

**SUBURBAN
Hockey Schools**



suburbanhockey.com

COACHING MANUAL

For players 10 & under

COACHING OUTLINE FOR PLAYERS 10 & UNDER

INDIVIDUAL SKILLS

BALANCE AND AGILITY

Both with the puck and without it, players need to be able to stop, start and cut quickly and turn sharply in all directions with good balance and control. Losing balance for just a split second is the difference between getting to the opening, or getting a shot off in the offensive zone or closing the gap and making the check on defense.

- Knee bend and body control are major factors in balance. Players should have maximum knee bend at all times with the upper body upright (not bending forward at the waist), with good arm and stick control, stick blade on the ice, leading the player's body whichever way it is going.

FOOT QUICKNESS

Getting up on the toes for a quick and explosive first three steps is the difference between getting to the loose puck or not.

- From a standstill, a stop, a tight turn or getting up from the knees, players need to take long, quick steps, like a sprinter coming out of the starting blocks to win those short races.
- Balance, knee bend and body control play a major factor in their ability to make quick starts.

FORWARD STRIDING

Speed is the name of the game and players need to have long, efficient, powerful strides.

- The less upper body movement the better, with a slight forward bend at the waist, and arms moving up and back (not side to side) in rhythm with the leg strides.
- Good knee bend is essential for balance and power, with long diagonal strides finishing with a thrust off of the inside edge of the toe. The more knee bend on the glide leg, the longer the stride can be.
- Players also need to return their skates in a straight line completely back under the body to set up for the next stride. Players skating with a wide base created by returning the skates only partially back, will have a shorter stride, and ultimately less speed and less stamina.

Common problems

- Wide base – short strides – reduced speed and stamina
- Minimal knee bend – poor balance, short strides and less power and speed
- Side to side upper body movement – poor balance, bad rhythm, less speed
- Bending forward at the waist – poor balance – high heel kick on return – less speed

STOPPING

With and without the puck, stopping with good balance and control is essential to being able to start quickly in another direction.

- Skates should be about shoulder width apart, roughly side-by-side, using the inside edge of the lead skate and the outside edge of the trailing skate to stop. The more weight that can be put on the outside edge of the trailing skate, the quicker the player will be able to start in the opposite direction off of that skate.
- Knees should be bent for balance and control with the upper body upright. Bend should occur at the ankles and knees.
- Stick should be on the ice in front, and then be rotated quickly to lead the player back in the other direction. When stopping with the puck, it should be on the heel of the stick, using the wrists to cup the blade over it for better control. When stopping to the forehand side, the player needs to manipulate the stick with his hands so that the blade faces straight ahead of his skates. This is accomplished by bringing the top hand underneath, and the bottom hand over top.

Common problems

- Feet too close together
- Feet not aligned side by side
- Straightening legs while stopping
- Stick off ice, upper body rotated
- Leaning into stop, upper body not upright

TIGHT TURNING

To change direction quickly without stopping, or to elude an opponent with the puck, a player needs to be able to turn quickly, and sharply, with good balance and control, while maintaining speed. This ability to cut back comes in especially handy in tight areas like the corners when players are trying to maintain possession of the puck and have no passing options.

- Skates should be about shoulder width apart for stability, in a heel –toe relationship, with the inside skate ahead of the outside skate.
- Ankles need to be bent to get on the outside edge of the inside skate, and inside edge of the outside skate.
- Good knee bend allows for good balance and sets the player up to begin striding in the other direction
- Upper body should be upright with the head and shoulders rotated in the direction of the turn, and the stick blade leading the player into the turn.
- The weight shifts toward the heels of the skate blades as the player cuts.

Common problems

- Feet too close together
- Feet not aligned in a heel-toe relationship
- Lack of knee bend
- Stick off ice, upper body rotated in the opposite direction of the turn
- Leaning into turn, upper body not upright

FORWARD CROSSOVERS

Quick feet, long strides and good balance combine to generate good forward crossover acceleration.

- Upper body should be upright, with shoulders rotated in the direction of the turn
- Stick blade should be on the ice on the inside of the turn
- Good knee bend allows for balance and for long, powerful strides
- Stride off of inside edge of outside skate, pushing to the outside (not back) and finishing with a thrust off of the inside edge of the toe of the skate
- There should be an equally long and powerful stride off of the outside edge of the inside skate, pushing across to the outside, and finishing with a thrust off of the outside edge of the toe of the skate.

Common problems

- Short choppy strides
- Unequal strides, longer push with inside edge than outside edge
- Lack of knee bend
- Stick off ice, upper body rotated in the opposite direction of the turn
- Leaning into turn, upper body not upright

PIVOTING – FORWARD TO BACKWARD

To be able to face the puck, and face the play at all times, players need to be able to pivot quickly with good balance at top speed.

- Upper body upright, good knee bend, weight over skates, not bending forward at the waist
- Feet apart to form good base for stability
- To release blades from ice, player needs to straighten up slightly, while rotating stick, head, shoulders, and hips around to begin skating backward

Common problems

- Legs straight, feet too close together
- Bending forward at the waist
- Stick and upper body out of control causing poor balance

PIVOTING – BACKWARD TO FORWARD (Mohawk)

To be able to face the puck, and face the play at all times, players need to be able to pivot quickly with good balance at top speed.

- Upper body upright, good knee bend, weight over skates, not bending forward at the waist
- With weight on pivot skate, rotate stick, head, shoulders, and hips, bring heels together under body
- Step from an inside edge to an inside edge, without breaking stride

Common problems

- Straightening up
- Bending forward at the waist
- Crossing feet over
- No rotating upper body

STARTING – FORWARD

To win the short races to the puck or to open ice, players need to have quick feet and be able to get upon their toes with long, quick steps for explosive starts.

- Good knee bend, leaning forward with the upper body, feet about shoulder width apart, ankles bent inward to get on the inside edges of the toes of the skates, heels inward so feet are in a V position
- With arms at the sides, driving up and back, player takes three long running steps with skates pointed out to the sides to grip the ice with the inside edges of the toes, then begins striding

Common problems

- Poor knee bend or straightening upward, not driving forward
- Not on toes of skates or toes not pointed to the side to grip the ice
- Arms moving side to side, not up and back

STARTING – CROSSOVER

To be able to start quickly from a stop, players need to be in a strong, balanced position, to generate power on the crossover start

- Upper body should be upright, with good knee bend, feet shoulder width apart, using the inside edge of the lead skate, and outside edge of the trailing skate
- The more weight that can be shifted to the trailing skate(outside edge), the faster the player will be able to step across and push off of the outside edge of that skate
- First push is off of the outside edge of the toe of the trailing skate, while crossing the other skate over top
- The upper body is rotated with head up, and arms driving up and back, with the next two steps off of the inside edges of the toes of the skates (as in a forward start)
- Player then begins striding

Common problems

- Straightening up
- Not rolling ankle and pushing off of the outside edge of the trailing skate
- Not getting on toes of skates
- Short crossover step and short forward steps on toes
- Not rotating upper body, trailing stick behind

BACKWARD STRIDING

As in forward striding, full-out speed is the name of the game, and a player needs to have good balance, body control, and power to make it happen.

- Upper body should be upright (no bending at the waist), with good knee bend, like sitting on a stool
- Feet should be side by side under the body
- With weight shifted to striding leg, toe should be pointed in and ankle bend inward to get on inside edge of the skate. Push is to the side, ending when the leg is fully extended, and with a final thrust of the inside edge of the toe of the skate, shifting the weight to the other skate

- This push to the side generates the force to glide backward on the other leg, as the pushing skate is returned back underneath the body to set up for the next stride with the other skate (completing the C-cut)
- Arms should be tight to the sides, driving up and back, not side to side across the front of the body

Common problems

- Not enough knee bend, which limits balance and the length of the stride
- Bending forward at the waist, and losing balance forward during the stride
- Not shifting weight onto striding skate at the beginning of the stride, and onto the other skate at the end of the stride
- Wide base – not returning skates completely under body at the end of the stride
- Sideways movement with the arms across the upper body

BACKWARD CROSSUNDERS

Similar to forward crossovers, but in reverse, with the inside skate actually crossing under and behind the outside skate.

- Good knee bend with upper body upright and head and shoulders rotated to the inside of the turn
- Stick on the ice on the inside of the turn
- With the ankle bent inward, the first push is off of the inside edge of the outside skate, to the outside (not back), finishing with a thrust of the toe
- The next push is with the outside edge of the inside skate, with the ankle bent outward, pushing under and across to the outside, ending with a thrust off of the outside edge of the toe of the skate
- Players should strive for long, equal pushes with both skates, deriving most of the power from the outside edge push of the inside skate, reaching as far as possible to the inside of the turn, then pulling across to the outside

Common problems

- Bending forward at the waist
- Lack of knee bend resulting in short pushes with the inside edge of the outside skate and outside edge of the inside skate
- Losing balance and control by not having shoulders and upper body rotated to the inside of the turn

BACKWARD STOPPING

To be able to be in good defensive position and always face the play, players need to be able to stop backwards in a good position to start in any direction.

- While moving backward, player needs to have good knee bend, leaning slightly forward at the waist to help take some of the weight off of the skate blades
- Skates need to be brought underneath the body in a V position with heels in (about 6" apart) and toes to the sides with the weight on the middle of the blades.
- Once in this position, more weight that is applied to the blades, the faster the player will stop. Player is in excellent position for a good, quick forward start.
- Another option is to use a one-foot T-stop, where one skate is brought in behind the other (so the feet form a T), and the inside edge of that skate is used to stop the player. This stop is advantageous when a player wants to move forward to one side or the other after the stop, rather than straight ahead, as it puts the feet in position to do a good, quick forward start in that direction.

Common problems

- Spreading feet apart and pushing to the outside, rather than bringing the heels together underneath the body, resulting in poor balance and mobility
- Not bending the knees causing poor balance and control

BACKWARD STARTING

Players need to be able to face the play, and begin skating backward from a standstill, with quick feet, power and good balance.

- Player should start from a good powerful ready position, upper body upright, knees bent, turned sideways, skates side by side, with the weight on the back skate
- Bending the ankle inward and turning the toe in, the first push is to the side, thrusting off of the toe (making a C-cut)
- As this push begins to propel the player backward, the next push is off of the inside edge of the front foot, bending the ankle outward and bringing it across behind the first skate (a crossunder), finishing with a thrust off of the outside edge of the toe of the skate
- At this point the player should generated enough power and speed to begin backward striding without crossing over any more, although some players may require a couple of crossunders to get up to speed

Common problems

- Bending too much at the waist and getting too far forward on the toes of the skates resulting in poor balance
- Not bending enough at the knees resulting in shorter, less powerful strides
- Not getting a push off of the outside edge of the inside skate by not rolling the ankle of the inside skate outward and driving it across behind the other skate

HOLDING STICK PROPERLY (One hand)

- The stick should be grasped firmly (but not squeezed) with the top hand placed at the end of the shaft (little finger right at the end) with no butt end sticking out.
- The palm of the hand should be on the top side of the shaft with the thumb and fingers pointing down, and the fingers wrapping around the bottom. Many younger players incorrectly place the palm of their hand under the shaft with their thumb and fingers point up. This bad habit, if not corrected early, will be tough to break and will limit their ability to properly use their wrists in handling the puck.

HOLDING STICK PROPERLY (Two hands)

- With the top hand at the top of the shaft, the bottom hand should be placed about “the width of the player’s body” down the shaft.
- The bottom hand should also grip the stick firmly, but also needs to be able to move up and down the shaft as needed to maneuver the puck, and on and off as needed for skating and puckhandling.
- The palm of the bottom hand should be on the backside of the shaft of the stick, not on the underside.

STICK QUICKNESS

Players need to have a quick stick when handling the puck, (stickhandling, passing, shooting) and to be an effective checker (poke checking, sweep checking, stick lifting) to angle and take away passing lanes.

- The stick should be light enough that the player can use it effectively with one hand for poke checks and sweep checks and two hands when handling the puck or battling for the puck.

STICKHANDLING (Stationary)

- Be sure that players are in ready position and are holding the stick properly, with their hands slightly away from (in front) of their body.
- The puck should be handled on the heel of the stick blade, with the player using the wrists to cup (close) the blade of the stick over the puck as it moves side to side.
- The puck should be handled in front of the body directly in front of the skates. In this position, the player can keep the head up, and still see the puck in front of them, while developing a feel for it on their stick.
- In addition to handling the puck in front of their skates with their wrists, players should use their arms and be able to reach wide to each side, shifting their weight onto the skate on that side, and getting their hands away from the body to move the puck wide to side.

Common problems

- Hands incorrectly positioned on stick
- Heel of stick blade not on ice
- Head down looking at puck
- Arms moving only, not wrists
- Puck handled at side of skates, not in front

STICKHANDLING (Moving)

- Whenever possible the puck should be handled in front of the body, forcing the player to use the wrists to move it side to side, while allowing them to keep the head up and still see the puck. Pushing the puck along on the forehand at the side of the body limits the options for a player in going around a defender.
- While moving a player should be able to reach wide to each side, to move the puck around the defender, and be able to move the puck quickly, and wide to the side.

ONE-HANDED PUCK CONTROL

- When in open-ice with room to move, players should get accustomed to handling the puck with one hand on their stick so that they can control it while moving at full speed. The puck should not slow them down.
- The puck should be in front of body, and with arms moving up and back, the wrist of the top hand is turned (palm up, or palm down) to maneuver the stick blade to one side or the other. The player taps the puck straight ahead (not side to side) using the heel of the stick blade and then strides into it and taps it ahead again.

DEKING

Movement with the puck - the ability to move the puck quickly from side to side, getting an opponent to start to lean, or commit one way, thinking you are going that way, then quickly moving the puck back across the other way to get around them. Puck carrier must have head up, and be able to move the puck quickly across the body, shifting the weight from one side to the other, as the puck moves from one side to the other.

FULL SPEED & IN TRAFFIC

When in open ice, players should be able to skate and control the puck with one hand on the stick at full speed (ie. on a breakaway), so they do not break stride and the puck does not slow them down. There are also times when they need to move at full speed with the puck with two hands on the stick, as they might need to beat a defender, or make a play with the puck. Handling the puck with the head up in traffic is also an essential skill to avoid being hit, and to make the correct play with the puck.

PASSING

The quickness of a pass and the accuracy of the pass are the two key elements of whether it will have any success. Players need to make a decision to make the pass, and release it immediately, making the pass firm, on the ice and on the tape of their teammate.

- Puck should begin on heel of blade with the blade of the stick, cupped or closed over the puck for better control
- Hands need to be away from the body and pass made with the wrists. The action of the wrists will manipulate the stick blade from the closed position, to open and then finish closed, pointing in the direction of the pass destination
- With wrist action, puck spins from heel and released toward the toe. Spinning action helps to make the puck easier to receive.
- Head up and follow through in direction of pass to hit the target. For a moving target, be sure to “lead” the receiver, to pass where they will be, not where they are

Common problems

- Hands tight to the body resulting in the blade of the stick starting in an “open” position, and as the pass is made the stick blade comes under the puck forcing it to wobble and bounce
- Not using wrists – same problem as above
- Not passing the puck hard enough
- Not releasing the puck quickly enough
- Not hitting the intended target

BACKHAND PASSING

Virtually all passes should be made on the forehand and made with the wrists. Occasionally, backhand passes should be made when there is no option to use the forehand, or it is the quicker option.

- Hands need to be away from the body, and the puck needs to be swept across the body, with both hands moving together across the front of the body, and the path of the stick blade should be a straight line, not an arc
- The puck should start on the heel of the stick blade and be released toward the toe. At the end of the pass the back side of the stick blade should be facing upward

SNAP PASSING

The quicker the release the better. The longer the player takes to release the puck, the less likely the play will be made.

- Hands should be away from body, using the wrists to start the stick blade in a “closed” position, about 3-5 inches behind the puck. With the wrists, the player “snaps” the puck, starting with the blade closed, then open, and finishing closed. Movement of stick blade should be about 10-12 inches in total

PASS RECEIVING

To receive a pass with their stick blade, players actually have to “catch” the pass, using their wrists to receive the puck.

- Stick blade should be on the ice presenting a target
- Players should try to receive the puck on the heel of the stick blade, using the wrists to make sure the blade of the stick is “closed” or cupped over the puck, allowing it to “give” 6-8 inches as they catch it for better control.

Common problems

- Stick blade not on the ice
- No “give” with wrists – poor control
- Not trying to catch puck on the heel – poor control

BOARD PASSING

Another option when there is no direct passing option, or open passing lane, is to use the boards.

- Most board passes should be on the ice whenever possible, so that they are not wobbling and bouncing when they are received. Sometimes it is necessary to get the puck up in the air to complete the pass, and those passes should be made with a saucer pass to give the puck the best chance of landing flat for the receiver
- The passer must be away from the boards – the angle of the pass off of the boards will be the same angle as the pass made toward the boards

SHOOTING

When shooting the puck, the emphasis should be on shooting it as quickly as possible (quick release), as accurately as possible, and as hard as possible (velocity), in an effort to score more goals.

- Hands should be in a “strong” position on the stick – a little more than the width of the player’s body apart.
- Feet should be set, shoulder width apart, with good knee bend and upper body upright, allowing the player the balance and control to step into the shot with the legs, transferring the weight from the back foot onto the front foot.
- The middle to heel of the blade (strongest part) of blade should be used to shoot the puck
- Hands must be away from the body and wrists must be used to get the proper stick blade action – closed, open, closed – on the puck for better velocity and accuracy. As the stick blade moves from closed (blade cupped over the puck), to open, then closed again, the puck spins from the heel and is released toward the toe. The spinning action allows the player to shoot the puck harder and with more accuracy
- The follow-through should be in the direction of the target – with the blade of the stick finishing in a “closed” position to shoot low, and an “open” position (front of blade up) to shoot high

Common problems

- Feet not set, minimal knee bend, poor balance, player can not step into the shot
- Hands too close together on stick – weak stick
- Player tries to “flick” or “flip” the puck – quick little wrist movement in an effort to get the puck up in the air – poor velocity and accuracy
- No follow through

WRIST SHOT

- Most accurate shot as puck is on the stick blade for the longest amount of time so the player has better control of where it is going
- Release is not as quick – as puck needs to be drawn back behind the body with the stick blade to generate power

BACKHAND SHOT

- A valuable shot when player is not in a position to get the puck to the forehand
- Puck needs to be on the heel of the stick blade, and released from the middle toward the toe
- Both hands need to sweep across in front of the body as the weight is transferred from the back foot to the front, with the follow-through toward the net
- To shoot the puck low, the blade of the stick should be “closed” on the follow-through, to shoot it high, the blade of the stick should be “opened” to get underneath the puck, and finish open on the follow-through

SNAP SHOT

- Quickest shot in terms of release, but less accurate as the puck is only very briefly on the stick blade
- Mechanics are very similar to wrist shot, except the stick blade is drawn back, but the puck is not
- Using the wrists, the action of the stick blade is “closed, open, closed”, with the player striking down at the ice, 1-2 inches behind the puck, stepping into the shot and following through toward the net
- Velocity is about the same as the wrist shot

SHELF SHOT

- Used in tight to get the puck up over the goalie on rebound situations
- Bottom hand must be slid down the shaft of the stick, blade is “opened” with the wrists
- The puck is scooped with the wrists and bottom hand, upward – spinning from heel toward toe for control
- Follow-through is upward, not toward the net

REBOUNDING

- Most goals are scored on rebounds, not on the initial shots
- Players need to know where the shot is coming from and position themselves in an area where the puck would go after a save, not too tight to the net where a rebound would go right by them, and not too far away where they can't get to it. Time the movement to the net with the shot. Rebounders are very easy to defend when standing still
- Be prepared to have to win a "quickness" battle or "strength" battle for the puck on a rebound
- Most goalies go down on the first shot, so the best scoring chance on a rebound is up high

ANGLING

A skating skill where a defending player utilizes proper positioning and timing to take away the middle of the ice, forcing a puck carrier toward the boards, eventually running them out of room, and into a position where they can use their stick, body or both to eliminate them from the play and get the puck. Angling is used by forecheckers in the offensive zone, and defenders in the neutral and defensive zones.

- The defender establishes good defensive position, two stick lengths or less away from the puck carrier, toward the middle of the ice, so that the open ice for the puck carrier is toward the boards
- The defender moves at the same speed, roughly parallel to, and a step behind the puck carrier, allowing them to believe that they can beat them up the boards
- As the puck carrier moves in an arc, the defender takes a short-cut, moving on an angle, to meet the puck carrier along the boards
- The defender can not get too far ahead of the puck carrier, allowing them to cut back behind them and get to the middle of the ice

Common problems

- Getting too far ahead of puck carrier allowing them to cut back behind to the middle of the ice
- Being too slow and too far away from the puck carrier to cut them off
- Getting too close and behind the puck carrier – not approaching on an angle – and not being able to catch up

SWEEP CHECKING

A form of stick checking used when defender is skating forward along side the puck carrier, angling them toward the boards. It is used by forecheckers in the offensive zone, defensemen in the defensive zone, and defensemen defending the rush, who have been beaten wide and have been forced to pivot and skate forward to defend.

- Defender needs to be in good defensive position, two stick lengths or less from the puck carrier, toward the middle of the ice
- Stick blade needs to be on the ice, taking away passing lanes and space for the puck carrier to make a play
- Once in position to be able to make contact with the puck carrier's stick and the puck, the defender sweeps the stick with one hand with the blade on the ice, to knock the puck off of the puck carrier's stick, then battles for the loose puck

POKE CHECKING

A form of stick checking used when defender is skating backward defending a puck carrier, or forward toward the puck carrier. It is used by forecheckers in the offensive zone, defensemen in the defensive zone, and defensemen defending the rush.

- Defender needs to be in good defensive position, two stick lengths or less from the puck carrier
- Stick blade needs to be on the ice, taking away passing lanes and space for the puck carrier to make a play
- Once in position to be able to make contact with the puck carrier's stick and the puck, the defender makes a little poke diagonally forward to the left or right, to try to knock the puck free
- The defender needs to play with "controlled aggression", luring the puck carrier close enough to be able to quickly, with one hand, poke the puck free. Large sweeping movements, or lunging should be avoided, as a swing and a miss means the defender will be beaten and out of the play.

STICK LIFTING

At times, the best defensive play is to lift the puck carrier's stick and simply take the puck. This requires that the defender be in good position, be strong on the skates, strong on the stick, and quick to "tap" the stick up, and "take" the puck. It is used when pursuing from behind, and the puck carrier leaves the puck exposed, or in any 1 on 1 battle for the puck.

- Defender needs to have two hands on the stick in a position of strength and be strong on the skates with good balance
- Defender needs to slip stick underneath puck carrier's stick as close to the ice as possible – quickly tapping it upward (it only needs to be high enough to get the puck), and quickly taking the puck away