

START TO COACH, SERVE THE TASK –

A PRACTICAL GUIDE ON WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN COACHING KIDS



By Georg Franz Taferner

Degree Program in Sport and Leisure Management

Vierumäki, Finland

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1. Introduction

To me to coach means to serve – to serve the children, teenagers or adults I am coaching, the team I am working for, the club, the city or country I represent.

Coaching is in many ways serving the community and the society, to achieve a higher goal, not to your own benefit but to the benefit of those who trust you and who rely on you – if you manage to do so you will benefit from it.

The practical guide book was created to provide coaches and in particular youth coaches with a simple guideline on what to consider when they start to coach. It can be used either to help the novice coach to do his or her first steps, or even the experienced youth coach just to have a basic main thread to prepare for a season. It provides the user with questions and tools to get him or her involved in an active individual development process on his road to become a successful coach.

The booklet doesn't claim to be perfect as there can be so many more things which should be considered from time to time, nor does it guarantee any coach to have a successful season, as there might occur circumstances which would range way too far to be covered within this manual.

On the other hand I am sure that no matter if you are a novice or experienced coach the manual gives you a main “red” thread in your coaching work in preparation for a season as well as during a season.

2. Your reason to be a coach

“The successful man is himself.

To be successful you have got to be honest with yourself.” Vince Lombardi.

Self reflection is the first step to get ready for coaching and become a coach, so sit down, take your time and think about it – and also write it down.

- Why do you want to – respectively did you – become a coach?

- What age, gender and skill level would you like to coach?

Age of Kids: _____ Gender: _____

Skill level (Beginners; Novice; Intermediate; Advanced): _____

- Why do you want to coach that particular youth team next season?

3. Describe your personality

Here are some aids to think about the type of person you are:

The Big Five factors (OCEAN) and their constituent traits can be summarized as (according to Digman, 1990):

Openness to experience – (inventive/curious vs. consistent/cautious). Appreciation for art, emotion, adventure, unusual ideas, curiosity and variety of experience.

Conscientiousness – (efficient/organized vs. easy-going/careless). A tendency to show self-discipline, act dutifully and aim for achievement; planned rather than spontaneous behavior.

Extraversion – (outgoing/energetic vs. solitary/reserved). Energy, positive emotions and the tendency to seek stimulation in the company of others.

Agreeableness – (friendly/compassionate vs. cold/unkind). A tendency to be compassionate and cooperative rather than suspicious and antagonistic towards others.

Neuroticism – (sensitive/nervous vs. secure/confident). A tendency to experience unpleasant emotions easily, such as anger, anxiety, depression or vulnerability.”

You may go by the suggested or just use your own terms and reflections to answer the following questions.

- What type of person are you?

- What are your values and beliefs?

- Do you have principles and if so, what are your principles?

4. The coach and his/her personality

Each coach has his/her personality according to the type of person he/she is, based on his/her values and the principles which come with it.

Try to identify yourself within the coaching personalities listed below – it also may fit more than just one – and answer the question below. The personality traits which are listed by each character are just examples and not the entire list which could be named.

- The command or autocratic coach (the dictator or authoritarian):
He punishes first, converses later; An atmosphere of fear of failure for the athlete; Immediate short-term respect; Undivided attention when speaking; Intimidation of those who speak against the coach's decisions; Demeaning motivation; Nonexistent relationship with the athletes and assistant coaches; ...
- The cooperative or democratic coach (the teacher):
Positive relationship with athletes and other coaches; Fresh ideas through open lines of communication; Increased participation due to coaching style; Appreciation shown from athletes/community; Gives and receives advice; Leads by example; Encourages team leaders; ...
- The submissive coach (the easy going):
Little instructions; Minimal guidance in organizing activities; Throw the ball in and play type; Doesn't seem to take things seriously; At times appears lazy; ...
- The business-like coach:
Not very people orientated – cool personality; Likes to see a 100% effort at all times; Very well organized; Major emphasizes on out-thinking the opponent; Logical in his approach; ...
- The intense coach:
Focuses on the quality of the player performance; He/she is in some ways similar to the authoritarian coach but doesn't punish players; Uptight attitude and highly emotional behavior; Takes things personally; Motivates players by example; Complete knowledge of the game; ...

According to the coach personalities listed above, which fits best / least to you?

5. Create your coaching philosophy

Here a brief introduction – what is a coaching philosophy:

“The beliefs, values and truths that define a person or an organisation constitute a philosophy. A philosophy distinguishes right from wrong and good from bad and defines success.” (Robinson, 2010)

Your coaching philosophy doesn't provide you with specific answers to each problem that occurs, but it gives you a set of principles to guide your decision making. A found coaching philosophy reduces uncertainty in handling problems related to training rules, team discipline, short- and long-term objectives and many other facets of competition. (Burton & Raedeke, 2008)

Here are some ideas what should be a part of your coaching philosophy:

Simply said your coaching philosophy should be based on your “foundational beliefs, values, principles concepts and priorities”. (Kidman & Hanrahan, 2011)

Martens (2004), splits it into two main groups:

“(1) your major objectives (the things you value and want to achieve) and (2) your beliefs and principles that help you achieve your objectives. These principles help you cope with the myriad of life's situations.”

Write down your coaching philosophy:

6. Reflect yourself

Does your general personality, your coaching personality and your coaching philosophy correspond with each other?

Are there differences which might hardly fit or exclude each other?

Is it possible that you want to be a different type of coach than your personality allows you?

If so, how will you deal with things that don't fit within your general and coaching personality or by your values, beliefs, principles – will you change, will you work and develop your personality, or will you play a role?

Think about it, reflect it and write it down. Try to be as honest to yourself as possible – it will help you to see yourself clearer.

7. The age group you will coach

Which age group will you coach? _____

What are their specifics?

- Physical (Size, anatomical development):

- Mental (According to age, how far developed are they; What is their capacity according to school standards; Children learn through different stimuli in different age groups):

- Behavioral (Are they in their middle childhood, preteens or teenagers; Do they stick with family and close friends or with their peer groups; Do they listen to authority such as parents, teachers, coaches or not ...)

What to consider when they get to puberty:

Girls

- body fat increases
- breasts begin to enlarge
- pubic hair grows
- height and weight increase
- first menstrual period occurs
- hips widen
- underarm hair grows
- skin and hair become more oily
- pimples may appear

Boys

- scrotum becomes darker
- testicles grow larger
- penis grows longer and fuller
- pubic hair (underarm, facial) grows
- breasts can get "lumps" and become tender
- height and weight increase
- muscles develop
- voice cracks and gets deeper

8. Team attendance

Here is a list based on a survey on motive's for Participation in Youth Sport (Weinberg & Gould, 2007)

Reasons for Participating in Nonschool Sports	
Boys	Girls
To have fun	To have fun
To do something I'm good at	To stay in shape
To improve my skills	To get exercise
For excitement of competition	To improve my skills
To stay in shape	To do something I'm good at
For the challenge of competition	To learn new skills
To get exercise	For excitement of competition
To learn new skills	To play as part of a team
To play as part of a team	To make new friends
To go to higher level of competition	For the challenge of competition
Reasons for Participating in School Sports	
Boys	Girls
To have fun	To have fun
To improve my skills	To stay in shape
For excitement of competition	To get exercise
To do something I'm good at	To improve my skills
To stay in shape	To do something I'm good at
For the challenge of competition	To be a part of a team
To be a part of a team	For excitement of competition
To win	To learn new skills
To go to higher level of competition	For team spirit
To get exercise	For the challenge of competition

9. A child’s learning strategies

Here are the three major types, how children learn new things:

- Visual learners:

Two types of visual learners exist – the visual-linguistic learner and the visual-spatial learner. They differ from each other in the way, that the visual-spatial learner prefers charts, demonstration, video, picture material, while the visual-linguistic learner will prefer reading and writing tasks, as any information in written form will remain in his memory also if it is only read once. Visual learning kids can often be identified after you as a coach finished your verbal explanation of a drill. They would still be standing, looking at you with big eyes and waiting for the actual illustration of what they should do next.

- Auditory learner:

As the name already says, this type of learner likes to talk through a situation and would not enjoy reading and writing tasks.

- Kinesthetic learner:

This individual prefers to learn new skills by movement or contact with the subject. She or he would lose concentration quite rapidly if movement is not interlinked to a learning subject – these are most likely those kids who never can stand still while you as a coach try to explain something verbally.

Do you know how your players learn best? What type of learning do you think would fit for your kids’ age group? What type of learning will you offer and in which situation?

10. The teaching and the possible teaching styles

Muska Mosston created a spectrum of eleven different teaching styles – from the command to the self-teaching style – which can be used and are appropriate for sports coaching. The list below shows you all eleven of them, the coach's and the learner's role within it and how they interact with each other:

Mosston & Ashworth 'Teaching Style'	Interaction	Role of Teacher T	Role of Learner L
Command (A)	T makes decisions; L copies and complies with decisions and instructions.	Instructing	Copying
Practice (B)	T sets up opportunities, giving feedback to L who is working at own pace on tasks set.	Establishing	Repeating and improving
Reciprocal (C)	L work together, receiving feedback from each other; L provides reference points for feedback.	Supporting	Performing and peer assessing
Self-Check (D)	T sets criteria for success; L checks own performance against theses.	Directing	Self assessing
Inclusion (E)	T sets out a variety of tasks/opportunities; L select which task is most appropriate for their abilities and/or motivates.	Facilitating	Selecting
Guided discovery (F)	T uses questions and tasks to gradually direct L towards a pre-determined learning target.	Questioning	Uncovering
Convergent discovery(G)	T sets or frames problems; L attempts to find most appropriate solution	Guiding	Finding out
Divergent discovery (H)	T sets or frames problems; L attempts to create possible solutions	Prompting	Creating
Learner designed (I)	T decides on area of focus; L develop within this area, drawing on T expertise;	Advising	Initiating
Learner initiated (J)	L decides on how and what they are aiming for; T drawn on for support as needed	Mentoring	Deciding
Self teach(K)	L engages in development on their own	N/A	Self determined

Which style do you prefer when coaching, why and when is it appropriate when not?

What other style(s) would contribute to your personality & to your children's age group?

11. Feedback

Here is some basic information on feedback and the four types of feedback which exist:

Feedback can be given via several modes of communication, such as symbols, gestures and verbal behaviour. It is fundamental to the progress of the learner for two primary reasons:

- Reinforce or change subject matter, behaviour or logistics.
- Shape self concept.

The four types of feedback:

- Value statement: A word (or symbol) that judges the performance and projects a value or a feeling about the performance – it may be specific or nonspecific as well as positive or negative.
- Corrective statement: A statement that refers to an error; it provides information on how to correct the error and identifies only the correction. The focus is either on the subject matter, behavior or logistic of the error.
- Neutral statement: Is factual, descriptive and nonjudgmental. An objective description of what the performer has done and permits continued conversation.
- Ambiguous statement: A word or phrase which does not provide precise information about performance – it leaves room for interpretation and also misinterpretation as the focus is uncertain.

(Mosston & Ashworth, 2002)

When will you give feedback and what form of feedback will you use?

12. Skill teaching

At first I will name the three stages of skill learning:

- The mental stage: Requires a great deal of cognitive activity as the learners' brain searches for a mental plan of the correct technique. In this stage it is important not to teach too much, as too much information easily overloads the learning circuit.
- The practice stage: This stage basically emphasizes on the quality of practice to refine technique and to decrease errors.
- In the automatic stage: The technique becomes more and more automatic.

Here are the four steps that are needed to teach technical skills, in addition to the three stages of skill learning:

- Step 1: Introduce the technical skill – name the technique and explain how it is used in the game. Introduce the new skill with enthusiasm, clearly and simply spoken words (as brief as possible) and show it in action.
- Step 2: Demonstrate and explain the technical skill – tell your players what to look for; demonstrate the whole technique unless it is too complex, then break it into major parts.
- Step 3: Have the athletes practice the technical skill – the seven principles of practicing a technical skill:
 1. Have athletes practice the right technique.
 2. Have athletes practice the technique in game like conditions as soon as they can.
 3. Keep practices short and frequent when teaching new techniques.
 4. Use practice time effectively.
 5. Make optimal use of facilities and equipment.
 6. Make sure athletes experience a reasonable amount of success at each practice.
 7. Make practice fun.

• Step 4: Correct errors

- How does the completed performance compared with the desired performance look like.
- How to change an incorrect performance to more closely approximate the desired performance

To do so you got to observe and evaluate the performance and give feedback on it. Identifying the correct cause of inadequate performance is one of the big challenges in coaching. The better you understand the technical skill the easier you will be able to correct it – there is no substitute for knowledge and experience in correcting technical skill. The use of video can be a great help to observe your athletes and to correct mistakes. Don't rush into error correction – as long as you couldn't clearly identify it. "One of the most common coaching mistakes is to provide inaccurate feedback and advice on how to correct errors." (Martens 2004)

Think about teaching an essential skill in your sport (e.g. forehand pass in ice hockey) and write down step 1 to step 4 how you would teach the new technique:

13. Motivation

Two types of motivation exist as you can see below:

- Extrinsic motivation through extrinsic rewards: trophies, medals, money, praise, equipment, recognition from others – they come from the outside to the athlete and are either given by the club, media, parents or coaches to motivate players.
- Intrinsic motivation through intrinsic rewards which are internally satisfying when players participate in sport – such as having fun and feeling competent and successful.

The problem is that extrinsic rewards given to motivate may become less appreciated from time to time and so may lose its value to the athlete. On the other hand intrinsic motivation is self-fueling and cannot be given to the player, a fact every coach should realize when thinking about motivating athletes. You as a coach can create conditions in practice and games that provide your players with the opportunity to fill their need of their own intrinsic rewards. (Martens, 2004)

Which type of motivation do you personal favour and why?

What will you do to provide intrinsic and/or extrinsic motivation?

14. Goals – goal setting

In sport goals focus on outcome, performance or process:

- Outcome goals focus on a competitive result and/or compare the performances of athletes with those of other athletes.
- Performance goals focus on achieving and improving an athlete's individual performance usually on basis of his/her previous performances.
- Process goals are used to improve the execution of a skill by focusing on little things to be corrected to execute or perform even better. (Weinberg & Gould, 2007, 346)

Principles of goal setting

- Make goals specific, observable and in measurable terms.
- Clearly identify the time constraints – well stated goals should be timely.
- Use moderately difficult goals – moderate goals are better than easy or very difficult goals. They are also more satisfying when attained.
- Use a mix of process, performance and outcome goals – the most effective way to set goals is to have a multiple goal strategy.
- Write goals down and regularly monitor progress – goals are ineffective if forgotten; write them down, being as specific as possible.
- Use short-range goals to achieve long range plans.
- Set practice as well as competition goals – practice goals should match competition performance goals as often as possible.
- Make sure goals are internalized by the athlete - consider personality and individual differences in goal setting: It is important that athletes feel in control (self-determined) of their goals – so let them set their own goals and just assist on it (positive verbalized).
- Provide goal support – this usually includes other coaches, family, friends, teachers and teammates; their job is to encourage and support the progress towards the goals.
- Set team as well as individual performance goals.

Widmeyer and DuCharme (1997) named six principles of effective team goal setting:

- Establish long term goals.
- Establish clear paths of short term goals on route to long term goals.
- Involve all members of the team in establishing team goals.
- Monitor progress toward team goals.
- Reward progress made toward team goals.
- Foster collective team confidence or efficacy concerning team goals.

(Weinberg & Gould, 2007)

To create team goals you have to consider a planning phase, meeting phase and an evaluation phase.

Now think what are your personal goals with the team and each player – will you even set personal, player specific and team goals?

Personal goals: _____

Team goals: _____

Possible goals with players: _____

How will you set those goals – describe the process.

15. Criteria for practice

CHECK the list what you got and what is missing:

- How many players do you have? _____ What age group are they? _____
What is the skill level of the majority of the players? _____
- What is the main theme of the practice? _____
- A practice has a beginning (warm up), middle (main theme) and an end (fun & cool down).
Write down the main ideas for each area:
Beginning: _____
Middle: _____
End: _____
- What time is the practice – late in the evening or after weekend games and tournaments players may be tired – consider that: _____
- How many pucks/equipment (goals, pylons etc.) do you need respectively have– make sure you have enough to run your planed drills.
- How many coaches – do you have a coach for every group on the ice or will you have to adjust the formations so that one coach can supervise more groups?
- How many goalies – as most drills are designed for at least two goalies, make sure to have a backup plan if you have less goalies than needed.
- How much practice time is there – most of talking should be done in the dressing room as the ice is for moving and practicing. Avoid time wasters as seen below (Martens, 2004):

Time wasters	Time savers
Drills in which most of the athletes time is spent waiting.	Reorganize drills so athletes are more active.
The coach talks too much.	Keep demonstrations, explanations and feedback concise.

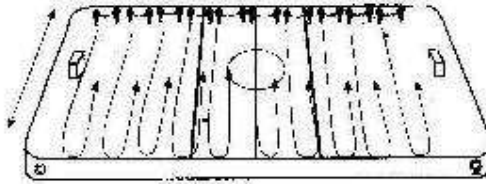
Moving between activities in the practice schedule.	Be sure you have a practice plan so you know what you'll do next and develop routines for athletes to follow when changing activities.
Practicing things that don't help athletes play the sport better; selecting useless drills.	Don't spend too much time on techniques athletes already know well; work on those that need the most improvement.
Dealing with athletes' misbehaviour.	Separate the misbehaving athlete from the team; have the team continue practicing, and then speak with the misbehaving athlete.
Insufficient facilities or equipment or not having the facilities or equipment ready.	Be sufficient organized to make the best use of the facilities and equipment available.

- How much ice is available – adapt to the given situation as most of the exercises can also be executed cross-ice, which leaves space for more groups or teams.
- Discipline –Try to foresee problems before they occur.
- How many players are there – to run practices with a large group of players on the ice the tasks must be simple and few. If the coach is flexible, there can be a lot of room on the ice or playing surface, if you divide the rink into working areas, groups or stations as seen in the following drawings: (Wahlsten & Molloy, 1997)

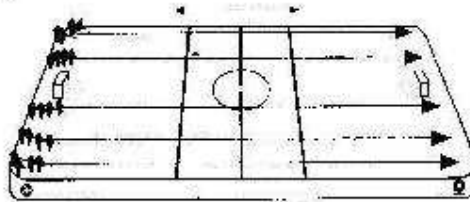
BASIC FORMATIONS

A

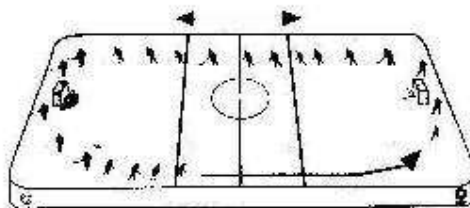
A1



A2



A3

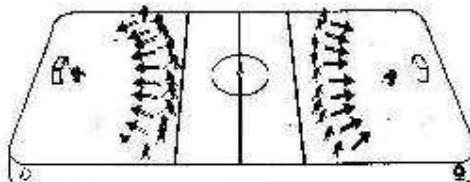


B

B1

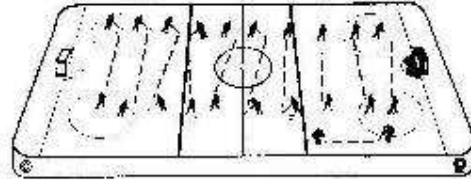


B2



B

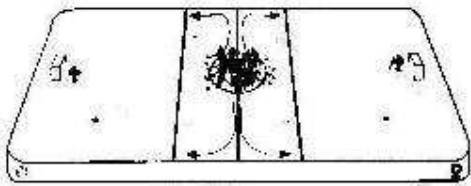
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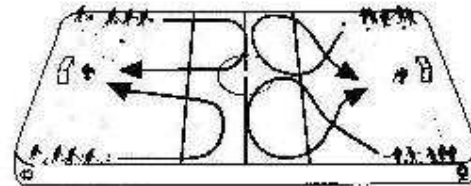
B4



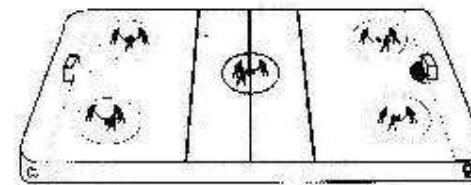
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B6



B7



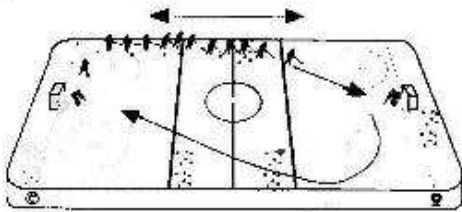
BASIC FORMATIONS

C

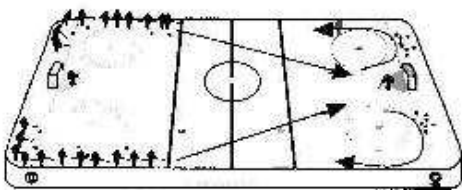
C1



C2

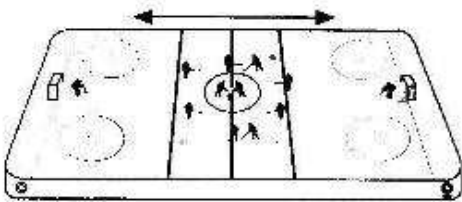


C3

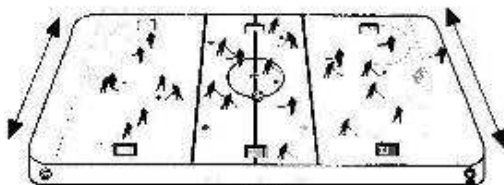


D

D1

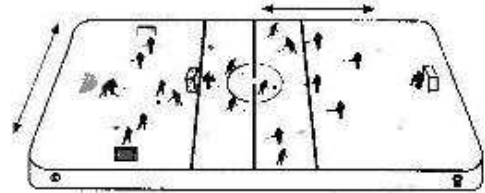


D2

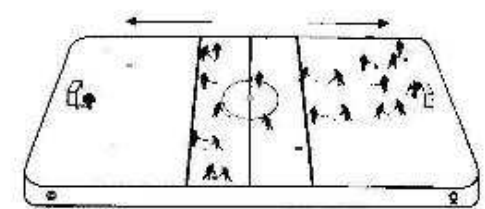


D

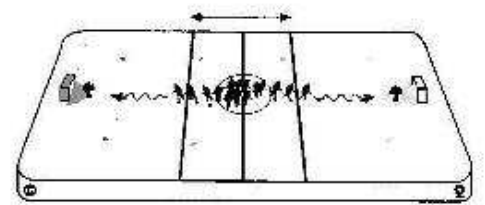
D3



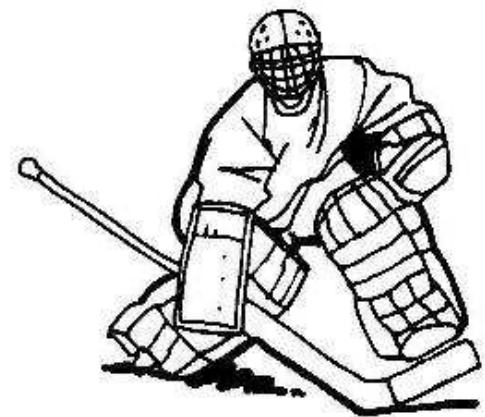
D4



E



G



16. The game or tournament

- What to consider before a game/tournament?
 - Pregame meals – make sure your players eat the right thing at the right time.
 - They got to check their clothing and equipment before coming to the game.
 - Set time of arrival before the contest – there always should be enough time to unpack, settle down and concentrate, warm up, get dressed and some last information from the coach.
 - For you as a coach always get familiar with the rink and the facility.
 - What tactics/game plan will you use - the younger the kids are the less complex any tactic should be.
 - How will you handle unplanned events?
 - How will you react when players come late?
 - What will you do if you are late if something unexpected takes place?
 - When games get postponed make sure to inform everyone in time.

Write down your ideas in brief words to each point mentioned above:

Meals: _____

Clothing needed: _____

Time for arrival – when and where: _____

The rink and facility: _____

Your tactics and game plan: _____

How will you handle unplanned situations: _____

- How will you handle situations within a game / tournament?
 - Tactical decisions:

In youth hockey tactical decisions – such as line up, who starts and how we approach the game – are basically made before the contest starts. Just make sure that all your players get to play a reasonable time of the game. The younger the kids are and the lower the level is the less need to win exists. In this case try to give all players the same time on ice, so they all have fun and get the same chance to develop.
 - Players' errors:

Basically two types of players' errors can be identified – the learning and the performance errors. It is crucial to know your players' capabilities to find the right access and the right words. No matter what you want say to your player, do it in "a quiet, controlled, and positive tone of voice during a break or when the player is on the sidelines with you."
 - Coaches and players behaviour:

Your behaviour as a coach influences your players' behaviour – if you are up your players more likely are up, if your are down or anxious your players might reflect on that. Don't over-commentate on mistakes or errors, stay in control, stay positive as the main aspect always should be having fun. Remember you're not playing for the Stanley Cup – it's still youth hockey where the main focus is to help players to develop.

Besides your own behaviour you are also responsible for your players' behaviour. Set a good example, establish team rules on how to behave and discipline when necessary. Areas to watch are: players' language; players' behaviour in general; Interaction with officials; discipline for misbehaviour; dress code for competitions;
 - Opponents and officials:

Respect them – without them there wouldn't be any competition. Remember referees are also humans as you are who make mistakes. Respect them and treat them with integrity. No matter how the opponent behaves, your team should show respect by giving the best effort. Don't allow "trash talk" and taunt as this is disrespectful towards the opponent and the spirit of the game. Basically spoken, teach your players respect for the game.

Write down your ideas in brief words to each point mentioned above:

Tactical decisions: _____

Players' errors: _____

Coaches and players' behaviour: _____

Opponents & officials: _____

- What will you do after the game/tournament?

Teach your players winning and how to cope with losing. It is also important to say some words to your players after the game either in a team circle or in the locker room – be specific, but don't criticise personally, as players won't be able to handle this well.

What are your thoughts on winning and losing – and how will you handle it respectively teach it to your players?

17. Communication

Coaching is a relational job and communication is the mechanism used to develop positive relationship between the coach and the participant.

“In summary, communication between the coach and young participant creates an environment where children can develop as individuals and team members, build competence and confidence in physical activity, and know that there is mutual support and understanding for all involved in the process.” (Walsh in Stafford, 2011)

Three dimensions of communication:

- Sending and receiving message
- Verbal and nonverbal messages
- Content and emotion of communication

Here four things which should be considered when sending verbal messages to young players:

- Be positive and honest – don’t get negative too often.
- State it clearly and simply – organize your thoughts before you talk.
- Say it loud enough, and say it again – when terms are new, kids might not understand it right away.
- Be consistent – avoid sending different messages than you want to say.

Think about your communication skills – where are you strong at and what needs to be improved?

18. Parents – communication with parents

In general be open to parents - all parents “have the best interest of their children at heart...” and therefore parents have a right to understand and be informed about all aspects of their children’s experience.

Four ideas which can help you to create a positive and helpful environment with your players’ parents:

- Be transparent about your coaching philosophy – let the parents know how you see the game, your values and believes.
- Engaging in appropriate and ongoing communication – talk to the parents about all aspects of their children’s experiences. Let them know what you think on the individual child, about his/her behavior, development and potential and always be open when parents have questions and concerns. Helpful tools for an ongoing communication are a welcome letter at the beginning of the season, an information package and a parent’s forum.
- Collecting data to guide decisions and assess progress – this will help the coach to argue on decisions he/she made as during a season discussions with parents occur about their kids playing time and so on.
- Providing social opportunities outside of the coaching context – organize a family day.

Write down three ideas you will focus on to create a positive parents-coach environment:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

19. Players' safety

General spoken: from the moment a child enters the arena for practice, reaches a defined meeting point before a game or takes part in a team activity, you as a coach are in charge and responsible for the health and wellbeing of the child.

Some additional legal duties you should keep in mind to protect your players and yourself are:

- Provide a safe environment.
- Properly plan the activity.
- Provide adequate and proper equipment.
- Match, or equate, athletes.
- Warn of inherent risks in the sport.
- Supervise the activity closely.
- Evaluate athletes for injury or incapacitation.
- Know emergency procedures and first aid.
- Keep adequate records.

(Coaching Youth Hockey, 2001)

Write down additional important safety guidelines you experienced during your time as a coach:

20. Code of character – behavioral rules – team rules

Do you insist on team rules? Are they behavioral shaped or are they based on a code of character? And how do you punish players if they are broken?

Write down some rules based on your principles and values, which are essential for the team you coach – and how you punish players who break them:

Martens (2004) provides us with six moral values which shape the character of a young athlete:

ATHLETES CHARACTER CODE		
Moral Values	Actions in Life	Actions in Sport
Be Respectful	Be respectful of other people Be respectful of others' property Be respectful of the environment Be respectful of yourself	Be respectful of the game and to its rules and traditions. Be respectful of your opponents Be respectful of the officials Be respectful in victory and defeat
Be Responsible	Fulfill your obligations Be dependable Be in control of yourself Be persistent	Prepare yourself to do your best Be punctual for practices and games Be self-disciplined Be cooperative with your teammates

Be Caring	<p>Be compassionate and have empathy</p> <p>Be forgiving</p> <p>Be generous and kind</p> <p>Avoid being selfish and mean</p>	<p>Help your teammates play better</p> <p>Support your teammates in trouble</p> <p>Be generous with praise; stingy with criticism</p> <p>Play for the team, not yourself</p>
Be Honest	<p>Be truthful and forthright</p> <p>Act with integrity</p> <p>Be trustworthy</p> <p>Be courageous to do the right thing</p>	<p>Play by the spirit of the rules</p> <p>Be loyal to the team</p> <p>Play drug free</p> <p>Admit to your own mistakes</p>
Be Fair	<p>Follow the Golden Rule</p> <p>Be tolerant to others</p> <p>Be willing to share</p> <p>Avoid taking advantage of others</p>	<p>Treat other players as you wish to be treated</p> <p>Be fair to all players including those who are different</p> <p>Give other players an opportunity</p> <p>Play to win within the rules</p>
Be a Good Citizen	<p>Obey the laws and rules</p> <p>Be educated and stay in form</p> <p>Contribute to the community</p> <p>Protect others</p>	<p>Be a good role model</p> <p>Strive for excellence</p> <p>Give back to the sport</p> <p>Encourage teammates to be good citizens</p>

How important is it for you to have behavioral based team rules or would a code of character do the same? How would you teach that code? How would you keep it working? ... Just think about it!

21. Final thoughts...

...on talent coaching vs. coaching the average

We are already in the second decade of the 21st century and where ever I have been I saw way to many coaches working with youth teams focusing on just one goal – to find this one special talent and push it to the top. May it be because the focus was to win games – and everyone knows that an extra ordinary player can win almost every youth game, especially in younger age groups, on his/her own – or because they want to show how good they are to bring one player to the top. In times where sport – no matter which one – gets more and more pushed to the sideline of our society and in addition to that children who want to participate in team sport get fewer and rare, coaching for talent, in my opinion, is out of time. Basically you don't find so many natural talents anymore, as kid's stay more at home sitting in front of the computer or TV, than improving their skills and stamina by climbing trees, playing catch or exploring the woods. We need all the kids on a team to run a team and we need all of them educated, skill and tactically trained. The times where all players on a team work and exist so one of them can make it to the “pros” are over. And can you really tell by the age of eight, ten or twelve who has the potential – by talent, physical development, mental readiness and work attitude – to make it to the “pros”. I doubt that anyone can say this for sure! Ok, there still might be some extraordinary talented kids and there will always be some kids who are just helplessly untalented for a certain sport. Put both categories together and you will get a number smaller than ten percent of the team you will coach. Nowadays we have a big mass on “average talented” players and every one of them has the same potential to make it to the top. So our main focus as coaches has to be to develop every player as good as possible – skill wise and tactically – to provide every kid with the same opportunity to go all the way, if the working attitude fits, the physical and mental development stays within the norm. Believe me, more than ever we need every player we can get and all of them – and not just the talented one – have to be developed in the best possible way to provide good quality within our team. Based on this idea my believes are, that talent alone is way not enough and our job as a youth coach is not to decide who is talented or not and who might make it to the “pros” based on his or her talent. Our job and mission as a coach of a youth teams is to teach, to develop and to treat all our players the same way and so to give them the same opportunity to reach their personal goal.

...on enthusiasm

Important in coaching, and especially when you are working with kids is to show emotion and enthusiasm. Showing just enthusiasm and having no knowledge is not enough. But you may have all knowledge and show no emotion and enthusiasm for what you do, you won't be successful either. Enthusiasm paired with knowledge is the most powerful and effective tool you possess as a coach.

So I will conclude my manual on "What to consider when coaching kids in the age of 7 to 17" with the words "Coach D" always said to us:

"Either you are fired with enthusiasm or you are fired with enthusiasm."

Anthony de Carvalho