



HOCKEY CANADA

Learning Lab – Development 1

Communication Resource Guide





The National Coaching Certification Program is a collaborative program of the Government of Canada, provincial/territorial governments, national/provincial/territorial sport organizations, and the Coaching Association of Canada.



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COMMUNICATION

Stakeholders

Stakeholders in hockey programs include:

- Staff
- Players
- Parents
- Officials
- Opposition coaches
- Arena attendants
- Scouts/Recruiters (u15 and up)
- Media (u15 and up)

What is communication?

- Communication is an exchange of information.
- When we communicate, we *send* or *receive* information such as feedback:
 - We *send* information to another person, and we use our communication skills to *link* to that person.
 - We *receive* information from other people, and we use our communication skills to better read and understand what they mean.
- Feedback can be specific, positive, and effective. It can also be vague, negative, and ineffective.

Types of communication

- Verbal
 - Use language appropriate for the age and level
- Non-verbal
 - Be aware of the messages your body is sending
- Listening
 - Let people complete their thoughts
- Written
 - Key teaching and execution points on a drill sheet
- Visual
 - Time spent on the rink board / iPad / tablet

Effective communication skills

- Being:
 - Enthusiastic
 - Positive
 - Consistent
 - Demanding but considerate
- Listening actively
- Giving effective feedback
- Explaining contributions
- Treating players as individuals

The power of communication

Confidence builders	Confidence busters
■ We can	■ We can't
■ We will	■ If
■ Expect the best	■ Doubt
■ Commit	■ Try
■ We know	■ We don't think
■ We'll make the time	■ We don't have the time
■ Positively	■ Maybe
■ I'm confident	■ I'm afraid of
■ I believe	■ I don't believe
■ Anything's possible	■ It's impossible

Communication concerns in the game

- Social media – not knowing/following MHA and HC policies
- Coaches talking the game – standing, screaming, directing, over-coaching
- No visual cues – lack of whiteboard
- Talking to players in DR without sitting – back turned, no eye contact, abuse of power
- Body language – arms flailing, negative gestures, profane gestures
- Inappropriately addressing players – put-downs
 - Bench honor: Coaches don't talk/yell at/challenge the other team's players
- Profanity – obvious! zero tolerance!
- Post-game comments – replaying game, highlighting mistakes, demoralizing players

- Disrespectful communication with players and opposing coaching before/during/after play
- Disrespectful communication with officials

Communication with officials

- Always address officials at ice level
 - Step down off the bench
 - Eye-to-eye contact
 - Good body language
 - Calm demeanor
- Shared respect
 - Avoiding abuse and harassment
- Who and when
 - Bench staff
 - Team leader (captains)?

A communication plan

Here are some examples of the kinds of communication you could have with the stakeholders in your hockey program:

- Staff (staff meetings, written set of roles and responsibilities)
- Players (one-on-one interviews or team builders)
- Parents (team meetings, fair play codes)
- Officials (off-ice meetings, communication code of conduct)
- Club or association (invitations to team meetings, copies of seasonal plan)
- League (contact list, invitations to participate in league meetings)
- Arena attendants (seek assistance on Emergency Action Plan and adherence to rules or guidelines)
- Scouts/Recruiters (u15 and up) (team roster, team bios)
- Media (u15 and up) (team roster, news releases)

As you build your seasonal plan, you will need to specify the steps you will take to create open and clear channels of communication with the stakeholders in your hockey program. In other words, you will need to indicate when, how, and why you will communicate with those stakeholders.

More information

Team meetings

Team meetings help you keep communication channels open. They also:

- Give you a chance to share your leadership skills
- Ensure that all stakeholders are aware of your coaching philosophy and plans
- Reinforce key team issues with parents

When should you meet?

Meetings should occur as often as necessary. Generally, the pre-season, mid-season, end of season, and other special occasions are the optimum times.

Pre-season meeting

Purpose

- Introduce coaching staff and summarize qualifications and responsibilities
- Present coaching philosophy
- Provide an overview of the seasonal plan, including skills to be taught
- Enlist the support of parents to handle various team duties
- Explain basic team rules and expectations of players, parents, and coaches

Mid-season meeting

Purpose

- Reinforce program's key points
- Introduce new ideas for the next part of the season
- Summarize current player development
- Solicit parent involvement for specific projects, e.g., tournaments

End-of-season meeting

Purpose

- Allow parents and players to evaluate the year, particularly program and player development, and to give coaches feedback about the season and plans for the upcoming season
- Give players opportunities to seek further development in the off-season
- Celebrate the season with an end-of-year social, including ribbons and trophies
- Always end the year on a positive note

Special meetings

Purpose

- Organize tournaments
- Plan fundraising projects
- Plan special events like team-building activities and community events

Conducting the first parent/coach meeting (after the team is formed)

Getting started (5 – 10 minutes)

- Introduce yourself, assistant coaches, manager, and trainer
- Give a brief explanation of the importance and purpose of the meeting

Coaching philosophy (10 – 15 minutes)

- Provide information on the goals and objectives of the program and discuss your expectations of the players
- Explain your coaching approach and coaching outcomes

Details of your program (10 – 20 minutes)

- Present specific information on the operation of your hockey program
- Discuss your expectations of the players and parents
- Give out copies of the Fair Play Codes

Your expectations of the parents (15 – 20 minutes)

- Organize a parents' committee to coordinate roles and responsibilities
- Let the parents participate, along with you and your support staff, in deciding the rules of parent conduct at games and team functions (e.g., parents, as well as coaches, should be positive role models for players)

Wrapping up (20 –25 minutes)

- Ask parents for further suggestions and/or comments
- Tentatively schedule next meeting

SOCIAL MEDIA

Coaches: Best practices

- Be proactive
 - Educate players and team staff
- Set guidelines
 - Make team decisions, get player input and ideas (creates buy-in and accountability)
- Look for red flags
 - Do you sense friction? When are phones a distraction?
- Create a safe space
 - Establish open dialog and an environment where players feel safe and comfortable sharing concerns

Coaches: Team policy Considerations when creating your policy...

- WHO: Who does your policy apply to? Define any differences between players and staff.
- WHAT: Encourage the entire team to define what is included (“the rules”).
- WHERE: What spaces are sensitive? Where should social media be off-limits?
- WHEN: Have a plan for when something negative occurs. What are the consequences?
- WHY: Be clear and specific about the purpose and expectations of the team and association.

Remember: Know where you are – tournaments or events may have their own rules.

Players: Best practices

- Good photo and well-written bio
- Correct spelling and grammar
- Value in the visual (incorporate photo and video)
- Balance of personal and professional life
- Balance of original and curated content
- Engage with fans, stakeholders, sponsors, team, and teammates
- Stay positive and respectful

Players: Risk vs. reward

Risk	Reward
✘ Tarnish reputation	✓ Grow fanbase
✘ Embarrass yourself (+ team, league, country, sponsor, family)	✓ Build professional network
✘ Cause friction/distraction within your team	✓ Attract sponsorships
✘ Be fined, charged	✓ Promote causes
✘ Get suspended, expelled	✓ Amplify team/league initiatives
✘ Lose sponsorship, scholarship	✓ Engage with fans
✘ Not be recruited, drafted, selected for a team	✓ Have a voice

Players: Social media 101

Do	Don't
✓ Clean up your accounts	✘ Disclose personal info about yourself or others
✓ Adjust your settings (privacy, passwords)	✘ Post when angry, upset, tired, or intoxicated
✓ Log out and lock phone	✘ Engage in controversial, heated discussions (feed the trolls)
✓ If your account gets hacked: report it, let people know	✘ Make offensive or discriminatory remarks
✓ Be aware of and abide by team/tournament rules	✘ Post content with references to drugs, alcohol, money
✓ Create an online presence that is an authentic reflection of who you are	✘ Mention companies/brands that conflict with sponsors
	✘ Engage in cyberbullying



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