



SPORTS  
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Discovery  
*Vitality*

# Junior hockey

coaching manual



Primary

school



# Junior hockey

coaching manual contents



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## Introduction

Junior hockey  
coaching manual



“We wish to change our nation’s children by instilling in them the desire to be more active, not just now but for all their lives. We aim to achieve this by teaching each child a competence in and passion for at least one sport. This we will do by building a sports coaching culture for our children ...”

Many factors in modern society have resulted in children and adults becoming increasingly inactive and this has had an alarming effect on their health. Regular physical activity plays an important role in the prevention and treatment of many lifestyle-related diseases such as coronary artery disease, strokes and type 2 diabetes (non-insulin dependent diabetes). Sports are a great way to encourage children to get more physically active and healthy, and that’s why Discovery Vitality has developed a series of sports manuals for primary schools in South Africa.

### The purpose of the Junior hockey coaching manual

This manual provides teachers and coaches with relevant information on how to coach hockey so that children get the maximum benefits from playing the sport – getting physically active, healthy and fit. The focus of the manual is on developing **the basic skills needed** for juniors (up to the age of 12) to become competent hockey players. The main focus is on **providing exercises and drills** to help you plan your practice and develop skills, rather than to give a comprehensive framework of the rules and tactics of the game.

Professor Tim Noakes of the Sports Science Institute of South Africa has a dream to make South African children the fittest in the world by 2020. He believes that through initiatives like the Vitality Schools Programme we can reach this goal. You too can play a part in making this vision a reality!

### Introduce your kids to the exciting game of hockey

Hockey is a very popular sport, and is considered the second most widely participated team sport in the world after soccer. It appeals to children of all shapes and sizes, and both boys and girls can play it with equal ability up to the age of 14. It requires lots of running, jumping, turning and other movements that build fitness and stimulate the growth of healthy bones and muscles.





## Understanding the game

### The aim of hockey

The aim of the game is to score more goals than the opposing team. There are generally two phases of play: attack and defence. During attack, the team that has the ball must move it upfield towards the opponents' goal, and score. Defence happens when the opposing team has the ball and the defending team must fall back, try to win the ball back and stop them from scoring. Players use skills such as passing, shooting, dribbling, stopping the ball and tackling.

### Safety

Hockey is played with sticks and a hard ball, so there is a risk of injury. Nevertheless, this risk is greatly reduced if players wear the right equipment, if you teach them how to play safely and with good technique, and if you teach them fair play.

Children should learn fair play from a young age, which involves sticking to the rules of the game; in particular, players should never be allowed to:

- Argue with the referee or other players
- Simulate being fouled
- Commit dangerous tackles.

Young players need to be taught how to tackle properly and that they must not tackle from the 'wrong side'. When they tackle it should always be from the front or from the right-hand side, and never from behind or from the left. These tackles are illegal and will result in a free hit being awarded to the other team.

The picture sequence below shows the incorrect tackle approach. In Figure 1a, note that the player on the right has come in from the left shoulder and behind the player with the ball. He will end up in a position where he is in line with the other player's stick and will get struck if the player decides to hit the ball (see Figure 1d on the following page). It is therefore vital that players learn how to avoid getting into these potentially dangerous tackle situations.

For a summary of the rules, positions and equipment of hockey, please see the Appendix on page 48.





Tackling from the wrong side



## Planning your practice

### Practice frequency and duration

When trying to encourage children to participate in sport, it is essential that sessions are fun. Training is not necessarily about quantity but rather quality, so we suggest that you have two one-hour sessions a week.

### Putting the practice together

As the coach, use your imagination and creativity to get the most out of your practice time.

It is helpful to stick to a framework that will help you cover all the important aspects of hockey training. The table below summarises the framework for how to set up a good practice session:

Phase	Description and principles	Length
Warm-up*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective is to prepare players physically and ease them into activity</li> <li>Should be done with the stick and ball – more enjoyable and helps skills development</li> <li>Should be lively, fun, engaging and instructional</li> </ul>	About 10 minutes, consisting of four of the available activities
Skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific attention is paid to individual players and skills training</li> <li>Skills include passing, running with the ball, tackling, shooting, positional play and teamwork</li> </ul>	30 minutes, consisting of six of the available skills drills (see next section)
Match or game time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A short match is a great way to end off a practice session and expose players to proper play</li> <li>Small-sided (5-a-side) games or 'attack vs. defence' matches work well</li> </ul>	15 minutes
Warm-down*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity to get all players together at the end and reinforce key lessons of the practice</li> <li>Also helps to ease players out of activity</li> </ul>	5 minutes
		Total 60 minutes
All phases have drills and training games you can use to make sessions fun and enjoyable for your players while also helping you teach the skills properly. The drills are explained in the following sections.		

\* Refer to the General coaching manual for a list of dynamic and static stretches.

## Warm-up drill and activities

These warm-up activities should be fun and ease players into activity. All involve the stick and ball, and some of them also include skills like passing and stopping the ball. Players should master these skills before doing the warm-up activities. If they have not, rather focus on activities that do not involve these skills. More examples of such activities can be found in the General coaching manual. The warm-up period should last about 10 minutes. Avoid all-out sprinting and hitting, and focus instead on easing the players into exercise.

### Simon says

This is a game where players move according to instructions. It eases players into the training session.

#### Set up

- Form a 20-30 m circle using cones.

#### How to do the activity

- Have the children jog around the outside of the circle
- Shout instructions such as 'left', which means everyone touches the ground with their left hand
- If you shout 'right', they must touch the ground with their right hand
- If you shout 'up' they put both hands up and jump in the air
- Call 'down' and they touch the ground with both hands.

#### Coaching points

- Let the players run holding their sticks – they must hold their stick as if they are playing, in both hands, ready to use the stick if the ball were to roll towards them.

#### Progression

- Change things around – shout 'left' and they must touch the ground with their right hand, 'down' and they must jump up in the air and so on.

### Simple Simon

This is a game where children copy the coach.

#### How to do the activity

- Players jog on the spot with the ball in front of them
- Stand in front of players so that they can copy what you do. Do not give verbal instruction; instead, go down on one knee, hop on one leg, drag the ball towards you or from right to left, etc.



## Ball relays

### Set up

- Place two cones 20 m apart.

### How to do the activity

- Divide players into two equal groups
- Players run a relay race where each player carries the ball to a cone, places it next to the cone, and runs back to the other cone to 'tag' his/her team mate into the race
- The second person fetches the ball and returns it for the next player to run with it.

### Coaching points

- Let players run holding sticks and balls in their hands so they can learn how to carry the stick while running.

### Progression

- To increase difficulty, players can dribble the ball to the cone, or do an exercise (eg push-ups / jumping jacks) at the cone.

## Juggling

This is a good drill for developing eye-hand coordination and for improving skills, ball control and confidence on the ball.

### Set up

- Have players form a circle with about 2 m between each player.

### How to do the activity

- Players each have balls which they pick up in their hands and throw in the air to start the juggling
- They then bounce the ball up and down using the stick.

### Progression

- As they become more skilful, teach players how to scoop the ball up by dragging it towards them and getting their stick under the ball to lift it up before bouncing it.



## Ball gymnastics

This activity helps players focus on balance, control and keeping the ball close to the body.

### How to do the activity

- Players stand with the ball in front of them and then roll the ball around using their sticks, first forwards and backwards, then from left to right, and then in a circular motion
- This is done both clockwise and anti-clockwise.

## Tick-tock

This activity is a starting point for learning how to dribble and control changes in direction during a match.

### How to do the activity

- Players stand with their feet about shoulder-width apart with a ball in front of them, which they drag slowly from left to right
- First have them tap the ball softly from left to right and back again, and then have them move their stick around to control the ball
- Balance is essential.

### Progression

- Start slowly by tapping the ball from side to side very gently, and build up speed slowly
- Have players drag the ball sideways so that the stick and ball are almost always in contact.

## Tick-tock forward

This activity provides a basic starting point for dribbling the ball.

### How to do the activity

- This is the same as the previous drill, but players now move forward while tapping the ball from left to right
- Emphasise control.

### Progression

- Walking speed at first, running later
- First start with tapping the ball and later they can begin to drag the ball.



## Pass and stop

This drill requires that players are competent at passing and stopping the ball.

### How to do the activity

- Have players pair up and stand 3 m apart, facing each other
- Player 1 passes and player 2 stops the ball
- Player 2 runs backwards and player 1 runs forward, and the ball is passed again
- Repeat for the length of the field and then return with player roles switched.

## Wall game

This drill also requires that players are competent at passing and stopping the ball.

### How to do the activity

- Divide players into groups of three or four
- One player stands about 5 m from the others and is the 'wall' (player A)
- Each of the other players (B, C and D) passes to the 'wall' who stops the ball and passes it back
- Player B stops the ball and runs to the back of the group
- Player C then has his turn, and so on
- Once all players have gone, player B becomes the 'wall' and player A falls in with the group.



## Skills development and training

Skills development and training should be the focus of your practice sessions so the basic skills of hockey can be taught. The aim with young players is to spend about 70% of the time focusing on skills development and only 30% on competition. This way, training is fun and stimulating and not too competitive. It is important that players don't have to wait in lines where they get bored – you should have a 'no queue' policy during your practices! Remember to get creative.

## Attributes of a good player

A good hockey player possesses attributes including:

- Speed
- Strength
- Endurance
- Explosive power for acceleration
- Ability to communicate
- Decision-making ability
- Vision.
- Correct technique and use of the stick
- Eye-hand coordination
- Agility
- Balance
- Coordination
- Ability to create and move into space

## Hockey skills

Skills for hockey include individual skills and defensive and attacking skills.

### Individual skills include:

- Moving with the ball
- Ball control
- Passing and receiving the ball.
- Dribbling and running with the ball
- Forward and reverse stick passing

### Attacking and defensive skills include:

- Tackling and defending
- Shooting.
- Penalty corners

Each skill is explained in more detail in the next section.

## Teaching correct technique

Before you start teaching specific skills like how to pass, stop, dribble and shoot the hockey ball, it is important to lay a sound foundation for the very basic skills of hockey. Hockey is a technical game requiring fine-motor skills to control a small ball while moving, so learning how to hold the stick properly, how to position the body and move with the ball are essential skills if players are to master more complex skills later on.



## Holding the stick and balanced body position

The player's body position will vary according to what she or he is trying to do with the ball.

If they are going to hit the ball, it is more effective for them to have their two hands close together. For a push pass, flick or stop the hands should be apart on the stick. The starting position and best method for teaching players to hold the stick is shown in the picture below. This is called the 'balanced position' and it allows players to switch grips very quickly for whatever purpose.

Figure 2



The following is a description of how to do the balanced body position and the stick hold:

- Shoulders and feet must face the ball
- Hands are in a separated 'shake hands' grip – not a grip that you would use when holding a baseball bat (see picture). The 'shake hands' grip can be taught in the following way:
  - Place the hockey stick on the ground with the rounded part of the stick facing right and the front edge pointing towards the sky
  - Place both palms on top of the stick handle with fingers touching the ground on either side of the stick. Pick up the stick with both hands
  - For the starting position, the hands are separated – the left hand is at the top of the stick and the right hand is about a third of the way down. This is the best position for stopping, pushing and controlling the ball. If you are going to hit the ball, the hands will come together
- Feet must be shoulder-width apart
- Head is steady over the knees and up to see the field
- The shoulder will almost always point towards the target: If the player is passing the ball, the shoulder points towards a team mate; if they are shooting, it points to the goal; and if they are receiving the ball, it points at the oncoming ball. **Hockey is a side-on game, so players should never face the ball or team mates directly.**

Common mistakes in balance and positioning include:

- Losing the balance forward: This happens because people bend at the waist. It is important to teach players to bend at the knees and not the waist
- Losing the balance backward: This happens because players are 'on their heels' – the weight has to be forward on the balls of the feet
- Losing balance sideways: This happens because the feet are too close together. Make sure players spread their feet about shoulder-width apart.



## 2

### Moving with the ball

The next step is to teach players how to move in this balanced position. Movement on the field includes:

- Taking small, quick steps instead of long ones
- Trying to move with bent knees, especially when you are close to the ball.

If the player is far from the ball and has to run relatively long distances, they can run normally and hold the stick in the right hand. In all other circumstances, it is better for them to stay in the balanced hockey position with both hands on the stick so that, if the ball comes their way, they can rapidly control, pass or hit it without having to make too many adjustments. In the pictures, also notice how the player is able to lift her head to see opponents and team mates while running. Make sure your players are able to do the same.

Figure 3a



Figure 3b



Figure 3c



### 3 Ball control

The best way to control a ball is to have it within reach, under the eyes, and not directly beneath the feet. This is the 'zone' where the ball should be kept so that the player has control over it. It is sometimes referred to as the 'control box'. One of the most difficult things for young players to learn is how to position the body relative to the ball. When teaching players this, it is important to emphasise the following points:

- The optimal distance from the body to the ball depends on the height, build and balance of the player. The ball should be in an imaginary box in front of the feet that should be about as wide as the shoulders. This is shown in Figure 4.
- The ball must be inside this imaginary area whenever a player is running with, controlling, stopping or pushing the ball
- You can teach children this concept in the following way:
  - For the starting position, hold the ball in the left hand and the stick in the right hand
  - Squat down (using the knees, don't bend the back), and then lean forward and place the ball in front of and centred between the feet
  - Stand up again and adopt the balanced position (explained above), with the separated 'shake hands' grip and bent knees
  - The ball is now at the far end of the control box
  - Teach players to visualise this imaginary box.

Below is a picture of how the players should stand to ensure a balanced body position with the ball inside his or her control box.

The control box, or the zone in which the player is able to control the ball effectively. When running, hitting or stopping the ball, it should always be inside this imaginary area. See the text for details on how to teach children this concept.





4

## Teaching forward and reverse sides (back-stick skills)

Players are not allowed to use the back side of the stick, which means they will sometimes have to turn their hands ‘inside-out’ to control the ball. Think of it this way:

### The forward side

If the player is standing facing the ball at the edge of their control box (see Figure 5a), and they want to hit it from right to left, they simply swing the stick back over their right shoulder and forward (see Figure 5b) over their left shoulder, and strike the ball on its right-hand side. This is called the forward side.



### The reverse side

If players want to hit the ball from left to right, they cannot simply swing their stick back over the left shoulder and forward over the right shoulder because they will end up hitting it with the rounded part of the stick, which is a penalised offence. Instead, players need to adjust their hands on the stick into what is called the “reverse side grip”. The left hand must turn the stick so that the flat side now faces right instead of left. You will need to teach this with all hockey skills so players will be strong on both sides and able to pass in either direction.



Figure 6

5

### Staying ‘strong’ – teach players to remain on the forward side as much as possible

It is very important to teach players to do everything they can to avoid playing the ball on the reverse side, because they are weaker when they have to swing from left to right. So, it is always better to teach them to move the body around the ball and to avoid going “weak” if they can. Imagine a player moving with the ball in front of them and passing it to a team mate on their right-hand side, instead of swinging from left to right and going in a reverse grip, teach players rather to move the body around the ball and then play it from right to left. Obviously, it’s not always possible to do this – sometimes players will need to pass the ball quickly and will not have the time or space to change body position. In such cases, it’s better to pass or hit on the reverse side. Most of the time, however, it’s better to get strong.

In the skills section below, we’ll look at teaching the skill in both directions – in other words, you’ll learn to pass from right to left and from left to right. Nevertheless, we recommend that you encourage players to practise ‘staying strong’ on the forward side as much as possible during practices. In a game situation, this will give them the advantage of better ball control and more accurate passing.

### Hockey-specific skills

Once these fundamental skills are explained and practised, you are ready to move onto the specific hockey skills like passing, hitting, tackling and dribbling. But keep returning to the above fundamentals because players that don’t learn proper body position and control of the ball will find it difficult to learn other hockey skills. In fact, often when players battle to learn a skill it’s because they are struggling with the basics. So, while you go on to use the specific hockey skills that will now follow, keep referring back to the basics.



## 6

### Passing and receiving the ball

Controlling the ball is the key to successful hockey and requires two frequently used skills: passing and receiving. An effective pass must be received and controlled by a team mate – only when this has been mastered can players go on to learn more advanced skills. For this reason, passing and receiving the ball should always be taught simultaneously. The drills below help to teach these two skills.

#### Passing

Passing the hockey ball can be done in one of three ways:

The push pass – fastest and most accurate, best for short distances

The bunt pass – accurate, good for medium distances when there is more time

The hit – less accurate, but more power for longer distances.

#### The push pass

With this pass, the ball remains in contact with the stick throughout, allowing for good accuracy and a quick 'release'. It also helps players to change the direction of the pass quickly, making it difficult for the opponent to anticipate their next move. It is most effective over shorter distances of between 5 m and 20 m. The following is an explanation of how to teach the push pass:

- Start in a balanced position with the ball positioned in the control box
- The left shoulder must point towards the target
- The weight must be balanced with the feet shoulder-width apart and forward on the balls of the feet, and the head must be steady over the ball
- There is no backswing. The swing begins with the head of the stick in contact with the ball
- The player then begins to transfer weight forward (in the direction of the pass)
- The stick is pushed through the ball in line with where the ball is supposed to go
- The left hand pulls the stick forward while the right provides pressure and direction
- Remember to follow through by shifting the weight all the way to the front leg and extend the arms towards the target



- See the picture sequence below showing start, middle and end phases.



### The bunt pass

The bunt pass provides slightly more power and is used for short to medium-length passing. The process is almost identical to that of the push pass except that, instead of keeping the stick in contact with the ball throughout, it includes a slight backswing and follow-through. The pictures below show the bunt pass.



### The hit

The hit is used for longer passing because it generates the most speed. The downside is that accuracy is often lost with this pass. The following steps are required to hit effectively:

- Start with the ball in the control box and the player in a balanced position



- Change the position of the hands. Normally the hands are separate, but when it comes to the hit they must come together. This can be done in the following way:
  - The left hand remains at the top of the stick and the right hand slides up so that the hands are together. This is similar to how a cricket bat is held
  - It is also possible to slide the left hand down slightly and the right hand up so that the player is holding the stick with both hands together, but about a third of the way from the top of the stick. This gives more control but slightly less power than having the hands right at the top of the stick
- From this position, the player swings the stick back towards the right shoulder, as shown in the picture below:



- It is essential to keep the head down the whole way through this sequence
- The player now swings the stick down, keeping the left arm almost straight and the eyes on the ball. The player then swings through the ball, following through in the direction of the target
- Remember to make sure that the knees are slightly bent, that the ball is under the eyes and that it is at an optimal distance from the body – if the ball is too far from or too close to the body, it will be difficult to hit.

### Backhand passing

So far we have only looked at forehand passing, but players need to learn skills on their backhand side as well. Though it is similar to forehand passing, this side requires a lot more practise. For the backhand push pass, the following is important:

- The ball starts in the player's control box
- This time the right shoulder points in the direction of the target (remember that for the forehand it is the left shoulder that points to the target)
- The stick must be held in a reverse grip (as previously described)

- The follow-through begins with the ball on the stick. The right hand then pulls the stick forward and follows through in the direction of the target
- The weight shifts from the left to the right foot during the backhand push pass
- This is shown in the picture sequence below.

Figure 10a



Figure 10b



## Receiving the ball

Receiving is an important but difficult skill to learn, especially on grass fields where the bounce or roll of the ball isn't always predictable. Players want to get good control of the ball so that they can do what they want with it - pass, hit, run with or shoot it. Achieving this requires lots of practice and good technique. Let's now look at this technique:

- The player starts in the balanced position and watches the ball very closely on the stick
- The shoulder must point towards the oncoming ball and the hands must be in the separated 'shake hands' grip. Try to avoid facing the ball with shoulders 'square on' to the ball. It's better to be at an angle – hockey is a side-on game
- The stick must be facing the ground at an angle of about 70 degrees. If the stick is upright the player will not have good control when receiving the ball. Also make sure that the stick head is on the ground
- As the ball starts to arrive, the player must adjust their feet and position the stick to intercept the rolling ball
- Allow the ball to come onto the stick with 'soft hands,' inside the control box
- Once the ball strikes the stick, it should come to a stop within the control box so that the player can pass it, hit it or run with it
- Refer to the picture sequence overleaf for more instruction on how to receive the ball.



Figure 11a



Figure 11b



## 7

### Dribbling and running with the ball

Dribbling and running with the ball is a very personal skill and players should be encouraged to develop their own style. However, there are certain techniques that should still be taught to help develop good habits and individual style. What's most important for good ball control is the ability to keep the ball close to your stick and move with it down the field and away from opponents.

#### Basic running with the ball

For a player to run effectively with the ball, they must be in a comfortable, balanced position (as previously described). The most common mistakes made by players when learning to run with the ball include running too upright, looking down at the ball so they can't see their team mates and opponents, and getting the ball 'stuck' beneath their feet. So, the first step when teaching players how to run with the ball is to make sure they have mastered the balanced position and get the ball into their control box.

Once this is done, players can practise this skill first by walking, then by jogging, and then by running with the ball. The basic skill is relatively simple:

- The hands are in the split 'shake hands' grip
- The body is slightly crouched
- The ball is on the right-hand side of the body (the forehand side), in the control box
- The stick is behind the ball and in close contact with it
- The player runs with the ball in a straight line, keeping the ball as close to the stick as possible
- Try to avoid tapping the ball forward each time. It should be more of a constant pushing action
- Also, keep the ball slightly in front of the body, as shown in the figure on the right
- As players improve, they can begin to swerve and change direction
- Start with a walk and then gradually build up to a run.

Figure 12





### Changing direction when running with the ball

When players are running with the ball, they need to be able to change direction so as to evade opponents and create space to pass or hit the ball. Changing direction requires two things:

- Changing the running direction by stopping or slowing down before veering off in a new direction
- Stopping the ball from continuing in a straight line and then changing its direction. The skill used to achieve this is known as the ball check.

### The ball check

- The player runs with the ball inside the control box, taking small, quick steps
- Knees are bent and the head is up to see where the opponents are
- The left hand is used to turn the stick, allowing the stick to rotate in the right hand
- The player must then use the rotated stick to stop the ball, which was rolling in the direction in which the player was running, or change direction
- Once the ball has stopped or changed direction, the player must move his or her body to the left-hand side of the ball so as to stay 'strong'
- The player can then continue to run in a different direction while the opponent who was coming back to make the tackle has been wrong-footed and hopefully left behind by the sudden check and change in direction
- This is shown in the pictures below.

Figure 13a



Figure 13b





### Indian dribble

The Indian dribble method allows players to weave left and right and go around defenders. The key to learning this skill is to become adept at both forehand and backhand control of the ball. Players will have to move the ball from side to side using both forward and reverse stick skills. The following is an explanation of how to teach the Indian dribble:

- The player holds the stick with a split 'shake hands' grip. The player will rotate the stick often so they must be comfortable with the position of the hands on the stick
- The player runs forward with the ball inside the control box
- The ball is moved from right to left within the control box with a controlled and silent 'tapping' movement
- Once the ball is on the left side of the control box, it must be tapped back to the right-hand side
- The hands must then rotate the stick to the reverse side and gently tap it back. This is shown in Figure 14d
- This is a difficult skill to learn so make sure players have first mastered other types of running with the ball. They should first learn this skill by walking with the ball and then gradually pick up the pace until they are able to run with it.





### Other dribbling methods: Practice makes perfect

As mentioned, dribbling the ball is an individual skill that is learned through many hours of practice, and certain aspects of the skill can only be learned through experience. For instance, experienced hockey players can spin and turn at almost 180 degrees, and then continue running with the ball. They can also swerve, side-step and fake changes in direction by throwing their body to one side while moving in another. Although these abilities develop through experience, they are actually just complex advancements of the three basic skills taught above, which are:

1. Running with the ball in a straight line
2. Changing direction while running with the ball, using the ball check
3. Dribbling by turning the hands to both the forward and reverse side (Indian dribble).

Encourage your players to express themselves and learn other techniques!



## Tackling and defending

There are two key requirements for an effective tackle: First, the ball must be within reach of the stick so that players can control it within their control box; and second, balance and body weight distribution helps players change direction quickly when running with the ball or going in to tackle an opponent.

The starting point for a good tackle is body and foot position. Tacklers have to be in a balanced position, as explained previously. They must have feet roughly shoulder-width apart, with knees bent and weight on the front part of their feet so they are ready to take quick small steps to change direction.

One of the most important aspects of tackling is patience. If tacklers lunge in too soon, the opponent will most likely see them coming and move past them. Players need to learn how to 'give' ground to the opponent and wait for the ideal moment to move to the ball. This is done by moving away from the opponent (rather than lunging in) to avoid getting too close before re-establishing the ideal distance from the opponent.

Only when opponents are close enough should they move in for the tackle. So, emphasise to players the importance of waiting for the right moment rather than leaping in too soon.



**There are two basic methods for tackling:**

1. The jab tackle
2. The block tackle.

**1. The jab tackle**

The jab tackle is a one-handed tackle that is effective when the opponent is running towards you, or when they are already moving past you so quickly that you don't have time to get into position and face them. The strategy is to poke the ball away from them using only your left hand on the stick, and then to run onto the open ball and claim possession of it.

**2. The block tackle**

The block tackle is a more forceful tackle used in front-on situations when the opponent is running directly towards the tackler. The technique is explained below:

- The player starts with the left foot slightly in front of the right foot, shoulder-width apart. Both hands are on the stick in the separated 'shake hands' position
- The head of the stick starts on the ground, and the right foot and shoulder line up with the path of the dribbler and ball (see Figure 15a)
- The player takes a small step towards the ball and aims to intercept its path with the stick at an almost horizontal position. This horizontal position is important because if the dribbler tries to change direction, the player is then able to cover the ball with the stick and prevent this from happening (see Figure 15b)
- Once the tackle is complete, the player keeps moving forward (in the opposite direction to the dribbler) to get into place and keep the ball inside the control box.

Figure 15a



Figure 15b





## Shooting

Shooting is a skill that is restricted to the shooting circle (see diagram of hockey field in the Appendix, page 52). Even though the basic description of shooting is similar to that of a hit (as explained in the section on passing), it is a specialised skill that requires daily practise before it can be mastered.

The major differences between hitting and shooting are that players may need to hit a rolling ball to shoot effectively, they may have to change the direction of the shot at the last moment, and they may have to hit the ball from an off-balance situation. The ability to judge the right power and angle for shooting is usually instinctual, but there are many drills and practices that can help develop these instincts.

### The quick hit

Defenders will very rarely give the attacker time to line up and prepare for a shot at goal. For this reason, attackers need to use a specific shooting technique called the quick hit. In this shot, the backswing and preparation phase are shorter to ensure that the shot is taken before defenders can close down the space.

- To execute a quick hit, the player starts off in the separated 'shake hands' position
- Instead of moving the right hand up to the top of the stick where the left hand is, the player instead moves the left hand down to where the right hand is (you will see part of the stick above the hands)
- The backswing is short and fast and, instead of swinging the stick all the way back, it involves cocking the wrists back
- If there is time, the player steps into the ball, points the left shoulder towards the target and swings through the ball
- Weight is transferred onto the left foot, and the follow-through is in line with the target (see picture sequence overleaf)
- It is important to keep the head down and eyes on the ball.

Good attacking players always have a good idea of where the goal and goalkeeper are so they know where to aim the ball without having to look. If they lift the head, look at the target and then take the shot, defenders have time to move in and claim the ball. So, make sure shooters develop an instinctive awareness of the goal.

As players improve they will begin to learn and develop new shooting skills, but for now focus only on teaching younger players the basic skills.



Figure 16a



Figure 16b



## 10

### Goalkeeping skills

The goalkeeper is the team's last line of defence and carries a huge responsibility for the team. Therefore, learning the basic techniques of goalkeeping is essential. Goalkeepers need to be brave and committed since they are expected to dive in the air; they may also need to dive at attackers' feet to prevent the ball from going into the goals.

The following skills need to be practised:

- Make sure the body is behind the ball when it is coming towards you
- Stay on the toes, ready to move in any direction, and watch the flight of the ball before making a decision on how you will save it
- Try to get into a position to close down the angle of a shot coming from an attacker
- Good communication with other players in the team, specifically the defenders, is important
- If the goalkeeper has to come out to make a save, ensure he stays standing for as long as possible to create a bigger presence and cut down the attacker's angle
- Hold the stick in the right hand, half-way down. The stick must face towards the ball. The left hand should assist for balance.

### Punch kick

This skill requires the instep of either foot.

- Step towards the oncoming shot, bringing the supporting leg closer to the line of the oncoming shot
- Keep arms forward for balance
- Do not lift the kicking leg too high
- Open the instep of the kicking foot to 'punch' down on the oncoming ball
- There shouldn't be a follow-through from the foot; the action stops at the ball.



### Double-block save

- Keep the knees and the feet tightly together behind the line of the ball
- Drop the left hand down, with palms facing forward and fingers down to protect the high area above the pads
- Bend the knees to trap the ball down
- Do not jump into the block action
- Hit the ball down
- Once the ball is on the ground, look up to determine where your team and the opposition is
- Punch-kick the ball to a defender.

## Activities

All the activities below can be used to help you design practices for your team. See the diagrams for more instruction on how to run the activity. As you grow in experience and knowledge you'll be able to modify some of these activities and make them more challenging and more exciting for the players. Pay very close attention to the proper technique for each activity.

### Activity summary

The table below shows all the activities explained in the following section, indicating which skills can be taught using each activity.

Drill letter and name	Passing	Controlling	Dribbling	Tackling	Shooting	Positional play	Goalkeeping
A. Pass and control	✓	✓					
B. Turn and stop drill	✓	✓				✓	
C. Fives downfield	✓	✓	✓			✓	
D. Dribbling circle			✓			✓	
E. Dribbling slalom			✓			✓	
F. Vision dribbling	✓	✓	✓				
G. Tackle square			✓	✓			
H. Sharks and minnows		✓	✓	✓			
I. Shooting teams			✓	✓	✓	✓	
J. Positional play	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
K. Punch kick							✓
L. Double-block save							✓



## Pass and control

This is the most basic drill for teaching passing and controlling of the ball. You can include this in warm-up activities once players become familiar with it.

### Set up

- Divide players into pairs with one ball for each pair.

### How to do the activity

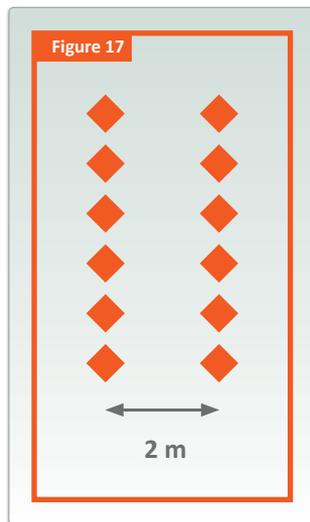
- Players pass to one another from a 2 m distance using the push pass and then the bunt pass
- Perform about 15 passes using each technique and then do the same on the reverse side.

### Coaching points

- Pass accuracy
- Good first-touch control by receiver.

### Progression

- Increase distance apart to 4 m, 6 m and then 10 m
- When players are 10 m apart they can begin to do hit passes.





## Turn and stop drill

This drill also teaches passing and controlling of the ball.

### Set up

- Divide players into groups of three, with one ball per group.

### How to do the activity

- Player A passes to player B (in the middle), who controls the ball and passes it back to player A
- Player B then turns around to receive a pass from player C before controlling and passing it back to player C
- Continue for two minutes then alternate the player in the middle.

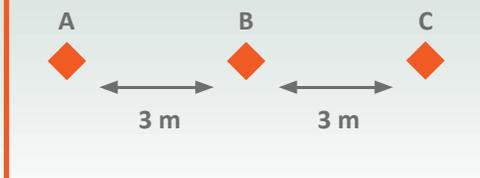
### Coaching point

- Pass accuracy and control by all players, especially player B.

### Progression

- Increase distance apart to 4 m, 6 m, 8 m and 10 m
- Use bunt and hit passes for bigger distances.

Figure 18





## Fives downfield

This drill helps players learn movement and passing in multiple directions.

### Set up

- Divide players into groups of five.

### How to do the activity

- Players walk from the goal line to the halfway line while passing the ball between them. They can pass to any team mate.

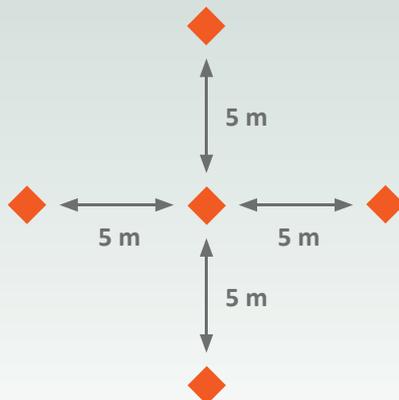
### Coaching points

- Pass accuracy
- Good first-touch control by receiver
- Must stay strong by moving the body around the ball.

### Progression

- Increase distance apart
- Increase speed by having them jog first and then run.

Figure 19





## Dribbling circle

This activity allows players to practise the various dribbling techniques.

### Set up

- Players are numbered 1 and 2 in pairs.

### How to do the activity

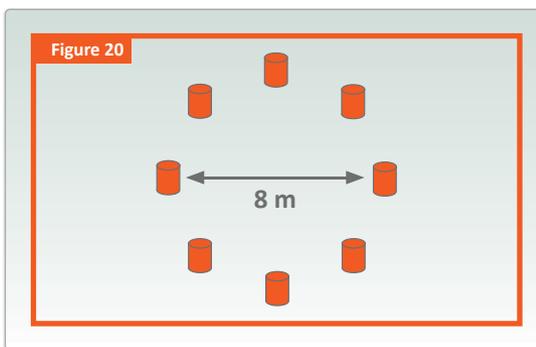
- All player 1s from each pair must enter the circle and must avoid each other while dribbling their balls around. There should be at most six other players in the circle. If you have more than 14 players at a practice, consider making the circle larger (by 10 to 12 m) or making a second smaller circle
- Players may use any dribbling technique - the Indian dribble, power dribble, run with the ball or ball check
- While player 1s are dribbling, player 2s are bouncing a ball on their sticks
- After one minute, all player 2s enter the circle with the ball. Player 1s bounce the ball on their sticks
- Continue for six minutes.

### Coaching points

- Must stay strong by moving the body around the ball
- Must have good body position
- Must keep the ball in the control box at all times.

### Progression

- Dribble using a specified method
- Quick stop on the whistle
- Perform a quick turn when instructed
- Go very slowly, then quickly speed up when instructed.





## Dribbling slalom

This is a good drill for teaching the Indian dribble and how to change direction using the body rather than the stick to keep 'strong'.

### Set up

- Divide the team up into groups of six
- Set up a line of between four and six cones, about 2 m apart.

### How to do the activity

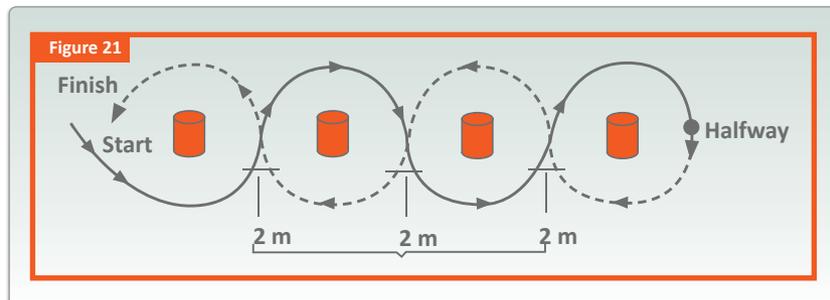
- Players line up behind the cones and then take turns to dribble in a zigzag pattern between the cones (like a slalom skier)
- Once the players have reached the last cone, they must do a full circle around this cone before returning to their team mates. They then pass the ball to the next player and join the queue for their next turn.

### Coaching points

- Players can use either the Indian or the power dribble, or they can alternate
- If players use the Indian dribble, they will move their bodies in a straight line as they use their sticks to pull the ball left and right between the cones
- If they use the power dribble, they must use their bodies to move the ball between the cones so that they always stay 'strong'.

### Progression

- Move the first cone away from the group of players so that when a player has finished dribbling they must push pass the ball to the next team mate over a distance of 10 m
- Move the cones closer together so they are only 1 m apart. This will force players to make faster direction changes either with the ball or their bodies.





## Vision dribbling

This activity allows players to practise changing direction while dribbling.

### Set up

- Divide players into pairs.

### How to do the activity

- One player (A) starts with the ball, the other player (B) stands 5 m in front of them without a ball
- Player B places the stick head on the ground and then begins to backpedal. The stick head must stay on the ground
- Player A must dribble in the direction of the stick head
- Player B must move their stick sideways at least five times in the 20 m distance to force player A to change direction
- When both players arrive at the cone, they swap roles and player B gets the ball while player A backpedals and shows the direction to player B.

### Coaching point

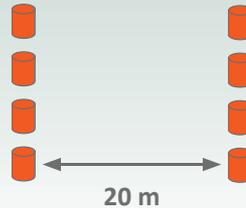
- Player A must keep the ball slightly in front of her, in the control box, with her head up so that she can see the direction of her partner's stick.

### Progression

- As players improve, introduce the ball check skill so that if player B lifts his stick above waist height, player A must check the ball (as explained on page 24 of the Skills section). When player B drops his stick back to the ground, player A must continue dribbling.



Figure 22





## Tackle square

This is a good drill to teach players how to perform the block tackle, how to intercept a pass and how to control space by backing off the attackers so they don't lunge in, as explained in the Skills section.

### Set up

- Divide players into groups of three
- Mark out a rectangle measuring 10 m x 4 m.

### How to do the activity

- One player begins on the far side of the square with two players on the opposite side. The single player is the tackler, and the other two are the attackers
- Each attacker takes a turn to run into the rectangle and attempt to dribble the ball around the tackler, or pass it so that the tackler is beaten by their passing movement
- The tackler must enter the rectangle to meet the oncoming attackers halfway and, using the block tackle, attempt to disrupt the attacker and win possession of the ball
- The tackler cannot simply lunge for the ball because attackers will pass the ball to a team mate and the tackler will then be out of position. So the tackler must wait for the ideal moment to either block tackle an attacker who is attempting a dribble, or to force a pass that can be intercepted
- Each player takes turns as the tackler.

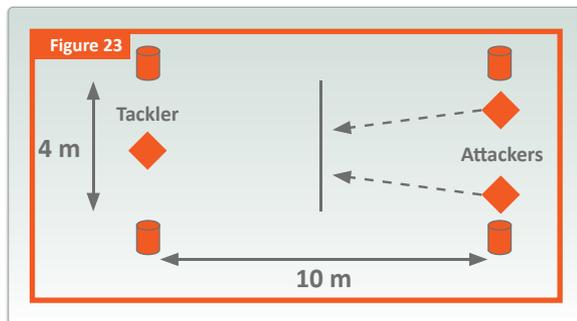
### Coaching points

- Attackers should attempt to pass the ball at least once to give the tackler a fair chance at winning the ball. This is particularly important early on when the skill is still being learned
- For tacklers, the key is to time the move so that they do not over-commit and lunge in too soon, giving attackers time to decide whether to dribble or pass
- Look for the body position of all players. Tacklers should be low to the ground, feet apart, head up and stick close to the ground.

The attackers must be in the balanced position with the head up to see what the tackler is doing.

### Progression

- Increase the size of the rectangle to 15 m x 6 m, and add a third attacker and second defender.





## Sharks and minnows

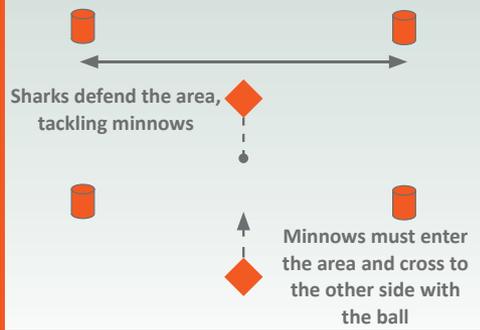
### Set up

- Mark out an area adjusted to size depending on the number of players you have available. For eight players, an area with dimensions of 20 m x 10 m is appropriate. For every extra player, add 2 m to each side of the rectangle.

### How to do the activity

- Half the players have balls and are minnows. The rest do not have balls and are the sharks
- The minnows start at one end of the area and must dribble across the area and across the opposite goal line without losing possession of their balls. The sharks defend the area by trying to jab or block tackle the minnows' balls out of the defined area
- Minnows that retain possession turn around and go back for round two. Minnows that lose their balls join the sharks for round two. The last successful minnow is the grand champion.

Figure 24





## Shooting teams

This drill combines defensive practice with shooting. It uses all players, including the goalkeeper. Players must master the shooting techniques before attempting this drill.

### Set up

- Create three teams each consisting of between four and seven players
- One team attacks, one team defends and the third is a ball-retrieving team.

### How to do the activity

- Stand at the edge of the penalty box with as many balls as possible
- For two minutes, throw, bounce or roll a ball into the penalty box
- The two opposing teams (defence and attack) must compete for possession of the ball and then shoot to score a goal
- The retrieving team must collect the balls that are shot wide of the goal and return them to you
- After two minutes, the retrieving team gets a turn to shoot and score. Another team then has the job of retrieving for the next two minutes.

### Progression

- As players improve, add more players.



## Positional play: teaching and principles

It is important to lay the foundation for proper positional play at a young age. This means that all players should try out every position (attack, midfield and defense). As the coach, you should help children understand how to play these positions.

The most common positional error you see when young children play hockey is that they **all** run after the ball rather than play their positions. It's important to begin teaching them that they must not simply chase the ball. Explain to them that they have specific zones to cover on the field, and that they will all get a chance on the ball.

### Good positional play includes:

- Players running away from a team mate in possession, rather than running to him or her
- Players moving off the ball to create good passing angles for team mates
- Players running forward and receiving the ball in space
- Players learning to pass backwards to keep possession and allow their team to move forward.



Teaching these principles is difficult and will take time and practice. Be patient and rather monitor small-sided games, some of which are described below. As the coach, you will need to be very involved, stopping the game frequently to teach and explain. It will involve a great deal of repetition, and young players will need regular input and encouragement. Some drills for positional play include:

#### a) 5 vs 1

This drill is designed to help players learn how to move into space for a successful pass. Make players aware of space and the position of their team mates so that they can create easier passing angles for themselves.

#### Set up

- Divide players into groups of six
- One player is designated 'defender', and stands in the middle of a 8 m x 8 m grid divided into four zones (see Figure 25)
- The other five players are 'attackers'. They are given one ball between them.

#### How to do the activity

- The attackers must pass the ball between them while the defender attempts to intercept it (just like the game 'piggy in the middle', except, in this game there are five players against one)
- Change defenders every minute, even if they are able to intercept the ball. This ensures that every player gets an equal chance at defending and attacking
- For more advanced players, the player in the middle changes when a pass is intercepted or a tackle is made. The player who gave away the ball becomes the player in the middle.

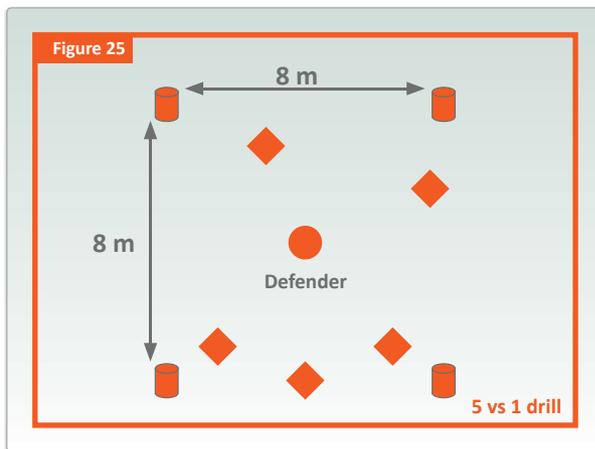


### Coaching points

- Remind players that before they pass the ball they can draw defenders by waiting for them to approach. This helps create a better angle or space for the pass
- Players that do not have the ball must be moving constantly to create a good passing angle
- Defenders must try to cut down these angles, 'cornering the players', so they can intercept the next pass. Attackers must move to prevent this from happening
- When players receive a pass, they must control the ball to the side and then look up for the next pass
- Players should think about who to pass to before they receive the ball.

### Progression

- Challenge players to make at least five successful passes before an interception is made. As they improve, increase this to six, seven and so on
- Have players beat the defender with a dribble and then pass to a team mate.



### b) 3 vs 2

This drill teaches the same skills as the 5 vs 1 drill, but is more advanced.

### Set up

- Divide players into groups of five
- Set up a small playing area measuring 8 m x 8 m using cones. At each end of the playing area create small goals using other cones about 2 m apart.

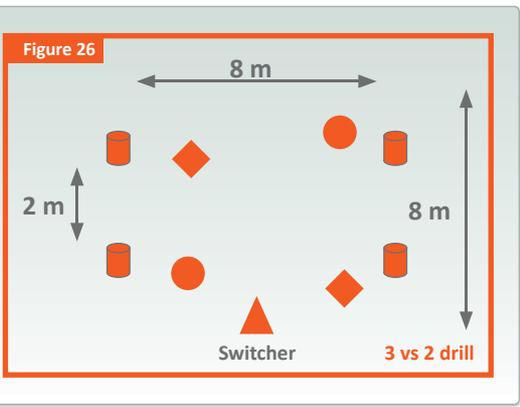


### How to do the activity

- Four of the players pair up so that they can play 2 vs 2, while the fifth player is the 'switcher' and will play for whichever team has the ball
- The objective is to pass the ball around until an opportunity comes to pass the ball through the goals and score
- If the team loses the ball, either when it goes out of bounds or is intercepted, the 'switcher' changes sides and plays for the other team now trying to score
- Allow play to continue for three minutes before changing the 'switcher'.

### Coaching points

- Players that do not have the ball should constantly be moving to create a good passing angle
- The 'switcher' holds the key to the game. They provide the third player in the team and need to create space for other players
- Players should be more focused on passing than scoring, and should pass the ball into the goal. If they shoot or lift the ball into the air, the goal is disallowed
- Focus on push passing since space is limited and distances are short.



### c) The 1-2 pass – also called the ‘wall pass’ or ‘give and go’

In the 1-2 pass drill, a player passes to a team mate, and then runs past a defender to receive a quick pass back from the team mate in space. If done effectively, it is a great way to move the ball through the defensive line using space and movement. There are three key requirements for good 1-2 passes:

- The first pass must be played into the ‘wall’ with speed and accuracy
- The original passer must sprint into the space behind the defender
- The return pass must land in front of the runner

Figure 27 below illustrates the 1-2 pass to beat the defender.

#### Set up

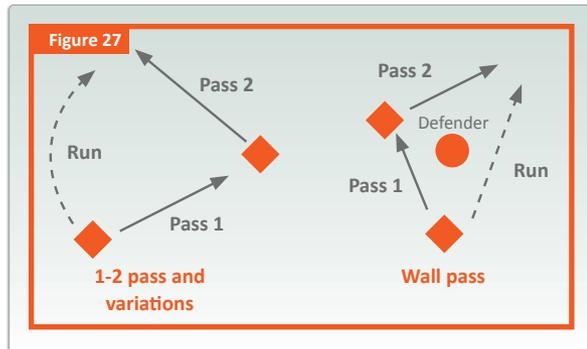
- Divide players up into groups of three.

#### How to do the activity

- One player is the defender and the other two are attackers. One of the attackers is going to pass and then run, while the other will play the role of the ‘wall’
- As explained above, the first attacker pushes the ball to the other attacker. This player then either controls it or deflects it directly into the path of the first attacker, who should have now sprinted into space behind the defender
- The ‘wall’, or player who will receive and then lay off the pass for the attacker, can decide to control the ball and then pass it or pass it immediately. Obviously an immediate pass is faster and more effective, but it is also more difficult. In the beginning, focus on accuracy rather than speed
- The attacker then gets the ball and goes on to shoot at goal (use a goalkeeper if desired)
- Initially, defenders should not try and win the ball. They simply provide a guide for the passing of the ball. (You may even use a cone instead of a defender for this.)

#### Progression

- As players improve, defenders can begin to intercept passes. Players will have to think carefully about where to run and how to manipulate space so they can keep possession of the ball.





#### d) Coached games

This final drill can be used to wrap up the training session. It is a coached game, which means players will play in a game situation with you coaching them. This gives players the opportunity to practise passing, dribbling, controlling and positional play in the context of a game.

##### Set up

- Divide players into two teams of five players
- The game takes place on half the field, from the halfway line to the goal.

##### How to do the activity

- One of the teams attacks and their objective is to score the goals
- The other team is defence who must attempt to win the ball by tackling, or intercepting a pass and then pass it accurately back to the halfway line
- You (or one of your nominated players if you don't want to be involved in the game) stand on the halfway line with four or five balls ready to be pushed into the game. You are the server and will start the game. You will also have to receive the ball from the defensive team if they pass it to you
- The server on the halfway line starts the game by passing the ball to a player on the attacking team
- Attackers try to score while defenders try to pass the ball accurately back to you, the server. You can move anywhere along the halfway line to receive the pass
- The drill is continuous, unless you decide to stop the game to make a coaching point.

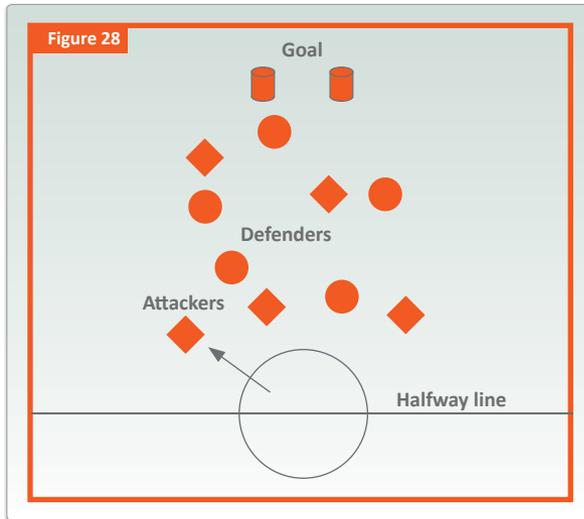
##### Variations

- To work more on attacking play, create a 5 vs 3 drill with five attackers and three defenders. You can do the same for a defensive situation and have 3 vs 5
- You can also create an 8 vs 6, which is more like 11-a-side hockey. In this game there will be less space for players and less time on the ball, so it should only be played if all players are comfortable with dribbling, passing and running into space.



### Coaching point

- Pay close attention to technique and players' positioning on the field.



### Activities for goalkeepers

#### Punch kick

##### Set up

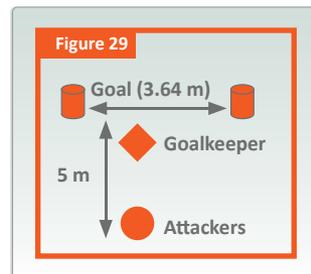
- One goalkeeper, one attacker, one ball, goal.

##### How to do the activity

- The attacker rolls the ball to the right or left of the goalkeeper
- The goalkeeper has to punch kick it away.

##### Progression

- The ball is push passed or hit rather than rolled
- Have a number of players stand around the circle and roll or push pass the ball to the goalkeeper.





## Double-block save

### Set up

- One goalkeeper, one attacker, one goal.

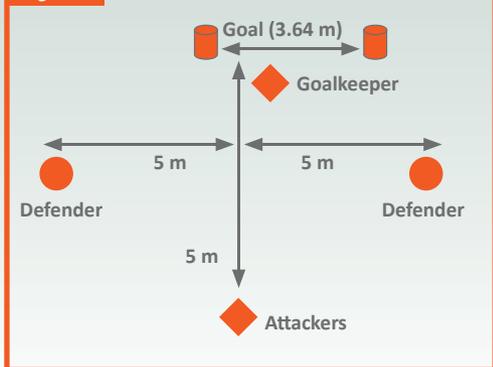
### How to do the activity

- The attacker flicks the ball to the right or left of the goalkeeper
- The goalkeeper has to stop it with his hand, push it down and kick it to a defender.

### Progression

- The ball is flicked faster
- Have a number of players stand around the circle and flick the ball at the goalkeeper in succession.

Figure 30



## The Warm-down

A good way to wrap up the session is a light warm-down, which includes reinforcing key skills and aspects of the session. Part of the warm-down involves stretches with the ball, while the rest is a review of the skills that have been learned. You can also give homework so learners can practise on their own. This can consist of developing one of the skills you've taught them that day, such as passing, dribbling or shooting skills. (See the General coaching manual for more information on the warm-down).

## Putting it together

We helped you put a practice session together by providing a number of examples of drills and activities you can choose from for your practice. Remember that these are guidelines only and you should feel free to adapt the drills and create new ones depending on your players.

## Evaluation

One of the coach's most important tasks is to evaluate players. At every practice session, you will watch and observe, looking for players who are learning and those who are battling with certain skills.

For you to be a successful coach, it is absolutely vital that you constantly notice which of the players is struggling with skills so that you can address problems early. Typically, these problems involve difficulty in executing the key components of a skill and a tendency to fall back into bad habits (like incorrect body positioning or playing on the reverse side too often).

The checklist below is a summary of some of the key coaching points that were explained in detail in the Skills and Activities sections earlier. We recommend that you pay very close attention to all those skill descriptions, but use the checklist as a quick evaluation for individual players.

### Checklist

Question	Yes	No
Are players able to pass the ball accurately using the different techniques – push pass, bunt pass and hit pass? Can they do this on both the forehand and backhand side with accuracy and control? Do they look up and maintain the ball in their control box before passing?		
Is every player able to control the ball as it rolls towards them? Effective control of the ball means that the player has the ball inside his or her control box and is able to dribble, pass or hit the ball depending on what's required.		



Question	Yes	No
Do players show good balance and posture when passing and receiving the ball? Knees (not the back) should be bent, body weight should be slightly forward so that the head is over the ball, and the ball should be in the imaginary control box and not under the feet.		
Can each player run with the ball while looking up?		
Do players always move towards the ball when it is passed to them?		
Are players able to change direction when running with the ball, use the ball check skills and stop the ball inside their control box?		
Do players try to remain 'strong' by moving their bodies around the ball?		
Do players show a good attitude towards tackling and winning the ball back – running towards the ball and not backing away from it, and defending the space without simply lunging in to win the ball?		
Do players use the right tackle technique at the right time?		
Are players able to shoot accurately and powerfully when given the opportunity, using either the normal hit or the quick-hit method?		
Do players communicate well on the field by calling out for the ball, creating options for the player with the ball and talking to team mates about positional play?		

## Appendix: Rules, positions and equipment

### Managing a game

Matches are controlled by two referees, each responsible for refereeing their half of the field. Unlike in soccer, there are no assistant referees on the sidelines.

### Scoring goals

A goal is scored when the attacking team shoots or pushes the ball into the goal from inside the shooting circle. If it is hit from outside the shooting circle, the ball crossing the goal line will not count as a goal and the defending team will then have to play the ball from the edge of their shooting circle.

### Ball handling

Goalkeepers are the only players that are allowed to use their hands, feet and bodies when playing the ball, and only inside the shooting circle. When they move outside the circle they may only use their sticks like the other 10 players. The 10 outfield players may only use the flat side of their hockey sticks to play the ball. If the ball touches the rounded part of the stick or any part of the player's body, including the hands, a free hit will be awarded to the other team.

## Free hits

Free hits are awarded for foul play, including:

- Striking an opponent with the stick (either deliberately or accidentally)
- Tackling a player from behind
- Obstructing or pushing opponents
- Lifting the ball dangerously in the air
- Handling the ball
- Playing the ball with the rounded part of the stick.

(Note that there is no offside rule in hockey, and free hits are not awarded for this.)

When a free hit is awarded, players from the team who have conceded the hit must stand at least 5 m away from the opponent taking the free hit. The player must not lift the ball or strike the ball in the air when taking the free hit. If this happens, a free hit is awarded to the other team and is taken from the same place on the field as the first hit took place.

## Penalty corners

If a foul occurs inside the shooting circle, the attacking team receives what is called a 'penalty corner' (sometimes referred to as a short corner). This is awarded for:

- An offence by a defender in the circle that does not prevent the probable scoring of a goal
- An intentional offence in the circle by a defender against an opponent who does not have an opportunity to play the ball
- An intentional offence by a defender outside the circle, but within the 23 m area they are defending
- A defender intentionally playing the ball over the backline
- When the ball becomes lodged in a player's clothing or equipment while in the circle they are defending.

## Set up

Short corners begin with five defenders (including the goalkeeper) positioned behind the backline and at least 5 m from the position of the ball. Before the ball comes into play all other players in the defending team must be beyond the halfway line on the opponents' side of the field.

One attacker starts the corner by playing the ball from a mark 10 m on either side of the goal. The rest of the attacking team must stand outside the scoring circle until the ball comes into play.

## Delivery

- The attacker puts the ball into play by pushing or hitting it to his or her team mates outside the circle
- The attackers stop the ball outside the circle before passing it back into the circle to take a shot at goal
- A goal cannot be scored if the ball has not gone out of the circle
- For safety reasons, the first shot of a penalty corner must not be more than 460 mm high (the height of the 'backboard' of the goal). However, if the ball is deemed to be below backboard height, the ball can subsequently be deflected above this height by another player (defender or attacker), providing this deflection is not dangerous.



## Penalty stroke

If a deliberate foul is committed inside the shooting circle, the referee will award a penalty stroke. The penalty stroke is taken from the white circle (penalty spot), shown on page 52, a distance of 6.4 m from the goal. During the penalty stroke, the attacker takes one step to the ball, pushes or flicks it to the goal (it should not be hit), and the goalkeeper then tries to save the ball.

## Sideline hits, centre circle hit-offs and long corners

- When the ball goes outside the field of play, a player (from the team that didn't touch the ball last) gets to restart the game with a hit
- If the ball crosses the sidelines, the hit is taken from the point where it went out
- If the ball crosses the backline or the goal line, but is hit from outside the shooting circle, the hit is taken from the 14.63 m circle where the ball crossed the line
- If the ball comes off a defender's stick and crosses over the backline, a long corner is awarded. This is a hit to the attacking team and is taken from the long corner mark on page 52.

## Card system

When players commit repeated fouls, or deliberately foul opponents, the referee can use a card system to warn players. A green card represents a warning for dangerous play and is also given when a player commits repeated fouls. A yellow card is shown to a player for a more serious offence or a deliberate foul, and the player must sit on the sidelines for at least five minutes if they receive this card.

Finally, a red card means permanent expulsion from the game and the player may then be banned for some games afterwards. It is usually given for deliberately aggressive and dangerous play, such as striking an opponent with the stick or dangerous body contact.



## Positions

Hockey is played between two teams, with 11 players on each side. There are also substitute players that can be swapped for an on-field player at any time, unlimited times, throughout the match, either for tactical reasons or to give players short rests. A 'squad' then consists of more than 11 players with substitutes usually limited to six players for each match.

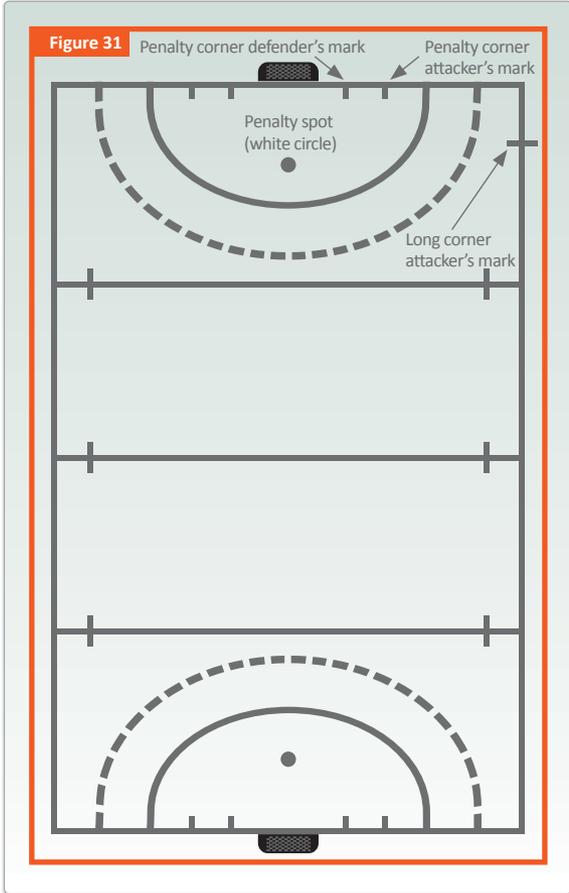
As mentioned previously, one of the 11 players on the field is the goalkeeper. This player defends the goals and usually stays inside an area known as the shooting circle.

Besides the goalkeeper, there are no 'compulsory' positions in hockey, but most teams arrange themselves into a pattern that is similar to that of soccer. For instance, the 10 outfield players consist of:

- Defenders, whose role it is to prevent the opposition from scoring
- Midfielders or links, who give the link between defence and attack, and control the game
- Attackers or forwards, whose primary role is to score goals.

## Playing field

The game is played either on a grass surface or a synthetic field called an astro-turf. These astro-turf fields allow the ball to roll much faster and more smoothly, but are expensive and not yet widely available, so most school matches will still be played on grass. A full-sized pitch is between 90 m long and 55 m wide.



## Equipment

**The goal:** This is made of a steel or wooden frame consisting of two 'posts' (the vertical part of the frame) and a 'bar.' The goal is smaller than for soccer, measuring 3.66 m wide and 2.14 m high.

**Hockey sticks:** Modern hockey sticks are often made from fibreglass, Kevlar or carbon-fibre materials. The stick is flat on one side (the hitting side) and rounded on the other. It has a hook at the bottom where the 'head' of the stick is used to control and hit the ball. An adult-length hockey stick is between 92 cm and 95 cm long, but for children aged between eight and 12, it is recommended that shorter sticks be used. This is often not feasible, however, so be mindful that some children may be playing with sticks that are slightly too long for them and this will affect their control and ability to hit the ball.

**Hockey balls:** Small and made of plastic, often with a cork core. They can be smooth or dimpled (like golf balls) and are quite hard, which is why mouth guards and shin pads are essential for all players.

**Basic equipment and kit:** Players should have a stick, ball, shirt, shorts, socks, footwear, adequate shin guards and a mouth guard. Players should not wear anything that is dangerous to themselves or another player, such as jewellery or watches.

Figure 32





**Kit for goalkeepers:** They must wear clothing that distinguishes them from other players and match officials. They must also use a set of protective pads, including kickers, chest guard, helmet, gloves and leg pads. It is not essential that goalkeepers wear all this padding and sometimes they will wear only a helmet, but it is recommended that they wear as much padding as possible to prevent injury from the hard ball.

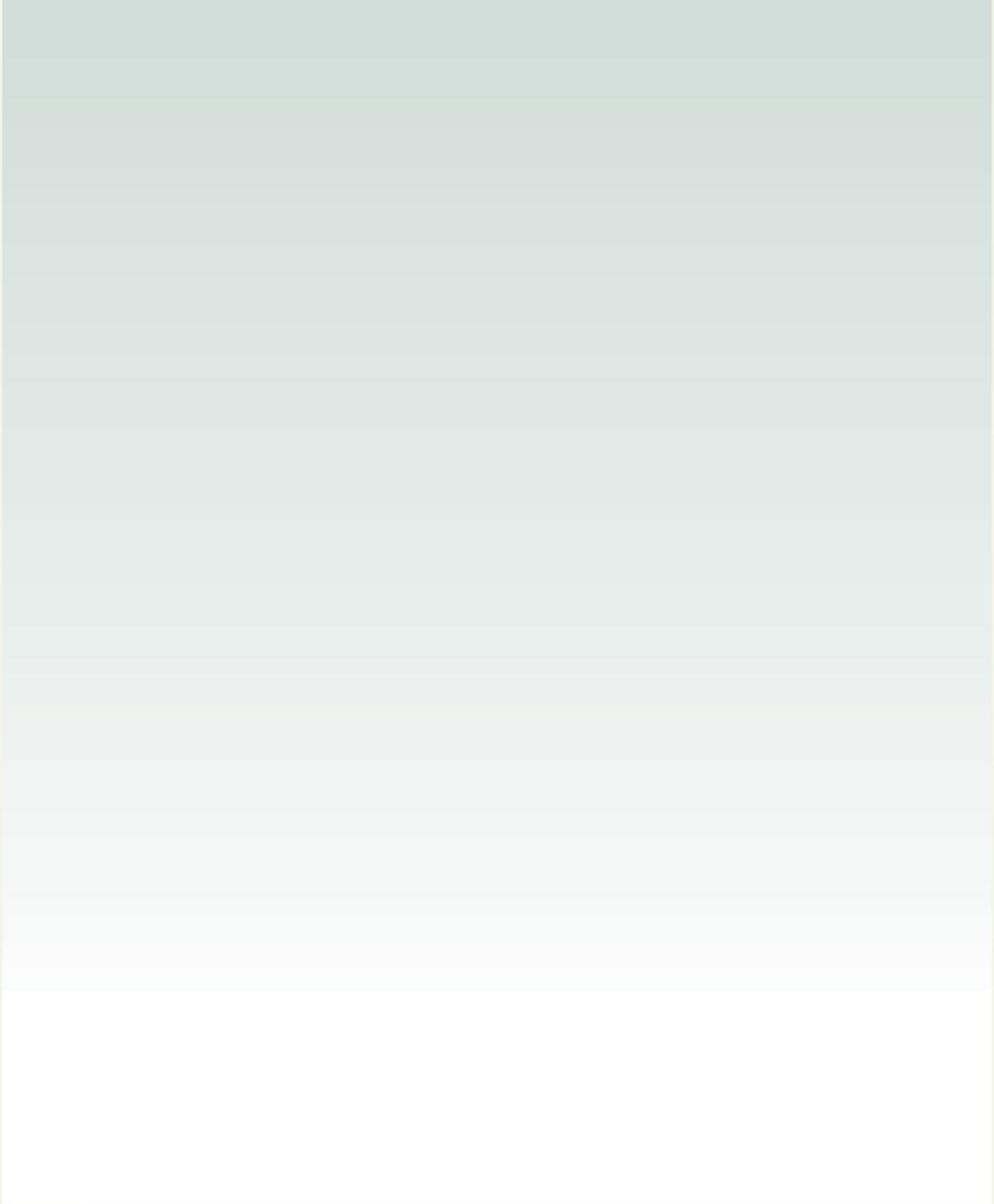
**For coaching sessions you will also need**

- A whistle
- A set of 12 cones
- At least 10 hockey balls for use during drills and activities.



Discovery has endeavoured to ensure that all the information contained in this manual is accurate and based on credible clinical and scientific research. Discovery cannot however, be held responsible for any injury, loss or damages that may result from reliance on the information, and by utilising the information you specifically waive any claim you may have against Discovery in this regard. You are advised that each individual has their own unique clinical make-up and while the lesson plans were designed with all individuals in mind, some may respond differently to others. You are therefore advised to take due caution when participating in any of the activities recommended.





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