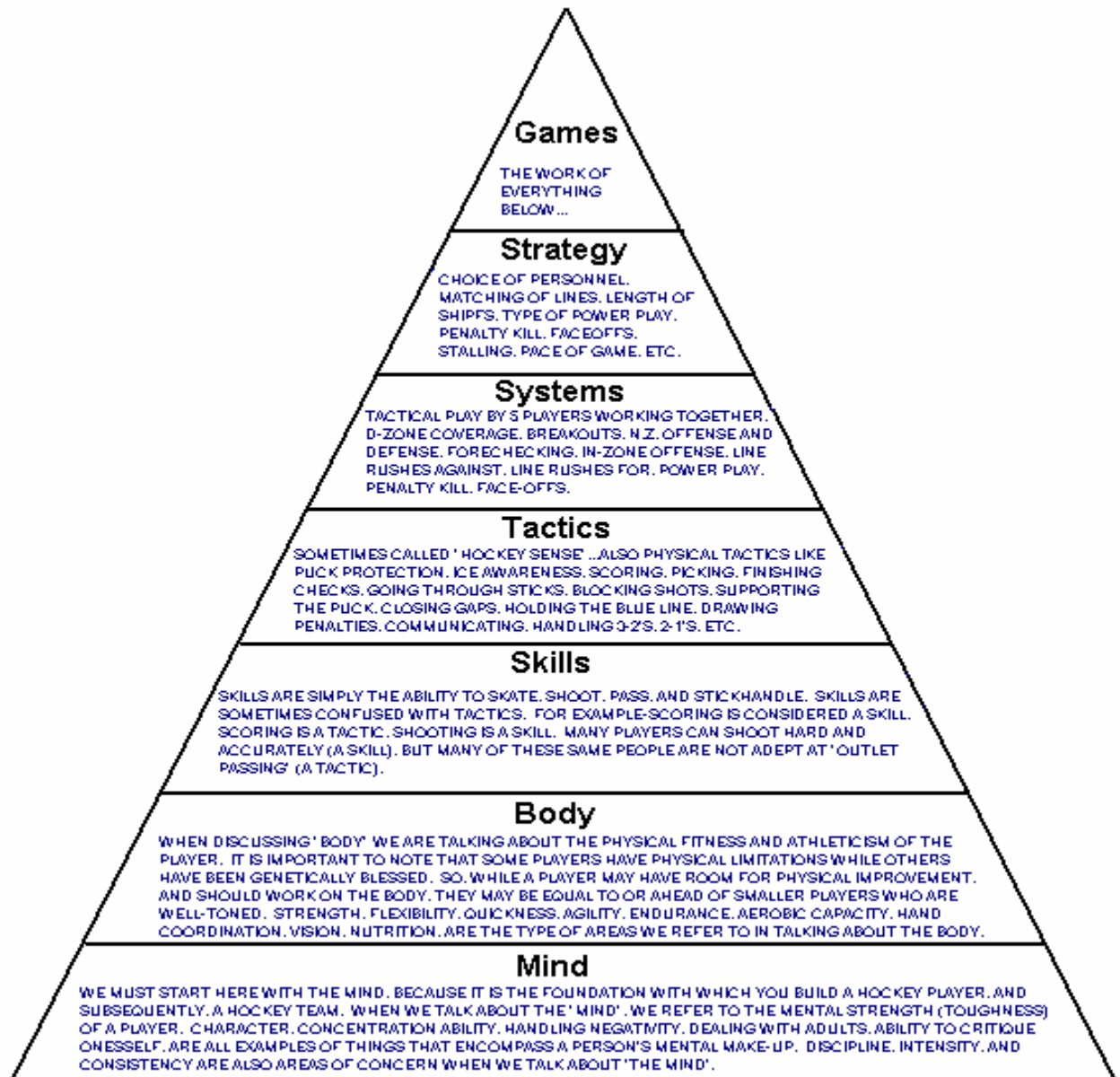


USA Hockey

Player Evaluations article

Player evaluations are one of the most important parts of coaching, which need to be stressed on an ongoing basis! Player evaluations are not just about player's tryouts and selection for a team, as this piece, while important is a fraction of what player evaluations should consist. A more comprehensive approach to player evaluations follows the player development triangle or building blocks shown below:



MIND:

Considerations for “State of Mind” should include the following:

- A player’s ability to concentrate and learn. (ex. How are they doing in school?, How do they concentrate both in the locker room and on ice?, What is their knowledge of the game? ... these are a few examples). Based on USA Hockey’s Skill Progressions for Player and Coach Development, consider giving each player a pencil & paper age specific knowledge comprehension assessment three times during the season to evaluate their knowledge of the game.
- Coachability of the player – what types of coaching & communication methods are the most effective for each of your players. Keep in mind that some players are more extroverted, while others are introverted, and different approaches need to be considered.
- What do the players see as their strengths & development opportunities? How do the coaches evaluate each player’s strengths & development opportunities? Based on this individual discussion, what are the player’s goals for the season? Then break this down into 1/3 of season for goals and integrate this plan into the practices for each player.
- Effective Communication and Listening Skills are the KEY: Be sure to have a one on one discussion with each player every time you are together and really get to know them, so as part of the evaluation, the coach can determine if there is some issue, which needs to be addressed.
- Develop a list of leadership qualities, and evaluate players based on these criteria.

BODY:

- Perform a series of physical skills testing three or four times per season. The first should be prior to the season, the second 1/3 of the way through, the third, 2/3 of the way through the season, and the last at the end of the season to measure a players physical conditioning improvements. Some of the timed or measured skills would include:
 - 40 yard sprint forwards
 - The number of push ups completed in two minutes
 - Vertical leap height
 - Time in a 2 mile run
 - 20 yard sprint backwards
 - Timed “ladder” drills
 - The number of pull ups
- While the strength & conditioning skills to be measured can vary with the coach, they are an indication of the player’s physical conditioning and athleticism. Dry-land training is an important key, to supplement on-ice time to improve the athlete’s body conditioning.
- Also being able to perform effective warm-up and stretching exercises to prevent injury should be taught to each player as measured as part of the player’s evaluation.

INDIVIDUAL HOCKEY SKILLS:

- Individual hockey skills is the most common form of player evaluation by all coaches. Look for strengths & developmental opportunities (both back wards and forwards) in the following:

- Edges
- Balance
- Stance for all
- Stride
- Stops
- Starts
- Skating
- Puck control (both stationary and with movement)
- Moving at a high rate of speed in a congested area with the puck
- Passing (forehand and backhand)
- Shooting (forehand and backhand)
- Lateral shuffle for goalies
- T-push for goalies
- Skating & puck handling for goalies
- On line & in position for goalies

Use of video taping each player will enhance learning and coaching critique for instruction. Please note that not all skills are mentioned here, but should be in concert with the age specific Skills Progressions for Player and Coach Development handbook by USA Hockey. Skills should be evaluated for practice, dry land training, and games.

TACTICS:

Tactics evaluation should include, but are not limited to:

- Puck protection
- Outlet passing
- Defense and Offense evaluation of how to play:
 - One on one
 - Two on two
 - Two on one
 - Three on two (... and etc... these are read and react drills)
- Communication on the ice
- Creating time and space if on Offense
- Eliminating time and space if on Defense
- Understanding and executing zone play based on the situation in the offense zone, neutral zone, and defensive zone (whether the player is on Offense or Defense). Please note that for purposes of discussion, a player is on Offense if his/her team posses the puck, and a player is on Defense if his/her team does not posses the puck or if puck possession is unclear.
- Goalies playing the puck and giving an outlet pass
- Goalies giving the shooter the “angle” until their head drops to take the shot, then takes it away.

Systems

A couple of measurements include, but are not limited to the following:

- Evaluation of a player’s ability to perform tactical team play when full strength in the Defensive Zone, Neutral Zone, and Offensive Zone, whether on Offense or Defense.

- Evaluation of a player's ability to perform on the power play and the penalty kill.

Please note that there are other traditional player evaluation criteria such as:

- +/-
- Goals
- Assists
- Saves
- # of times the goalie is on line and in position for the play
- Hits
- Face offs won/lost

This article is meant to stimulate the coaches to provide a total player evaluation vs. just one of on the ice performance. Individual player evaluations should be performed every time the team gets together by both the Head Coach and each Assistant Coach. These should be reviewed and aligned after each team practice, dry land training, and or game. USA Hockey has provided each coach with the Skills Progressions for Player and Coach Development; an age specific practice plan manual, and coaching manuals based on the coach's level of USA Hockey CEP Certification. Each of these tools should be used along with a personal computer to provide comprehensive player's evaluations from the start of the season through the conclusion, to ensure that the player progresses to their maximum and is ready to move up to the next level of competition by the end of season.

Thanks for participating in the "GREATEST SPORT ON ICE"!!! Best wishes this hockey season to all players and coaches!