



JUNIOR COACHING PRINCIPLES

Junior Coaching is organised on Sunday mornings from early September through to the end of March. Detailed timings vary each week depending on match requirements. Generally, coaching is organised into six broad subgroups: U16/15 Boys, UU16/15 girls, U14/13 Boys, U14/13 Girls, U12/11 Boys, U12/11 Girls and U10/9/8/7 mixed; however, there may be occasions when these groups will be combined for training purposes. The older groups have 1.5 hour training sessions while the younger U10s (with a shorter concentration time) get 1 hour sessions. The programme for the year is set out in the document 'TWHC Hockey Coaching Programme'.

To produce good young hockey players there are four objectives TWHC wish to coach

- 1 Core Skills
- 2 Movement both on and off the ball
- 3 Fitness and Athleticism
- 4 Enjoyment

It is important that we maintain a good balance of these objectives in order to produce well-grounded juniors.

Coaches need to ensure an inclusive policy for all players.

TWHC will not be focussed purely on results (except for specific targets) but will encourage all players to be part of the team and benefit fully from the enjoyment of playing.

Coaches will think carefully about labelling players in certain positions. All players should have the skills and opportunity to play anywhere on the pitch, which will enable fluid team structures.

TWHC will consider if it wants to implement a junior club structure of play, but at present this is not the case.

The coaches will focus on development of the core skills that are essential to the game. Hockey is actually a very simple game (even when played at higher levels).

The core skills are

- 1 Controlling the ball
- 2 Moving the ball
- 3 Moving off the ball and receiving
- 4 Moving with the ball

- 5 Elimination Skills 1v1, 2v1
- 6 Defending
- 7 Goal Scoring
- 8 Goal Keeping

All players should be coached to be confident in moving the ball both on the open and reverse side (**Body/Stick/Ball/Grip**).

The relationship between control and speed and the affect of changing grips needs to be developed.

Movement will be encouraged, especially off the ball, with emphasis on how important this is to the outcome of the pass (V cut, J runs).

Further, it is important that no runs are in a straight line (even when warming up there should be changes of direction and pace).

Players should never run directly at the defender but need to change angles to get the defender off balance and gain an advantage.

Focus will be put on decision-making skills. The product and outcome of players' actions should be discussed, and here a question and answer style might be useful.

Player communication needs to be developed.

Players must be able to move the ball by a number of different methods (the hit will be discouraged as its completion rates are generally low, only about 20%).

Therefore our juniors must learn to: Push, Slap and especially on water based astros where the ball gets squeezed to Sweep, the reverse stick is becoming a very important part of the game.

Foot work, body position and grips are key.

The elements to complete a successful pass are: pre scan, 1st touch, body position, scan, execution.

The players need to be trained to recognise and achieve successful outcomes in overload situations (2v1's).

Also they must be comfortable under pressure (although this has to be introduced gradually: cones, passive defending and then active 1v1's).

Elimination skills need to be coached, Body, stick, ball, lateral drags, using the body and changes of pace.

Receiving the ball is one of the most important skills so that the ball ends up in the correct position to move the ball on.

The 1st touch is extremely important and we must stop the players tip tapping, looking at the ball and not where the next pass or the defender is.

Scanning, soft hands and the skills of taking the ball early or late, once again Body, Stick, Ball.

Defending skills need to be coached carefully, safe tackling both open block tackle and reverse stick tackle.

The principle of ball, body, goal, communication and decision-making.

With older juniors it might be useful to show how to employ a press correctly.

The use of a goal keeper dramatically changes the balance of the game and we might want to consider using goal keepers during practices to allow player get used to their presence.