or other support organizations can help in these cases.) Lack of transportation may keep some athletes from participating. They may not be able to go to practices or games outside their neighborhood. Coaches and boosters can work together to solve this problem as needed. Coaches who know their athletes will identify these problems and arrange solutions.

**Dealing With Substance Abuse & Chemical Dependency*

- Coaches need to learn the signs of substance abuse and chemical dependency. Youth and scholastic coaches are obligated to maintain a chemical-free environment.
- **WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:**
 - Commonly abused substances include alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, ecstasy, amphetamines, cocaine, anabolic steroids, caffeine and diuretics.
 - Substance abusers characteristically deny the problem as well. Denial makes the problem worse. Immediate action is critical for everyone's health.
 - Confronting a substance abuser requires professional help from a counselor, therapist or psychologist. Coaches need to know their limitations when counseling athletes.

Chemical Dependency: The repeated, abusive and uncontrollable consumption of a chemical(s). Dependency causes problems in an individual's emotional, mental, social spiritual, academic and athletic life. Chemical dependency is an illness to be professionally diagnosed and treated.

Substance Abuse: The consumption of a chemical(s) that causes the individual to engage in dangerous and risky behavior. The behavior is potentially harmful to the individual or to others and may lead to chemical dependency. Drinking alcohol in order to get drunk at post game parties is an example of substance abuse.

- Substance use/abuse is a major problem among America's youth. Athletes feel unique pressures that may lead them to use or abuse substances.
- **Some athletes say they are dependent or abuse substances to:**
 - alter mood
 - feel better or feel nothing
 - improve muscle mass, strength and power
 - relieve stress (blow off steam)
 - decrease recovery time
 - increase energy
 - reduce pain
 - escape reality
- Combating substance abuse or chemical dependency means detecting when athletes are involved with harmful substances.
- **Signs of abuse or dependency include:**
 - abrupt changes in attendance at practice or school
 - decreased performance quality
 - less effort in athletics or school
 - loss of memory
 - withdrawal or isolation from usual peer group
 - smell of alcohol or marijuana
 - developing new, questionable friends

- Coaches need to avoid diagnosing a problem without sufficient information. If several of the signs are noticed more than once, or if a sign is unmistakable (for instance, if the player is obviously intoxicated), confronting the athlete is in order. If there is any doubt, consult an appropriate professional such as a school counselor, social worker, psychologist or physician.
- Chemical dependency and substance abuse aren't supposed to be a part of coaching. Unfortunately, they are. Most coaches, however, are not trained in substance abuse counseling, so they have limited ability to deal with chemical dependent athletes. Coaches need to understand why they may not want to become involved with a chemical dependent athlete.
- Other issues include:
 - Unless properly trained, coaches cannot accurately diagnose chemical dependency.
 - Coaches may think that the situation is none of their business or that the athlete will grow out of abusive behavior. Therefore, they do not confront the athlete(s).
 - The desire to win may stop coaches from confronting an athlete when substance abuse is suspected or known.
 - Coaches may think that substance abuse could never happen on their team.
- Players and parents have the right to expect a safe athletic environment. Coaches are responsible for providing that environment.
- Strategies for Maintaining a Chemical-Free Athletic Environment Include:
 - refusing to engage in negative enabling behavior
 - knowing the athletes and letting them know that drug use and abuse is unacceptable.
 - Confront athletes when substance use/abuse or chemical dependency is suspected or known.
- Negative enabling behavior occurs when coaches choose to not take action when substance abuse is suspected. Or, coaches may decide to protect athletes from the consequences of their action (for example, being benched, suspended or removed from the team). Negative enabling behavior unintentionally tells athletes that substance abuse is acceptable.
- When coaches suspect substance abuse, their responsibility is to confront the athlete.
- Six Steps for Confrontation are:
 - get to the point
 - summarize behaviors that lead to the suspicion that the athlete is abusing some substance
 - base the confrontation on accurate information and observable behaviors
 - avoid bringing up inappropriate or irrelevant past issues
 - avoid threatening and aggressive tones. That will put the athlete on the defensive. Let the athlete know that you are there to help.
 - Intervene by insisting the athlete seek professional help
- To promote a chemical-free athletic environment, coaches have to be knowledgeable about substance abuse and how it affects their athletes. Coaches should educate themselves and be aware of what chemicals/drugs are used in the area. They also should strive to maintain open communication with athletes, resolve conflicts immediately and maintain a low-stress, high-fun environment on the team.

Effective & Appropriate Discipline Techniques

- Many problems associated with discipline can be avoided if coaches have a well-developed plan for controlling misbehavior. A sound discipline plan involves identifying the rules of behavior.
- WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:
 - Threats, screaming and lectures only prevent misbehavior in the short term. They are best used when a behavior needs to be stopped immediately. Routinely using such forms of discipline creates a negative atmosphere.
 - Youth roller hockey players want clearly defined rules for acceptable behavior.
 - Coaches need a systematic plan for maintaining discipline, before the season gets underway, that identifies the rules of behavior and the consequences for breaking the rules.
 - Rules have to be enforced consistently.

Use Meaning and Effective Reward and Penalties

Rewards

- starting after being a backup
- playing a desired position
- leading an exercise or activity
- receiving praise from the coach

Penalties

- being taken out of a game
- not being allowed to start
- sitting out for part of practice
- eliminating choice of a drill

- Coaches often react to their athletes' misbehavior by yelling, lecturing or making threats. These techniques are used because the coach does not know what else to do to regain control. Coaches don't have to yell and lecture to keep control if they develop a sound discipline plan before the season gets underway.
- Guidelines for Developing a Sound Discipline Plan
- 1. Define team rules:
 - develop a list of desirable and undesirable behaviors
- 2. From the list of behaviors, develop team rules:
 - rules need to be stated in clear and specific terms. For example, a rule regarding attending to instructions could be: "Players have to pay full attention to the coach's instructions. This means eyes on the coach, no talking and no moving around."
- 3. Include players in formulating rules:
 - players want clearly defined rules for their behavior. Players need to be involved in establishing those rules. Research indicates that players are more willing to live by rules that they helped make. A coach might begin a discussion of discipline by saying, "Roller hockey can't be played without rules, too. I have a set of rules that I think are important. But we all have to follow them so they have to be your rules too. What do you think are important team rules for us?"

- **Enforcing Rules:**

- rewards and penalties help coaches enforce rules. Players are rewarded when they follow the rules and penalized when they break the rules.
- Determine reward and penalties for each rule. Players’ input is necessary for this because they will receive the rewards or penalties. The best approach is to use rewards that are important to players coupled with withdrawal of rewards for inappropriate behavior. Ineffective penalties include showing anger, embarrassing the player or shouting at the player.
- Clearly state the condition for the reward or penalty. Players need to know exactly what they have to do to earn a reward and avoid a penalty.

- **Consistently Enforce Rules**

- It is important to follow through, consistently and impartially, with your enforcement of the rules. Nothing destroys a discipline plan more quickly than its inconsistent application. Rules have to apply to all players equally and in all situations equally.
- For example, if your team is in an important game and your star player breaks a rule that requires that he/she isn’t allowed to start, the rule still has to be enforced.
- Threats, lectures and yelling may prevent misbehavior in the short term. However, their effects do not promote learning. They also reduce the coach’s long-term effectiveness. A more positive approach to handling discipline problems is to prevent them.

Sample Lists	
Desirable Conduct	Undesirable Conduct
Arriving on time for practices/games Bringing all gear to practices/games Attending to instructions Offering positive encouragement to teammates Treating opponents with respect Notifying the coach when having to miss practices/games	Being late to practices/games Failing to bring gear or uniform to practices/games Talking while instructions are being given Making negative comments to teammates Fighting with opponents or trash talking Failing to notify the coach of absences



PART 2-

*ESSENTIAL QUALITIES
AND COMPETENCIES
OF COACHES*

*QUALITIES OF A SUCCESSFUL COACH

Every coach wants to be successful, but success goes beyond winning.

- **WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:**
- **COACHES ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN THEY:**
 - Coach for the right reasons
 - Understand players and teach skills properly
 - Keep players safe
 - Communicate positively with players and their parents
 - Learn the game
- Roller hockey can be safe, and an enjoyable part of growing up. Coaches are successful when players develop a love for the game. Your actions influence how they and their parents will feel about roller hockey.
- **Coach for the Right Reason**
 - Most athletes and their coaches will never make big money from roller hockey. Fun, learning and watching the athletes' personal growth are your rewards.
- **Understand Your Position**
 - You affect your athletes; they watch and copy you. Players notice how you behave and how you talk. They see if you control your emotions and how you treat officials. They know if you have a sense of humor and whether you treat players fairly. You are the center of attention. Your actions, attitudes and words are powerful. Be a positive role model. Athletes take your comments seriously. These comments affect their self-esteem.
- **Know the Age Group and How Young Athletes Develop**
 - Understand the athletes-physically, socially and emotionally. Learn their capabilities and maturity levels. Plan the season and set your goals using this information.
 - Most roller hockey programs classify players by age or grades in school. But children grow and develop at various rates. Some may not learn skills as fast as others. Late, they may be the most coordinated and easiest to teach. The smart coach works equally with every athlete and uses the best developmental approach.
- **Learn First Aid and Emergency Medical Procedures**
 - The National Standards for Athletic Coaches recommend first aid and CPR certification for all coaches. Contact your American Red Cross chapter for information about sport safety programs.

- Understand Training and Conditioning
 - Roller hockey demands specific training and conditioning. Age-appropriate techniques can be found in this series of books and other references. Learn how to prepare your players for practices and games.
- Keep Roller Hockey Safe and Athletes Healthy
 - Choosing and teaching appropriate skills-properly and in the right sequence-are important. So is understanding that injuries occur at every level of play. Some can be prevented; some cannot. **Successful coaches maintain a safe environment for athletes:**
 - Inspect the rink and equipment
 - Prepare an emergency plan
 - Require the reporting and treatment of all injuries
 - Teach fundamentals, then progress to more complicated skills
 - Teach the strategy of roller hockey
- Coaching is Teaching
 - You became a teacher when you agreed to coach. **The qualities of good teachers also make good coaches:**
 - Plan the season, and make daily practice plans
 - Get to know your players; learn their characteristics
 - Create a positive learning environment
 - Communicate with your players
 - Learn how to motivate players to do their best
 - Be positive and supportive
 - These qualities will affect your ultimate success more than the latest strategies or the newest equipment.
- Organize Effectively
 - A team is an organization; the coach is the leader. Plan activities, keep records, evaluate personnel, and outline future goals. Decide what you need to do to better next season and begin implementing changes to meet new goals.
- Communicate with Parents
 - Have a preseason meeting with parents and athletes. Discuss team rules. Go over the schedule. Collect phone numbers. Get emergency information. Outline when and how parents can contact you with questions. Parents are an important part of the program-make them feel included.
- Know your roller hockey
 - You became a coach because you believe young people deserve the chance to play roller hockey. You know the game and how to play it. But this isn't enough. As long as you coach, keep learning. Develop the habit of reading coaching materials, attending clinics and talking with coaches who have a reputation for excellence.

**DEVELOPING A COACHING PHILOSOPHY*



- A sound and carefully considered coaching philosophy is the backbone of every successful program. Take the time to develop a philosophy of coaching that reflects principles of child/youth development.
- WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:
- 1) SELF-AWARENESS IS KEY TO DEVELOPING A COACHING PHILOSOPHY
- 2) SHARE YOUR PHILOSOPHY WITH YOUR STAFF, PLAYERS AND THEIR PARENTS
- 3) YOUR COACHING PHILOSOPHY NEEDS TO BE YOUTH-CENTERED
- 4) PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH.

Values and goals are the building blocks of a coaching philosophy.

- Roller hockey is for the benefit of the participants. Every coaching decision has to be made with the interest of the athlete first, and the interest in winning second.
- Focus on what it takes to win and not just winning. Attend to the skills and fitness of players and encourage them to give their utmost effort. True winners are those who always play as well and as hard as they can.
- Roller hockey is a game. Make sure it is fun for players. Fun results when players have the opportunity to learn skills and apply themselves in a safe and well-organized environment. Keep workouts interesting and varied.
- Teach safety every day. A healthy athlete learns skills and enjoys the game. An injured player misses out on the benefits of roller hockey.
- Help players become good citizens and good athletes. Success in roller hockey and life requires an effort, commitment, cooperation, fair play and a respect for others. Take the opportunity to pass on these values to your players.
- Don't play favorites. Try to give every player the opportunity to play. Encourage your athletes to try out at a variety of different positions. You will add depth to your program and your players will learn the value of teamwork. Give them the chance to experience a variety of challenges.

- Coaching Style:

- Young athletes come to the first practice highly motivated and eager to please. A wise coach works to maintain this enthusiasm. This is done by keeping instructions short and allowing players to see and do rather than sit and listen.
- Demonstrations have proven more effective than verbal descriptions. Long drills are unproductive. Limit instruction to ten minutes, then switch to another drill or conditioning activity. Planning a series of ten-minute sessions with one or two minutes of verbal instruction keeps everyone active and involved.
- Avoid shouting at individual players. Instead, approach the athlete and quietly explain how to correct the mistake. Young players have fragile self-concepts. They respond better to one on one teaching. Singling them out in front of the group causes problems. They become defensive and fail to concentrate on your instructions.

- Developing Your Philosophy: The key to a sound coaching philosophy is self-awareness.

- Get to know yourself: What kind of person are you? What are your reasons for coaching? A coach who knows his or her values and priorities is a coach who is able to make consistent and well-informed decisions. Appropriate reasons for coaching include teaching valuable life skills and promoting good health.
- Be yourself: Many coaches like to copy the coaching styles or strategies of their heroes. Although you can learn a lot from these coaches, don't be misled into believing that what worked for them will work for you. Recognize the differences between professional and youth roller hockey and adopt a coaching style that places the interests of players before the interests of winning.
- Share your philosophy: Encourage players, parents and fellow coaches to consider and accept your coaching philosophy and the values you endorse. This will provide your program with stability and unity.
- Be a role model of your philosophy: Coach in a manner that is consistent with your beliefs and treat everybody that you work with on an equal and fair basis.

- Sharing Your Coaching Philosophy: It's a good idea to hold a meeting for parents and players before your first practice and go over your philosophy with them. Prepare a written statement that identifies the values and goals of your program. Include your thoughts on:
 - Attending practice
 - Assigning positions
 - Determining starters
 - Playing time
 - Player conduct
 - Parent behavior
 - Discipline procedures
- Test Your Coaching Philosophy: Stating your coaching philosophy in words may not require much effort, but putting your philosophy to the test will be much more difficult. The pressure to win leads many coaches to sacrifice their values for a win. Such decisions bring short-term success and in the long-term are counter-productive. Winning seasons come and go, but your reputation as a coach and a role model for young athletes will last a lifetime.

**EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION*

Effective and appropriate communication is important for coaches to succeed as leaders, teachers and motivators.

- **WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:**
 - NON-VERBAL MESSAGES ARE A POWERFUL TOOL IN COMMUNICATION
 - SENDING MESSAGES CONSISTS OF GETTING THE ATTENTION OF YOUR LISTENER, USING SIMPLE LANGUAGE, CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING AND BEING CONSISTENT.
 - GOOD LISTENERS SHOULD GIVE THE SPEAKER THEIR ATTENTION; REMEMBER WHAT IS HEARD AND SHOW INTEREST IN THE SPEAKER.
- Coaches have to communicate with athletes, parents, other coaches and game officials. All communication consists of sending and receiving verbal and non-verbal messages. Coaches send messages when they instruct, motivate, encourage, discipline and evaluate. Coaches receive messages or listen when their athletes ask questions, want more information or want to talk about problems.
- **Nonverbal Messages:** more than half the messages coaches send are non-verbal. At times, coaches may not even be aware that they are sending non-verbal messages. Non-verbal messages are a powerful communication tool and include the following:
 - Posture-how we hold our bodies or how we walk
 - Facial expressions-eye contact, smiling, frowning
 - Gestures- throwing arms in the air, crossing arms, pointing
 - Vocal qualities- yelling, talking quietly
 - Touching- high five, pat on the back
- Here's an example of dealing effectively with a non-verbal message. A player has taken a hard hit. You ask him if he needs to sit out for awhile. He says no, but his face clearly shows he is in pain. You remove him from the game because you are aware of his non-verbal messages.

- Sending messages: coaches constantly send messages to athletes, including feedback and organizational information. How to send clear, effective messages:
 - Get and keep the listener's attention
 - Make eye contact
 - Avoid distractions
 - Use simple and direct language
 - Do not overload our players with too much information
 - Keep instructions to a minimum and messages short and direct
 - Use words players understand and language that is appropriate for the age of the athletes
 - Check for understanding
 - Ask players to restate points
 - Ask players if they have questions

- Be Consistent
 - Make sure your actions match your words; Verbal and non-verbal messages that conflict cause confusion. For example, you tell a player they did a good job but your shoulders are slumped and you sigh. The athlete will not believe your verbal message. Another example occurs when you tell players not to question officials' calls but then you constantly argue about calls. These mixed messages create disorder.

- Listening
 - Listening is the other half of communication. Listening is not automatic. It is a skill that must be developed and practiced. The following steps outline how to become a good listener.
 - Give the speaker your attention
 - Make eye contact
 - Stop distracting activities like making practice plans or reading
 - Listen in a positive and objective manner
 - Respond in verbal and non-verbal ways
 - Hear the speaker's message, not just the words
 - Remember what you heard
 - Restate what you heard
 - Repeat the message in your head and associate the message with a meaningful event
 - Express interest in the speaker
 - Show understanding
 - Acknowledge that you are listening
 - Ask the speaker if the message heard is correct

- Blocks to Effective Listening Include:
 - Asking too many questions
 - Giving advice before the speaker finishes
 - Being judgmental about the speaker's opinions
 - Agreeing or disagreeing before hearing the complete message

*MOTIVATING ROLLER HOCKEY PLAYERS

- WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:

- The word motivate is an extension of the word motive.
- Successful motivators blend the athletes' motives with the coaches' motives to create compatible goals and objectives.
- Successful motivation begins with understanding what athletes want from their experience.

- Get to Know the Athletes:

- Fun is the most important reason given by young athletes for playing sports. Winning is much less important to them. Roller hockey coaches need to understand why they play roller hockey. In other words, coaches need to know the athletes.

- Ways to get to know players include:

- Ask players why they want to play. Have them write down their reasons or simply ask them. Do this at the first practice.
- Learn athletes' names. Make an effort to learn every player's name during the first practice.
- Greet each player every day by name. This shows concern about players as individuals.
- Ask players for their input. This gives athletes a sense of control. It also shows interest in what they have to say. Coaches will find that players have good insights.

BUILDING MOTIVATION



- Young athletes play roller hockey for many reasons. Some players simply like being with their friends and learning the game; others enjoy the competition and the physical activity. Coaches need to maintain and build players' motivation.
- To increase athletes' motivation:
 - Provide opportunities for each player to be a leader and have responsibilities. Have athletes take turns leading warm-ups or stretching.
 - Help athletes learn by first teaching them the fundamental skills. Encourage goal setting that is relevant to learning and improving skills. Start with simple goals and progress to more complex ones.
 - Encourage players to make new friends.
 - Build relationships on the team. Encourage outside activities such as pizza parties.
 - Help athletes understand success is more than winning.
 - INVOLVE EVERY PLAYER IN EVERY GAME! The weakest or smallest player today may be the strongest and best players when he or she matures. Keep players' interest while they learn basic skills, and let them have fun playing the game.

**BUILDING TEAM UNITY, HARMONY AND COHESIVENESS*

- Team unity results when coaches and athletes share common goals and work for a common cause.
- **WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:**
 - A unified team shares goals, and those goals are a priority for all team members.
 - Team unity occurs when individuals on a team put the team's needs above their desires and are willing to make sacrifices for the team.
 - A cohesive team is like a family; it's a place to get support.
 - Be patient-team building takes time.
- Roller hockey is a team game. Success takes coordinated effort by a unified team. To create unified, cohesive teams, coaches have to recognize the characteristics of team cohesion.
- **On such teams, players:**
 - Are satisfied with the team and their experience
 - Have a team identity and pride in being on the team
 - Conform to team standards
 - Support and respect each other
 - Stay on the team
 - Understand their role and the roles of teammates
 - Communicate openly and honestly to resolve conflicts
 - Share goals and are committed to those goals
 - Recognize team leaders
 - Cooperate with one another
 - Take personal responsibility for their actions. They blame no one, own up to their mistakes and work to correct mistakes.

Building Team Cohesion

- Here are some day-to-day keys:

- Communicate openly and honestly with players. Learn to listen actively. Practice the skill with players. Active listening tells people that you are focused on them and what they are saying. Active listening means you maintain appropriate eye contact, use attentive body language (face each other, uncross arms and/or legs, resist fidgeting with our hands or other objects.), and occasionally repeat in your own words your impression of what the other person said. Ask questions to clear up confusion or increase understanding. Avoid putting people on the defensive by grilling or accusing them.
- Let all players know they play a role that contributes to team success.
- Foster healthy competition among lines. However, avoid setting up cliques. Coaches unwittingly do this by treating some players differently from others (e.g. starters, non-starters).
- Have regular team meetings. Meetings allow communication of positive issues and aid in conflict resolution.
- Know the team climate. Coaches need to be in touch with their teams. Team leaders can be a valuable information source.
- Know each team member. Get to know players individually and let them get to know you.

- Team-Building Activities

- During a team meeting, get players to agree on goals, priorities, identity and culture-with guidance from coaches. Start the season by asking what goals the team wants to accomplish and what it takes to reach these goals. Athletes are more committed to reach goals they set, rather than goals that are set for them. Have the team make some rules-based on the goals they set. Help team members connect the goals they set. Help team members connect daily behavior with their season goals. When athletes make the rules, they are more likely to follow the rules. Players sometimes make stricter rules than those the coach would set. Wait until the team makes its rules, then fill in the gaps with your rules.
- Use group activities that require teamwork and cooperation. There can be physical (for example, a tug of war) or mental (such as asking them to solve a problem that requires a coordinated effort).
- When coaches know what gets in the way of team unity, they know what to avoid.

- Barriers to unity include:

- Personality clashes and power struggles
 - Unclear, confusing or conflicting team roles or team goals
 - Poor communication among athletes and coaches
 - Favoritism of coaches for particular players or groups- especially stars or family members
- Be aware, too, that conflict can build team unity and cohesion and eventually can lead to harmony interactions on the team. So a cohesive team may have occasional and temporary conflict. The coach who is building a unified team will make the best of any conflict and emerge with a stronger team.

*RESOLVING CONFLICTS



- Coaches must identify sources of conflict and inappropriate behavior, resolve conflicts with and among players, and be able to respond when conflicts occur.
- WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:
 - The sources of conflict on a team are usually miscommunication and or misinterpretation.
 - Defining inappropriate aggressive behavior may be difficult because this behavior can be physical and or psychological.
 - Resolving conflicts requires immediate and open communication.
 - If violence does erupt, immediate action is necessary to keep the situation from getting out of hand.
- Conflict is often viewed as a harmful, negative experience. People tend to avoid it. Avoiding conflict is destructive behavior. Conflict, when properly resolved, can help build team unity. In this way, a potentially negative issue can be turned into a positive experience.

Miscommunication or Misunderstanding Often Lead to Conflict

- To stop conflict before it starts, coaches need to:
 - Clearly communicate all expectations to players
 - Treat all players equally-coaches who show favoritism toward certain players will cause resentment
 - Resolve conflict among the adults-among the coaches and parents, and with opposing coaches. If the team's coaches are not peacefully resolving their conflicts, the players have little chance of doing so.
- Coaches may initiate conflict without knowing it. With miscommunication, coaches send a message different from what they think they are sending. Misunderstanding, on the other hand, means the athletes hear a different message than what is being sent by the coach.
- Coaches Need to Identify and Players have to Know the Inappropriate Behavior that is Likely to Occur.
 - Coaches need to be alert to warning signs of impending conflict or violent behavior. These include griping, complaining, trash talking and emotional outbursts by players. This list is not complete. Each coach needs to determine what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. These then need to be clearly communicated to the team.
- Open Communication and Immediate Action Help Resolve Conflicts.
- If conflict arises, steps to take include:
 - Immediately talk with players involved. If the conflict cannot be resolved immediately, the players and coaches need to meet as soon as realistically possible.
 - The players need to state their side of the conflict while the coach listens impartially.
 - After all players have spoken, coaches need to verbally summarize the situation to make sure everyone understands the full story.

- Unity or team cohesion usually increases when conflicts are resolved in a constructive way. By using this conflict-resolution process, team members learn that they can trust each other and that their team is strong enough to withstand the challenge of conflict.
- Creating Solutions: when a problem is understood, it can be solved.
- Coaches can aid in finding solutions:
 - If the players cannot create their own solution, the coach has to act as an impartial judge.
 - Either way, the solution has to be stated as specific behavior that the players will, or will not do.
 - If the conflict is between coach and player, deal with the player(s) in private.
- Dealing with Anger
 - Players ought to be encouraged to express their anger with words rather than acting out.
 - Coaches have to show self-control when dealing with anger. Players will follow the coaches' actions more often than the coaches' words.
 - Anger is the likely culprit in the instance of aggressive behavior. Players need to know the difference between expressing and acting out anger. Expressing anger involves using words to describe feelings. Acting out anger involves an action, either doing something (yelling, hitting) or not doing something (avoiding responsibility).
 - Coaches need to act swiftly to stop inappropriate behavior before it escalates out of control. Players should be separated until their emotions are under control. Then, as soon as possible, the player(s) need to meet with the coach to come to some solution according to the recommended conflict-resolution steps.
 - Communication is crucial to non-aggressive solutions to conflicts.

*HARASSMENT AND THE ABUSE OF POWER

- There are various degrees of harassment and abuse. These occur as physical, sexual, neglectful or emotionally abusive behaviors. Coaches need to recognize the potential for sexual harassment and the existence of an abusive environment. The imbalance of power between coach and players, favors the coach. Therefore, the coach has the responsibility to recognize abuse and eliminate or avoid any real or imagine instances of it.
- WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:
 - Teammates are the most frequent perpetrators of harassment.
 - Coaches, spectators, officials and parents all have been cited for verbal and physical harassment of athletes.
 - Coaches need a complete and accurate job description. This defines their authority and obligations. Fulfilling a job description provides protection against claims of harassment.
 - Dual relationships can lead to trouble. A coach is a concerned adult-a teacher and a mentor- rather than a friend, counselor or medical advisor. Assist the needy athlete in finding professional help when the athlete could benefit from specific, individualized assistance.
 - Coaches become liable when they see harassment or abuse but are indifferent to it.

- The official role of coach does not fit with other social or emotional roles.
 - Successful coaches recognize the power they have over their athletes. They also know and understand the special authority that goes with being a coach. Successful coaches appreciate the responsibilities that accompany their chosen role.
 - Conflicts of interest arise from the multiple roles coaches fill in the athletic environment. Prudent coaches realize how athlete, parents and administrators may interpret their behavior.
- For example:
 - Coaches who are friends with athletes may find it difficult to be fair and objective. Decisions about starting positions, playing time, discipline and correcting errors may be affected.
 - Coaches may not be qualified to act as counselors. Coaches typically are not in a professional position to meet athletes' emotional needs.
 - Some coaches demand complete loyalty. They require strict conformity to training and conditioning programs. Coaches who require extreme commitment may persuade athletes to over train or to play when injured. When dedication undermines health, the relationship is abusive.
 - Coaches may develop romantic or sexual relationships with athletes. This creates a hostile team environment. Such relationships are unethical and illegal.
- By avoiding potentially compromising situations, coaches protect the coach-athlete relationship. They also foster strong emotional ties that are important to a healthy athletic experience.
- Coaches can do much to avoid claims of sexual harassment or abuse of power because they directly control the athletic environment.

- Coaches can:
 - Learn and obey the sponsoring agency's or school's policy on sexual harassment.
 - Deal with discipline problems within pre-established standards. If discipline policies do not exist, coaches need to ask the organization to create such policies.
 - Avoid sexually explicit comments, graphics, gestures or expressions. Verbal or physical acts especially true of actions that cause discomfort to or humiliate an athlete.
 - Refrain from sexual degrading language, jokes or gestures. Innuendo or absurd sounds are to be avoided. Such expressions have no place in the athletic environment.
 - Avoid unwelcome or inappropriate touching, patting or pinching.
 - Communicate to athletes and parents a code of conduct. Such a code describes what is expected of all athletes and coaches.
 - Insist that athletes and coaches do not use words or action that bully, intimidate or embarrass others.
- League administrators can prevent abusive behavior by coaches with background checks. These checks ensure that coaches do not have a previous record of inappropriate or abusive behavior. States vary in providing for screening and background checks. Therefore, administrators need to determine their state's provisions before initiating such actions.
- You and scholastic roller hockey offer unique opportunities. Among these is the chance to build healthy relationships between coaches and athletes. Coaches can do much to create such a nurturing environment. But first they have to understand the boundaries of personal involvement with their athletes. Successful coaches use their authority to foster physical and emotional growth in their young players.

*THE PARENT AS COACH

Coaches often end up with their own children on their team. Be sure to distinguish between the roles of parent and coach.

- **WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:**

- The coach needs to focus on the team.
- Dress and act the part of the coach at practices and games.
- Verbal and non-verbal clues indicate to players your role as coach.
- The dual roles of parent and coach put stress on relationships with people. As much as possible, separate the role of parent from that of coach.

- Being a parent/coach can be challenging. It puts stress on relationships and people. Before you put yourself in this position, think through some of the critical issues and plan how to minimize conflicts.

- **Some Similarities, a Big Difference**

- When taking on the dual role of parent/coach, the simplest way to be successful is found in the formula, “treat all athletes as you would want your child to be treated.” This means your primary concern is the health and well being of all players. Deal fairly with players and teach all players the fundamentals of the game.
- As coach, your primary concern is the team-not the individual players and certainly not your child. Make decisions on the basis of what’s best for the team. This includes lineups, plays called and defensive strategies- practically everything about the game.

- **When are you Coach?**

- Communicate to everyone-including your child- that you’re the coach. The simplest way is by how you dress. When you head out for practice or a game, look the part. Put on a team cap, shirt or jacket; wear a whistle or carry a clipboard. Do something that shows you’re coach. Talk about roller hockey, but don’t discuss your team or game plans or players. Let your child-and the others- see you enjoying the game with out being the coach. There are other ways to communicate when you’re the coach. Some are verbal, others are non-verbal.

- **In every situation:**
 - Get to know the players as individuals. Talk with each one daily. Ask each player for input. Respect their ideas.
 - Be consistent in your treatment of players. Don't single your child out for either excessive praise or criticism.
 - Show concern for all players. Check out all injuries.
 - Emphasize the importance of team: "We succeed when we work hard and play together."
 - Avoid family nicknames when talking with your child.
- **At practice:**
 - Rotate groups for drills so that your child is not always with you.
 - Refrain from asking your child to lead warm-ups or demonstrate skills unless everyone has a turn out front
 - Correct all mistakes positively and promptly
 - Expect everyone to practice hard
 - Celebrate each individual's successes
 - Avoid putting excess pressure on your child.
- **During games:**
 - Make players earn starting assignments and playing time by working hard in practice.
 - Have players play the position that fits them best.
- **Boundaries between Parent and Coach**
 - Even though you may be tempted, especially where discipline is concerned, avoid discussing other players and their actions with your child. Listen to complaints, concerns and observations. But don't put your child in the role of informer and don't ask your child for details. Finally, if someone starts discussing other players with you, make sure your child is not present. Respect the team and your child's ties with teammates.
- **Take Time to be Parent:** away from the rink, treat your child as you would if they played for someone else.
- For example, ask him or her:
 - "How did practice go?" - "Did you give it your best today?"
 - "What did you learn?" - "Did you have fun?"
- Being both parent and coach can create problems. Of course, you want your child to succeed, but the team has to come first.

**YOUTH AND SCHOLASTIC ROLLER HOCKEY PARENTS*

Parents of roller hockey players depend on the coach for information about their roles and responsibilities.

- WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:
 - What athletes really want to get from playing roller hockey?
 - The answers to parents' questions.
 - How parents can help players get ready for practices and games.
 - Create a system for reporting all injuries to the coach.
 - How parents can connect with the team to become a positive part of the program.
- Coaches can help the parents of players become positive influences for their children and the team. First of all, parents need to learn about the sport, the coaches and the program.
- Have answers for questions such as:
 - What are the benefits and risks of playing roller hockey at each level?
 - How does the program recruit coaches?
 - How are coaches prepared for their job?
 - What do program administrators and coaches do to ensure the players' safety at practices and games?
 - What special rules does the program follow?
 - What time and financial commitments have to be made?
 - What equipment is needed?
 - What equipment do parents provide?
 - What happens at practice?

How coaches can help explain to parents what is expected:

- get athletes to practices and games on time.
- see that they have all necessary equipment.
- report even minor injuries.
- Parents and the coach have responsibilities whenever an injury requires medical attention. Parents need to see that the injury receives proper care. Both coach and parents work together to help the athlete rehabilitate injuries and get back into game shape. The coach should not allow the athlete to play until fully recovered. If an injury requires the athlete to visit a physician or other medical professional, written medical clearance should be provided before the coach allows the player to participate.
- Parents can reduce everyone's stress level by helping players keep things in perspective. Attending games, cheering for the team, and being good sports also are important. Once the game is over, parents have to focus on the player's effort, not the score.
- In addition, parents help by:
 - Talking with their children about what goes on at practice.
 - Going over team rules with their children.
 - Supporting the coach when discipline becomes necessary.
 - Knowing when and how to talk with the coach.
 - Not asking for special treatment of their children.
 - Allowing the coach to make coaching decisions about such things as positions, starters, playing time and strategies.
 - Expecting players to take responsibility for their actions.
 - Supporting the program by keeping statistics, selling concessions or organizing team functions.
 - Developing realistic expectations for children.
 - Providing the same positive motivation expected from the coach.
 - Avoiding the temptation to critique their young player's every move.
- Most important, parents need to let go. Parents have to allow the player to play and the coach to coach, on their own terms.

*DEALING WITH PARENTS

- Taking the time to establish good working relationships with parents can help make your program a success and your job as a coach much easier. Appropriate expectations from parents will facilitate the development of a good working relationship.
- WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:
 - Conducting a parents' orientation meeting helps communicate with parents.
 - Parents expect you to be knowledgeable and interested in the welfare of their children. Demonstrate your concern.
 - A booster group provides important support for your program.
 - Inform parents regarding appropriate and inappropriate behavior.
- The coach's and parent's first consideration has to be whether the athlete is ready to play. Young athletes who choose to play roller hockey usually become happy, enthusiastic team members. They develop a love for the game. Those who are forced to join a team resent practices and can't wait for the season to end. They have short careers and often end up hating roller hockey.
- Learn why each athlete wants to play. Help parents realize that coercion or force negatively affects players.

- What Parents Expect of You

- Parents care about the welfare of their child. They want children to enjoy playing roller hockey, learn new skills, be active, and learn valuable life lessons. Parents expect you to be knowledgeable about roller hockey, sensitive to their children's needs and expect you to give their child equal playing time.

- Conduct an Orientation Meeting for Parents

- Communication and cooperating are keys to developing successful parent relationships. Consider having a parent orientation meeting to recruit volunteers and explain your coaching philosophy.

- Discuss such things as:

- The role of parents
- Your season goals
- Team and league rules
- The amount of playing time each athlete can expect
- Practice and game schedules with expected attendance
- Your philosophy of discipline
- Your need for parental support
- When and how to talk with the coach
- Not asking for special treatment of a player

- The Expected Role of Parents

- Some parents, though, have unrealistic ideas about their athlete's capabilities.
- Parents need clear guidelines about their place in your program. Their primary role is providing emotional support for their athletes. Other parental responsibilities include:
 - Providing a positive, supportive atmosphere at home
 - Informing the coach of pre-existing medical conditions that may place the child at risk
 - Helping the child understand the lessons sports can teach

- Such parents:
 - Live vicariously through their child
 - Spoil the child
 - Pressure the child with expectations that are out of reach, such as always winning
 - Fail to listen to the child's concerns about sports and life
 - See the child's athletic experience as an investment in the future and shame the athlete who wants to do other things
 - Unfairly criticize the coach
- Coaches should understand and encourage realistic parental expectations.
- Parents with realistic expectations:
 - Listen to their children's view about playing sports
 - Provide unconditional love during both successes and failures
 - Help children understand that the definition of a good performance is giving one's best effort
 - Encourage the players to be self-reliant and to accept responsibility for their decisions and actions
 - Encourage non-sport interests
 - Allow their children to set their standards of excellence
 - Provide encouragement and hopeful optimism when needed by the athlete
 - Emphasize enjoyment above all

- Define a time and place to communicate with parents
 - Explain to parents that just before and after games are not good times to talk. If an emotional parent does come around, politely ask the person to wait until he or she has cooled down. Meeting with parents away from practices and games eliminates distractions and diffuses confrontations. If someone confronts you during a game or practice, ask the person to call you at a more suitable time.
- Dealing with criticism
 - Parents are critics. They may tell you what style of offense to run, what plays to call or who to start at which position. Don't be defensive. Such suggestions often are given in good faith. Take advantage of their enthusiasm. Encourage critics to become volunteer coaches. If they accept, you have recruited a new coach and strengthened your program. If they do not, it is unlikely that you will hear from them again.
- Conflicts with parents
 - Conflicts with parents usually result from a lack of communication, miscommunication, or a misunderstanding. Coaches should establish clear lines of communication with parents and encourage parents to discuss issues or concerns with the coach.
- Encourage parents to act appropriately
 - Parents have to control their emotions. Encourage parents to cheer their players while showing respect for the opponents and officials. Parents need to refrain from coaching their children from the stands. They cannot make derogatory comments to coaches, players, officials or other parents. The coach should establish beforehand, the consequences that a disruptive parent should expect.
 - Your relationship with your players' parents affects the success of your program both on and off the rink. Include parents in your program and encourage them to support their children.



PART 3-

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

*SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- Many coaches are trained to recognize a player's use of ergogenic drugs, such as anabolic steroids, that are used to enhance a player's strength and endurance. However, young athletes are much more likely to abuse alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, ecstasy and other recreational drugs. Youth coaches need to know the symptoms of substance abuse and how to assist in securing treatment.
- WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:
 - Young roller hockey players are at risk of using and abusing alcohol and illicit drugs.
 - Coaches should educate players about the dangers of drug abuse and should always be conscious of being a positive role model.
 - Preventing young players from abusing drugs increases their chances of becoming healthier athletes and adults.
 - Effective approaches include:
 - Speak to athletes about drug abuse and ask them questions in a personal and direct manner.
 - Find and be prepared to recommend a local program that is experienced in assisting young people with drug addiction.
 - Work with the team health-care professional(s) to discourage drug use by discussing the consequences of use, effective methods to overcome common barriers to quitting, and techniques to prevent relapse.
 - Prohibit alcohol use by parents at team events.

- Even episodic drug use can affect performance in young players. A change in performance and motivation may be the only clue a coach will have that a player is using drugs.
- The most widely abused drug by both youths and adults is alcohol. In children, even very small amounts of alcohol can cause impaired motor performance, which includes reduced hand-eye coordination, grip strength, and jumping ability. In addition, players who have consumed alcohol may tire more quickly during high-intensity exercise. Coaches should watch for slurred speech, tremors and decreased physical performance.
- Experimentation with marijuana also is prevalent among young athletes. The signs of marijuana use include red eyes, dry mouth, excessive giddiness, and the inability to concentrate. Reaction times can be slowed, reducing a player's level of performance.
- Cocaine abuse, in contrast is characterized by increased rate of speech, hyperactivity and agitation. Physiologically, the player may experience shortness of breath, heart palpitations, and high blood pressure. The sudden deaths of nationally known athletes can be cited when discussing cocaine abuse with players.
- All players should be informed of the risks associated with drug and alcohol abuse, especially as it relates to physical activity. Any athlete who has recently used drugs, or is suspected of chronic abuse, should be removed from play and referred for counseling. However, the most effective deterrent a coach can provide is to act as a role model for positive behavior. Coaches should not consume alcohol in the presence of players, and alcohol in the presence of players, and alcohol use among parents at team hotels or parties should be prohibited.
- All youth coaches should be aware of the warning signs of alcohol and drug abuse. Coaches and health care professionals should speak to players about drug abuse and ask questions in a personal and direct manner. Coaches should also remember that they and the athletes' parents act as role models for young players and should refrain from such negative behaviors as alcohol, tobacco and drug use.

**SUSPECTING DRUG ABUSE*

- Drugs used by young athletes may be legal or illicit, recreational or performance enhancing or they may be therapeutic and necessary. It is important that the youth coach can recognize drug abuse.
- WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:
 - Be knowledgeable about the danger signals that may indicate signs of drug abuse.
 - If an athlete is suspected of drug use, talk to him where privacy and confidentiality are assured.
 - Consider initially discussing commonly used substance such as over-the-counter medications and their effects on performance as an icebreaker.
 - Be informed about material on the topic available from community resources.
 - Stay informed about new drugs that are known to be abused.
 - When possible, a coach may want to share his suspicions with a team physician who can decide whether to discuss the subject with the athlete and his or her parents, in the case of a minor.

- From a child's first participation in sport until the end of his or her athletic career, many individuals, teams, and organizations are in a position to act as agents of drug-abuse prevention, recognition and early intervention. The coach is central to the sports experience and should be aware of possible substance abuse by athletes.
- The symptoms of drug abuse can be subtle, particularly in fit and accomplished athletes. Coaches often are in the best position to detect drug abuse because they constantly observe the athletes' appearance and behavior. Unexplained changes in physical appearance, behavior, mood, performance or concentration may be symptoms of drug abuse.
- Arguments with teammates, inappropriate challenges to authority figures, lying, routinely showing up late to practice; increased injury rate, and/or excessive reliance on medications for the treatment of minor injuries should raise suspicions of drug abuse.
- The attitude and behavior of the coach can influence the attitudes and actions of athletes. The coach should be able to discuss openly the ethics and dangers of drug abuse, provide appropriate guidance, and stress proper training methods to avoid injury. The coach should help the athlete set goals that are achievable through hard work and developed talent and without the use of drugs.

*TOBACCO USE

- Smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco are common even in young athletes. Youth coaches need to know the dangers of tobacco use and its effect on athletic performance.
- **WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:**
 - Young athletes are at high risk for developing a smoking or smokeless tobacco habit.
 - Tobacco use impairs athletic performance, may increase the risk of injury and slows the rate at which injuries heal.
 - Nicotine is a highly addictive and dangerous drug in any form.
 - Smoking and smokeless tobacco are responsible for respiratory and oral cancers, increases in blood pressure, vascular damage, heart attack and receding gums.
 - Coaches should educate players about the dangers of tobacco and should serve as positive role models by refraining from tobacco use.
 - Preventing young players from using tobacco increases their chances of becoming healthier athletes and adults.
 - **Effective approaches include:**
 - Treat the absence of tobacco use as a healthy vital sign and a way to enhance performance.
 - Ask athletes not to start, or to quit, using tobacco in a direct and personal manner.
 - Find and be prepared to recommend local treatment programs experienced in youth tobacco addiction.
 - Work with the team health-care professional(s) to discourage tobacco use by discussing the consequences, recommending effective methods to overcome common barriers to quitting, and using techniques to prevent relapse.
 - Be a role model for athletes. Do not use tobacco.

- Smoking and smokeless tobacco use still are considered socially acceptable, despite nicotine being identified as a highly addictive and dangerous drug. While smoking rates have decreased in the past two decades, smokeless tobacco use in young males and females is on the rise. This trend may be even more prevalent in young male athletes, who often use chewing tobacco during practice and sporting events.
- The dangers of smoking tobacco have been widely reported in the media. Tobacco smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals, including carbon monoxide and nicotine, which cause cardio-respiratory toxicity and addiction. Smoking can impair athletic performance by reducing the ability of the lungs to deliver oxygen to the blood, causing diminished muscular performance. Nicotine causes a narrowing of blood vessels, and puts an additional strain on an athlete's heart, making it work harder to achieve optimum performance.
- The addictive and adverse effects of smokeless tobacco are well documented. Oral tobacco use causes a significant increase in oral lesions and gum recession and can cause elevations in heart rate and blood pressure. The primary causes of oral cancer are smoking and smokeless tobacco use. The nicotine in smokeless tobacco, like in that of cigarettes, puts added strain on the heart and blood vessels, significantly reducing optimal performance. In addition, tobacco users take a significantly longer time to heal after a musculoskeletal injury.
- The NCAA Guidelines for institutional alcohol, tobacco and other drug education programs suggest that each player should sign a form consenting to a drug test, and each athletic department should conduct a drug and alcohol education program once a semester. This message, translated for youth and high school roller hockey, suggests that coaches take an active role in preventing players from smoking and using smokeless tobacco through education and disciplinary action. Adolescence is a critical time for learning these life lessons, and the youth coach can be a respected role model for avoiding nicotine addiction and subsequent health concerns.

PART 4-



*INJURIES AND FIRST
AID*

*ASTHMA

- Youth coaches need to be familiar with exercise-induced asthma (EIA), an illness that restricts an athlete's ability to breathe.
- WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:
 - Exercise-induced asthma is often characterized by an acute narrowing of the lung airways which may be brought on by breathing large quantities of cold, dry air.
 - During an EIA attack, a player can experience shortness of breath, tightness in the chest, pain, coughing and wheezing during and for up to 30-60 minutes after exercise.
 - Techniques for preventing an EIA episode include wearing a facemask or scarf during exercise in cold weather and participating in adequate warm-ups.
 - Players with EIA and their coaches should become familiar with the indications, timing and potential side effects of their medication.
 - Athletes with persistent asthma may experience EIA and exercise can trigger a fatal asthma attack.
 - A player who is wheezing and does not respond to medication should receive immediate medical attention.

- Exercise-induced asthma (EIA) is often characterized by sudden narrowing of the lung airways, which can be brought on by breathing large quantities of cold, dry air. Changes in airway temperature, along with the effect of increased ventilation, result in contraction of the smooth muscle and increased mucus formation along the upper airways. The underlying cause may be related to the relationship between bronchial blood flow and heat exchange. It occurs in 90 percent of asthmatics and 10-15 percent of non-asthmatics.
- Players with EIA should be carefully monitored for signs of breathing distress; coaches should be trained to recognize the warning signs in undiagnosed players as well. However, EIA should not prevent a player from participating, and improved fitness will reduce the symptoms over time.
- During an EIA attack, a player will experience shortness of breath, tightness in the chest, pain, coughing, and wheezing during or after exercise. The symptoms sometimes become worse when activity is stopped, and may last for up to 30-60 minutes after exercise, which distinguishes the disease from poor fitness.
- Players who have been diagnosed with EIA may use an inhaler or other medication to manage their disease. However, the different types of inhalers and medications that should be taken at specific times can elicit side effects; get to know the player's regimen. Players with persistent asthma should be managed with appropriate medications to control both the asthma and EIA. A player who is wheezing and does not respond to medication should receive immediate medical attention.
- EIA is a common disease affecting youth roller hockey players. However, with proper prevention and management techniques it should not restrict a player's activity. A youth coach should be aware of the signs and symptoms of EIA to ensure players' health and safety during practice and competition.

*DIABETIC ATHLETES

Youth roller hockey players with diabetes and their coaches should be acutely aware of the potential health risks associated with the disease as well as prevention guidelines and practical health maintenance issues.

• WHAT COACHES NEED TO KNOW:

- Type 1 diabetes should not prevent a player from competing in roller hockey.
- To minimize possible complications, diabetic athletes should be under the care of a physician.
- Diabetic athletes should eat a snack or meal before participation in roller hockey practice, scrimmage or games. This will minimize the risk of low blood sugar that can result in fainting.
- Snacks or meals before practice or games should be mostly carbohydrates (bread, cereals, pasta), which can be quickly digested.
- If an athlete is to participate in extended practice or scrimmage sessions, he or she should consume a modest snack after every 30 minutes of exercise.
- Symptoms of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) can include muscle weakness, lethargy, trembling and excessive sweating.
- Sugar cubes, soda or juice should be kept on hand in case of a hypoglycemic emergency. In the case of mild hypoglycemia (which the athlete can often recognize), athletes can re-enter the practice, scrimmage or game once they feel well and have consumed 100-200 calories of carbohydrates (a can of apple juice, several small hard candies, a banana, or several graham crackers for example). In the case of more serious episodes, medical personnel should be consulted.
- Communicate with parents of athletes and appropriate medical personnel for emergency procedures in case of hypoglycemia.
- In case of fainting or other episode involving a diabetic athlete, medical personnel should be contacted immediately.

- Diabetes is a metabolic disorder in which the body's ability to regulate blood sugar is impaired. Maintaining adequate blood sugar is critical to good health, and inadequately controlled diabetes can result in various long-term circulatory and nervous system disorders that impair vision, kidney function, cardiac function, and blood flow to the feet, fingers, and toes. Although there are two main types of diabetes (Type 1 and Type 2), it is the Type 1 diabetes that youth coaches are most likely to encounter among players.
- Type 1 diabetes typically has a sudden onset during childhood or young adult hood. Athletes with Type 1 diabetes must use insulin for the remainder of their lives, because the body, unable to produce insulin independently, is unable to regulate blood sugar. If an athlete eats too little prior to exercise or uses too much insulin to control blood sugar, it can result in a condition known as hypoglycemia. There are different kinds of insulin (short-acting/long-acting), so the time of day that an athlete needs to inject insulin medication will depend on the individual, previous food intake, and the intensity of anticipated exercise.
- Although Type 1 diabetes should not prevent participation in sports, youth and high school coaches should identify diabetic athletes and be aware of their potential health risks. The player, coach and available healthcare professionals should act as a team to ensure the safety of the diabetic athlete.

*DENTAL INJURIES

Dental injuries can occur in contact sports.

- WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:
 - Dental injuries can be prevented with appropriate education and equipment.
 - It is a coach's responsibility to ensure that all players wear properly fitted mouth guards in practice, scrimmages and games.
 - Coaches, trainers and appropriate program volunteers should be trained in first aid for dental injuries.
- There are three basic types of tooth injury-fractures, luxations and avulsions. Tooth fractures are characterized by a split tooth with one fragment still attached to the base of the tooth and the other fragment dislodged. A luxated tooth is one that has been loosened or shifted in positions but remains in the socket. A tooth avulsion is the most serious and occurs when the entire tooth is removed from the socket. An important way to reduce the risk of these types of injuries is to ensure that mouth guards are available and worn by all players during all practices, scrimmages and games.

- By absorbing energy from a blow to the chin or head, a properly fitted mouth guard reduces the risk not only of dental trauma but of brain concussion injury as well. Mouth-formed boil and bit mouth guards-the pliable mouth guard material is heated to soften it temporarily, then is placed in the mouth for adaptation to the player's bite-are the most popular variety for prevention of dental injuries in the age group. Such mouth guards are readily available and relatively inexpensive. Custom mouth guards have a better fit, thinner profile, and a longer life span, but are more expensive.

- COACH'S RESPONSE

- Dental injuries often occur simultaneously with other trauma, so an examination of the mouth should be conducted each time an injury occurs to the head or face. If a dental injury causes bleeding, have the athlete gently bite on a towel or gauze pad to help control the flow of blood.
- If a tooth is fractured, the fragment should be carefully handled and sent with the athlete to a dental office or emergency facility. If a tooth is shifted or displaced, the athlete requires immediate attention by a dentist or healthcare professional.
- In the case of a completely removed tooth, time is of the essence. If the tooth remains out of the socket for more than two hours, it is unlikely that the tooth can be saved. The lost tooth should be placed in a container of protective solution (such as clean water or saline) and sent with the athlete immediately to an oral surgeon.

- RETURN TO PLAY

- Any athlete with a serious dental injury should be referred for a dental evaluation and released by a physician. For less serious injuries, a coach should consult with medical personnel if there are any questions, and should restrict participation of a player if there is any doubt.

*SPRAINS AND STRAINS

Sprains and strains are common injuries in youth and high school roller hockey, but they often are confused. A youth coach should know how to recognize the distinction between them.

WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW

- A strain describes damage to muscle fibers to the tendons that attach muscle to bone.
 - A sprain describes damage to ligaments, the strong bands of tissue that connect bone to bone at joints.
 - Suspected sprains and strains should be protected from further injury by removing the player from activity. The injured area should then be elevated and treated with ice and compression.
 - Deformities or significant pain and swelling indicate the possibility of a third-degree injury or fracture. The injury should be immobilized and the player should receive medical attention.
- A muscle strain describes damage to muscle fibers or the tendons that attach muscle to bone. Common symptoms include torn muscle, pulled muscle or a ruptured tendon. These types of injuries are classified from least to most severe. If little tissue is torn, only mild tenderness and pain is felt, and the player retains a full range of motion in the affected limb, the injury is likely a first-degree strain. A third-degree strain-the most serious-generally refers to a major tearing resulting in painful and limited motion.
 - A sprain, on the other hand, refers to a ligament injury. Ligaments are the strong bands of tissue that connect bone to bone at the site of a joint. Again, the severity of the injury is classified by the amount of tearing and pain, and in this case, joint stability and degree of swelling. A first-degree sprain involves a little tearing, pain, or swelling and the joint remains stable. Second-degree sprains are slightly more serious. A third-degree sprain indicates complete rupture of the involved ligament accompanied by a large amount of swelling. Interestingly, there can be intense pain at the onset of a third-degree sprain, it can be relatively pain free compared to first and second degree sprains that often become more painful in the 2-5 days following the injury.

• COACH'S RESPONSE

- If a strain or sprain occurs, protect the athlete from further injury, remove the athlete from practice or play, and splint the affected area to limit abnormal planes or motion.
- Management of strains and sprains then should follow the principles outlined below:
 - R-rest the injured area: Limit use of the injured area until pain free and cleared by a physician.
 - I- apply ice: apply ice to the area for twenty minutes four to eight times a day.
 - C-apply compression: elastic wraps, air casts and splints may help reduce swelling.
 - E-elevate the injured area: keep the injured area above the level of the heart, if possible.
- Compression should not be too tight around an injury. Numbness, tingling, increased pain, and swelling of the limb below the wrap are all indicators that the compression is too tight and should be loosened. This is a particular hazard if ice is used with compression.
- If an ice pack is used, care should be taken not to leave the ice directly on skin or not to apply the ice for an extended period of time (particularly to bony areas with out much fat). A maximum of 20 minutes is recommended.
- In the absence of a physician or athletic trainer, it is the coach's responsibility to remove the player from the activity to prevent further injury. Deformities, significant pain, or swelling indicate that the injury should be immobilized and the player should seek immediate medical attention.

• RETURN TO PLAY

- Because it may not be easy to differentiate a strain or sprain from a fracture, all injuries should be examined by an athletic trainer or physician before a player can return to practice or competition.
- Strains and sprains are common injuries in youth and high school roller hockey. Coaches should recognize the symptoms and signs of these two types of injuries and be aware of the RICE principles for rendering first aid. If possible, an athletic trainer or physician should examine the injury and recommend a return to play program. Immediate medical attention is required if deformities, suspected fracture, significant pain, or swelling are present.

*COMMON KNEE INJURIES

- A youth coach should be familiar with the events that cause the most common knee injuries and the appropriate treatment.
- WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW
 - To help understand the severity of a knee injury, it is important for the coach to know how it happened.
 - Symptoms of severe injury include a popping sound upon impact, immediate swelling, weakness, locking, giving-way, point tenderness in a specific area, and problems with stability when running or turning. Medical personnel should be contacted immediately if any of these symptoms exist.
 - If the knee injury is serious, it is critical to consult a physician to determine diagnosis, treatment options, and return-to-play recommendations.
 - All youth roller hockey players should participate in stretching and strengthening exercises both before and after athletic activity to reduce the possibility of knee injury.
 - Athletes who have undergone a knee injury that has required a medical assessment should be required to have clearance (from a physician) prior to returning to play.
 - It is imperative that an athlete see a physician if the knee is swollen or if pain persists for more than five days.
 - Pain under the kneecap with out impact is common in young athletes, and should be evaluated to improve mechanics.

- Knee injuries account for more than one-third of all youth roller hockey injuries. The knee joint routinely sustains forces of six to seven times an athlete's body weight, and is capable of bending, twisting and withstanding tremendous impact.
- The mechanism of injury is the best indicator for determining the degree of severity. Many ligament and cartilage injuries result from the athlete twisting his/her body above a plant, rather than from hard physical contact with another player. This frequently is marked by immediate pain, a popping sound, and noticeable swelling within an hour. This type of injury often results in instability and an inability of the knee to function normally. If the anterior cruciate ligament or a meniscus cartilage are torn, surgery often is required followed by an extended recovery with formal rehabilitation.
- If the athlete experiences pain from a force striking the knee from the inside or outside, the injury will most likely be a ligament sprain, but if not entirely torn usually will heal within three to six weeks. Another possible knee injury in young roller hockey athletes is a physical (growth plate) fracture in the area at the end of a bone. This can resemble a ligament injury.
- Should the athlete fall or be hit directly on the patella or knee cap, the pain is usually from a patellar contusion, or bruise on the kneecap. Patellar contusions are rarely associated with serious or long-term damage, and usually heal within two weeks. The most effective prevention strategy for patellar contusions is using protective kneepads, which are hard in front and soft in back.
- Even in the absence of contact or force injury to the knee, young athletes commonly complain of pain when bending the knees or walking up and down stairs. Often the cause of pain is abnormal movement of the kneecap. A physician should evaluate the athlete for interventions that will reduce the pain and improve performance. Flexibility and strength training are important. A well-designed leg muscle stretching and strengthening program, integrated into the season conditioning program, will improve patella tracking and decrease pain.

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- COACH'S RESPONSE
 - If an athlete injures a knee, the coach or medical personnel (if available), should examine the player on the rink. The athlete should be questioned about how the injury occurred, if this type of injury has happened previously, and the location of the pain. The skin and joint should be examined for obvious swelling or joint deformities. Other indicators of seriousness include pain when attempting to bear weight, the knee giving way, locking, or tenderness in a specific area of the knee. If any of these symptoms are present, medical attention is immediately required for the athlete. The athlete should be removed from the field, with assistance, and qualified medical personnel (trainer, physician, etc.) should conduct additional comprehensive tests on the knee to determine the site and severity of the injury. Ice should be applied if swelling is noticed.
- RETURN TO PLAY
 - Any athlete with a serious knee injury should be referred for a medical evaluation and returned to play only after such an evaluation and release by a physician. For less serious injuries, a coach should consult with medical personnel if there are any questions, and should restrict participation of a player if there is any doubt.

*COMMON ELBOW AND HAND INJURIES

- Hand and elbow injuries are frequently related to collisions or overuse in contact sports. A youth coach needs to identify the cause of the injury to assist in its subsequent care.
- WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW
 - Hand and elbow injuries frequently result from overuse, but can also occur as a result of a forceful impact from collisions or falls.
 - Prevention measures include using proper mechanics, warm-ups and stretching.
 - A youth coach should be aware of swelling, bruising, and persistent pain as indicators of the need for medical attention. In such cases, the athlete should be removed from participation, ice should be applied to the affected area immediately, and the athlete should be transported to a medical care facility.
 - A fall or collision that results in pain for the athlete requires immediate medical attention.
- The most common elbow ailment involves chronic pain resulting from overuse. This often weakens the ligaments, and inflames muscles, tendons, and the growth plates. Elbow pain can also develop from a single event or an injury to tissues already vulnerable from overuse. Because the elbow is a joint involving three arm bones and associated ligaments and tendons, it is common for an athlete to suffer trauma from a collision, which may result in a sprain to the inside or outside ligaments, strain to the muscles surrounding the elbow, or a fracture.
- Hand injuries most often result from a forceful impact such as a collision with the rink or another player. These should be assessed immediately for swelling and bruising to identify a dislocation, fracture or a torn ligament or tendon.

*CPR

To administer CPR, first follow the emergency action steps, Check-Call-Care. Call, or have someone call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number immediately.

- If the player does not have normal breathing, or you cannot tell, remove the facemask. If you do not suspect an injury to the head, neck, or back, open the airway by tilting the head back and recheck for breathing for approximately 5 seconds. Using a breathing barrier, make a seal over the player's mouth and nose, then give 2 slow breaths. Each breath should make the player's chest gently rise and fall.
- Check for signs of circulation for no more than 10 seconds. Signs of circulation include coughing or movement in response to rescue breaths.
- If there are signs of circulation, continue rescue breathing as needed by giving 1 breath every 5 seconds.
- If there are no signs of circulation, begin CPR:
 - Find your hand position in the center of the chest, over the breastbone;
 - Position your shoulders directly over your hands. While keeping your arms straight, compress the player's chest to a depth of about 2 inches, 15 times in about 10 seconds.
 - Give 2 slow breaths.
 - Do 3 more steps of 15 compressions and 2 breaths;
 - Recheck for signs of circulation for no more than 10 seconds.
 - If there are no signs of circulation, continue giving sets of 15 compressions and 2 breaths, rechecking every few minutes.
 - Repeat this cycle until EMS personnel arrive and take over or an AED arrives and is ready to be used.
- The only instance in which an athlete's helmet should be removed is when a medical authority believes it is necessary for the care of the athlete or if the equipment interferes with the rescuer's ability to provide required CPR.
 - Remove the helmet. Obtain available assistance to minimize neck movement and maintain the neck in a neutral position (level with the height of the shoulders.)
 - After the helmet is removed, keep the neck in a neutral position by manual support or by placing towels or clothing under the head.

Note: This information isn't intended to replace formal first aid and CPR training given in a course such as the American Red Cross sport safety training course. Coaches are encouraged to contact their local chapter of the American Red Cross to enroll in a sport safety training, first aid, CPR or AED course.

**CONCUSSIONS IN SPORTS*

Recognize the signs and symptoms of a concussion.

When in doubt, sit them out!

- WHAT COACHES SHOULD KNOW:

- A concussion is any change in an athlete's behavior, awareness and/or physical feelings caused by a direct or indirect blow to the head.
- Any concussion has the potential to be a serious injury.
- Before letting an athlete go back to play, a concussion should be evaluated by a doctor.
- An athlete should never return to play while exhibiting any signs or symptoms of a concussion either at rest or with exertion. When in doubt, sit them out!
- Any head injury associated with loss of consciousness must be treated as a suspected head, neck or back injury.
- The only instances in which an athlete's helmet should be removed is when a medical authority believes that it is necessary for the care of the athlete, or if the equipment interferes with the rescuers' ability to provide required CPR.
- If necessary to provide care for life-threatening conditions, it is recommended that the facemask be removed rather than the whole helmet.
- For any head injury, activate the emergency action plan and follow the emergency action steps, Check-Call-Care.

- When a player is hit, he or she may receive a blow to the head, and become unconscious or demonstrate changes in behavior. If the player regains consciousness, seems to be alert and oriented, and is eager to play, a coach may feel the player is fully recovered and allow him or her back into the game or practice. However, the player has suffered a concussion. Failure to recognize a concussion can potentially lead to a coma and death, particularly if a second impact occurs. Coaches need to be aware of the signs of concussions and treat the situation properly.
- Concussions are caused by force being transmitted to the head. The force may be caused by any direct or indirect hit to the head or body and can cause changes in behavior, awareness, or physical feeling in the injured person. Concussions often go unrecognized by coaches because they are underreported by athletes who want to continue competing. Athletes often will minimize or deny symptoms. Maintaining a high level of suspicion and having some knowledge of the individual athlete's personality helps coaches in early detection of the signals of a concussion. This awareness can prevent additional concussive injury, potential long-term brain damage, or other possible catastrophic outcomes.
- On the Rink Evaluations
 - If there is a forceful blow to the head, with or without loss of consciousness, the coach should suspect a head injury and also be concerned that the neck or back has been injured. When caring for the player on the rink, tell him or her not to nod or shake their head during the assessment, but to say yes or no. The player's helmet should also be left in place. The goal is to minimize movement. If the head impact has caused the player to become unconscious or show the signs of concussion listed below, activate the emergency action plan and follow the emergency action steps, **Check-Call-Care**. **Check** the scene for safety and check the ill or injured athlete, **Call** 9-1-1 or the local emergency number when needed, and **Care** for the injured player until EMS personnel arrive.

- Symptoms that require immediate activation of the emergency action plan and immediate removal to a medical facility are:
 - Period of unconsciousness
 - Confusion, disorientation to time and place
 - Severe headache or vomiting
 - Appears sleepy, pale and is sweating
 - Blurred vision, slurred speech and muscle weakness
 - Neck pain
- Checking for a Concussion
 - If the player is removed from the rink after receiving a head impact, it is important to continue evaluating the player every five minutes for at least thirty minutes.
 - Look at the facial expression of the athlete. Does the athlete have a vacant stare or a confused facial expression?
 - Check the athlete's behavior. Is the athlete easily distracted or slow to answer questions or follow directions? Does the athlete display unusual emotional reactions, such as crying or laughing? Does the athlete have a headache or complain of nausea? Is the athlete irritable and easily frustrated? Does the athlete appear unusually anxious or depressed? Does the athlete appear sleepy? Does the athlete have significantly decreased playing ability from earlier in the contest?
 - Check the athlete's orientation and memory. Is the athlete aware of the time of day and date? Is the athlete generally confused? **Questions to ask:** Which period is it? Where are we? Which team are we playing? Which side scored the last point? Which team did the athlete play in the last game? Did the athlete's team win or lose in the last game?
 - Check for posttraumatic amnesia. Ask the athlete how he/she got injured. Ask what the first thing he/she remembers after the injury. Ask the last thing the athlete remembers before the injury.
- Medical attention is required if the athlete's expression, behavior or memory is affected. Attention should be immediate if symptoms show a deteriorating situation. When an athlete has had a concussion, he/she should not be allowed to return to the current game or practice, and should not be left alone. Medical evaluation following the concussion is required before a return to participation is permitted.

- Post Concussion Syndrome
 - After a player is removed from the rink, he or she may develop symptoms of post concussion syndrome. This can occur immediately after the injury or many hours or days later.
- Symptoms of post concussion syndrome include:
 - Blurred vision
 - Fatigue
 - Ringing in the ears
 - Trouble falling asleep
 - Dizziness
 - Sleeping more or less than usual
 - Headache
 - Increased sensitivity to light and noise
 - Nausea and vomiting
 - Feeling more emotional than normal
 - Poor coordination or balance
 - Difficulty concentrating
 - Increased irritability
 - Difficulty remembering
 - Slurred speech
 - Feeling dazed or stunned
 - Seeing stars or flashing lights
 - Having double vision
- A physician may conduct neuropsychological testing or neuro-imaging to assess exactly when the athlete has recovered from a concussion. No athlete should go back to play being free of all symptoms and signs, both at rest and during exertion, and a physician has indicated the player is ready to return to competition.