



INTRODUCTION

REFERENCE MATERIAL



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PARTNERS IN COACH EDUCATION

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.



The programs of this organization are funded in part by Sport Canada.



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1

RINGETTE COURSE INFORMATION



WHAT IS THE NATIONAL COACHING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM?

The National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) is a coach training and certification program offered in over 65 sports in Canada. The principal objective of this program is to develop the abilities of coaches working with athletes at all levels, from community to high-performance sport.

More than 1,000,000 coaches have taken part in training, education, and certification activities offered by the NCCP since its inception in 1974. This has enabled them to acquire coaching knowledge and skills aimed at:

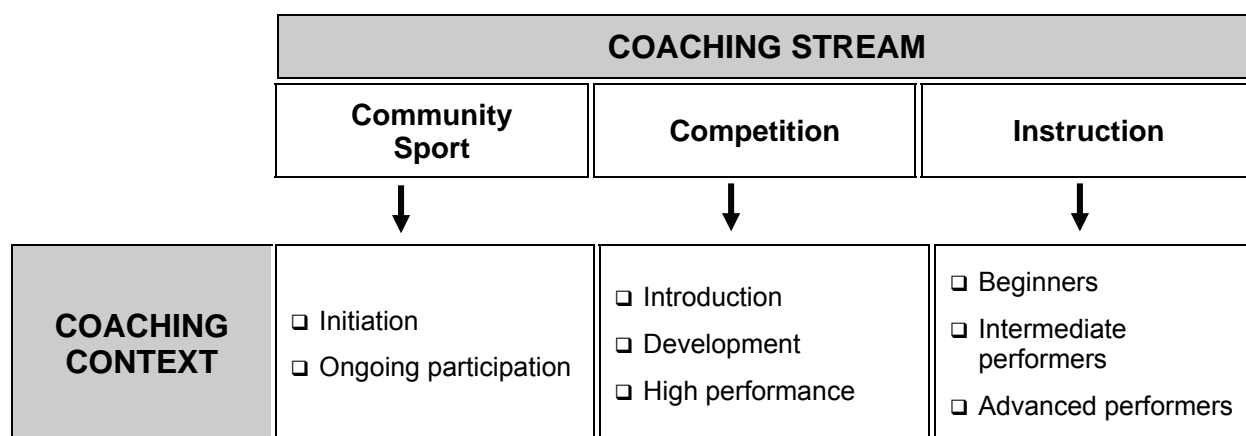
- ❑ Providing athletes with a positive sport experience
- ❑ Meeting the needs of athletes
- ❑ Providing athletes with opportunities to achieve their potential in and through sport

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.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE NCCP

The structure of the NCCP was recently revised to take into account (1) the different types of coaches that contribute to the Canadian sport system and (2) the environment or context in which they coach. This new structure is based on coaching streams and on specific coaching contexts within each stream. Three distinct coaching streams have been identified: Community Sport, Competition, and Instruction.

Each national sport organization is responsible for determining the coaching streams and contexts that apply to its coach development system.



Characteristics of the Three Coaching Streams

Each type of coach has an important role to play in the Canadian sport system and contributes in a unique way to the development of athletes under his or her care. It is sometimes hard to establish a clear distinction among the three coaching streams; in effect, there is an overlap between some of their roles and responsibilities. However, their coaching environments also differ in some important ways, especially with regard to athletes' needs.

Community Sport Stream

Community Sport coaches typically have the following characteristics:

- ☐ Many work with young children in programs that last only a few weeks.
- ☐ Many are parents who become involved in coaching because their children participate in sport.
- ☐ Many first-time community coaches have little experience in the sport they coach.
- ☐ Regardless of their experience, community coaches work in recreational or low-level competitive programs; although they may teach some basic sport skills, results in competition or performance are not the primary objectives of the programs in which they coach.
- ☐ Community coaches seek to foster a love of sport within a fun and safe environment; they create a dynamic environment in which participants interact socially with one another through sport.

- ❑ Community coaches promote participation and encourage participants, regardless of their ability level; these coaches create conditions that make sport a positive experience for all and promote participants' self-esteem.
- ❑ Traditional competitive rules may be adapted to better suit participants' needs or interests and to ensure that the sport experience is enjoyable.

Competition Stream

Coaches working in the Competition stream usually have the following characteristics:

- ❑ They work in programs where athletes seek to achieve a performance.
- ❑ They provide support to athletes in areas such as technical, physical, tactical, and mental preparation.
- ❑ They provide support to athletes in both training and competitive conditions.
- ❑ They work toward improving athletes' competitive abilities.
- ❑ They work to develop athletes over the long term.
- ❑ They use sport as a means of developing the individual in a holistic fashion.
- ❑ They teach values through sport.
- ❑ They help athletes become as good they can be.
- ❑ They create conditions in which sport is a positive experience and athletes' self-esteem is enhanced.

Three coaching contexts apply to this coaching stream, each reflecting key objectives related to athletes' long-term development and proficiency level:

- ❑ **Competition – Introduction:** For the most part, coaches in this coaching context work with children, pre-adolescents, or adolescents. They teach basic skills and tactics, and they prepare athletes for low-level competitions. Athletes train on a seasonal basis to improve their general fitness level. Fun is an important part of athletes' sport experience. Specialization is not a priority, and sport provides an opportunity to teach values and develop social skills. Examples include volunteer club coaches, coaches of athletes who are beginning to compete, and coaches of athletes who train and compete on a seasonal basis.
- ❑ **Competition – Development:** Most coaches in this coaching context work with adolescents and young adults. They help athletes refine basic skills and tactics, teach more advanced skills and tactics, and prepare athletes for provincial/territorial or national competitions. Athletes train several times a week on a seasonal or annual basis to improve performance. Although having a good time is still an important part of athletes' sport experience, the outcome of competitions is of greater importance, as athletes may have to meet predetermined performance standards. Event/discipline specialization and fitness also become important. Sport at this level provides an opportunity to teach values and ethics, and refine social skills. Examples include coaches of regional or provincial/territorial teams that train year-round, Canada Games coaches, and college or university coaches.
- ❑ **Competition – High Performance:** Coaches in this coaching context generally work with athletes between the ages of 20 and 35. They help athletes refine advanced sport skills and tactics, and they prepare athletes for national or international competitions. Athletes perform a high volume of specialized training on an annual basis to improve or

maintain performance. Although having a good time is still an important part of athletes' sport experience, the outcome of competitions becomes very important. Athletes try to reach their full potential and to attain world-class performance levels. At this level, sport provides an opportunity to implement values and to demonstrate social skills and ethics. Examples include coach of athletes who compete internationally, coaches of professional athletes, and national team coaches.

Instruction Stream

Coaches in the Instruction stream usually have the following characteristics:

- ❑ Their primary responsibility is to teach sport-specific skills.
- ❑ They instruct participants at various proficiency levels.
- ❑ Programs are primarily non-competitive.

Three coaching contexts apply to this stream:

- ❑ **Instruction – Beginners:** Coaches in this coaching context teach basic skills to individuals with little or no experience in the sport or the activity. These coaches deal with a limited number of participants at a time, and they focus on the fundamentals of the activity with an emphasis on safety, where appropriate.
- ❑ **Instruction – Intermediate performers:** Coaches in this coaching context help participants refine basic skills; they also introduce a variety of more complex techniques to individuals who already have some experience in the sport and who exhibit a fair degree of proficiency in the activity. These coaches provide more customized instruction, based on each participant's performance characteristics, and are expected to manage bigger groups. Those working with intermediate performers are expected to be fairly knowledgeable in all matters related to the selection and adjustment of equipment. Such coaches may also supervise coaches working with beginners.
- ❑ **Instruction – Advanced performers:** Coaches in this coaching context are expected to have extensive experience, as determined by each sport. They are also expected to demonstrate superior abilities in the areas of teaching skills and analyzing performance to help participants refine advanced skills. These coaches provide extensive customized instruction, including the development of new and innovative drills to address individual problems. Coaches in this coaching context are also expected to supervise coaches working with beginning or intermediate performers, and they may be required to be competent in areas other than equipment, skills, and techniques.

The table on the next page summarizes the coaching streams and coaching contexts of the new NCCP structure.

NCCP Coaching Streams and Coaching Contexts

	Coaching Stream						
	Community Sport	Competition			Instruction		
Context	Initiation	Introduction	Development	High Performance	Beginners	Intermediate Performers	Advanced Performers
Athletes or Participants	Young children	Children and adolescents	Adolescents and young adults	Adolescents and adults	All ages	All ages	Adolescents and adults
Emphasis of Program	Fun and safety	Fun; acquisition of basic skills and tactics; positive competitive experience	Consolidation and refinement of competitive skills and tactics; preparing athletes to meet national level performance standards	Refinement of advanced competitive skills and tactics; preparing athletes to meet international level performance standards	Acquisition of sport-specific skills	Consolidation of sport-specific skills	Refinement of sport-specific skills
Duration of Program	A few weeks	15-30 weeks	40-45 weeks or more	Annual	A few weeks or lessons	Variable; lessons	Variable; lessons
Training Frequency	Once a week	2-4 times a week	5-8 times a week	6-12 times a week or more	Variable; once a week	Variable	Variable
Competition Level	Recreational, community	Local, regional	Provincial/territorial and national; Canada Games	National and international	None	None	None
Support to Athletes or Participants	Safety, fun	Safety, fun, skill development, basic tactics, management in competitions	Physical, technical, tactical and mental preparation; design and monitoring of an annual sport program for national competitions	Physical, technical, tactical and mental preparation; design and monitoring of an annual sport program for international competitions	Teaching skills, correcting technical errors	Teaching skills, correcting technical errors	Teaching skills, correcting technical errors

COACH CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING/EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES IN RINGETTE CANADA'S NCCP

NCCP Outcomes

The NCCP establishes a clear distinction between *coach training/education* and *coach certification*. However, both are designed around well-defined outcomes. NCCP outcomes are statements that specify what a coach must be able to do to become certified in a particular coaching stream and coaching context. Some outcomes are fairly similar from one coaching context to another, while others are very sport-specific and context-specific.

Education and Training Opportunities for Community Sport (CSI) Coaches

The CSI Workshop is intended for coaches of B and C level teams. The workshop is ten hours long, and there is no evaluation requirement. For more information about CSI workshops, contact your national or provincial Ringette Association.

Training and Certification Opportunities for Competition-Introduction Coaches

The Competition-Introduction (C-I) context is intended for coaches of A and AA level teams. The C-I program consists of a 2.5 day training workshop which focuses on basic skills and strategies in ringette. Certification in the C-I context requires that coaches be trained and evaluated in the following outcomes:

- Planning a practice
- Ringette skill development and analyzing performance
- Providing support to athletes in training and in competition
- Designing a seasonal ringette program
- Strategies and tactics

Certified C-I coaches can meet professional development requirements by completing the training workshop in “Teaching and Learning”. The training provided in this module supplements the outcome of “Providing support to the athlete in training”.

The Ringette Canada C-I program is primarily an “Integrated” program. This means that all basic training components (general coaching and sport technical) are included in a sport-specific workshop.

Overview of the Ringette Competition-Introduction Program

A brief description of the components of the Competition-Introduction coach training program is provided below:

COMPETITION-INTRODUCTION BASIC PROGRAM:

Planning a Practice

Organize activities within a practice plan that is well structured, adapted to the participants' age, and reflects safety considerations. Distribute activities appropriately in the various parts of the practice. Identify potential risk factors for the sport and the activities. Design an emergency action plan. Identify suitable practice goals. Design activities that have appropriate characteristics for the sport, the age group, and the proficiency level of participants. Design activities in such a way as to obtain certain training effects on the athletic abilities required in the sport.

Ringette Skill Development

Identify skating, ring and goalkeeping skills suitable for players in A and AA level teams. Design drills and activities to develop these skills. Design, conduct and assess a short, on-ice skill teaching session with peer coaches.

Design a Basic Sport Program

Outline the structure of the sport program using training and competition events. Compare the major orientations of the coach's own program to those proposed by the NCCP in terms of athlete long-term development. Assess the athletic development opportunities offered through the program, and identify possible options to address identified weaknesses. Interpret information contained in a sample program designed for a family of sports, and identify training priorities and objectives at certain periods. Establish a link between a program's training priorities and objectives and the content of practice sessions on a weekly and daily basis.

Strategies and Tactics

Identify ringette strategies appropriate to A and AA level players. Design drills and activities to develop these strategies. Design, conduct and assess a short, on-ice teaching session with peer coaches.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Providing Support to Athletes in Training and in Competition: Teaching and Learning

Assess own beliefs regarding effective teaching. Analyze certain coaching situations to determine whether or not they promote learning. Create conditions that promote learning and self-esteem through (1) appropriate consideration of the affective, cognitive and motor dimensions of learning; (2) use of words and methods that relate to the athlete's preferred learning style; (3) a sound organization; (4) active supervision; (5) provision of feedback that is well-formulated, and offered at the right time and frequency. Use teaching assessment grids to gather objective information on teaching effectiveness. Interpret these data to develop an action plan to enhance teaching effectiveness.

Provincial /Territorial Ringette Associations

For all of our provincial ringette offices, please visit our website at www.ringette.ca for all the information

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2 INTRODUCTION – ROLE OF THE COACH



THE NCCP PHILOSOPHY

In the National Coaching Certification Program, coaching is about helping other people improve and achieve their goals in and through sport; it is also about creating an environment in which this can take place.

The aim of the NCCP is to:

1. Provide every athlete in a sport program with a positive experience
2. Provide an opportunity for athletes to achieve their full potential through sport
3. Use sport as a personal development tool

1. Provide every athlete in a sport program with a positive experience

Every individual who chooses to participate in a sport program must have the opportunity to have a positive experience. The benefits and satisfaction must be such that they will be motivated to keep participating.

2. Provide an opportunity for athletes to achieve their full potential through sport

Each individual has unique interests, abilities, and talents. Each athlete must have an equal opportunity to explore his or her interests and to develop his or her skills and abilities. Sport programs must represent a suitable challenge to each athlete, given his or her goals and capabilities.

3. Use sport as a personal development tool

Sport enables athletes to challenge themselves, the environment, and others. It also gives athletes an opportunity to interact with others. While sport in itself is neither good nor bad, it can be a vehicle for good.

ATHLETES' REASONS FOR BEING IN SPORT

Athletes or participants come to sport situations with their own needs, interests, and reasons for being involved. Some coaches spend more time with athletes than their teachers or even their parents do. Because of the significant influence coaches have on the development of athletes, from an athletic and a human point of view, coaches must ensure that their reasons for coaching are consistent with what athletes want or need.

This section provides an overview of the main reasons people are involved in sport and of the expectations athletes and parents may have of sport and of coaches. Coaches must recognize and respect individual differences in this area, because athletes drop out when programs do not match their reasons for being in sport. In other words, coaches need to be fair to athletes — either work to give them the program they want OR recommend a program that will better meet their needs.

In general, people participate in sport for one or more of the following four reasons:

- ☐ **A desire for *achievement*** — A wish to improve, master new skills, and pursue excellence.
- ☐ **A need for *affiliation*** — A desire to have positive and friendly relations with others.
- ☐ **A desire for *sensation*** — A desire to experience the sights, sounds, and physical feelings surrounding a sport or the excitement in a sport.
- ☐ **A desire for *self-direction*** — A wish to feel a sense of control, to feel in charge.

Coaching Tips

Achievement-Motivated Athletes

You can enhance athletes' motivation to improve and to stay in sport programs by providing personal experiences of success. One way of doing this is to set realistic, progressive goals based on past performances. Athletes then see their progress as they strive to improve.

Here are a few more ideas for making sure that athletes' needs for achievement are fulfilled:

- ☐ Point out individual improvement.
- ☐ Keep written records of progress in diaries, logs, etc.
- ☐ Schedule games or meets with suitable opponents.
- ☐ Meet regularly to discuss progress and re-evaluate goals.

Affiliation-Motivated Athletes

The affiliation motive – the wish to be part of a group and feel accepted by it – is probably the strongest and most common motive for continued participation in sport. Working as a unit, setting goals together, having fun with others, feeling appreciated by a group, and sharing with others can all help satisfy the desire for meaningful interaction.

Here are a few suggestions for making sure that the need for affiliation is satisfied:

- ❑ Make interaction with others a part of each practice; for example, have athletes do partner drills, encourage partner stretching, or have athletes coach each other.
- ❑ Have team talks after each practice. Keep these talks informal, and encourage athletes to be open and honest.
- ❑ Provide opportunities for social get-togethers after games or meets.
- ❑ Encourage athletes to help one another and to do things together.
- ❑ Have team parties.
- ❑ Remind athletes that everyone is a valued member of the team.

Sensation-Motivated Athletes

Experiences that excite the senses – for example, the sights and smells along a beautiful country trail, the feeling of being fit, the desire to move and be active, and the excitement of sport itself – can be very important motivators.

Here are a few tips on fulfilling athletes' needs in this area:

- ❑ Try to arrange workouts in areas with pleasant sights, sounds, smells, and physical feelings.
- ❑ Have athletes warm up to music.
- ❑ Provide enough activity for everyone – not too much, not too little.
- ❑ Break monotony regularly with fun or novelty events.
- ❑ Vary workouts – change the normal routines.
- ❑ Let athletes work on exciting new moves.
- ❑ Set up close games and interesting challenges.
- ❑ Ask athletes how they feel when they really flow.

Self-direction-Motivated Athletes

Sport gives people a rare opportunity to make decisions about what they are going to do – and to deal with the consequences in a non-threatening situation. As a result, there are many things you can do to assist those motivated by self-direction. For example, you can let athletes make up their own routines, moves, or plays; assess their own progress; set and adjust their own goals; or decide what play to run in a game.

In general, letting athletes make their own decisions builds greater commitment – and so increases motivation. The following pointers should help you satisfy athletes' needs for self-direction:

- ❑ Put athletes in positions of leadership. Have them lead warm-ups, choose drills to develop certain skills, etc.

- ❑ Give athletes chances during practices or competitions to make their own decisions about what strategy to use (what pitch to throw, what play to run, etc.).
- ❑ Above all, let athletes make decisions when it really matters – when decisions will affect outcomes or when parents and friends are in the stands, for example. This approach helps athletes learn to enjoy competition, and it encourages their development as true competitors.

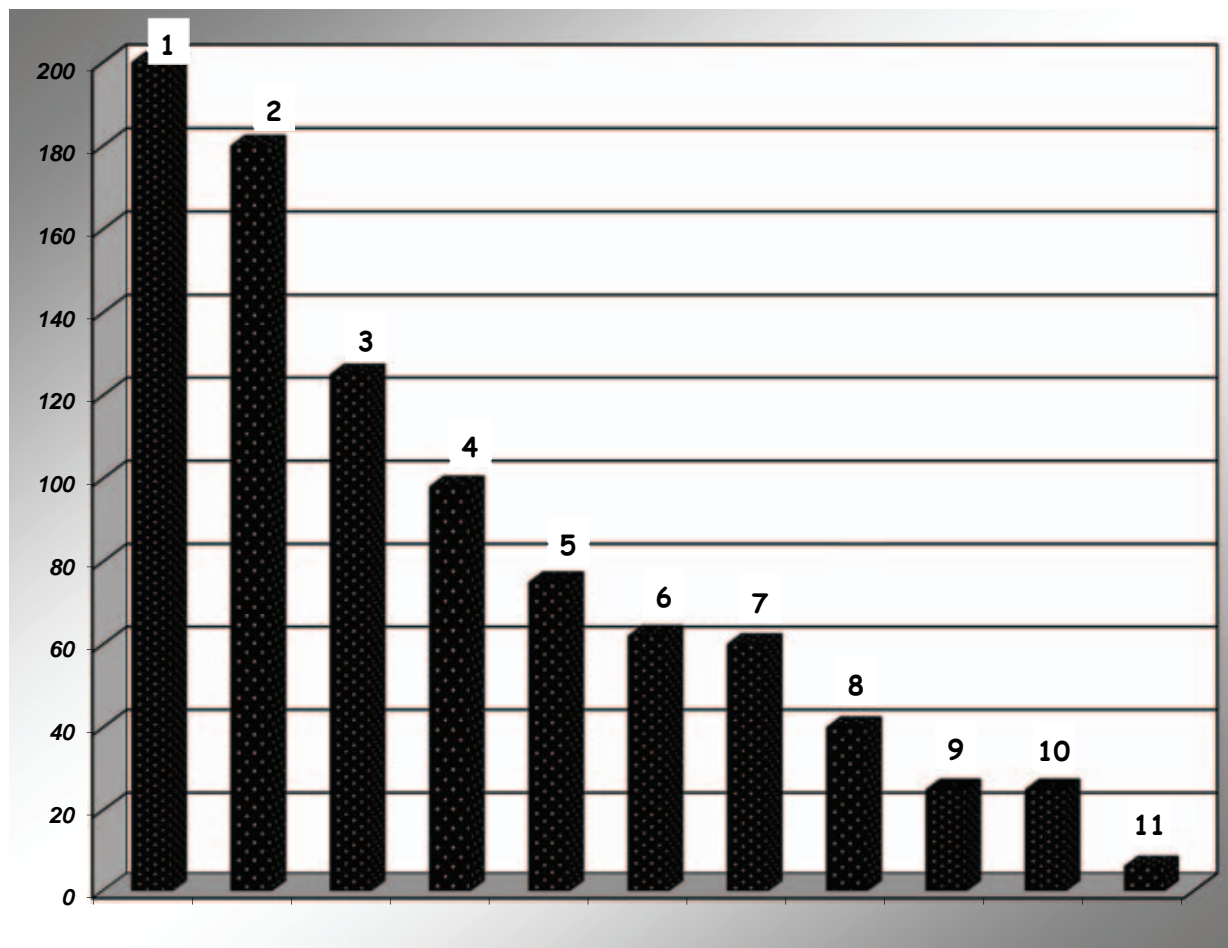
Reasons Children Participate in Their Favorite Sport

In a study of 2,000 boys and 1,900 girls in the 7th to 12th grades, Ewing & Seefeldt (1987) asked the children to rank what motivated them to participate in their favorite sport in school. The top ten reasons were:

1. To have fun.
2. To improve their skills
3. To stay fit
4. To participate in an activity at which they succeed
5. To have fun competing with others
6. To exercise
7. To be part of a team
8. To compete
9. To learn new abilities
10. To win

SPORT PARENT SURVEY¹

What Parents Expect of Coaches

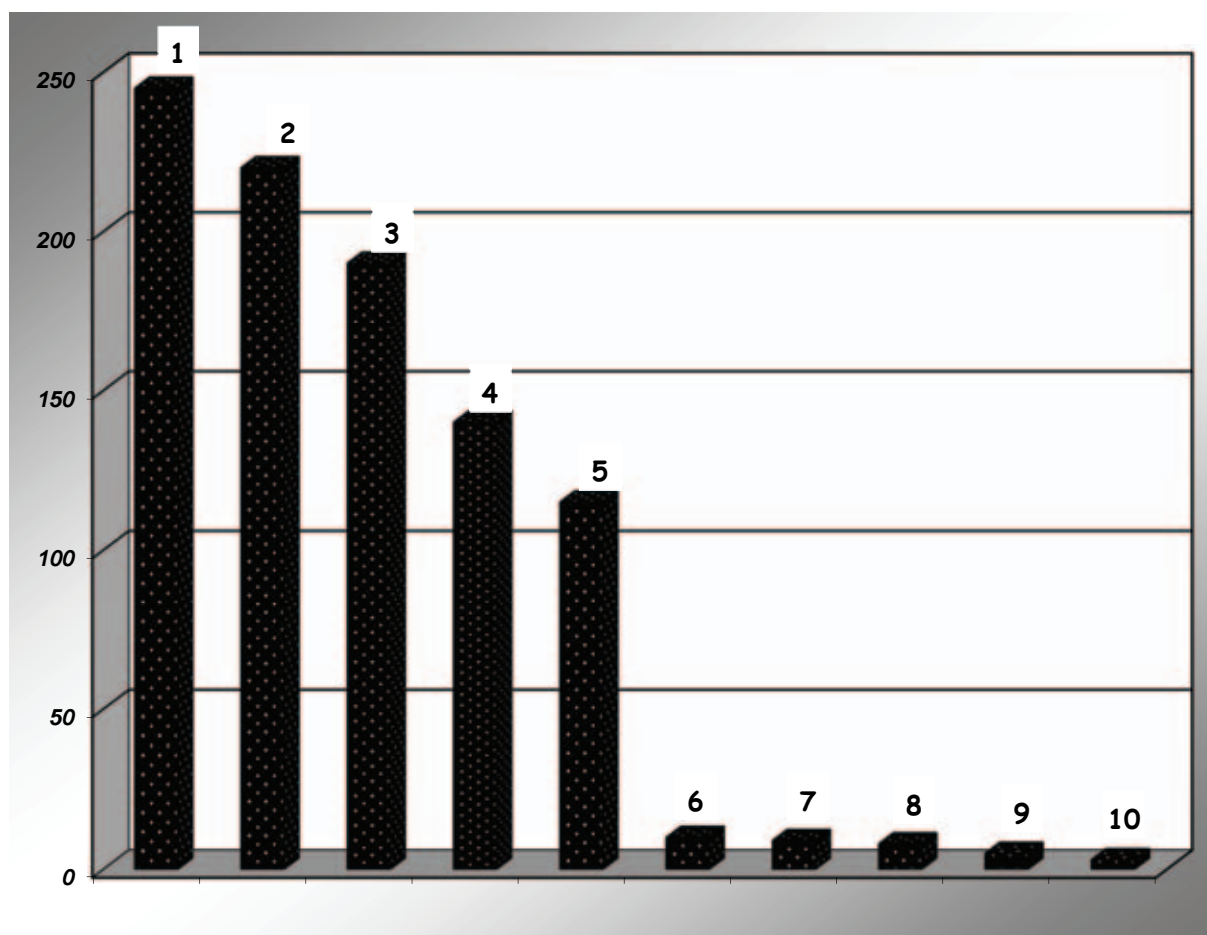


Legend

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|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Make sport enjoyable | 7. Respect rules and officials |
| 2. Respect children as individuals | 8. Give equal opportunity for playing time |
| 3. Be a knowledgeable leader | 9. Plan activities effectively |
| 4. Be safety-conscious | 10. Be approachable |
| 5. Act in a mature and adult manner | 11. Strive to win |
| 6. Be fair | |

¹ Sport Parent Survey. Ministry of Government Services, Sports and Commonwealth Games Division, Government of BC. 1994.

What Parents Expect of Sport



Legend

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. To build self-esteem | 6. Other |
| 2. To have fun | 7. To have a professional career |
| 3. To develop skills | 8. To play on a winning team |
| 4. To increase fitness | 9. To win awards |
| 5. To make new friends | 10. To go to the Olympics |

PROMOTING CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN SPORT: GENERAL TIPS

Athletes often drop out of sport because they don't get to play regularly or because achievement is overemphasized. Too serious a program, too little fun, too few chances to play, and too much criticism are all common reasons for dropping out of sport.

Since people participate in sport for different reasons, programs need to satisfy these various motives. In other words, a balanced approach that allows for personal achievement and meets athletes' needs for affiliation, sensation, and self-direction is necessary.

Coach-Parent Relationships

Parents play a key role in the sport experience of many athletes. In many cases, it is the parents who initiate the child's involvement in sport. As a result, coach-parent relationships also have a major effect — positive and negative — on athletes' experience in sport. It is therefore important for coaches to:

- ❑ Develop positive and meaningful relationships with athletes' parents
- ❑ Seek to influence parents and guide them so that they can have a positive and supportive influence on their child's sport experience

Here are some suggestions for how to develop such relationships:

- ❑ Organize a formal meeting with parents to discuss the objectives of your program and your approach to coaching. There are forms at the back of this document, in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3, you can use for such meetings.
- ❑ Describe to parents — in detail — the behaviour you will be reinforcing in athletes. For example, if you plan to reward effort rather than performance, let parents know.
- ❑ Explain to parents the behaviour you expect from them. For instance, make it clear that you expect them to show respect for officials, that you do NOT want them to yell instructions to players.
- ❑ Recognize the need for regular, open communication with parents. Since misunderstandings between coaches and parents are usually the result of poor communication, it's important to work hard at such communication.
- ❑ Be positive and open about feedback — it will build parents' trust in you and lead to an even better program.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REFERENCES



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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3

LONG TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT



LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT IN CANADA

This section presents the information on long-term athlete development (LTAD) that you will need to know in your role as a community coach in the Canadian sport system. While most countries with advanced sport systems have developed models and programs designed to ensure the sound long-term development of their athletes, the details of these models and programs vary from country to country. This NCCP and its supporting materials focus on the LTAD model used in Canada's sport system.

Eight LTAD topics are covered:

- 1 [What is Long-term Athlete Development?](#)
- 2 [What Difference Is It Making?](#)
- 3 [Where Does Community Sport Fit in Long-term Athlete Development?](#)
- 4 [Physical Literacy](#)
- 5 [Fundamental Movement Skills](#)
- 6 [Fundamental Sport Skills](#)
- 7 [Getting the Sequence Right: Fundamental Movement Skills BEFORE Fundamental Sport Skills](#)
- 8 [Physical Literacy in Community Sport](#)

What is Long-term Athlete Development?²

Children and youth need to do the right things at the right time to develop in their sport or activity — whether they want to be hockey players, dancers, figure skaters, or gymnasts. Long-term Athlete Development (LTAD) describes the things kids need to be doing at specific ages and stages in their development.

Science, research, and decades of experience all point to the same thing: kids will get active, stay active, and even reach the greatest heights of sport achievement if they do the right things at the right time. This is the logic behind the Long-term Athlete Development model (LTAD).

LTAD is a developmental pathway that guides an individual's experience in sport and physical activity. LTAD experts identified seven stages of human development, each with its own set of characteristics. The name of each stage reflects the stage's main objective (Learn to Train, for example) and is broadly linked to a chronological age range:

- ❑ Stage 1: Active Start (0-6 years)
- ❑ Stage 2: FUNdamentals (girls 6-8, boys 6-9)
- ❑ Stage 3: Learn to Train (girls 8-11, boys 9-12)
- ❑ Stage 4: Train to Train (girls 11-15, boys 12-16)
- ❑ Stage 5: Train to Compete (girls 15-21+/-, boys 16-23+/-)
- ❑ Stage 6: Train to Win (girls 18+, boys 19+)
- ❑ Stage 7: Active for Life (any age)

² The material in this section is used with the permission of Canadian Sport for Life and has been modified/adapted from its website (<http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/parents/ltad-path>).

Certain types of activities are unique to each stage. For example, Stages 1, 2, and 3 develop what we call physical literacy in a fun, stimulating environment before puberty. Physical literacy consists of the *fundamental movement skills* and *fundamental sport skills* that give children the confidence to participate in a variety of sports and physical activities throughout their lifetimes. For more information on physical literacy and its components, see Section 0.

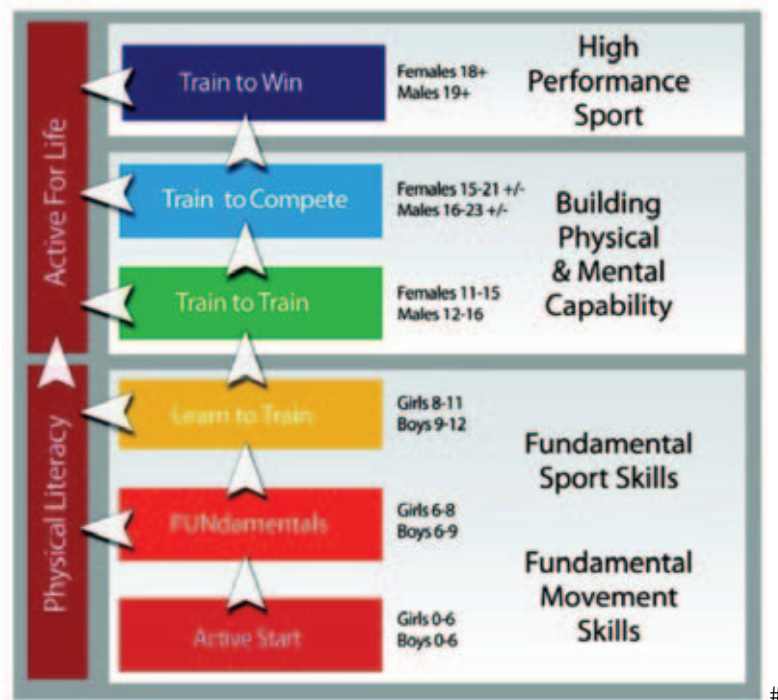
Stage 4 marks the beginning of specialized training. Being physically literate is essential for entry to this stage. Together, Stages 4, 5, and 6 represent the excellence pathway.

Stage 7 is about staying Active for Life through recreational participation in any sport or physical activity. It's also about giving back to the sport community through coaching, officiating, administration, or volunteering.

Some people will enter the Active for Life stage during their teen years, while others may choose to pursue elite sport competition for years or decades before transitioning to the Active for Life stage.

LTAD is part of a bigger movement called Canadian Sport for Life. Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) aims to improve the quality of sport and physical activity in Canada. CS4L links sport, education, recreation, and health and aligns community, provincial, and national programming. As a community coach, you are a pivotal part of the CS4L movement!

Canada's Long-Term Athlete Development Model



What Difference Is It Making?³

Canada's progress in Long-term Athlete Development is starting to change the way some organizations think about developing physical literacy. Groups of sports, led by the "on-ice" sports of Ice Hockey, Ringette, Speed Skating, and Figure Skating, are collaborating to introduce young children to the world of skating — working to develop skating skills, on-ice agility, balance, and coordination so that the child can later enter any one (or more) of these sports for healthy recreation or to develop sport excellence.

Approaching this in a different way, some local recreation organizations are offering young children the opportunity to sign up for year-round programs that combine exposure to a number of different sports, with fundamental movement skill learning opportunities and lots of skill-developing mini-games.

This new approach is also being tried by some sport facilities. Swimming pools are developing "introduction to aquatics" programs that teach water safety and basic swimming — with the opportunity to take the first steps toward competitive swimming, water polo, synchronized swimming, and diving.

With creative thinking, local recreation providers and groups of national sport organizations could put together programs such as:

- ❑ Introduction to ball games — teaching the throwing, hitting, catching, passing, and kicking skills that could lead to later involvement in basketball, volleyball, soccer, rugby, team handball, and other similar games.
- ❑ Introduction to hitting games — teaching children to hit stationary and moving objects with a variety of bats and racquets, providing the building-block skills for softball, baseball, hockey, golf, tennis, badminton, racquetball, or squash.
- ❑ Introduction to being "on-the-water" — making children safe and comfortable around boats and introducing them to the idea of propelling a boat using paddles, oars, and sails to encourage children to take up canoeing, kayaking, rowing, and sailing.

As a nation, we have to change the thinking of many groups that work with young children. Too many organizations think of children as a resource to be brought into their sport and to be kept in that single sport for as long as possible — the "get them early and keep them" approach. This "get them and keep them" approach restricts the range of physical literacy skills that children develop, diminishes their all-round athletic development, and stops too many children from experimenting with different sports — and finding the one that is just right for them. Long-term, both the sports and the children are hurt by this approach.

Where Does Community Sport Fit in Long-term Athlete Development?

Community sport represents most participants' entry point into sport, encompassing the Active Start, FUNdamentals, and Learn to Train stages. It is often in community sport that participants

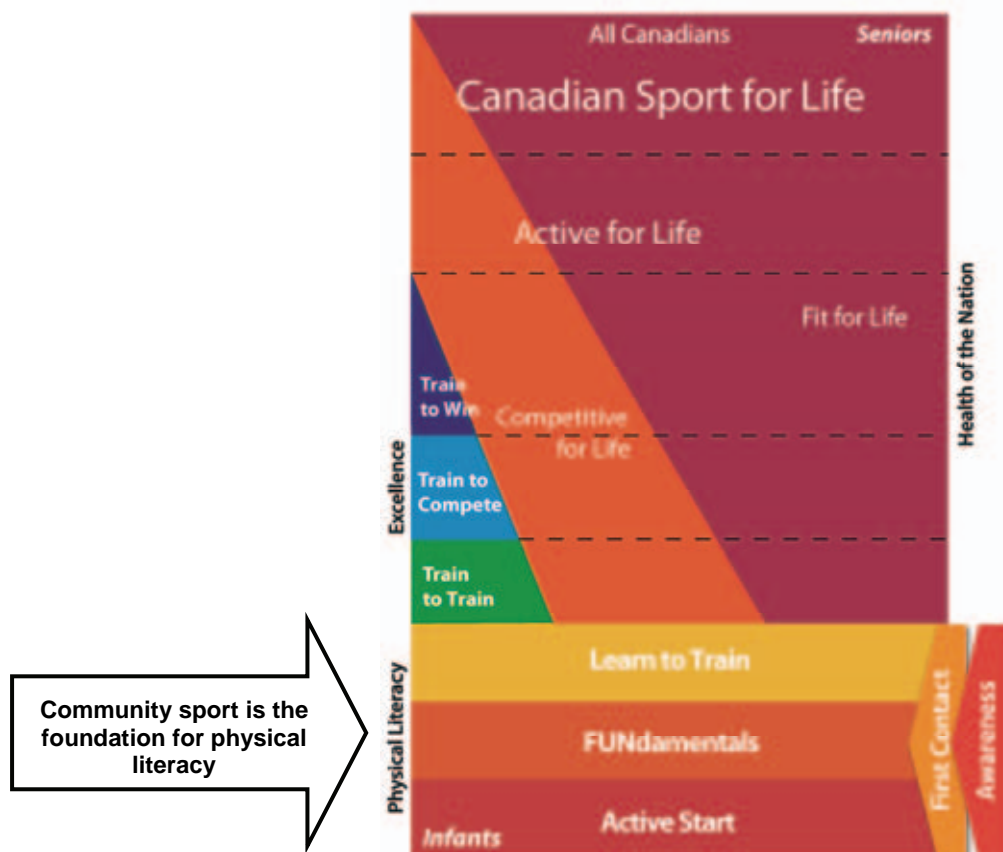
³ The material in this section is used with the permission of Canadian Sport for Life and has been modified/adapted from *Developing Physical Literacy* (<http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/resources/developing-physical-literacy>).

first develop basic sport skills and abilities and where the foundation for athlete development takes place. There are participants of all ages involved in community sport because, over time, they will choose to do one of the following:

- ❑ Increase their training commitment to a sport and progress to the Train to Train stage in one or two sports
- ❑ Move back and forth between an increased commitment stage and community sport as their abilities, interests, peer groups, personal priorities, and opportunities change
- ❑ Stay in community sport into adulthood and participate for fun and fitness

It is part of healthy child development to explore different sports. Experience has shown that:

- ❑ A focus on FUNdamentals and participation in many sports at early ages is key to elite performance as adults in sports where champions are generally 20+ years old (called “late-specialization sports” — all team sports and most individual sports fall into this category)
- ❑ Emphasis on a single sport at an early age does not result in better performance in that sport as an adult than a person who played multiple sports at a young age
- ❑ Emphasis on a single sport at an early age often results in burnout and dropout.



Note: In addition to the material in Canadian Sport for Life, which applies to everyone, there is additional information in **No Accidental Champions** that applies to Canadians with a disability.

You can find this and other resources at <http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/resources/ltad-resource-papers>.

Physical Literacy⁴

Physical literacy is the development of fundamental movement skills (see page 33) and fundamental sport skills (see page 40) that permit a child to move confidently and with control, in a wide range of physical activity, rhythmic (dance), and sport situations. Physical literacy also includes the ability to “read” what is going on around one in an activity setting and react appropriately to those events. For full physical literacy, children should learn fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills in each of the four basic environments:

- ❑ **On the ground** — as the basis for most games, sports, dance, and physical activities
- ❑ **In the water** — as the basis for all aquatic activities
- ❑ **On snow and ice** — as the basis for all winter sliding activities
- ❑ **In the air** — basis for gymnastics, diving, and other aerial activities

Why Does Physical Literacy Matter?

Physical literacy gives children the tools they need to take part in physical activity and sport, both for healthy lifelong enjoyment and for sporting success, and is a key component of Canada’s Long-term Athlete Development (LTAD) program.

Being physically active is more important to health than just about any other part of life over which we have control. Recent research suggests that it is better for your health to be overweight and active than to be of normal weight and be inactive. For this reason alone it is critical that children develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that give them the very best chance of staying active throughout their lives.

When children have confidence in their ability to take part in recreational and sporting activities without fear of showing themselves up, the probability that they will join in is high; and if they enjoy the activity they will likely continue with it. Their movement confidence develops gradually as children grow and learn, and children constantly compare their own level of ability with the ability of the children with whom they play. Physically literate children who move with skillful purpose KNOW that they move well, and this confidence encourages them to try new and different activities without fear.

Physical literacy also provides a foundation from which sporting excellence can grow.

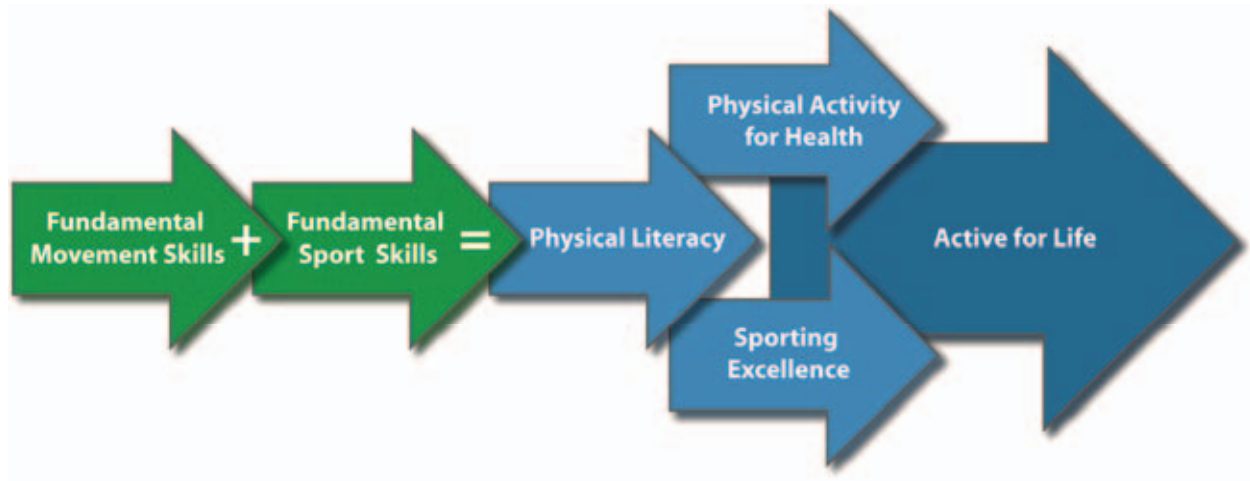
Developing the highest levels of sporting excellence in late-specialization sports requires about 10 years of deliberate practice and requires that the child first develop his or her athletic abilities and, only when these have been refined, specialize in sport-specific techniques and skills.

All too often, early overspecialization in a single sport leads to a failure to become physically literate, to poorer ultimate performance than would otherwise be the case, and to injury, burnout, and early retirement from sport.

Physical literacy is, therefore, the key to both developing habits of lifelong physical activity for enjoyment and health and to developing athletes who have the strong foundation that will permit them to reach the highest levels of international sporting excellence — to become world-class athletes.

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Physical Literacy Leads to an Active Life



What Happens if Children are NOT Physically Literate?

Research shows that without the development of physical literacy, many children and youth withdraw from physical activity and sport and turn to more inactive or unhealthy choices during their leisure time.

A child who misses out on developing physical literacy is at a great disadvantage. On the playground and in the park, children really like to play with other children who have the same level of skill as they do and who can “keep the game going,” and if you can’t keep the game going, you won’t generally be asked to join in.

Children who are physically skilled often enjoy vigorous healthy play, while the less skilled are often left out. This creates a vicious cycle; those with the skills play, and through that play further develop their fitness and skill. In contrast, those who are less skilled play less, have fewer opportunities to refine and develop their skills, and fall farther and farther behind their skilled peers. Eventually many of the less skilled children stop trying and withdraw from physical activities that would help them become fitter and develop their skills.

When and How Do Children Become Physically Literate?

Physical literacy is developed during the first three stages of Canada’s LTAD model, meaning the time from birth to the start of adolescence: from birth to approximately age 11 for girls and to age 12 for boys.

While it’s true that many children DO develop good physical skills on their own by trial-and-error, there are many who do not; and for those the consequences can be severe. To prevent this from happening, every child in Canada needs to develop physical literacy.

Developing physical literacy in our children will take the combined efforts of parents/guardians, day-care providers, schools personnel, community recreation leaders, and everyone involved in the Canadian sport system. Each has a role to play if we are to be successful.

This teaching needs to occur in a wide range of settings, and because of this, many different people need to be involved. The following figure gives some idea of the range of settings and the range of people who need to understand and be able to teach physical literacy skills.

Teaching Physical Literacy Skills

	Where?	Physical Literacy	Who?
LTAD Stage	Schools Sport clubs Community recreation Sport programs Home	Learn to Train Girls 8-11, Boys 9-12	Parents/Guardians Coaches Teachers Recreation leaders Youth leaders
	Schools Sport clubs Community recreation Sport programs Home	FUNDamental Girls 6-8, Boys 6-9	Parents/Guardians Coaches Teachers Recreation leaders Youth leaders
	Home Pre-schools Day care Sport programs Community recreation	Active Start Girls and Boys 0-6	Parents/Guardians Day care providers Pre-school teachers Kindergarten teachers

Ultimately the responsibility for developing a physically literate child rests with parents and guardians. Just as parents and guardians ensure their children are in learning situations that result in them having the ability to read, write, and do mathematics, they must also ensure their children develop physical literacy.

Fundamental Movement Skills⁵

To become physically literate, children need to master fundamental movement skills, but this mastery does not come all at once, and we need to remember that children are not just “adults in miniature.”

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Why Do Fundamental Movement Skills Matter?

Missing out on fundamental movement skills means that children are unlikely to choose to take part in a formal sport activity that requires proficiency in that skill, and this restricts their choice of lifelong health-promoting activities. It also restricts their opportunities for sporting excellence.

Being unable to perform even a single fundamental movement skill can seriously restrict later opportunities for recreational or competitive activity, as can be seen from the few examples shown below.

Consequences of a Missing Fundamental Skill



For almost every skill, the developing child needs to go through a series of developmental stages. For example, the following figure shows how throwing changes as the child matures. The goal should be to help each child move to the next most mature version of the skill he or she is learning, rather than pushing the child to perform the skill the way an adult would.

Three Stages in the Development of a Mature Throwing Pattern



Helping Children Learn Fundamental Movement Skills

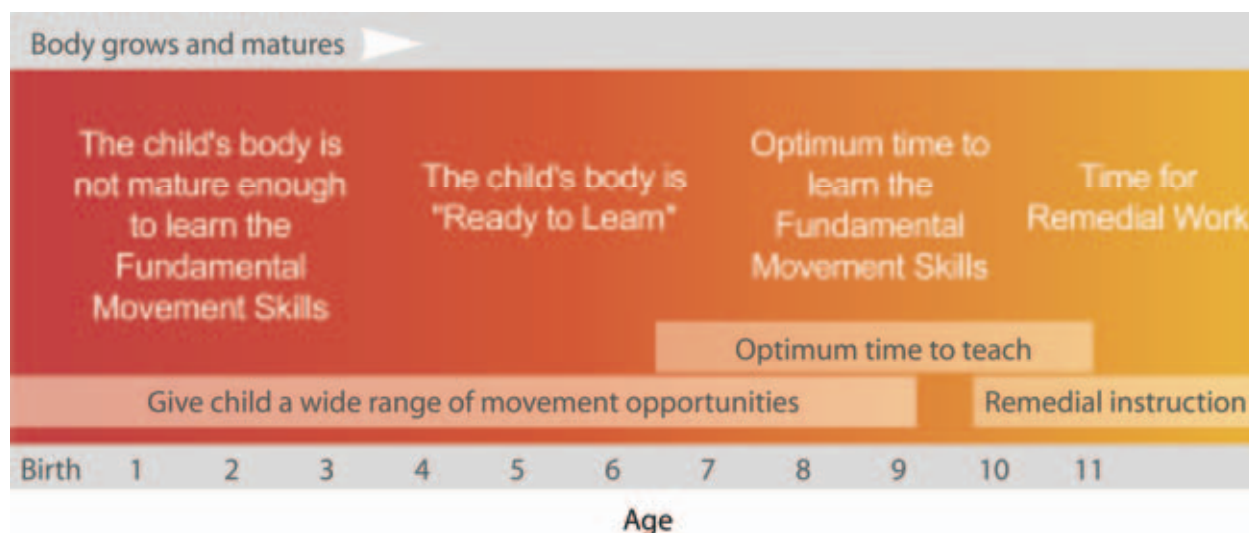
Although children mature and learn at different rates, almost all children learn their fundamental movement skills in the same sequence, and go through the same phases:

- ❑ **When a child can learn a skill:** As a child grows and develops (matures), nerve cells make more connections, while at the same time, the muscles of the body are getting stronger. Until the brain is mature enough and the muscles strong enough, the child simply cannot learn the skill, and trying to teach the child does little good. What is

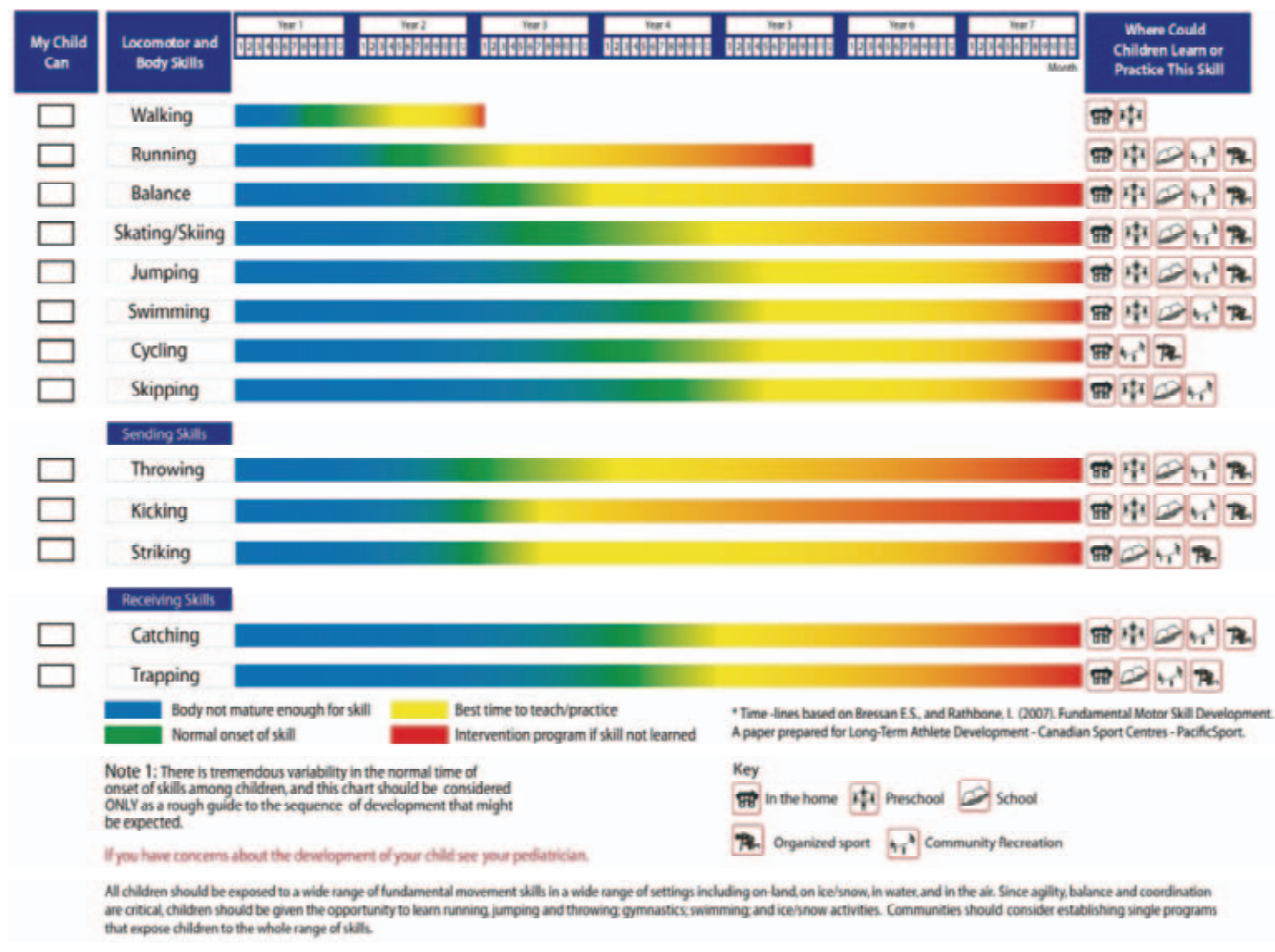
important at this time is providing the child with as many opportunities to explore all possible movements in a rich environment — which means that the child's environment needs to be both safe and challenging.

- ❑ **The child is ready to learn the skill:** At a certain point in maturation, all the hardware — the muscles and nerves — have developed enough that the child has the potential to perform a particular skill (the readiness factor) and now has to learn it. As the skill begins to emerge naturally, learning can be dramatically improved through opportunities for fun practice using lots of different equipment and materials. Giving the child some simple instruction and lots of practice can help the child develop confidence that stays with him or her for life.
- ❑ **The optimum time to learn the skill:** For every emerging skill there is a “best” time for the child to learn. At this time, helping the child through simple instruction and practice can improve learning and pay great dividends. While the “best” time to teach a particular skill to an individual child varies, there is great consistency in the sequence in which children learn skills. An indication of the best time to teach some of the more common fundamental movement skills can be found in the figure below.
- ❑ **Time for remedial work:** If the child goes too long without learning a skill, then learning it may become more difficult. However, the sooner the child starts to overcome the learning deficit, the easier it will be to catch up — and develop the skill and confidence needed to be fully active with friends and peers.

Learning Fundamental Movement Skills



When and Where Children Learn and Practise Fundamental Movement Skills



Sports That Contribute to the Development of Fundamental Skills

	Types of Fundamental Skills											
	Agility	Balance	Coordination	Running	Jumping	Swimming	Sliding/skating	Sending object	Receiving object	Dribbling	Striking	Rhythmic
Acrobatic sports	■	■	■	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	■
Aquatic sports	■	■	■	□	□	■	□	■	■	□	□	■
Combative sports	■	■	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	■	□
Dance	■	■	■	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	■
Ice/Snow sports	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	□	□	□	□	□
Individual sports	■	■	■	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
On-water sports	□	■	■	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□
Para sports	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	□	■	□
Racquet sports	■	■	■	■	■	□	□	■	■	□	■	□
Target sports	□	■	■	□	□	□	■	■	□	□	□	□
Team sports	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	□

■ Sports that are strong developers of this type of fundamental skill
 ■ Sports that are moderate developers of this type of fundamental skill
 □ Sports that are weak developers of or do not develop this type of fundamental skill

Sport groupings

Acrobatic sports *Gymnastics *Rhythmic Gymnastics Freestyle Aerials *Trampoline Sport Parachute *Diving Ski jumping	Aquatic sports *Swimming Synchro Waterpolo	Combative sports Bosing Fencing Judo Karate Taekwondo Wrestling	Target sports Archery Biathlon Shooting Golf Lawn bowls Bowling Curling	Ice/Snow sports *Figure Skating Speed skating Bobsleigh Skeleton Luge Alpine skiing Freestyle skiing Snowboarding Cross-country skiing	Individual sports Athletics Cycling Equestrian Triathlon Weightlifting	Racquet sports Badminton Racquetball Squash Table tennis Tennis	Team sports (ice) Broomball Hockey Ringette Team sport (floor) Basketball Volleyball
Team sports (Field) Baseball Cricket Field hockey Football Lacrosse Rugby Soccer Softball Ultimate frisbee	On-water sports Canoe/Kayak Rowing Waterski Wakeboard Yachting	Para sports Goalball (Visually impaired) Boccia (Cerebral Palsy) Wheelchair rugby (Quadriplegia) Sledge hockey (Various disabilities)	Notes: ■ For Para sports (sports for persons with a disability) running includes alternate means of locomotion, including wheelchairs. Sports in red: Indicates the most common sports for persons with physical or intellectual disability. *Early specialization sports				

The ABCs: Useful In All Sports

Agility, balance, coordination, and speed are valuable in almost all sports. Developing the ABCs — agility, balance, and coordination — is an important part of physical literacy, and there are a number of activities in which they can be learned and refined.

Some sports and activities are better at developing one or more of the ABCs than others, and the key sports are:

- ❑ Gymnastics is a great way for young children to learn and develop their ABCs, while athletics (track and field) is a great way to develop speed and coordination.
- ❑ Skating and skiing provide great opportunities for the development of balance, coordination, and speed, while soccer helps with speed, agility, and coordination.
- ❑ In addition to developing confidence and safety in the water, swimming or synchro (Aquasquirts) develops balance and coordination.
- ❑ Cycling, skateboarding, and horse riding all develop balance and the judgment of speed.

Some Other Skills to Develop

It's easy to understand why physical literacy needs to include the skills of running, jumping, throwing, kicking, catching, and other skills, along with agility, balance, coordination, and speed. But there are two other skills whose importance is less obvious: prediction and interception.

Think for a moment about what it takes to catch a softball hit high into the air.

As the catcher, the child needs to be able to:

- ❑ See the ball leave the bat, and predict where it will land.
- ❑ Move to where he or she thinks the ball will land — and get there for when the ball arrives. This is the ability to intercept the ball, and this is a physical literacy skill that needs to be learned.
- ❑ Catch the ball!

This ability to predict and intercept is also critical to many stick, bat, and racquet sports, where the child needs to predict where the ball or puck is going, and then move the bat, racquet, or stick so that the moving “stick” makes solid contact with the moving “ball.”

Learning to predict and intercept requires two things and is helped by a third:

- 1 Lots of opportunities to try to catch, intercept, and hit lots of different-sized and different-shaped objects moving in many different directions at many different speeds. Many children find it much harder to do this with small balls moving slowly than with balls moving a bit faster.
- 2 Good instruction, particularly about how to position the body and what to look for.
- 3 Sufficient maturation of the brain and vision, which usually happens between the ages of 4 and 7.

Fundamental Sport Skills⁶

Running, jumping, catching, kicking, throwing, and hitting something with a stick, bat, or racquet of some kind are the basic building blocks of the many sports played by the vast majority of people on earth. A person who can perform these fundamental sport skills well can learn to play many sports with ease. Making good decisions in sport situations is another skill fundamental to each sport.

What's the Difference between Fundamental Sport Skills and Fundamental Movement Skills?

Throwing is a fundamental movement skill — and a child learning this skill will learn to throw lots of different-sized balls with one hand or with both hands and will learn to throw the ball at different speeds — sometimes for accuracy using a lot of different targets and sometimes for distance.

When the child learns to throw a softball, using a softball pitching motion and trying to get the ball to pass over home plate, he or she has moved from learning a fundamental movement skill to learning a fundamental sport skill.

Getting the Sequence Right: Fundamental Movement Skills BEFORE Fundamental Sport Skills⁷

For children to have success in sport — either as a health-related recreational activity or in competition — it is important that they master fundamental movement skills before learning fundamental sport skills, and important that they learn fundamental sport skills before being introduced to specific techniques.

A couple of examples might help:

- Kicking skills:
 - In the **Fundamental Movement Skill** stage, children learn the basic kicking action, ideally with each foot. They kick a wide variety of balls and try different things — kicking as far as they can, kicking to hit a target, kicking to keep the ball on the ground, kicking the ball as high in the air as they can.
 - In the **Fundamental Sport Skill** stage (e.g., soccer), children learn to kick a soccer ball without touching the ball with the hands. They learn how hard they have to kick the ball to get it to another team member and how to kick the ball with the inside of the foot to increase passing accuracy.

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- ❑ Catching skills:
 - In the **Fundamental Movement Skill** stage, the child learns to catch — with both hands together in a two-handed catch, and then with one hand. They catch a wide variety of balls of different sizes and weights and learn to catch the ball while they are standing still and when moving toward the ball — skills that can be transferred to any sport they later take up.
 - In the **Fundamental Sport Skill** stage (e.g., baseball), the child learns to catch a baseball, using a baseball glove. As skill level improves, the child learns to catch the baseball first when it is thrown and then when it is hit with the bat — learning to catch it at ever greater distances from where it is hit.

Physical Literacy in Community Sport⁸

Physical Literacy during the Active Start Stage

Ages: 0-6

Objectives: Learn fundamental movements and link them together into play (www.ltad.ca).

Physical activity is essential for healthy child development during the critical first six years of life and is especially important during the first three years, since brain growth is extremely rapid, and learning creates more brain cell connections than in later years. Among its other benefits, physical activity during this time:

- ❑ Lays the foundation for future success in skill development by helping children enjoy being active, learning to move efficiently, and improving coordination and balance
- ❑ Creates neural connections across multiple pathways in the brain, particularly when rhythmic activities are used
- ❑ Enhances development of brain function, coordination, social skills, gross motor skills, emotional development, leadership, and imagination
- ❑ Helps children to build confidence and develop positive self-esteem
- ❑ Helps build strong bones and muscles, improves flexibility, develops good posture, improves fitness, promotes a healthy body weight, reduces stress, and improves sleep

Things to Think About

At this age, physical activity should always be fun and part of the child's daily life, not something he or she is required to do. Active play in a safe and challenging environment is the best way to keep children physically active.

Organized physical activity and active play are particularly important for the healthy development of children with a disability if they are to acquire habits of lifelong activity. Because this is a period when children with a disability rapidly outgrow their mobility aids, communities

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need to find effective ways — for example, equipment swaps or rentals — to ensure that all children have access to the equipment they need to be active.

Children with sensory disabilities (visual impairment or hearing loss) often require more repetitions to learn movement skills and different ways of getting information from the instructor. To find out more, contact your local organization providing support for persons with the specific disability.

Active Start — Physical Literacy Activities

Encourage the child to run — not just in a straight line, but with stops and starts and changes in direction. Tag and chasing games are excellent.

Play catching games with the child. Use a wide range of soft objects and balls of different sizes. Start with catching a large ball with two hands, and progress toward smaller balls and eventually one-handed catching. Remember — balls that don't bounce too much are great for learning, as are bean-bags.



Play games making body shapes — upside-down and right-side up. Pretend to slither like a snake, and roll like a rolling pin on the floor or down a small grassy slope.

Play throwing games — and start with soft objects that the child can hold easily in his or her hand. Try to get the child to throw at a target and sometime to throw as hard as they can. Get children to use both the left and right hand when they throw.

For quiet times or when in small spaces, play balancing games. Stand on one foot and then try the other — try balancing on different body parts, and try walking along any painted lines on the ground.

Jump, make shapes in the air, jump to see how high the child can go or how far. Make imaginary “rivers” and get the child to jump from one bank to the other. Try jumping from one foot or from both. Make sure the child bends at the knees when landing.

Introduce children to water activities and learn-to-swim programs. Get them on skates or skis and out on the ice or snow so that they learn to slide.

Ride a tricycle, or a bike — with or without training wheels to develop dynamic balance.

Formal competition is not recommended for this stage.

Physical Literacy During the FUNdamentals Stage

Age: Boys 6-9, Girls 6-8

Objective: Learn all fundamental movement skills and build overall motor skills (www.itad.ca).

This is a critical stage for the development of physical literacy, and it is during this time that the foundations of many advanced skills are laid down.

Skill development for children this age is best achieved through a combination of unstructured play in a safe and challenging environment and quality instruction from knowledgeable teachers/leaders/coaches in community recreation activities, schools, and minor sport programs.

Skill development during this stage should be well structured, positive and FUN and should concentrate on developing the ABCs of agility, balance, coordination and speed, plus rhythmic activities.



Hand and foot speed can be developed especially well by boys and girls during this stage and if this window of opportunity to develop speed is missed, body speed later in life may be compromised.

This is a great age for children to take part in a wide range of sports — and they should be encouraged to take part in land-based, water-based, and ice-/snow-based activities at different times of the year.

It is important that all children,

including those with a disability, master fundamental movement skills before sport-specific skills are introduced.

Strength, endurance, and flexibility need to be developed, but through games and fun activities rather than a training regimen.

Learning to “read” the movements going on around them and to make sound decisions during games are critical skills that should be developed at this stage.

Things to Think About

Children this age should not specialize in a single sport. Although they may well have a preferred sport that they take part in once or twice a week, they should take part in other sports or activities at least 3 to 4 times per week.

Children this age have a strong sense of what is “fair” and should be introduced to the simple rules and ethics of sports. Basic tactics and decision-making can be introduced.

Using equipment that is the right size and that fits well makes learning activities much more enjoyable and also safer. Equipment swaps and rentals are one way to keep the cost of participation down — and this is particularly important for children with a disability who need specialized sports equipment.

Fundamentals — Physical Literacy Activities

Encourage children to engage in unstructured physical play with their friends every day, regardless of the weather.

Continue to play catching, throwing, hitting, running, and other physically demanding games with both boys and girls.

If possible, enroll children in programs that offer a wide variety of different activities (multi-sport programs) or in a wide range of different activities. Try as many different activities as possible.

Provide lots of opportunities for children to practice skills using modified games and activities. Encourage children and their parents to practice at home to help children move from competency to proficiency, demonstrate confidence, and enjoy their participation in sport.

Attend parent-teacher or other school meetings and advocate for quality physical education programs in the school — with sufficient time allocated (recommended allocation 150 minutes per week — 30 minutes per day) taught by a qualified physical educator.

Don't be concerned with the score. At this age many programs that include competition don't keep score. This puts the focus of the program on learning and having fun, rather than on doing whatever it takes to win matches, games, and leagues.

Don't believe the myth that early specialization in sports such as soccer or hockey will lead to far better performance later in life. Developing all-round athletes at this age is far better, but remember that a few sports (such as gymnastics and figure skating) do require early specialization.

All competition opportunities should be FUN based.

Putting Competition in Its Place

Historically, the competition structures in many Canadian youth sports have created a situation where young athletes compete too much and practise too little. There are a variety of reasons why.

Often, it has been the result of the desire of parents and coaches to see “real games” and watch their children compete for trophies and titles. We tend to see children as miniature adults, and we want to watch them play the “real” game and compete like our sports heroes.

Other times it has been due to a simple lack of facility time, so sport groups sacrifice practice and training hours to “get the games played.” Children learn skills best during these early stages. Too often, this window of opportunity is missed because competition shifts the focus from skill development to winning.

Over-competing and undertraining can have significant negative effects on athlete development:

- ❑ Athletes develop an increased risk of overuse injuries to muscle and bone structures.
- ❑ Athletes face a greater chance of burnout and dropout from activity.
- ❑ Athletes reinforce bad habits in skills performance.

To avoid these problems, competition structures and calendars need to be adjusted to meet the needs of athletes, not coaches, clubs, and parents. The challenge is that dysfunctional competition structures can become “tradition” in certain sports and regions. It becomes difficult to introduce changes even if the changes can significantly benefit the playing experience of the children and their long-term development as athletes.

Good Rationale for Competition

Competition structures such as leagues, tournaments, and season calendars need to be backed by a good rationale. We should ask one question: How does the competition format and schedule serve the best development of the athletes?

Research shows that there are optimal training-to-competition ratios that optimize athlete skill development. By scheduling training and competition according to these ratios, competition will foster long-term athlete development and success while reducing the likelihood of burnout and dropout from activity.

At the same time, competitions and competitive events should also be designed and selected according to the quality and level of competition in relation to the developmental needs of the athlete.

Role of Competition

Training and competition schedules need to be adjusted at different LTAD stages to ensure optimal development and performance. At early stages, practising is much more important than competing. At later stages, competing and performing steadily increase in priority.

The table below outlines general recommendations for training-to-competition ratios. In later stages, competition can also include competition-specific training such as practice games, time trials, or other training tools that mimic competition.

Stage	Recommended Ratio
Active Start	No specific ratios; little or no competition
FUNdamentals	All activity FUN based
Learn to Train	7 practices to 3 competitions/games
Train to Train	3 practices to 2 competitions/games
Train to Compete	2 practices to 3 competitions/games, including competition-specific training

Source: <http://canadiansportforlife.ca/ten-key-factors/more-about-competition>

Physical Literacy During the Learn to Train Stage

Age: Boys 9-12, Girls 8-11 (ends with the onset of puberty)

Objective: Learn overall sport skills (www.ltad.ca).

This is the most important stage for the development of sport-specific skills as it is a period of accelerated learning of coordination and fine motor control. It is also a time when children enjoy practising skills they learn and seeing their own improvement.

It is still too early for specialization in late-specialization sports. Although many children at this age will have developed a preference for one sport or another, for full athletic development they need to engage in a broad range of activities, playing at least 2-3 different sports.

While competition is important, it is learning to compete that should be the focus — not winning. For best long-term results, 70% of time in the sport should be spent in practice, with only 30% of the time spent on competition.

This is an important time to work on flexibility.

Develop endurance through games and relays.

Things to Think About

This is the time to develop and refine all fundamental movement skills and learn overall sport skills. The brain is nearing adult size and complexity and is capable of very refined skill performance. Late developers (those who enter puberty later than their peers) have an advantage when it comes to learning skills as the Learn to Train stage lasts longer for them.

By this age, children have developed clear ideas about the sports they like and in which they feel they have success, and this should be encouraged. The focus should be on playing at least 2-3 sports in different seasons. Focusing only on one sport year-round should be discouraged.

Learn to Train — Physical Literacy Activities

Continue to encourage children to engage in unstructured physical play with their friends every day, regardless of the weather.

Enroll children in minor sport programs each season, and have them try different positions or events — they might find something they are very good at that was unexpected.

Encourage children to take every opportunity to play different sports at school, during physical education classes, in intramurals, or on school teams if their school has them.

Try to have children take part in some land-based, some water-based, and some snow-/ice-based activities.

Keep children working on flexibility, speed, endurance, and strength. For strength activities, they should use their own body weight, Swiss balls, or medicine balls — not heavy weights.

Keep sport and physical activity FUN.

Tracking the End of Childhood

The Learn to Train stage of development ends with the onset of puberty and the rapid growth that accompanies this important life event. There are some simple ways to track the onset of adolescence, and many parents already have the tools and the records that can help.

Many parents go through the birthday ritual of measuring how tall a child has become — and often have the birthday heights etched on the kitchen door frame. Recording these heights on each birthday tells us how tall the child is, and if we look at how much the child has grown since the last birthday we get a measure of how fast he or she is growing. This is called the “height velocity”.

During the years from about age 6 until the onset of puberty, children grow at a fairly constant rate, usually about 5-6 cm per year. If you keep track of this and then one year this value has increased, you’ll know that the child is starting the adolescent growth spurt and puberty is not far behind. Recording and plotting height every 3 months from about age 8 onward provides an even more accurate picture. For more details, see the document “The Role of Measuring Growth in Long-term Athlete Development” at www.ltad.ca.

A recommended practice-to-competition ratio is 7 practices to 3 competitions/games.



Ringette LTAD Reference

WATCH ME START - ACTIVE START STAGE

Age 0-6 years (girls and boys)

0-18 months: infant (child with parent or support person)

18 months – 3 years: toddler, mature walker (child with parent or support person)

3 – 6 years: preschool independent (may require parent or support person)

- Participants with an intellectual disability can enter at any age (with parent or support person)
- In Active Start participants are identified by stage of development (not age). Each stage has a plus/minus 4 month expected minimum variant associated with the approximate ages listed above. There may be considerable overlap between Active Start and Fundamentals stages.

General Objectives

- Initiation of fundamental movement and development of physical literacy through general sport participation
- To introduce overall motor skills like balance, coordination, agility in a fun and safe environment that promotes self-confidence on skates.
- To introduce all fundamental movement skills, including skating
- To develop an awareness of ringette and create a welcoming environment for all participants

Guiding Principles

- Fundamental movement skills, agility, balance, coordination and skating skills learned through the process of “play”
- Participation in community-based learn-to-skate programming that is well-planned and well-structured
- Create a stimulating, positive learning environment through active, creative, imaginative play.
- Activities are continuous and fun for all
- Parents or support person should participate with the child
 - Parents are important to introduce participants to a range of activities, provide encouragement and participate in activities such as parent days, winter festivals and parent/child classes
 - Parents provide support and share a spirit of participation and a joy of learning new skills
- Encourage participation in a variety of non-structured supervised activities, including skating with family and friends
- Encourage participation in gymnastics, swimming programs to help develop physical literacy
- Encourage a variety of daily physical activities, at least 60 minutes of non-structured supervised activities every day
- Movement skills (adaptation to ice, snow, water, ground, air) – skating, passing, receiving, running, jumping, gliding, throwing, catching, wheeling, climbing, etc.

- Motor skills – agility, balance, coordination, speed, time/space orientation, etc.
- Technical instruction should be limited, with minimal feedback on skills
- Encourage movement exploration within a safe, structured environment
- Maintain a 1:5 adult/participant ratio (or lower to 1:1) to provide quality supervision. With children under 4 years, the ratio should be 1:1

What does an Active Start Learn to Skate program look like?

- Programs focus on having FUN and becoming comfortable on the ice using simple group skating games and fun activities
- Maximum participation: everyone involved and active at all times
- Use modified or divided ice surface to allow more groups to participate at once
- Use modified equipment in keeping with the size of the participant (e.g. smaller nets)
- Including parents/support person provides additional supervision and allows for larger groups (10-12 participants)
- Develop basic skating skills (*basic stance, falling and getting up, edges, balance on skates, start, stop, walking all directions, forward/backward stride and glide*)
- Introduce sticks and rings, playing fun games to learn how to send, receive and carry a ring (on or off-ice)
- For older children in this stage, introduce the concept of Ringette using the art of imitation
- There is no place for competition in an active start program. Activities should encourage the development of
 - group social skills (interactions, sharing, taking turns, helping)
 - showing what you can do
 - confidence
- For children under 4 years of age: 30 minute learn-to-skate classes, once per week for 6-24 weeks (one or two sessions of 6 to 12 weeks)
- For children aged 4-6 years: 45-60 minute learn-to-skate classes, once per week for 6-24 weeks (one or two sessions of 6-12 weeks)
- For participants with an intellectual disability: begin with 30-40 minute learn-to-skate classes and progress to 60 minutes once or twice per week

What can parents do?

- Participate with their children in a wide range of activities
- Encourage unstructured outdoor and indoor play year-round

Coaching (type of coach)

- Community Sport Initiation (CSI)
- SOC Community Coach

I AM SKATING - FUNDAMENTALS STAGE

Age: 6-8 years (males and females)

Athletes with a disability: enter at any age, with or without parent or support person

General Objectives – Description of the Stage

- To continue to develop the components of physical literacy: fundamental movement and motor skills
- To introduce fundamental ringette skills in a fun and safe environment that promotes self-confidence
- To increase awareness of ringette and create a welcoming environment for all participants.
- To introduce structured, sport specific programming and modified game situations

Guiding Principles

- Community-based programming for all participants
- There are no competitive programs and no structured teams for players in this stage
- Practice time provides repetitions through active “play”, modified games and a varied, structured environment.
- Instruction and technical feedback on skills is minimal, simple, and developmentally-appropriate
- Emphasis on social interaction.
- Active time is greater than non-active time.
- 1:5 adult/participant ratio or lower as required to provide quality supervision.

Technical Skill Benchmarks

- **Basic skating skills:** basic stance, falling and getting up, edges, balance on skates, start, stop, walking all directions, forward/backward stride and glide
- **Basic ring skills:** basic skills, grip, carrying the ring, passing, receiving, checking, shooting – all within a controlled environment
- **Introduce Goalkeeping:** introduce concept and rotate position to all players, basic grip, stance, stick on ice, use modified equipment

Tactical Skill Benchmarks

- **Offensive** (*introduction to concepts of offensive skills and tactics, concepts of 1v1 offensive skills and team work, individual 1v1 offensive skills, team tactics*)
- **Defensive** (*introduction to concepts of defensive skills and tactics, individual 1v1 defensive skills with no contact, basic team tactics*)

What does a FUNDamentals Ringette program look like?

- The focus is on FUN, with lots of action and repetition
- Maximum participation: everyone involved and everyone wins (no bench warmers)
- All sessions are well-planned and well-structured. The focus is on progressive skill development and learning how to play ringette in a fun, success-oriented environment.
- Begin to develop group dynamics – encourage teamwork, fair play, sportsmanship, ethics
- Continue motor skill development – agility, balance, coordination, speed, time/space orientation, etc.
- Include activities that develop speed; there is a sensitive period for speed development between the ages of 6-8 for females, and 7-9 for males
- Include activities to develop flexibility during warm-up and cool down

- Incorporate the development of basic motor and movement skills into warm up activities and games
- Introduce basic ring and skating skills, and continue the development of physical literacy skills
- Equipment is modified, and the rink is divided so that several groups can be on the ice at once
- 1-2 weekly sessions of 60 minutes each. Programs run from October to March, and may be divided into two seasons of 6-12 weeks. There is no competitive period; modified games run throughout the year
- Programs are offered through local ringette associations

Game modifications

- Introduce basic game skills and simple rules of the sport
- Although there are no formal competitive events in this stage, some competitive-type activities can be introduced during practices. Focus on the process of learning about competition, not on winning. Ringette festivals are a good way to develop sport skills in a fun environment.
- Vary play situations: 1 vs. 1, 2 vs. 2 etc., with and without goalkeeper
- Participants play all positions, including goalkeeper
- Coaches are on the ice; keep game-type activities fun and fair
- Rules are modified so they are appropriate to young, beginning players, for example:
 - No score keeping
 - Free pass is allowed
 - Modified goalkeeper position
 - Goalkeeper ring
 - Only the goalkeeper may be inside the goal-crease
 - No contact
 - Players may pass over the blue lines
 - Smaller ice surface

Participant Monitoring

Coaches can begin to monitor growth by taking standing height measurements on the birthday (or first practice of the season) and recording for future reference

What can parents do?

- Introduce participants to a range of activities, provide encouragement and show interest in active participation in sport and physical activity
- Encourage daily physical activity, and unstructured outdoor and indoor play
- Support the development of excellent basic skills as a pre-requisite to playing the game
- Ensure that a balance is maintained with school, other sport and non-sport activities
- Understand the need to transport participants to activities, to pay for these activities, and to purchase required equipment for the activities (e.g. skates, helmet)

Coaching (type of coach)

- Community Sport Initiation (CSI) coach
- SOC Community Coach
- All coaches must have a knowledge of the rules of ringette and how to modify them appropriately for this stage

I AM PLAYING - LEARNING TO TRAIN STAGE

Age:

Early in Stage: Females 8-9 years, males 9-10 years

Later in Stage: Females 10-11 years, males 11-12 years

Athletes with a disability: enter at any age, with or without parent or support person

This is an important stage, one in which participants learn sound basics of ringette, but also begin to play formal games. Many participants in this stage will enter puberty, and it is important that height be monitored regularly to help determine when the player begins the growth spurt. Toward the end of this stage, individual rates of growth and development become quite obvious. Since each player has a different rate of development, it is important to be flexible with training programs to ensure appropriate challenges and to meet the needs of players who are growing rapidly.

General Objectives – Description of the stage

- To develop fundamental ringette skills in a fun, participation-based environment
- To continue to develop physical and motor capacities
- To develop general physical fitness
- To introduce the development of mental skills
- To introduce and develop simple tactics
- To introduce game play with focus on application of skills learned in training
- To introduce and develop decision-making skills in standard/controlled conditions
- To encourage players to strive to succeed and do their best

Guiding Principles

- Community-based programming
- Game play introduces an environment of competition, but there is no “competitive” program.
- Teams are created based on equal abilities distribution – no tiering
- Practices well organized, varied, game-like, and active participation of all
- Emphasize motor skill development, technical skill instruction, time-space orientation and team play
- Increase skill repertoire through a gradual progression of skill acquisition
- Include activities to develop flexibility during warm-up and cool down
- Introduction to the game – modified rules.
- Ensure that players experience all positions; toward the end of this stage, identify players who show an ability and interest in goalkeeping
- Maintain high frequency of practice and # repetitions: 70% success rate for learning to occur
- 1:6 adult/participant ratio or lower as required to provide quality supervision.
- Throughout the year, encourage players to participate in a variety of school and summer sports
- Toward the end of the stage:
 - Introduce understanding of how to use skills to resolve tactical problems
 - Introduce balance of individual/team offensive and defensive preparation.
 - Use game situations as learning opportunities.

Technical Skill benchmarks

Early in this stage: develop good skill technique

Later in this stage: develop accuracy and consistency in skill execution

Skating skills:

- Early in the stage: *basic stance, falling and getting up, edges, balance on skates, starts, stops, forward/backward stride and glide*
- Later in the stage: *as above plus acceleration, crossovers, sharp turns, double sculling, 2 foot slalom; transitions*

Ring skills:

- Early in the stage: *basic skills, grip, carrying and protecting the ring, passing, receiving and retrieving the ring, checking, shooting – all within a controlled environment*
- Later in the stage: *as above, plus deking – all within a controlled environment*

Goalkeeping skills:

- Early in the stage: *introduce concept and rotate position to all players, basic grip, stance, stick on ice, skating and ring skills, mobility and stick work, positioning and ring distribution*
- Later in the stage: *identify and develop maximum number of players interested – play goal no more than ½ time, continue basic grip, stance and style, stick on ice, skating and ring skills, mobility in all directions, stick work, positioning, ring distribution, communication/interaction*

Tactical Skill benchmarks

Offensive

Early in the stage: *acquisition of basic offensive skills and tactics, individual 1v1 and team offensive skills, individual skills for ring carriers and non-ring carriers, basic team tactics, creating open space and movement)*

Later in the stage: *Acquisition of basic offensive skills and tactics (1v1 offensive skills/tactics, 2v1 skills, isolate 1 defender and pass or shoot)*

Defensive

Early in the stage: *acquisition of basic defensive skills and tactics, individual 1v1 skills, maintain goal side positioning, introduce basic team tactics*

Later in the stage: *Acquisition of basic defensive game skills, defensive skills and tactics, individual 1v1 skills, maintain goal side positioning, team tactics*

What does a Learn to Train Ringette program look like?

- There should be at least two seasons, each is 6-12 weeks long. Season 1 runs from September or October to December, season 2 runs from January to March.
- Pre-season training: 2 to 4 weeks for evaluations, team formations
- Participate in an exhibition league
- Practice to game ratio is 70/30. There should be 2-3 training periods of 60 minutes each to 1 game session each week
- Provide developmentally-appropriate, specific technical feedback.
- Strength development should be through body weight activities, medicine balls, Swiss balls, light resistance

- A sensitive period for stamina (endurance) training coincides with the onset of the growth spurt
- Pay special attention to maintaining flexibility during the growth spurt
- There is a sensitive period for speed development in females aged 11-13
- Continue to develop motor skills – agility, balance, coordination, speed, time/space orientation, etc.
- Players must play all positions and have equal opportunity playing time
- Focus team social activities on fun and friendship
- Introduce Mental Preparation skills:
 - Decision Training - introduce decision making skills through skill training activities
 - Goal Setting – team
 - Self-Awareness – positive thinking, attitude
 - Team dynamics – teamwork, fair play, sportsmanship, sense of values
 - Team building and social development activities
- Build on these skills later in the stage by introducing:
 - Decision making in competitive situations
 - Goal setting – individual and team, long and short term, process and outcome
 - Focus management / attentional control - concentration strategies
 - Anxiety management / emotional control –visualization (mental rehearsal of game situations) strategies
 - Game preparation and routine – game strategies
- Encourage participation in other sports 3x per week; encourage a minimum of 60 minutes per day of play or participation in other unstructured activity
- During off-season, encourage players to participate in a variety of school and summer sports
- Avoid playing ringette year round, but players may participate in a summer ringette camp, or in 4-6 sessions of pre-season preparation
- By the end of this stage:
 - One season, 20-24 weeks long
 - Single peak periodization (peak for end-of-season league tournament)
 - Preparation period = 7-15 weeks; Competition period = 7-20 weeks; Transition period = 1-2 weeks
 - Two weekly training sessions to 1 competition (game)
 - Maximum 20 competition days during the season
 - Pre-season camp for warm-up (4-6 sessions)
 - Ringette-specific training 3X per week; 2-3 practice sessions of 60-90 minutes each

Game modifications

Early in the stage:

- Organized game play in a manner to maximize learning opportunities for all participants
- Focus is on fun and on basic ring and skating skills
- Introduction to game format with modified rules
- 2 minute warm-up; 3x10 minute periods with stopped time
- Coaches on ice at beginning of season; gradually decrease time on ice throughout the season
- No stats or standings, no emphasis on win-loss
- Up to 20 days of competition during the year (both seasons combined). One competition day = a day in which one or more games are played against another team. These competition days can include organized league/exhibition game play and a maximum of 2 local/regional tournaments (including year-end tournament)

Later in the stage:

- Begin playing regular game format
- Emphasize acquisition of basic game skills – focus on fun and basic ring, skating and game skills
- Rules of play: all basic, regular rules introduced but no shot clock; scores kept unless very lopsided; two officials for every game and they are encouraged to give play guidance to all players
- 6 players per side on a full ice surface, 4 minute warm-up, 3 X ten minute periods of stop time
- Organize game play to emphasize and maximize learning opportunities for all participants
- Begin organized league and exhibition game play; exhibition league until December, then regular league January to March
- Maximum 3 local/regional tournaments, including year-end tournament

Monitoring

- Ensure development of strong technical skills
- Monitor height every 3 months (standing height, sitting height and arm span) and record measurements for future reference related to onset of peak height velocity (PHV) Watch for correct body alignment and symmetrical development of flexibility and strength (i.e. equal on both sides of the body)

What Can Parents Do?

- Continue to expose participants to a range of activities, provide encouragement and show interest in participating in sport and physical activity
- Continue to support the development of sound basics over game and tournament play
- Listen to the participant to help identify sport preferences
- Ensure a balance with school, other sport and non-sport activities
- Understand the need to transport participants to activities, to pay for these activities and to purchase the necessary equipment
- Ensure a balance with school, other sport and non-sport activities
- By the end of this stage, parental involvement increases and parents develop a growing interest in the sport. Some parents may attend coaching or officiating courses. They may be asked to volunteer at activities or help with fund-raising

Coaching (type of coach)

- Community Sport Initiation (CSI)
- SOC Community Coach

Officiating

- Experienced officials can work with coaches to identify teachable moments to players during game play. If officials are seen as a helpful person at this stage of the game, will help to create a relationship of respect between player, coach and official.

I AM ON THE TEAM - TRAINING TO TRAIN STAGE

Age:

Early in the stage: Females 12-13 years, males 13-14 years

Later in the stage: Females 14-15 years, males 15-16 years

Athletes with a disability: enter at any age, with or without parent or support person

This is an important stage, in which there are opportunities for players at both the community and competitive level. Players who have the desire and ability to move into more advanced levels of Ringette will play in tiered programs, while players who do not wish to make this commitment can continue to improve their skills and enjoy playing Ringette in community programs. For all players, this is a time of solidifying good skill performance, physical and mental preparation and learning to play the game.

Most players will go through the growth spurt during this stage and it is very important to be flexible with training programs to ensure appropriate challenges and to meet the needs of players who are growing rapidly. Selection of athletes into tiered programs is also important, so that players are placed on teams with other players who are of approximately equal size and stage of development. Discretion should be applied to placement of athletes who are early or late developers; this is particularly important in competitive programs and may require overlapping age categories in competitive levels.

General Objectives – Description of the Stage

- To consolidate fundamental ringette skills in controlled and semi-controlled conditions
- To develop and consolidate simple tactics
- To further develop general physical fitness training and mental skills
- To introduce and develop advanced ringette skills
- To introduce and develop strategies (game plan)
- To introduce and develop decision making skills in varied situations
- To learn to cope with the challenges of competition and to strive to succeed and do their best

Later in Stage:

- To introduce position-specific skills

Guiding Principles

Community Programs:

- Fun (socially motivated), balance between participation and competition
- Ensure life-long participation in sport
- Limited tiering
- Skills are reinforced in real game situations

Competition programs:

- Fun (competitively motivated), maintain a balance between participation and competition
- Tiering begins
- Coaches empower athletes and include them in the decision making process
- Throughout this stage, athletes gradually become more autonomous on the ice

Technical Skill Benchmarks

Consolidation of skills

Skating:

Early in the stage: starting, stopping, forward and backward (stride, acceleration, crossovers, sharp turns, double sculling, 2 and 1 foot slalom), transition skills

Later in the stage: as above plus develop ability to do quick changes in direction, two and one foot Mohawk pivot

Ring: consolidation of ring skills, acquisition of position specific skills, carrying and protecting the ring, passing, receiving, checking, shooting, deking within a varied environment

Goalkeeping: Early in the stage: consolidation of skills; goalkeepers specialize but can still alternate; general goalkeeping drills, mobility (lateral and forward/backward), stick work, skating and ring skills, positioning, ring distribution, communication and interaction, style

Later in the stage: goalkeepers specialize, specific goalkeeping drills and training

Tactical Skill Benchmarks

Offensive

Consolidation of offensive game skills

Community:

- Skills are built so players are able to perform skills with sequential and flowing movements
- Understanding concepts and implementing occasionally

Competition

- Skills are refined so players are able to perform with quick, concise movements
- Understand concepts and implement on a reliable, consistent basis
- Understand offensive concepts of open ice, learning to read and react, incorporating defense in the offensive zone during play, wrist shots, shot clock awareness and usage, reversing the play, breakouts, communication, support, creating options, maintaining possession
- Individual skills and team tactics

Defensive

Consolidation of defensive game skills with primary focus on fun and execution of basic ring, skating and game skills

Community

- Skills are developed so players are able to perform skills with sequential and flowing movements
- Understanding concepts and implementing occasionally

Competition

- Skills are consolidated so players are able to perform skills with quick, concise movements
- Understand individual defensive skills and tactics concepts and implement on a reliable and consistent basis
- Understand team tactics concepts and implement on a reliable and consistent basis

Psychological Skill Development

Acquisition of:

- coping strategies, relaxation strategies
- skills that prepare the player to deal with success and failure
- skills for sharing leadership opportunities

Consolidation of skills such as:

- Focus management/ attentional control – concentration
- Anxiety and stress management / Emotional Control –visualization (mental rehearsal of game situations)
- Decision training – decision making in some competitive situations
- Goal setting – individual and team, long and short term, process and outcome
- Self-Awareness – positive thinking, attitude and adjustment
- Team Dynamics – teamwork, fair play, sportsmanship, ethics
- Game Preparation and Routine – game strategies
- Team building and social development activities

As this stage progresses, players continue to improve their abilities and usage of mental skills through:

Acquisition of skills such as:

- arousal strategies
- becoming more independent, understanding personal strengths and weaknesses
- developing effective communication strategies, understanding team roles and identifying where they fit in

Consolidation of skills such as:

- Decision Training - decision making in some competitive situations
- Goal setting – individual and team, long and short term, process and outcome (C)
- Focus management / attentional control - concentration, coping strategies
- Anxiety and stress management / emotional control – visualization (mental rehearsal of game situations), relaxation

- Game preparation and routine – specific game strategies
- Self-awareness – positive thinking, attitude and adjustment, preparing to deal with success and failure
- Team dynamics – teamwork, fair play, sportsmanship, ethics, shared leadership opportunities

What does a Train to Train Ringette program look like?

- Ringette-specific technical, tactical and fitness training 6-9 times per week, including complementary sports
- Continue to develop general fitness and conditioning
- Be aware of sensitive periods for development of strength, speed and endurance:
 - Strength: sensitive period for strength development in females after the onset of menarche
 - Speed: sensitive period for speed development in females at approximately 11-13 years and in males at approximately 13-16 years
 - Endurance: sensitive period for endurance (stamina) development in males with the onset of peak height velocity
 - Pay special attention to maintaining flexibility during periods of rapid growth
- Competition format:
 - Female vs. female only teams, male vs. male only teams
 - Organized League games based on age level and/or ability (standings are recorded).
 - Weekly games with some tournaments.
 - Tournaments, Provincial and League Championship format should be modified round robin or other format to allow maximum number of games for each team within a weekend.
 - Emphasis on learning and staying healthy
- Encourage daily participation in sport and physical education, minimum 60 minutes per day
- Team social activities focused on fun and teambuilding
- Players may be encouraged to become coaches in training or referees

Community

- Season is 20-32 weeks; single peak periodization
- Players play a variety of positions and receive equal playing time
- Pre-season training: 3-6 weeks for evaluations, team formation and team practices
- Preparation period 10-12 weeks, Competition period 8-12 weeks, Transition period 3-4 weeks
- Training to competition ratio = 60:40; 2 trainings to 1 competition weekly
- 2-3 sessions of 60-90 minutes each weekly
- 21-22 days of competition
- Events – exhibition games, league games, tournaments, playoff games, provincials (by classification)
- During off-season:
- Encourage players to participate in a variety of school and summer sports.
- Players are encouraged to attend ringette camps through the summer.

Competition

- Season is 24-25 weeks
- Players play 1-2 positions, with “fair and reasonable playing time; identify 2 goalkeepers per team.
- Single or double peak periodization; peak for provincial and national championships
- Pre-season = 2-4 weeks for pre-season training, evaluations, team formation and team practices
- Preparation period 7-15 weeks, Competition period 8-14 weeks, Transition period 1-2 weeks
- Training to competition ratio = 60:40; 3 trainings to 2 competitions weekly
- 3-4 sessions of 60-90 minutes each weekly (1-2 trainings with the team, 2-3 training on own)
- 22 days of competition
- Events – exhibition games, league games, tournaments, playoff games, provincials (by classification)
- Toward the end of this stage players may also participate in provincial qualifiers for

- Encourage maintenance of physical fitness qualities (endurance, strength)
- Participate in pre-season camp for warm-up.

Eastern/Western/CRC (A and AA); Eastern/Western (Regional) Championship for A category; CRC (National) Championship for AA category

- During off-season:

Players are encouraged to participate in an activity that will aid in their development and preparation for the beginning of the fall season (i.e. Running for cardio as well as dry land shooting practice or attending a summer session of power skating, light weight training** under supervision; early in the stage using own body weight, later in the stage may use light weights).

Encourage involvement in a variety of school and summer sports or activities throughout the year May play rep or high calibre sports, but without a specialization in one specific sport.

- Players are expected to maintain their physical training program.
- For top competitive athletes, the services of an integrated support team may be included to enhance training and recovery

Game Modifications

- 7 minute warm-up, progressing to a 10 minute warm-up by the end of the stage
- Shot clock
- 6 players per side on a full ice surface
- early in stage: 60% of international game format
- later in stage: 75% of international game format
- 2 officials on the ice for games

Monitoring

All players:

- Monitor standing and sitting height, arm span and weight every 3 months and adjust training as a function of growth and development. This is particularly important during the early part of this stage when the majority of players will be experiencing rapid growth.
- Continue physical abilities testing; it is particularly important to maintain active flexibility during this stage
- Monitor rapidly growing players for symptoms of Osgood Schlatter's

Competitive level players

- As intensity and volume of training increase, general health must be monitored regularly
- Ongoing screening for hip and knee alignment, and imbalances in strength and flexibility will help reduce the risk of injury
- Monitor iron levels in female athletes annually
- Begin to educate athletes about doping control at the end of this stage

What Can Parents Do?

Early in the stage:

- Continue to ensure that there is a balance of sport with school and other activities and that players are properly nourished and rested
- Provide a “positive push” , but no pressure on the player
- Ensure ongoing communication between parents, coach and player; trust the coach, talk to the player, and intervene only when necessary
- Parental involvement increases and parents develop a growing interest in the sport. Some parents may attend coaching or officiating courses. They may be asked to volunteer at activities or help with fund-raising. Depending on the level of involvement, parents may sacrifice considerable leisure time to volunteer
- Understand the need to transport players to activities, to pay for these activities and to purchase the necessary equipment; this commitment is greater for competitive athletes

Later in the stage:

- Parents tend to move into the background and play a less direct role, but they still provide emotional and tangible support
- As the player becomes more responsible for decision-making, parents continue to provide support but allow increased independence
- Continue to provide a “positive push” and be available when the player needs guidance
- Parents remain active as volunteers
- Ensure that the player’s schedule is organized and that there is balance between sports, school, social life and family activities.
- Ensure that siblings have their own niche, which may be in ringette, or in another sport/area of interest
- Understand that with increased level of player participation, there will be increased time and financial commitments (e.g. driving to practices and games, tournament and out-of-town travel costs)

Coaching (Type of Coach)

Community: Community Sport Development (CDS) coach + MED online evaluation

Competition: Competition Introduction (CI) certified coach (includes online MED evaluation)
Competition Introduction Gradation (CIG) Certified

I AM A COMPETITOR - TRAINING TO COMPETE STAGE

Age:

Females 16-18 years, Males 17-18 years

Athletes with a disability: enter at any age, with or without parent or support person

General Objectives – Description of the Stage

- To further consolidate all ringette skills and tactics in semi-controlled and random conditions
- To optimize general physical fitness training
- To consolidate strategies (game plan)
- To further develop decision-making skills
- To develop position-specific skills
- To introduce/develop position-specific mental and physical training
- To achieve consistent performance in competitions and to strive to succeed and do their best

Guiding Principles

Community:

- Fun (socially motivated), balance between participation and competition.
- Ensure lifelong participation in sport.
- Limited tiering
- Skills are reinforced in real game situations.

Competition:

- Skill development under competitive conditions
- Individual actions must be team oriented (what's best for the team)
- Individual responsibility within team play becomes a focus
- Game plan/individual play must adapt to opponent
- Individualized instruction based on the needs of each athlete

Technical Skill Benchmarks

- Refinement of skating skills – starting, stopping, forward, backward, transition
- Refinement of ring skills, refinement of position-specific skills – carrying and protecting the ring, passing, receiving, checking, shooting, deking in a varied environment
- Refinement of goalkeeping skills – general, lateral, forward and backward mobility, stick work, skating and ring skills, positioning, ring distribution, communication and interaction, style

Tactical Skill Benchmarks

Offensive:

Consolidation of offensive game skills:

- Further consolidate technical skills
- Consolidate cues to read and react to defense
- Use overload, isolation, communication, movement, timing and space to create scoring opportunities
- Refine options

- Pay increased attention to strategy and tactics
- Refine individual and team tactical skills

Defensive:

Refinement of defensive game skills:

- Further consolidate checking and skating skills – backward skating, speed and pivoting. Consolidate cues to read and react to ring carrier and non-ring carriers
- Refine positioning, gap control, channelling and timing challenge on ring carrier
- Pay increased attention to strategy and tactics, both individual and team
- **Community level players** should be able to perform sequential and flowing movements, understand and implement defensive concepts
- **Competitive level players** have consolidated the ability to perform skills quickly and efficiently. They have a solid understanding of defensive concepts and can implement them reliably and consistently

Psychological Skill Development

Consolidation of advanced mental preparation skills:

- Stress management
- Independence, personal strengths and weaknesses, attribution, self-coaching
- Effective communication strategies, understanding team roles and identifying where they fit in

Refinement of mental skills:

- Decision training – correct decision making in all competitive situations, long and short term goals, process and outcome
- Focus management/attentional control – concentration, coping strategies
- Goal setting – individual and team
- Anxiety management/emotional control – visualization (mental rehearsal of game situations), relaxation arousal strategies
- Game preparation and routine – specific game strategies
- Self-awareness – positive thinking attitude and adjustment, preparing to deal with success and failure
- Team dynamics – teamwork, fair play, sportsmanship, ethics, shared leadership opportunities
- Team building and social development activities

What does a Train to Compete Ringette Program Look Like?

- Ringette-specific technical, tactical and fitness training 9-12 times per week
- Improve general and specific fitness conditioning (stamina, strength, speed and suppleness)
- Be aware of sensitive periods for strength development in males, 12-18 months after peak height velocity
- Competition format:
 - Organized League games based on age level and/or ability (standings may be recorded).
 - Weekly games with some tournaments.
 - Tournaments, Provincial, League and Regional Championship format should be modified round robin or other format to allow maximum number of games for each team within a weekend
- Encourage daily participation in sport and physical activity, minimum 60 minutes per day
- Encourage players to continue participating in one sport out of school
- Players may attend or work at a ringette camp in the summer
- Players are encouraged to become assistant coaches to younger teams
- Team social activities are focused on fun and teambuilding

Community

- Season: 20-26 weeks (Preparation: 7-15 weeks, Competition: 7-20 weeks, Transition: 3-4 weeks)
- Single peak periodization; peak for regional/provincial championships
- Training to competition ratio = 40:60
- 20-30 competition days per season
- One training session to 2 competitions weekly
- 2-3 weekly ringette sessions of 60-90 minutes each
- players play a variety of positions
- emphasis on learning and staying healthy, and on friends, socializing, meeting people and relationships
- Events:
 - Exhibition games
 - League games
 - Playoff games
 - Provincials (by classification)
 - University Challenge Cup
- Off-season development:
- Players participate in spring/summer sports to help with cardio training, balance and hand/eye coordination (e.g. lacrosse, soccer, aerobic base training and strength training)
- Physical and skill development are ongoing
- Participate in pre-season camp for warm-up

Competition

- Season: 35-45 weeks (Preparation: 7-15 weeks, Competition: 7-20 weeks, Transition: 3-4 weeks)
- Double peak periodization; peak for provincial and national championships
- Training to competition ratio = 40:60
- 30 - 40 competition days per season
- Two training sessions to 3 competitions weekly
- 4-5 weekly ringette sessions of 60-90 minutes each
- 2-3 weekly non-ringette training sessions with team
- 3-4 weekly non-ringette training sessions on own
- Play 1-2 positions; goalkeeper specialization
- Teams are female vs. female, or male vs. male
- Regional, National and Multi-sport events should be structured to encourage/require optimal performance in every game for team to successfully advance (i.e.: pool play, single or double elimination formats)
- Events:
 - Provincials (by classification)
 - Eastern/Western (regional) championships for A category
 - CRC (national) championships for AA category
- Off season development:
 - Players are encouraged to participate in an activity that will aid in their

development and preparation for the beginning of the fall season (i.e. Running for cardio or dry land shooting practice, attending a summer session of power skating, light weight training under supervision)

- May play rep or high calibre sports with a specialization in one specific sport
- Work on basics of training and performance – stamina, strength, speed, skill, suppleness

Game Modifications

Community and Competition:

- 10 minute warm-up
- Shot clock
- 6 players per side on a full ice surface
- International game format
- 2 officials on the ice for games

Options for fun/ variety and to improve regular game:

- Gym Ringette
- 3 on 3's

Monitoring

- Height and weight should be monitored quarterly for baseline measurements
- Continue monitoring of physical abilities, skills and technique

Competition:

- As intensity and volume of training increase, general health must be monitored regularly
- Ensure that recovery and regeneration are monitored on an individual basis
- Ongoing screening for hip and knee alignment, muscle imbalances and flexibility will help reduce the risk of injury
- Monitor iron levels yearly in female athletes

What Can Parents Do?

- Parents are the primary support person to manage the player's schedule, particularly for competitive players
- Continue to provide a positive push and offer unconditional support for the player
- Understand that with increased level of player participation, there will be increased time and financial commitments (e.g. driving to practices and games, tournament and out-of-town travel costs)
- Parents may encourage the player to learn to drive so that they can reduce the time commitment for transport to training

Coaching (Type of Coach)

Community:

- Community Sport Development (CSD) + MED online evaluation

Competition:

- Certified Competition Development (CD) coach
- Specialized coaching (goalkeeping, defensive, offensive etc.) as needed

I AM EXCEEDING MY LIMITS: LEARNING TO WIN STAGE

Age:

Females 18-19+ Males 19-20+

Athletes with a disability: enter at any age, with or without parent or support person

This stage is the entry to high performance programs in Ringette.

General Objectives – Description of the Stage

- Players are introduced international competition
- To introduce players to a high performance environment
- To maintain fundamental skills, tactics, mental and general physical fitness
- To refine advanced skills and tactics
- To refine strategies (game plan)
- To consolidate decision making skills
- To consolidate position-specific skills
- To consolidate position-specific mental and physical training
- To achieve consistent performance in major competitions

Guiding Principles

- Players are introduced international competition
- Performance outcomes become important; players must learn to produce performance on demand
- 24 hour athlete (ensure all elements of training are addressed and monitored)
- Develop the ability to adapt to a different/new environment, including team-mates, travel, training, coaches, strategies and lifestyle

Technical Skill Benchmarks

- Refinement of all skating skills
- Refinement of all ring skills and position specific skills
- Refinement of all goalkeeping skills

Tactical Skill Benchmarks

Offensive

- Continue to refine individual skills and team tactics to execute them at greater speeds, more powerfully and with greater accuracy

Defensive

- Continue to refine individual skills and team tactics to execute them at greater speeds, more powerfully and with greater accuracy

Psychological Skill Development

Advanced mental preparation

Refinement of all mental skills

- Decision training – correct decision making in all competitive situations
- Goal setting – individual and team, long and short term, process and outcome
- Focus management/attentional control – concentration, coping strategies, stress management
- Anxiety management/emotional control – visualization (mental rehearsal of game situations) relaxation, arousal strategies
- Game preparation and routine – specific game strategies
- Self-awareness – positive thinking, attitude and adjustment, preparing to deal with success and failure, independence, personal strengths and weaknesses, attribution, self-coaching
- Team dynamics – teamwork, fair play, sportsmanship, ethics, shared leadership opportunities, effective communication strategies, understand team roles and identifying where they fit in
- Team building and social development activities

What does a Learning to Win Ringette Program look like?

Ringette-specific technical, tactical and fitness training 9-15 times per week

- Length of season is 35-45 weeks (7-15 weeks preparation, 7-20 weeks competition, 3-4 weeks transition)
- Training: competition ratio = 25:75
- 40-50 competition days per season
- Double peak periodization
- 1 training session to 3 competitions weekly
- 4-5 ringette specific training sessions of 90-120 minutes each weekly
- 2-3 weekly non-ringette training sessions with team
- 3-4 weekly non-ringette training sessions on own
- Players specialize in one position, but have knowledge of 1-2 positions; reasonable playing time for all
- Goalkeepers are specialized
- Further develop general and specific fitness conditioning by position
- Daily participation in sport and physical activity, minimum 60 minutes per day
- Competition format:
 - Female vs. female only and male vs. male only teams
 - Organized league games based on age level (team and individual stats recorded)
 - 2-3 games per weekend
 - series playoff schedules
 - pool structure for nationals to ensure teams play against like teams
- Events:
 - Canada Games (U20 females)
 - Canadian Ringette Championships
 - “Junior” World Ringette Championships
 - World club championships
- Team social activities focused on fun and teambuilding
- Off-season:

- Increased emphasis on Ringette related training. Players are encouraged to participate in an activity that will aid in their development and preparation for the beginning of the fall season (i.e. running for cardio, dry land shooting practice, attending a summer session of power skating, light weight training under supervision). Three days/week off ice or cross training by participation in other sports.
- Aerobic base training and strength training to maintain year-round fitness levels.
- Minimal to moderate on-ice Ringette training: Rec league or 3vs3 – not regular teams. Key is to stay on the ice and have fun in the off-season.

Game Modifications

- International rules and game format
- 15 minute warm-up + flood
- Flood between periods

Monitoring

- Height and weight should be monitored quarterly for baseline measurements
- As intensity and volume of training increase, general health must be monitored regularly; monitor iron levels yearly in female athletes
- Ongoing monitoring of physical abilities, skills and technique
- Ensure that recovery and regeneration are monitored on an individual basis
- Ongoing screening for hip and knee alignment, muscle imbalances and flexibility will help reduce the risk of injury

What Can Parents Do?

- Parents are the primary support person to manage the player's schedule, particularly for competitive players
- Continue to provide a positive push and offer unconditional support for the player
- With increased level of player participation, there will be increased time and financial commitments (e.g. driving to practices and games, tournament and out-of-town travel costs)

Coaching (Type of Coach)

- Competition Development (CD)certified coach
- Performance enhancement team (PET) for specialized coaching – goalkeeping, defensive, offensive etc.
- Ongoing education and learning opportunities for high performance coaches

Officiating

Maintain current process

Other areas of player support

- Access to specialists in performance nutrition, mental skills training, sport-specific physical preparation, injury prevention, recovery and regeneration
- Lifestyle counselling (time management, transition from national team level competition, financial management, travel, money, family)
- Adherence to principles of fair play and True Sport
- Access to ringette skills, drills, systems, plays
- Know the rules of the game – rules training or officials training
- Media training

I AM A CHAMPION - COMPETING TO WIN STAGE

Age:

Females 18+, males 19+

General Objectives – Description of the Stage

- To develop high performance Ringette players who will achieve international success on the Canadian team.
- To maximize all aspects of Ringette preparation: physical, mental, technical and tactical.
- To achieve peak performance in major competitions; performance on demand

Guiding Principles

- Highest level of competition programs
- To establish and maintain a national high performance player development program that will lead to success at the international level

Technical Skill Benchmarks

- Refinement of all skating skills
- Refinement of all ring skills and position specific skills
- Refinement of all goalkeeping skills

Tactical Skill Benchmarks

Offensive and Defensive:

- Refine skills and tactics to identify team-specific strategies based on scouting reports

Psychological Skill Development

Advanced mental preparation

Refinement of all mental skills

- Decision training – correct decision making in all competitive situations
- Goal setting – individual and team, long and short term, process and outcome
- Focus management/attentional control – concentration, coping strategies, stress management
- Anxiety management/emotional control – visualization (mental rehearsal of game situations) relaxation, arousal strategies
- Game preparation and routine – specific game strategies
- Self-awareness – positive thinking, attitude and adjustment, preparing to deal with success and failure, independence, personal strengths and weaknesses, attribution, self-coaching
- Team dynamics – teamwork, fair play, sportsmanship, ethics, shared leadership opportunities, effective communication strategies, understand team roles and identifying where they fit in
- Team building and social development activities

What does a Train to Win Ringette Program look like?

- Ongoing ringette-specific technical, tactical and conditioning training 9-15 times per week
- Regularly scheduled training camps for athletes identified to the national team program
- 40-50 week season (preparation 7-15 weeks, competition 7-20 weeks, transition 3-4 weeks), depending on World Cup or Challenge Cup year
- Double periodized training program – Canadian Ringette Championships and World Championships
- Training: competition ratio = 25:75
- 1 training session to 3 competitions weekly
- 40-50 competition days per season
- 5-6 sessions each of 90-120 minutes weekly
- 2-3 weekly non-ringette training sessions with team
- 3-4 weekly non-ringette training sessions on own
- players concentrate on one position, with ability in a secondary position; goalkeeper specialization is complete
- Ensure appropriate recovery and regeneration is included in periodized plan
- Maintain year-round fitness standard
- Daily participation in sport and physical activity, minimum 60 minutes per day
- Competition format:
 - Yearly competition in a “Challenge Cup” format
 - Tri-yearly competition for World Championship
 - Two teams to Challenge Cup tournaments scheduled on a regular cycle and at consistent times

Events:

- National Ringette League
- World Championships (Team Canada)

Game Modifications

- International game rules and format
- 15 minute warm-up before game + flood
- Flood between periods

Monitoring

- Height and weight should be monitored quarterly for baseline measurements
- Ongoing monitoring of physical abilities , technical and tactical skills
- As intensity and volume of training increase, general health must be monitored regularly
- Ensure that recovery and regeneration are monitored on an individual basis
- Ongoing screening for hip and knee alignment, muscle imbalances and flexibility will help reduce the risk of injury
- Monitor iron levels yearly in female athletes

What Can Parents Do?

- Parents take an active role in helping players make decisions about university, living environment and life after sport
- Parents’ role in managing the players’ schedule decreases as the player becomes older and more independent.
- Parents continue to offer unconditional support and a positive push

Coaching (Type of Coach)

- Certified Competition Development (CD) coach
- Specialized coaching – goalkeeping, defensive, offensive etc.
- Ongoing education and Mentoring opportunities at camps and competitions

Officiating

- Maintain current process
- Officials should be part of national team training camps

Other Areas of Player Support

- Access to specialists in performance nutrition, mental skills training, sport-specific physical preparation, injury prevention, recovery and regeneration
- Utilize Canadian Sport Centres for testing and setting standards
- Lifestyle counselling (time management, transition from national team level competition, financial management, travel, money, family)
- Opportunities for players to have input, representation and be part of program evaluation process
- Opportunities for coaches and officials to receive support and constructive feedback
- Adherence to principles of fair play and True Sport
- Media training

I AM RINGETTE - ACTIVE FOR LIFE STAGE

Age:

- Any Age
- Athletes with a disability may enter at any age, with or without a support person

General Objectives – Description of the Stage

- To provide a positive environment for lifelong physical activity
- To be flexible in approach to assist all players
- To provide integrated programs for athletes with a disability
- To provide programs for athletes with a disability where possible
- To encourage ongoing involvement and contribution to the sport through volunteering, coaching, officiating and being a parent/supporter

Guiding Principles

- Ongoing community-based programming for all ages and abilities
- Fun (socially motivated), balance between participation and competition.
- Individualized instruction based on the needs of each athlete
- Ensure lifelong participation in sport.
- Tiering to accommodate varying abilities and experience and provide exposure to different levels of competition
- Skill development under competitive conditions
- Individual actions must be team oriented
- Game plan/individual play must adapt to opponent

Technical Skill Benchmarks

Opportunity to develop, maintain and refine skills, depending on the level of players

Tactical Skill Benchmarks

Opportunity to develop, maintain and refine skills, depending on the level of players

Psychological Skill Development

- Decision training – correct decision making
- Goal setting – individual and team, long and short term, process and outcome
- Focus management/attentional control – concentration, coping strategies, stress management
- Anxiety management/emotional control – visualization (mental rehearsal of game situations) relaxation, arousal strategies
- Game preparation and routine – specific game strategies
- Self-awareness – positive thinking, attitude and adjustment, preparing to deal with success and failure, independence, personal strengths and weaknesses, attribution, self-coaching
- Team dynamics – teamwork, fair play, sportsmanship, ethics, shared leadership opportunities, effective communication strategies, understand team roles and identifying where they fit in
- Team building and social development activities

What does an Active for Life Ringette Program look like?

- Encourage daily participation in physical activity and sport, with an emphasis on learning and being healthy
- Encourage a minimum of 60 minutes moderate activity or 30 minutes of intense activity daily
- Encourage players to participate in a variety of summer sports
- Encourage involvement in physical and social activities
- Encourage ongoing general and specific fitness conditioning
- Season: 20-30 weeks (Preparation: 4-8 weeks, Competition: 7-20 weeks, Transition: 3-4 weeks)
- 20-30 competition days per season
- single peak periodization (peak for regional/league championships) or no periodization, depending on level
- players have the option of playing a position of choice but are not required to specialize; encourage more than one goalkeeper per team
- Players have fair, equal playing time
- Competition format:
 - Organized League games based on age level and/or ability (standings may be recorded).
 - Weekly games with some tournaments.
 - Tournaments, Provincial, League and Regional Championship format should be modified round robin or other format to allow maximum number of games for each team within a weekend.
- Off-season development:
 - Players participate in spring/summer sports to help with cardio training, balance and hand/eye coordination (e.g. lacrosse, soccer, aerobic base training and strength training)
 - Attend a ringette camp in the summer
 - Participate in pre-season camp for warm-up

Game Modifications

Will vary, depending on the age and ability level of participants

- 6 players per side on a full ice surface
- three X 10minute periods of stop time
- 2 officials on the ice for games
- 3 on 3

Monitoring

- General health and fitness
- Ongoing skill and technique development, as needed

What Can Parents Do?

- Older players may be self-sufficient and independent
- Family is still important in providing support to the athlete and coaches, and enjoying watching their family member play

Coaching (Type of Coach)

Type of coach will depend on the performance level of the players

- Community Sport Initiation (CSI)
- Competition Introduction (CI) certified coach (includes online MED evaluation)
- Competition Introduction Gradation (CIG) Trained

Other Areas of Player Support

- Active and healthy lifestyle
- Adherence to principles of fair play and True Sport
- Access to ringette skills, drills, systems, plays
- Know the rules of the game – rules training or officials training

4

LESSON PLANNING - SAFETY



SPORT SAFETY THROUGH RISK MANAGEMENT

By its very nature, physical activity can present some risk of injury. One of the key responsibilities of the coach is to manage the potential risks that present themselves during practice or competition.

The main risk factors can be categorized as follows:



Environmental Risks

Factors related to the weather or its effects on the practice or competition site.

Examples: Lightning, rain, puddles/mud on the playing surface, heat and humidity, cold.



Equipment and Facilities Risks

Factors related to the quality and operating conditions of equipment and facilities.

Examples: A ski binding that does not release, ill-fitting helmet, damaged gymnastics apparatus, debris on the playing surface.



Human Risks

Factors related to athletes and the people associated with them, such as parents, coaches, officials, and event organizers. Human risks may also be related to athletes' individual characteristics (e.g. height, weight, level of physical preparation, ability) or behaviour (e.g. carelessness, panic, aggression). Human factors related to coaches include their training and experience, their supervision of athletes, and the decisions they make about situations they put athletes in.

Examples: Matching athletes of uneven strength and ability in a combative sport, forgetting to spot a gymnastics athlete.

Strategies for Managing Risk

Information to Gather	Actions to Take
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Risks of the activity <input type="checkbox"/> Athletes' medical information <input type="checkbox"/> Athletes' contact information in case of emergency <input type="checkbox"/> Facility safety checklist <input type="checkbox"/> Past injury reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Designing an Emergency Action Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Inspecting equipment and facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Informing athletes and parents <input type="checkbox"/> Supervising activities <input type="checkbox"/> Implementing return to play guidelines where necessary

Information to Gather
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Phone numbers and addresses of athletes, their parents, the ambulance service, the police force, the fire department, and the public safety service. <input type="checkbox"/> Medical conditions of each athlete (e.g. illnesses, allergies, disabilities, injuries, previous concussions), person to contact in an emergency situation, and procedures to follow if an emergency occurs (e.g. administer a specific medication).
<p>Keep this information in a waterproof binder that you can carry with you to the training or competition site.</p> <p>Find out if 911 services are accessible from your facility or if there is medical support on-site.</p>

Actions to Take

Planning

- ☐ Ensure that activities are appropriate for athletes' age, fitness, and ability level.
- ☐ Ensure that the practice starts with a warm-up and that the activities include a reasonable progression and challenge for the athletes.
- ☐ Adjust activities for athletes who cannot perform them as planned for the larger group.

Designing an Emergency Action Plan

- ☐ Guidelines for designing an Emergency Action Plan appear later in this document.

Inspecting Equipment and Facilities

- ☐ Ensure that you are fully aware of the specific safety standards related to the equipment used in your sport.
- ☐ Take an inventory of collective and individual equipment.
- ☐ Take an inventory of available first-aid equipment. Carry a first-aid kit at all times. (See Appendix 4 for an example of the contents of a first-aid kit.)
- ☐ Assess the safety of the facility itself (e.g. walls, playing area, lighting) by completing a facility safety checklist (see Appendix 5 for an example)
- ☐ Identify environmental, equipment and facilities, and human risk factors.
- ☐ Ensure that athletes wear their protective equipment and that it is properly adjusted and in good condition.

Informing Athletes and Parents

- ☐ Inform parents and athletes of the risks inherent in the sport.
- ☐ Fully explain the safety procedures and instructions related to all activities, and check that athletes understand them.
- ☐ Provide athletes and parents with educational material on concussions (see page 91 to page 95, as well as Appendices 9 through 14).
- ☐ When explaining an activity during a practice or competition, highlight potential risks.
 - **Examples:** If athletes are required to cross paths, ask them to keep their heads up and to be alert to where others are as they are moving around; if it has just rained and your team is practising on wet grass, remind your athletes that the field is slippery.

Supervising Activities

- ☐ Ensure that the number of athletes involved is not so high as to compromise supervision and safety.
- ☐ Keep in mind that athletes need constant supervision. Stop all activities when you have to leave the room or site or delegate responsibility for the group to a competent person.
- ☐ Look for signs of fatigue and aggression in athletes; if necessary, stop the activity.

Implementing Return to Play Guidelines

- ☐ Ensure return to play guidelines are followed if a brain or head injury occurs.

Summary

Preventing Sport-related Injuries: What to Do and When to Do It
Before the Season
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have each athlete complete a medical profile <input type="checkbox"/> Inform parents of possible risks <input type="checkbox"/> Inform parents and athletes about educational material on concussions <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure facilities and equipment meet established safety requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Create and fill in a facility safety checklist <input type="checkbox"/> Review last season's injuries or common injuries in your sport
During the Season
<p>Before a practice or competition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Inspect equipment and facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with the officials <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare an Emergency Action Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Plan specific safety measures for the practice/competition <p>During a practice or competition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Inform athletes of specific safety measures relating to activities, facilities, and equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure there is proper supervision <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate athletes <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that fair play principles are followed <p>After a practice or competition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Store equipment safely <input type="checkbox"/> Fill in an accident report if necessary
After the Season
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Keep an accident/injury report log

HEAT AND HUMIDITY AS RISK FACTORS

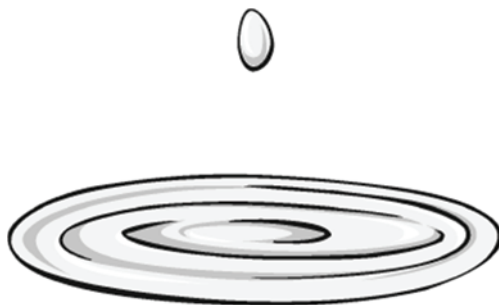
The Challenge of Exercising in the Heat

- ❑ During exercise, the muscles produce heat. This heat must be dissipated, or the body runs the risk of overheating. Overheating can result in serious, potentially life-threatening injuries.
- ❑ Sweating is one of the heat-dissipating mechanisms of the body. When sweat evaporates, it cools off the body.
- ❑ Most sport activities lead to heat production and sweating. Evaporation of sweat works best when the air is dry. In moist, damp air, sweat cannot evaporate easily, and cooling off is harder.
- ❑ If the air temperature is high during vigorous activity, athletes can lose a significant amount of water through sweating.
- ❑ High temperatures and high relative humidity make it hard for the body to dissipate heat; heavy sweating occurs, but the water lost does not help cool off the body. Under these conditions, athletes run the risk of overheating.
- ❑ Water lost as a result of heavy sweating can lead to dehydration. Dehydration can reduce performance, decrease the body's ability to dissipate heat, and endanger health.
- ❑ During exercise in the heat, adequate hydration is a must. Athletes must drink water whenever the risk of dehydration is present.
- ❑ Thirst is not a good indicator of a need for water. In fact, dehydration has already started if an athlete feels thirsty.
- ❑ In most exercise conditions, the rate at which athletes lose water exceeds the rate at which they can absorb it by drinking. Exercise in a hot environment accentuates this. Athletes therefore need to drink fluids *before* they are thirsty.
- ❑ Because their sweating mechanism is not fully developed, children run a higher risk of overheating when exercising in the heat. In addition, children tend to not drink enough during exercise, especially if the drink is not flavoured.

Steps to Take to Avoid Heat Injuries

- ❑ Give athletes enough time to get used to the environment they will face in competition. Insisting on heat acclimatization may mean not entering competitions or adjusting duration and intensity of training if athletes cannot train in a similar climate for approximately two weeks beforehand.
- ❑ To protect athletes (especially young children) from the potentially harmful effects of ultraviolet (UV) rays, have them do the following:
 - Wear a hat or a cap with a visor
 - Wear UV protecting sunglasses
 - Wear clothes that cover the upper part of the body, the neck, the arms, and the legs
 - Use sun screen lotion (protection factor of 30 or more) on exposed skin, including the face and hands
 - Avoid exposing their body to the sun without effective protection when the UV index is high
 - If possible, train in the shade
- ❑ Before exercise, athletes should drink 400 to 600 mL of fluid.
- ❑ During exercise, athletes should drink 150 to 250 mL of fluid every 15 minutes. Remind athletes to drink, lead by example, and never restrict athletes from drinking during a practice or competition.
- ❑ After exercise, athletes should rehydrate by drinking as much fluid as thirst dictates; athletes may have to force themselves to drink.
- ❑ Beverages should be cool (8° to 10°C) and not too sweet; children prefer flavoured sport drinks, and using them encourages children to drink.
- ❑ Tell athletes to bring a personal water bottle with cold fluids to each practice or competition; inform parents about the importance of hydration; make sure each bottle is clean and well identified.
- ❑ Tell athletes to monitor their hydration level by checking their urine. If it is dark, if there is not much of it, and if it has a strong smell, athletes are probably dehydrated and should force themselves to drink.

Note: Pay particular attention to these steps during the first few hot days of spring or summer, when athletes are not yet acclimated to hot and humid weather.



The Humidex

- ❑ The humidex is a useful guide to assessing the risk of exercising in hot and humid conditions.
- ❑ The humidex describes how hot and humid weather feels to the average person. The humidex combines the temperature and humidity into one number to reflect the perceived temperature.
- ❑ Because it takes into account both heat and humidity, the humidex provides useful information about the risks of exercising in the heat.
- ❑ The table below shows the humidex value for various air temperatures and levels of relative humidity. For instance, if the air temperature is 25°C and the relative humidity is 70%, the humidex is 32°C. This means that the sensation of heat when it is 25°C and the relative humidity is 70% is about the same as when it is 32°C and the air is dry (20% relative humidity).

		RELATIVE HUMIDITY (%)																	
T E M P E R A T U R E (°C)		15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
	20						20	20	21	22	22	23	24	24	25	25	26	27	27
	21						21	22	22	23	24	24	25	26	26	27	28	29	29
	22					22	22	23	24	25	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	30	31
	23					23	24	24	25	26	27	28	28	29	30	31	31	32	33
	24					24	25	26	27	28	28	29	30	31	32	33	33	34	35
	25				25	26	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	33	34	35	36	37
	26				26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
	27				27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41
	28			28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43
	29			29	30	31	32	33	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	45	46
	30			30	31	33	34	35	36	37	39	40	41	42	43	44	46	47	48
	31			32	33	34	35	37	38	39	40	42	43	44	45	47	48	49	50
	32		32	33	34	36	37	38	40	41	42	44	45	46	48	49	50	51	53
	33		33	34	36	37	39	40	41	43	44	46	47	48	50	51	53	54	55
	34		34	36	37	39	40	42	43	45	46	48	49	51	52	53	55	56	58
	35		36	37	39	40	42	43	45	47	48	50	51	53	54	56	57	59	
	36		37	39	40	42	44	45	47	49	50	52	53	55	57	58	60		
	37	37	38	40	42	44	45	47	49	51	52	54	56	58	59				
	38	38	40	42	43	45	47	49	51	53	54	56	58	60					
	39	39	41	43	45	47	49	51	53	55	57	59							
	40	41	43	45	47	49	51	53	55	57	59								

Guidelines for Exercising at Different Humidex Values

The guidelines below are provided for a heat-acclimated, well-hydrated person.

Humidex Value	Discomfort at Rest	Risk of Overheating during Exercise
Below 24°C	None	Low to moderate
25 to 29°C	None	Moderate
30 to 39°C	Some	High – Children should be monitored closely
40 to 45°C	Great	Very high – Exercise is not advised for children, older people, or individuals with a poor fitness level
Above 45°C	Great Risk of overheating even at rest	Extreme – Exercise is not advised for any athlete

If the humidex is above 30°C, and especially if it exceeds 35°C:

- ☐ Tell athletes to bring extra water or sport drinks, ensure there will be access to water during the practice or competition, and bring a big jug of fluids.
- ☐ Tell athletes to dress in loosely fitting, lightweight, light-coloured clothes.
- ☐ Plan for low-intensity activities.
- ☐ Plan for shorter work bouts, with frequent and longer pauses.
- ☐ Schedule practices early in the morning or during the evening; avoid the hours between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.
- ☐ Consider changing the location of the practice to a shaded area, or ask athletes to bring umbrellas to create shade during breaks.
- ☐ Consider exercising indoors, in a facility with air conditioning.
- ☐ Consider alternatives to physical exercise.

COLD AS A RISK FACTOR

The Challenge of Exercising in the Cold

- ❑ The colder the environment, the faster the body temperature decreases.
- ❑ During exercise in a cold environment, the skin can become wet as a result of sweating or exposure to rain or snow. A wet skin surface cools the body faster than a dry surface.
- ❑ The temperature may drop considerably once the sun has set; this can quickly increase the risk associated with exercising in a cold environment.
- ❑ Wind magnifies the perception of cold and increases the rate at which the body loses heat. This effect can be further amplified if the skin is wet.
- ❑ In cold weather, high humidity makes a temperature feel colder than the air temperature indicates it is.
- ❑ It is generally easier to tolerate the cold when the air is dry; however, cold, dry air makes it hard for some asthmatics to breathe.
- ❑ Skin can freeze when exposed to very cold temperatures, and circulation slows when this happens. Tissue can be damaged if frostbite is prolonged and extensive. Extremities (toes, fingers, nose, and ears) are particularly at risk in cold temperatures, because the body shunts blood flow to central organs and tissues to maintain the body's core temperature.
- ❑ In severe cold, brain function can slow down, and so risk of further injury in prolonged exposure increases.
- ❑ Children get cold much faster than adults, and their skin is more likely to freeze. People with less body fat usually have less tolerance for cold than those with more body fat.
- ❑ Muscles and other soft tissues that are cold are more susceptible to injuries such as pulls and tears, especially if movements are sudden and intense.
- ❑ In very dry, cold environments, loss of water vapour through breathing and the evaporation of sweat from exposed surfaces may lead to dehydration.
- ❑ Wearing appropriate clothing can be a challenge when exercising in the cold. Clothes must protect against the cold while not impairing the body's ability to get rid of heat produced during exercise. Heavy clothing can be cumbersome and may interfere with movement; it can also increase air resistance in some sports where speed is critical. On the other hand, the thin clothing used in many sports often offers little protection from cold and wind.
- ❑ Some fabrics can wick water from the body surface (e.g. synthetics such as polypropylene or Gore-Tex®), reducing the risk of heat loss. Other fabrics trap heat (e.g. cotton or nylon), increasing the risk of heat loss.

Steps to Take to Avoid Cold Injuries

- ☐ Ensure athletes wear sufficient clothing for the conditions, and layer clothing as follows:
 - **Layer closest to skin:** Polypropylene, close fitting (wicking effect)
 - **Second layer:** Fleece or wool, slight room between first layer and second layer for “trapped air” effect
 - **Third layer:** Wind-breaking, water repellent, breathable layer
- ☐ When it is very cold, ensure athletes expose as little skin as possible to the cold air.
- ☐ Once the body has warmed up and if the temperature is not too cold, consider having athletes remove the second layer of clothing during exercise to avoid excessive sweating. Add a layer or use blankets to keep warm during breaks or pauses.
- ☐ Recommend that athletes apply antiperspirant to their feet before they exercise to lessen sweating of the feet (which is usually followed by cooling of the feet). Those who tend to sweat a lot in their gloves or mitts may find that applying antiperspirant to the palm of their hands makes their hands feel less cold.
- ☐ Make sure athletes hydrate properly when exercising in the cold.
- ☐ Bring children inside when they say they are cold; it is not worth the risk to prolong exercise and have them suffer from frostbite. Once a person suffers serious frostbite, the risk of subsequent frostbite in the same area may be increased.
- ☐ Never send athletes out into the cold alone or without a way of communicating with you or an emergency centre; avoid prolonged activities in which athletes are in isolated areas and risk becoming exhausted.
- ☐ When the weather is very cold and athletes must train outdoors, hold your practices between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., as these tend to be the warmest hours of the day. Be aware that the temperature drops quickly when the sun sets.
- ☐ Tell athletes and their parents to consider the combined effect of cold and wind, not simply the temperature, when deciding how to dress; the combination of cold and wind is called wind chill. Do the same when you make coaching decisions about what activities to do and when to do them.
- ☐ If possible, choose areas that are protected from the wind; avoid activities in open areas.
- ☐ Ensure that athletes wear protective eyewear to prevent snow reflection from damaging eyes and to protect from the cold and the wind.
- ☐ Have athletes or their parents bring a change of clothing, especially socks and underwear, to practices or competitions. Try to find a warm and protected spot to change.
- ☐ Inform athletes and their parents that athletes should always wear a hat when exercising in the cold; over 30% of body heat may escape through the head. Ensure that athletes cover their ears to avoid frostbite.
- ☐ Allow additional time for warming up for training and competition; it takes longer to get the body warmed up and ready for sport in cold weather than it does in warm weather.



Wind-Chill Factor

At certain temperatures, wind may greatly increase the perception of cold. The wind-chill factor is an index that combines air temperature and wind velocity. It measures the rate at which living creatures lose body heat to the environment. The wind chill is not a temperature in the strict sense, but a temperature-like number that quantifies the sensation of cold. It was created to help reduce the risk of frostbite and other cold related injuries. The wind-chill factor should be consulted before exercising in the cold, as it provides more useful information regarding the best way to dress than temperature alone.

The table below shows the equivalent temperature (°C) felt by the human body as a result of the combined effects of ambient temperature and wind velocity. At a temperature of -20°C , a 20 km/h wind will result in a cold sensation equivalent to -30°C .

		WIND VELOCITY (km/h)															
		5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80
T E M P E R A T U R E (°C)	5	4	3	2	1	1	0	0	-1	-1	-1	-2	-2	-2	-2	-3	-3
	0	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-6	-7	-7	-8	-8	-8	-9	-9	-9	-10	-10
	-5	-7	-9	-11	-12	-12	-13	-14	-14	-15	-15	-15	-16	-16	-16	-17	-17
	-10	-13	-15	-17	-18	-19	-20	-20	-21	-21	-22	-22	-23	-23	-23	-24	-24
	-15	-19	-21	-23	-24	-25	-26	-27	-27	-28	-29	-29	-30	-30	-30	-31	-31
	-20	-24	-27	-29	-30	-32	-33	-33	-34	-35	-35	-36	-36	-37	-37	-38	-38
	-25	-30	-33	-35	-37	-38	-39	-40	-41	-42	-42	-43	-43	-44	-44	-45	-45
	-30	-36	-39	-41	-43	-44	-46	-47	-48	-48	-49	-50	-50	-51	-51	-52	-52
	-35	-41	-45	-48	-49	-51	-52	-53	-54	-55	-56	-57	-57	-58	-58	-59	-60
	-40	-47	-51	-54	-56	-57	-59	-60	-61	-62	-63	-63	-64	-65	-65	-66	-67
	-45	-53	-57	-60	-62	-64	-65	-66	-68	-69	-69	-70	-71	-72	-72	-73	-74
	-50	-58	-63	-66	-68	-70	-72	-73	-74	-75	-76	-77	-78	-79	-80	-80	-81

The table below shows how quickly frostbite can occur in adults when skin is suddenly exposed to the cold. Frostbite occurs faster in children; it also occurs faster if the skin exposed to the cold is cooler than it normally is at room temperature.

Wind-Chill Factor (°C)	Frostbite Can Occur In:
-25	45 minutes
-35	10 minutes
-60	2 minutes

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN (EAP)

An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is a plan coaches design to help them respond to emergency situations. Preparing such a plan in advance will help you respond in a responsible and clear-headed way if an emergency occurs.

An EAP should be prepared for the facility or site where you normally hold practices and for any facility or site where you regularly host competitions. For away competitions, ask the host team or host facility for a copy of their EAP.

An EAP can be simple or elaborate. It should cover the following:

- ☐ Designate in advance who is **in charge** if an emergency occurs (this may be you).
- ☐ **Have a cell phone** with you and make sure the battery is fully charged. If this is not possible, find out the exact location of a telephone you can use at all times. Have spare change in case you need to use a pay phone.
- ☐ Have **emergency telephone numbers** with you (facility manager, superintendent, fire, police, ambulance), as well as athletes' contact numbers (parents/guardians, next of kin, family doctor).
- ☐ Have on hand a **medical profile for each athlete** so that this information can be provided to emergency medical personnel. Include in this profile signed consent from the parent/guardian to authorize medical treatment in an emergency.
- ☐ Prepare **directions** for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to follow to reach the site as quickly as possible. You may want to include information such as the closest major intersection, one-way streets, or major landmarks.
- ☐ Have a **first-aid kit** accessible and properly stocked at all times (all coaches are strongly encouraged to pursue first-aid training).
- ☐ Designate in advance a **call person**: the person who makes contact with medical authorities and otherwise assists the person in charge. Be sure that your call person can give emergency vehicles precise directions to your facility or site.

When an injury occurs, the EAP should be activated immediately if the injured person:

- ☐ Is not breathing
- ☐ Does not have a pulse
- ☐ Is bleeding profusely
- ☐ Has impaired consciousness
- ☐ Has injured the back, neck, or head
- ☐ Has a visible major trauma to a limb

Note: See Appendices 4 through 7 for a number of EAP-related forms and checklists.

Emergency Action Plan Checklist

Access to telephones



- ☐ Cell phone, battery well charged
- ☐ Training venues
- ☐ Home venues
- ☐ Away venues
- ☐ List of emergency phone numbers (home competitions)
- ☐ List of emergency numbers (away competitions)
- ☐ Change available to make phone calls from a pay phone

Directions to access the site

- ☐ Accurate directions to the site (practice)
- ☐ Accurate directions to the site (home competitions)
- ☐ Accurate directions to the site (away competitions)

Athlete information

- ☐ Personal profile forms
- ☐ Emergency contacts
- ☐ Medical profiles

Personnel information

- ☐ The person in charge is identified
- ☐ The call person is identified
- ☐ Assistants (charge and call persons) are identified

- ☐ The medical profile of each athlete should be up-to-date and be in the first-aid kit.
- ☐ A first-aid kit must be accessible at all times and must be checked regularly.

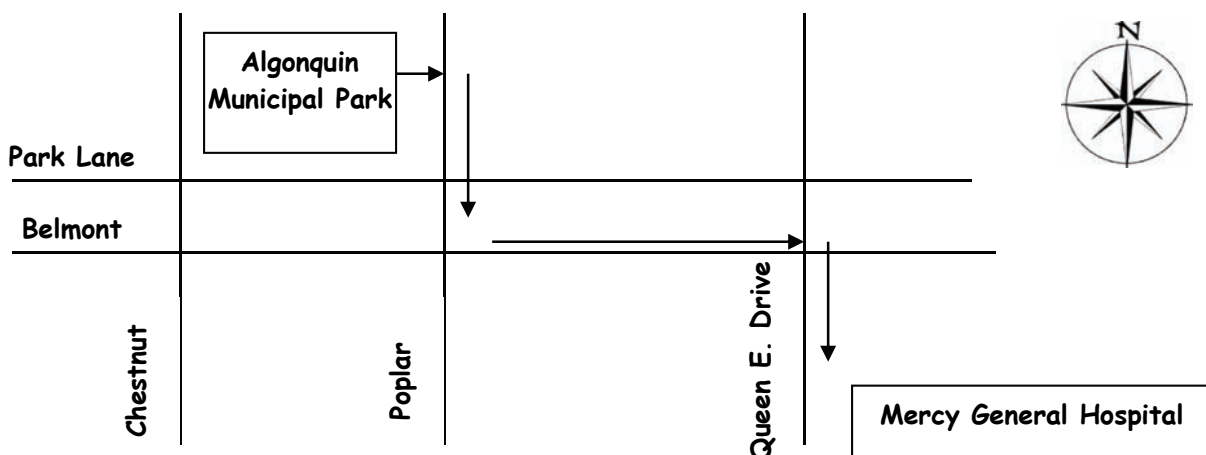
Sample Emergency Action Plan

Contact Information

Attach the medical profile for each athlete and for all members of the coaching staff, as well as sufficient change to make several phone calls if necessary. The EAP should be printed two-sided, on a single sheet of paper.

Emergency phone numbers:	9-1-1 for all emergencies
Cell phone number of coach	(xxx) xxx-xxxx
Cell phone number of assistant coach:	(xxx) xxx-xxxx
Phone number of home facility:	(xxx) xxx-xxxx
Address of home facility:	Algonquin Municipal Park 123 Park Lane, between Chestnut St. and Poplar St. City, Province/Territory, Postal Code
Address of nearest hospital:	Mercy General Hospital 1234 Queen Elizabeth Drive City, Province/Territory, Postal Code
Charge person (1 st option):	Suzy Chalmers (coach)
Charge person (2 nd option)	Joey Lemieux (assistant coach)
Charge person (3 rd option):	Angela Stevens (parent, nurse, usually on site)
Call person (1 st option):	Brad MacKenzie (parent, cell xxx-xxxx)
Call person (2 nd option)	Sheila Stevens (parent, cell xxx-xxxx)
Call person (3 rd option):	Stefano Martinez (parent, cell xxx-xxxx)

Directions to Mercy General Hospital from Algonquin Municipal Park



Sample Emergency Action Plan (cont'd)

Roles and Responsibilities

Charge Person

- ☐ Reduce the risk of further harm to the injured person by securing the area and sheltering the injured person from the elements
- ☐ Designate who is in charge of the other athletes. If nobody is available for this task, cease all activities and ensure that athletes are in a safe area.
- ☐ Protect yourself (wear gloves if in contact with body fluids such as blood)
- ☐ Assess ABCs (check that the airway is clear, breathing is present, a pulse is present, and there is no major bleeding)
- ☐ Wait by the injured person until EMS arrives and the injured person is transported
- ☐ Fill in an accident report form

Call Person

- ☐ Call for emergency help
- ☐ Provide all necessary information to dispatch (e.g. facility location, nature of injury, description of first aid that has been done, allergies and other medical problems for that athlete)
- ☐ Clear any traffic from the entrance/access road before ambulance arrives
- ☐ Wait by the driveway entrance to the facility to direct the ambulance when it arrives
- ☐ Call the emergency contact person listed on the injured person's medical profile

Steps to Follow When an Injury Occurs

Note: It is recommended that emergency situations be simulated during practice to familiarize coaches and athletes with the steps below.

Step 1: Control the environment so that no further harm occurs

- ❑ Stop all athletes
- ❑ Protect yourself if you suspect bleeding (put on gloves)
- ❑ If outdoors, shelter the injured athlete from the elements and from any traffic

Step 2: Do an initial assessment of the situation

If the athlete:

- ❑ Is not breathing
- ❑ Does not have a pulse
- ❑ Is bleeding profusely
- ❑ Has impaired consciousness
- ❑ Has injured the back, neck, or head
- ❑ Has a visible major trauma to a limb
- ❑ Cannot move his or her arms or legs or has lost feeling in them



Activate
EAP!

If the athlete does not show the signs above, proceed to Step 3

Step 3: Do a second assessment of the situation

- ❑ Gather the facts by talking to the injured athlete as well as anyone who witnessed the incident
- ❑ Stay with the injured athlete and try to calm him or her; your tone of voice and body language are critical
- ❑ If possible, have the athlete move himself or herself off the playing surface; do not attempt to move an injured athlete.

Step 4: Assess the injury

- ❑ Have someone with first-aid training complete an assessment of the injury and decide how to proceed.
- ❑ If the person trained in first aid is not sure of the severity of the injury or no one present has first-aid training, activate EAP.
- ❑ If the assessor is sure the injury is minor, proceed to Step 5.



Activate
EAP?

Step 5: Control the return to activity

Allow an athlete to return to activity after a minor injury only if there is no:

- ❑ Swelling
- ❑ Deformity
- ❑ Continued bleeding
- ❑ Reduced range of motion
- ❑ Pain when using the injured part

Step 6: Record the injury on an accident report form and inform the parents

HEAD INJURIES AND CONCUSSIONS

Concussion Questions and Answers

There is a lot to know about concussions and their proper management. This section deals in depth with the most common issues associated with concussions. Read on to learn:

- ☐ What is a concussion?
- ☐ What actually happens?
- ☐ How do concussions occur?
- ☐ Who should the athlete tell?
- ☐ What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?
- ☐ How are concussions diagnosed?
- ☐ When can the athlete return to normal activity?
- ☐ How can the athlete cope with the symptoms of concussion?
- ☐ How can the athlete manage emotions after a concussion?
- ☐ How can athletes prevent concussion?

What is a Concussion? — Definition

A concussion is a common form of brain injury and can be caused by a direct or indirect hit to the head or body (for example, a check to the boards, a hit to the head, or a car crash). This causes a change in the brain function, which results in a variety of symptoms. With a concussion, there is no visible injury to the structure of the brain, meaning that tests like MRI or CT scans usually appear normal.

What Actually Happens? — Definition

When a person suffers a concussion, the brain suddenly shifts or shakes inside the skull and can knock against the skull's bony surface. A hard hit to the body can result in an acceleration and/or deceleration injury when the brain brushes against bony protuberances inside the skull. Such force can also result in a rotational injury in which the brain twists, potentially causing shearing of the brain nerve fibres. It is not yet known exactly what happens to brain cells in a concussion, but the mechanism appears to involve a change in chemical function. In the minutes to days following a concussion, brain cells remain in a vulnerable state. New research emphasizes that the problem may not be the structure of the brain tissue itself, but how the brain is working. The exact length of this change is unclear. During this time period, the brain does not function normally on a temporary basis, and is more vulnerable to a second head injury.

How Do Concussions Occur? — Definition

Most concussions occur as a result of a collision with another object while the object or person is moving at a high rate of speed. Forces such as these (and others) can result in deceleration and rotational concussive injuries.

Who Should the Athlete Tell?

It is extremely important to seek medical advice immediately upon receiving a blow to the head or body that results in signs or symptoms of a concussion. Often, concussions can go untreated (and even unnoticed by others) because few symptoms are visible to casual observers. Many times, the symptoms of a concussion may not be identified until the athlete recovers to the point

where increased exertion causes symptoms to worsen. In fact, 4 out of 5 professional athletes do not even know that they have been concussed (Delaney et al, CJSJ 2001).

Although symptoms may not be immediately apparent, it is important to be aware of possible physical, cognitive, and emotional changes. You can never be too careful! Symptoms may actually worsen throughout the day of the injury or even the next day. Without proper management, a concussion can result in permanent problems and seriously affect one's quality of life.

It is important for athletes to tell a family member, friend, co-worker, teammate, employer, trainer, or coach if they think they have had a concussion. Because a concussion affects the function of the brain and can result in symptoms such as memory loss or amnesia, it is important that others be aware of the signs and symptoms of concussions to help identify the injury in others. If athletes think they have had a concussion, they should immediately remove themselves from the current activity whether it is sports, work, or school. They should not drive and should seek medical attention immediately.

What are the Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion? — Definition

Following a concussion, athletes may experience many different signs and symptoms. A symptom is something athletes will feel, whereas a sign is something athletes' friends, family, or coach may notice. It is important to remember that some symptoms may appear right away and some may appear later. Just as no two people are the same, no two concussions are the same and so the signs and symptoms may be a little different for everyone. Some may be subtle and may go unnoticed by injured athletes, as well as their co-workers, friends, and family.

Contrary to popular belief, most concussions occur without a loss of consciousness (LOC).

How are Concussions Diagnosed?

With a concussion, there is no visible injury to the structure of the brain, meaning that tests like MRI or CT scans usually appear normal.

Concussions typically resolve fully with proper rest and management in about a week or two, but concussions which are not diagnosed can lead to long-term and more serious health implications. The first and most important step is to consult a doctor, preferably one familiar with concussion management.

There are many potential factors which may help to inform individual diagnosis, concussion management, and recovery, although many of these are still being researched to find the exact link. For example, severity is probably impacted by a number of factors such as the athlete's history of previous head injuries, including number of past concussions, length of recovery time, timing between past concussions, age, and style of play. Factors such as this may lead to a different, slower recovery, which is why concussion history should always be monitored.

Return to activity while still concussed and symptomatic can lead to an increased risk for another concussion, more intense symptoms, and a prolonged recovery.

Diagnosing a concussion may take several steps. The athlete's doctor may ask questions about the concussion and work/ sport history, the most recent injury, and will conduct a neurological exam. This can include checking the athlete's memory and concentration, vision, coordination, and balance.

The athlete's doctor may request further tests including a CT scan or MRI; these tests can be important to assess for other skull or brain injury but they do not inform concussion diagnosis. In the majority of concussions, there will not be any obvious damage found on these tests.

Neuropsychological testing: Sometimes the role of neuropsychological testing is important in identifying subtle cognitive (i.e., memory, concentration) problems caused by the concussion and may at times help to plan return to pre-injury activity. In addition, balance testing may be required. Usually these are arranged by the concussion expert.

When Can the Athlete Return to Normal Activity? — Return to Play

Athletes should not return to activity or play until they have completed the 6 Steps to Return to Play and have been cleared by their doctor. A concussed athlete should be removed from activity immediately and should be assessed by a medical doctor. Given that symptoms may worsen later that night and the next day, athletes should not return to their current activity. When athletes are concussed, their ability to assess their situation may be impaired. Post-concussive symptoms may intensify with an increase in activity, so it is important that return to activity is gradual and monitored/supervised by a medical professional.

The 6 Steps to Return to Play include:

1. No activity, mental and physical rest until symptom free
2. Light aerobic activity like walking or stationary cycling
3. Sport-specific activity like skating or running
4. Training drills without body contact
5. Training drills with body contact — only once cleared by a physician
6. Game play

These steps do not correspond to days, though each step should take a minimum of one day. If symptoms return during this process, athletes should stop the activity and return to rest until symptoms resolve before they try any activity again. A physician should be consulted if symptoms persist.

For more detailed information about returning to play, please see the Return to Play Guidelines (pages 976-98 in this document).

How Can the Athlete Cope with the Symptoms of Concussion? — Emotions

The best medical management for a concussion is rest, both physical and mental. An athlete who has suffered a concussion may often feel lethargic and tired. It is important for athletes to admit this fatigue to themselves. The brain is telling the athlete that he or she needs rest and it is extremely important that the athlete listen to it. If the athlete continues pushing himself or herself and struggling on, it is likely to make the symptoms worse.

The first thing to fail when athletes get tired is concentration. If there is something important to get done, it is best for athletes to complete it when they are fresh after resting. When their attention starts to fade, they may need to stop, rest again, and write down the important things for later.

Many athletes who have suffered a concussion often complain of being very irritable. Athletes may find that things that would not normally annoy them suddenly do. Athletes sometimes find themselves losing their temper, snapping at family members or friends, and being very annoyed over things. This may be because athletes' own self-control needs a fresh, working brain as well. In order to cope with this, athletes need to be aware of emotions. Some athletes have learned personal relaxation methods such as imagery and progressive relaxation methods to optimize their coping skills.

Other symptoms such as dizziness and clumsiness appear because the brain is reacting slowly and less efficiently. Concussions can upset balance organs in the ear, resulting in vertigo. One way to deal with these types of symptoms is to take special care in actions and movements, which means walking slowly and being aware of one's surroundings.

Other problems such as noise sensitivity and visual changes are also the result of a concussion. Putting up with noise and bright lights needs brain energy, and athletes may find that they do not have the energy level to do so. Athletes may be around a loud radio, bright lights, or a stimulating environment and find themselves suffering from bad headaches. One answer to coping with this is to avoid loud noise and bright lights as much as possible. Many people find it helpful to wear sunglasses everywhere, even indoors.

When dealing with other symptoms, it is crucial for athletes to take only medications that their doctor has prescribed or approved of. Also, athletes should not drink alcohol or take any drugs not prescribed by a medical doctor, as it may hinder recovery and can put athletes at risk for further injury. Although symptoms resolve spontaneously in most cases, usually in a couple of weeks, the process of healing from a concussion may take considerably more time. It is important for athletes to pace themselves and increase activity gradually, as well as to consult with their family or friends before making any important decisions.

How Can the Athlete Manage Emotions after a Concussion? — Emotions

When coping with a concussion, it is not uncommon for athletes to become overwhelmed by a variety of emotions. Often athletes feel concerned, anxious, and sometimes depressed. The first part of the healing process is to understand that these emotions are normal. After an injury, most people go through an initial stage of denial. Athletes may refuse to believe that they are injured or unable to participate in their selected work, activity, or sport. It is extremely tough for athletes to realize that after sustaining a concussion, their body may not be able to respond as it did before.

Other emotions such as anger and depression are also common when suffering a concussion. Athletes may find themselves being angry, displaced, and blaming others for their injury. It is quite common to become very angry at co-workers, family, and friends. As athletes continue to become more aware about the extent of their injury, depression may set in. This may include self-pity, crying, insomnia, etc. When athletes are unable to work, play, and participate in their normal life, they may become doubtful of their personal abilities and struggle with their personal worth. They may worry that if they are out of the "loop", somebody will take their spot or permanent position. They may suffer a blow to their ego and it is not uncommon for athletes to isolate or alienate themselves.

With time, most athletes learn to accept the injury. It is important to allow themselves to mourn, be sad, and then move on. Attempting to be mad or tough and find blame for an injury is a waste of time. It is important to leave the "should haves" or "would haves" out of the picture and focus on the future. The reality is that the athlete has suffered a concussion and has to deal with it. This may include setting goals for himself or herself and maintaining a positive attitude. The athlete may also weigh the pros and cons of his or her future. Dealing with a serious concussion is very demanding and can result in economic loss and emotional burden for the athlete and his or her family. A positive, optimistic outlook can help to speed up the healing process and lessen the emotional pain, while thinking negatively discourages everyone around the athlete.

It is also important for athletes to take an active role in their recovery and seek out the resources available to them. Athletes should also continue to participate in daily functions and activities, as their step-wise recovery allows. Athletes should not isolate themselves.

Lastly, it is important to be patient. Concussion can result in permanent damage and seriously affect one's quality of life. Athletes must not rush their recovery, because it will only lead to negative results. Athletes should follow the advice of their doctor and trust in the healing process.

How Can Athletes Prevent Concussion?

It is important to take a preventative approach when dealing with concussions. This is especially true with recent concussions as the brain is still very vulnerable at that time. Prevention of concussion and head injury is most successful when workers and athletes are properly educated and the safety rules of the working and sporting environment are enforced.

Concussions are an invisible injury, making it important for athletes to share information with the people surrounding them. This will help them understand athletes' situations and educate them for the future.

Protective equipment can reduce the risk and severity of injuries to the face and skull, but there is no concussion proof helmet, nor is there research to support that mouth guards prevent concussions.

Source: Modified/adapted from Parachute. *Concussion Questions and Answers*. Available at parachutecanada.org (www.parachutecanada.org/active-and-safe/item/concussion-questions-and-answers).

Concussion Action Plan

CONCUSSION ACTION PLAN

To make sure concussions are managed properly, put in place an action plan that your coaches, trainers, athletes and parents are all involved in.

- Identify safety people who can assist managing the health of the athlete. Make sure that the safety person is knowledgeable about concussions, knows about the action plan and what to do when a concussion is suspected.
- Always have a concussion card and SCAT2 Pocket Card at practices and games so that you have all the information about signs, symptoms and first steps to take when a concussion is suspected.
- Provide athletes and families with concussion handouts so everyone knows what to look for to keep athletes safe.

If you suspect a concussion has occurred:

1. Remove the athlete from play.
2. Do not leave the athlete alone. Monitor signs and symptoms and do not administer medication.
3. Make sure the athlete is evaluated by a medical professional as soon as possible. If your doctor's office is closed, go to the Emergency Room.
4. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the known or suspected concussion.
5. Follow up with the athlete to ensure that if he/she is diagnosed with a concussion, he/she is following a medically supervised 6 Step Return to Play plan. These athletes should return to play only when they have been cleared by their doctor.
6. **When in Doubt, Sit Them Out!**
The athlete must not return to play in that game or practice.

If there is loss of consciousness - initiate the Emergency Action Plan and call an ambulance. Assume possible neck injury. Continue to monitor airway, breathing and circulation.

www.parachutecanada.org

Source: Modified/adapted from Parachute. *Concussion Action Plan*. Available at parachutecanada.org (www.parachutecanada.org/downloads/programs/activeandsafe/Concussion_ActionPlan.pdf).

Guidelines for Return to Play after a Concussion

**GUIDELINES FOR RETURN TO PLAY
AFTER A CONCUSSION**



A concussion is a serious event, but you can recover fully from such an injury if the brain is given enough time to rest and recuperate. Returning to normal activities, including sport participation, is a step-wise process that requires patience, attention, and caution.

Each step must take a minimum of one day but could last longer, depending on the player and his or her specific situation.

STEP 1: NO ACTIVITY, ONLY COMPLETE REST.
Limit school, work and tasks requiring concentration. Refrain from physical activity until symptoms are gone. Once symptoms are gone, a physician, preferably one with experience managing concussions, should be consulted before beginning a step wise return to play process.

STEP 2: LIGHT AEROBIC EXERCISE.
Activities such as walking or stationary cycling. The player should be supervised by someone who can help monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weight lifting. The duration and intensity of the aerobic exercise can be gradually increased over time if no symptoms or signs return during the exercise or the next day.

SYMPTOMS? Return to rest until symptoms have resolved.
If symptoms persist, consult a physician.

NO SYMPTOMS? Proceed to **Step 3** the next day.

STEP 3: SPORT SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES.
Activities such as skating or throwing can begin at step 3. There should be no body contact or other jarring motions such as high speed stops or hitting a baseball with a bat.

SYMPTOMS? Return to rest until symptoms have resolved.
If symptoms persist, consult a physician.

NO SYMPTOMS? Proceed to **Step 4** the next day.

STEP 4: BEGIN DRILLS WITHOUT BODY CONTACT.

SYMPTOMS? Return to rest until symptoms have resolved.
If symptoms persist, consult a physician.

NO SYMPTOMS? The time needed to progress from non-contact exercise will vary with the severity of the concussion and with the player. **Proceed to Step 5 only after medical clearance.**

STEP 5: BEGIN DRILLS WITH BODY CONTACT.

SYMPTOMS? Return to rest until symptoms have resolved.
If symptoms persist, consult a physician.

NO SYMPTOMS? Proceed to **Step 6** the next day.

STEP 6: GAME PLAY.

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GUIDELINES FOR RETURN TO PLAY AFTER A CONCUSSION



NEVER RETURN TO PLAY IF YOU STILL HAVE SYMPTOMS!

A player who returns to active play before full recovery from the first concussion is at high risk of sustaining another concussion, with symptoms that may be increased and prolonged.

HOW LONG DOES THIS PROCESS TAKE?

These steps do not correspond to days! It may take many days to progress through one step, especially if the concussion is severe. As soon as symptoms appear, the player should return to rest until symptoms have resolved and wait at least one more day before attempting any activity. The only way to heal a brain is to rest it.

HOW DO I FIND THE RIGHT DOCTOR?

When dealing with concussions, it is important to see a doctor who is knowledgeable in concussion management. This might include your physician or someone such as a sports medicine specialist. Your family doctor may be required to submit a referral to see a specialist. Contact the Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine (CASEM) to find a sports medical physician in your area. Visit www.casm-acsm.org for more information. You can also refer your doctor to parachutecanada.org for more information.

WHO DO THESE GUIDELINES APPLY TO?

These guidelines were developed for children over the age of 10; those younger may require special guidelines, and more conservative treatment and care. Return to Play Guidelines should be at the discretion of the physician.

WHAT IF MY SYMPTOMS RETURN DURING THIS PROCESS?

Sometimes these steps can cause symptoms of a concussion to return. This means that the brain has not yet healed, and needs more rest. If any signs or symptoms return during the Return To Play process, they should stop the activity and rest until symptoms have resolved. The player must be re-evaluated by a physician before trying any activity again. Remember, symptoms may return later that day or the next, not necessarily during the activity!

www.parachutecanada.org



Source: Parachute. *Guidelines for Return to Play after a Concussion*. Available at parachutecanada.org (<http://www.parachutecanada.org/downloads/programs/activeandsafe/returntoplayguidelines.pdf>).

COACH LIABILITY

More than ever before, coaches are aware of the risks and responsibilities they assume when they coach. These risks and responsibilities include those that are legal in nature. No matter what their certification, experience, employment or volunteer status, sport discipline, or location of residence, coaches at all times have a *legal obligation to provide a safe environment for athletes*.

To understand this obligation more fully, coaches must understand some key legal principles, including negligence and liability. Coaches must also understand concepts and techniques related to risk management. With this knowledge, coaches can determine the applicable standard of care, can assess their own coaching situation for risks, and can put in place appropriate measures to manage these risks.

Negligence

Negligence is a term with precise legal meaning. The term relates to standards of behaviour that the law expects, and understanding the law of negligence is an essential first step in learning how to provide a safe environment for athletes.

In general terms, negligence refers to behaviour or action that falls below a “reasonable standard of care.” The law in Canada demands that we behave in a particular way so that others who might be affected by our actions are not exposed to an unreasonable risk of harm. The standard of behaviour coaches are expected to meet is termed an “objective” standard. As adults and as coaches, we are all credited with the same general intelligence and sensibility, and the law therefore expects each of us to behave in a reasonable fashion in similar situations.

The law does not expect coaches to be *perfect* in his or her behaviour; rather, the law expects coaches to be *reasonable* and act as other reasonable coaches would in the same circumstances.

It is widely accepted that there is a certain amount of risk in many sport activities and that such risk is knowable, foreseeable, acceptable, and, depending on the sport, even desirable. What is unacceptable in sport is behaviour that puts athletes at unreasonable risk or in danger.

A coach’s conduct is negligent when all four of the following occur:

- ☐ A duty of care exists (such as the one that exists between a coach and an athlete).
- ☐ That duty imposes a standard of care that the coach does not meet.
- ☐ An athlete or some other person experiences harm.
- ☐ The failure to meet the standard of care can be shown to have caused or substantially contributed to the harm.

For the coach, the standard of care is the most important of the above elements. The standard of care is what the coach *should* do in a given situation. Standard of care is difficult to define precisely because it is influenced by the risk inherent in the surrounding circumstances. Thus, the duty to act responsibly remains constant, but the specific behaviour required to fulfil that duty changes with the circumstances.

Determining what the *standard of care* is in any given circumstance involves looking to four sources:

- ☐ **Written standards** – these are government regulations, equipment standards, rules for a particular sport or facility, rules from a sport governing body, coaching

standards and codes of conduct, and other internal risk-management policies and procedures.

- ❑ **Unwritten standards** – these are norms or conventions in a sport, an organization, or a facility that might not be written down, but are nonetheless known, accepted, and followed.
- ❑ **Case law** – these are court decisions about similar situations. Where the circumstances are the same or similar, judges must apply legal principles in the same or similar ways. Earlier decisions of the court are a guide, or *precedent*, for future decisions where the facts are similar.
- ❑ **Common sense** – this means simply doing what feels right, or avoiding doing what feels wrong. Common sense is the sum of a person's knowledge and experience. Trusting one's common sense is a good practice.

The responsible and prudent coach is familiar with written policies that govern him or her, is aware of unwritten norms and practices, knows something of the case law as it applies to coaches, and has learned to trust his or her intuitive judgment and common sense.

Liability

Where all four conditions of the legal definition of negligence have been met, negligence of the coach may be established. What follows then is the question of liability. While negligence refers to *conduct*, liability refers to *responsibility* for the consequences of negligent conduct. Responsibility may lie with the coach who was negligent or with another person or entity.

For example, an insurance policy transfers the financial liability for negligence to an insurance company. A valid waiver of liability agreement might eliminate liability entirely. An injured athlete may be partially responsible for his or her injuries and thus may share liability with the negligent coach. And a sport organization may be liable for the negligent actions of its coach, whether he or she is an employee or a volunteer.

Liability can also refer to responsibility for the consequences of conduct that fails to meet a predetermined legal standard other than the standard of care in a situation where negligence occurs. In addition to arising from negligence, liability can arise when a law is broken or a contract is breached. The prudent coach avoids these types of liability by obeying laws and complying with contractual agreements.

In sum, an understanding of the legal meaning of *negligence* answers the coach's question: How does the law expect me to behave? The follow-up question is: How can I be sure that my behaviour will meet this expectation? The answer to this question lies in *risk management*.

Risk Management

Risk management is about taking steps to identify, measure, and control risks. This involves spending time thinking about potentially risky situations, deciding which situations might pose serious risks, and determining what steps to take to minimize those risks. The common ingredient in all these tasks is common sense.

There are four strategies for controlling risks, all of which are important to coaches:

- ❑ **Retain the risk** – the risk is minor and is inherent in the sport activity, and the coach is willing to accept the consequences. The coach therefore does nothing about the risk. In sport, this is often a legitimate risk-management strategy.
- ❑ **Reduce the risk** – the risk is moderately significant and the coach takes measures to reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring or minimize its consequences if the risk occurs; the coach does this by planning carefully, supervising athletes appropriately, and educating athletes.
- ❑ **Transfer the risk** – the risk is significant and it is transferred to others through contracts, including waivers and insurance.
- ❑ **Avoid the risk** – the risk is severe and the coach decides to avoid anything that may cause the risk.

A word of caution: there is no template, formula, or checklist for managing risk. The law expects coaches to provide a safe environment for athletes, but what that means for a coach's conduct will vary with circumstances, including athletes' age and skill level and the environment where the coaching activity occurs.

The Coach's Personal Risk-Management Plan

The informed and prudent coach protects himself or herself by implementing a personal risk-management plan. This plan helps the coach in two ways. First, it promotes a safe program and helps prevent injuries from occurring. Second, it helps protect the coach from liability claims when an injury cannot be prevented.

Coaches can, and should, practice their own personal risk management by following this ten-point plan:

1. Be familiar with and adhere to applicable standards, both written and unwritten, as well as internal policies and rules governing the facility, the sport, and your program.
2. Monitor your athletes' fitness and skill levels, and teach new skills in a progressive fashion suitable to their age and skills. *Never* leave young athletes unsupervised.
3. If you do not have access to medical personnel or a qualified trainer, keep adequate first-aid supplies on hand; ideally, you should be trained in administering first aid.
4. Develop an Emergency Action Plan for the facility or site where you regularly hold practices or competitions. Carry with you, at all times, emergency contact numbers and athletes' medical profiles.
5. Inspect facilities and equipment before every practice and competition. Take steps to ensure any deficiencies are corrected immediately, or adjust your activities accordingly to avoid the risk.

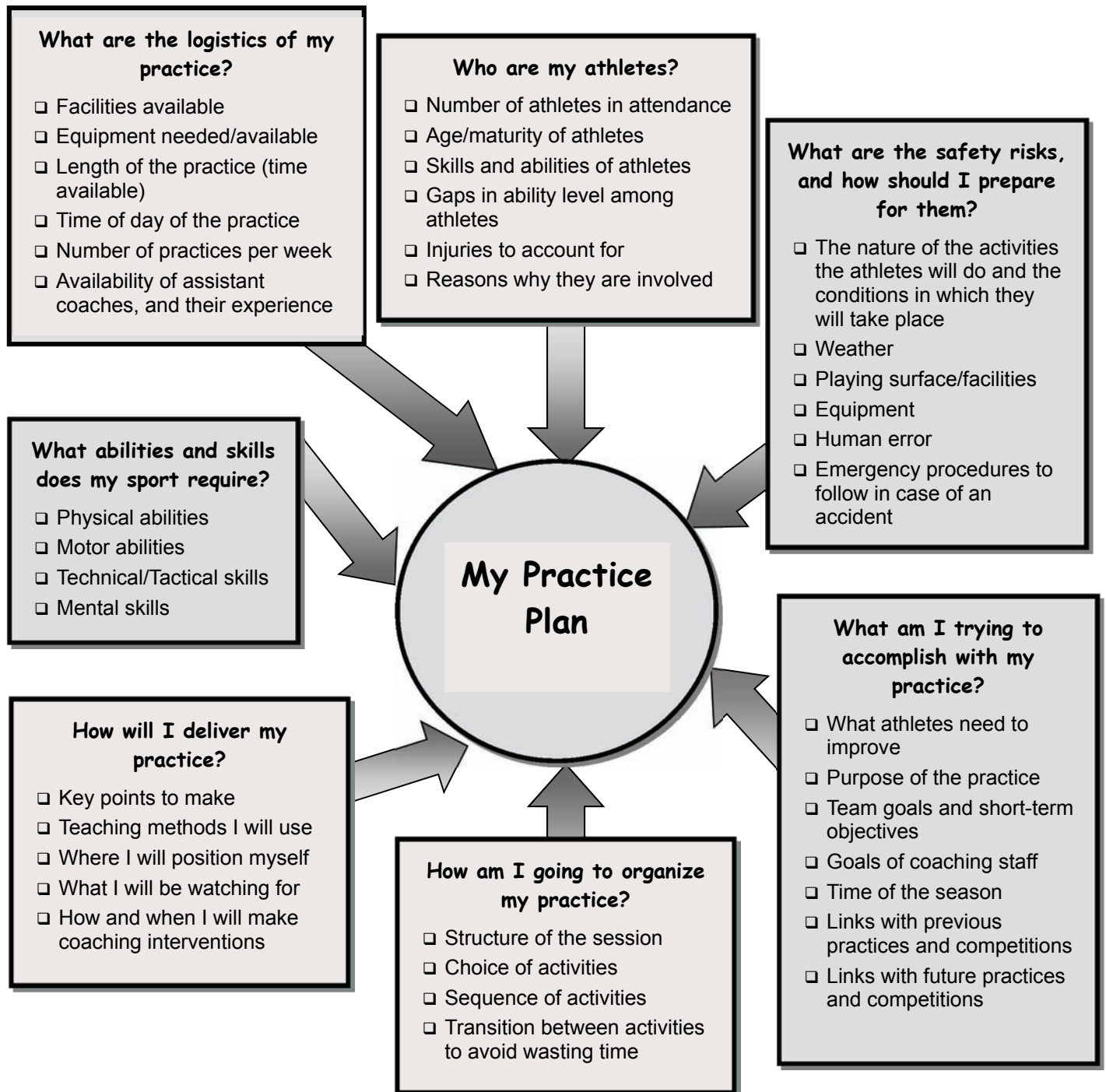
6. Work with your employer or sport organization to develop and use appropriately worded assumption-of-risk agreements in your programs. Where appropriate, develop and use agreements waiving liability; these are suitable only for adult athletes.
7. You *should* be covered by the liability insurance policy of your employer if you are paid for your coaching services, by the liability insurance policy of your organization if you are a volunteer coach. Find out whether you are covered. If you aren't, obtain your own insurance.
8. Don't be afraid to stop or withdraw from any activity that poses unreasonable risks. This could include stopping a practice or removing your team or your athletes from a competition.
9. Trust your common sense and intuition!
10. Actively pursue your own training, professional development, and coaching certification.

Note: See Appendix 8 for answers to some key questions on liability.

5 PLANNING A PRACTICE – LESSON PLANNING



KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING A PRACTICE



Note: The points listed under *How will I deliver my practice?* are covered in the *Teaching and Learning* module.

THE PARTS OF A PRACTICE

A well-structured practice has five parts:

- ❑ **The introduction:** The coach prepares the site and equipment, welcomes the athletes, and tells them what will happen during the practice. This is also a good time to assess the general status of the athletes (e.g. have they recovered from the previous practice?).
- ❑ **The warm-up:** The coach plans activities that gradually activate the athletes and prepare them physically and mentally to effectively perform the main part of the practice. The warm-up consists of two parts: (1) general and (2) specific. The general warm-up aims to raise the body temperature until the athlete sweats, to allow for progressive muscle stretching. The specific warm-up, designed for the athlete's particular sport, aims to prepare the warmed muscles for the types of movements the athlete will perform in the main part of the practice. The movements in the specific warm-up should mimic those of the main part, gradually building in intensity and range of motion.
- ❑ **The main part:** The coach ensures a smooth flow of activities that are challenging for the athletes and help them improve sport-specific abilities and fitness. The activities chosen must be appropriate for the sport, as well as athletes' age, fitness, and ability levels.
- ❑ **The cool-down:** To initiate the recovery of the body, the coach plans low-intensity transition activities between the more intense efforts of the main part and the end of the practice. The coach also plans for some time for athletes to stretch.
- ❑ **The conclusion:** The coach provides some comments on the practice and gives athletes an opportunity to provide feedback. The coach ensures that the practice ends on a positive and friendly note. The coach also provides some information about the next practice or game.



Key Elements of Each Part of a Practice



Practice Part	Time	Key Elements
Introduction Purpose is to greet athletes and let them know what will be taking place	Variable 2-3 min	Before practice begins: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Inspect facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Organize equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Greet each athlete <input type="checkbox"/> Assess each athlete's energy level At the beginning of the practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review the goals of the practice and the activities planned <input type="checkbox"/> Give safety instructions specific to the activities planned
Warm-up Purpose is to prepare the body for the efforts of the main part	5-10 min 8-15 min	General warm-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> General exercises or games to loosen muscles and raise body temperature <input type="checkbox"/> Progressive stretching Specific warm-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Brief activities that athletes already know that mimic the movements of the main part (may even be the same activity, but at lower intensity) <input type="checkbox"/> A gradual increase in intensity that will not tire the athlete <input type="checkbox"/> A quick transition between the end of the warm-up, the explanations/instructions given for the first activities of the main part, and the activities themselves
Main part Purpose is to perform activities that will help athletes improve sport-specific abilities and fitness	Variable; 30-60 min or more	Three or more activities linked in the proper order (see suggestions on page Error! Bookmark not defined.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Activities that challenge athletes so that they can learn and improve while enjoying themselves <input type="checkbox"/> Athletes involved in an activity most of the time (i.e. not standing around or waiting in line) <input type="checkbox"/> Athletes allowed lots of practice for each activity <input type="checkbox"/> Activities that are appropriate for the age, fitness, and ability levels of the athletes and are relevant to the sport
Cool-down Purpose is to begin recovery	5-10 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A gradual decrease in intensity <input type="checkbox"/> Stretching, especially of muscles most used

Practice Part	Time	Key Elements
Conclusion Purpose is to debrief athletes and tell them about the next practice or competition	3-5 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide and ask for feedback on what went well and what can be improved <input type="checkbox"/> Tell athletes about the next practice or competition (e.g. logistics, goals, and emphasis) <input type="checkbox"/> Lead team cheer <input type="checkbox"/> Speak with each athlete before he or she leaves

PLANNING A PRACTICE - ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, REFERENCES, AND GLOSSARY



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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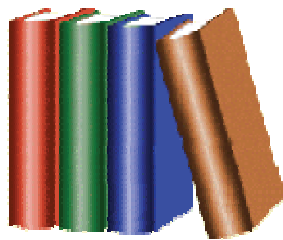
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APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1 — SAMPLE ATHLETE QUESTIONNAIRE

Why I'm Involved in Sport or in this Sport Program

My name: _____

My age: _____ years I am: a girl () a boy ()

I am involved in this sport because... _____

This season would be really fun for me if... _____

This season would be really fun for our team if... _____

When I perform my sport, I think my strengths are... _____

I would like the coach to help me improve... _____

APPENDIX 2 — SAMPLE LETTER TO SEND TO PARENTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEASON

Participants/athletes: Children to young teens

Questionnaire: See Appendix 3

Dear Parents,

I am pleased to be contacting you for the first time this season. During the season, I will have the opportunity to spend many hours with your son/daughter, and I hope that you and I will also have the chance to meet on a regular basis.

I am writing to invite you to an important information meeting that will take place at _____ (location) on _____ (day/date) at _____ (time, indicate AM or PM). The meeting will last approximately one hour.

If there is a particular issue that you wish to discuss with me that is not covered in the meeting, please see me immediately after the meeting.

The agenda for the meeting will be as follows:

The Directions of the Program

- ☐ Coaches' presentation
- ☐ Review of the results of the questionnaire and their impact on our program
- ☐ Our philosophy and our program — create a sport environment that is fun, safe, and conducive to learning

The Season

- ☐ Number of games and tournaments (season and playoffs)
- ☐ Vacation breaks, family vacations, expected absences, participant/athlete involvement in other sports/activities

Organization

- ☐ Fees and financing
- ☐ Payment deadlines
- ☐ Transportation and what is expected of parents

General

- ❑ Question period

It is important for the coaches to know what you as parents expect of them and of the program. This is why I am asking that you take a few minutes with your son/daughter to complete the attached questionnaires. They will help us build an honest and open relationship and will also help us align our goals and expectations for the program.

Team Leaders:

Coach:

Assistant-coach:

Manager:

Contacts:

name, phone, email

name, phone, email

name, phone, email

The best time to reach me is:

Note: I invite parents who are unable to attend to communicate with me before the meeting.

APPENDIX 3 — SAMPLE PRESEASON QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

(Parents of four-year olds to teens)

1. What were your reasons for registering your child to participate in this organized sport program?

2. What are your expectations of the program leaders, and specifically of the coaches?

3. In your opinion, what goals should be set for the athletes by the team leaders?

4. Identify values that you think the program should promote.

5. Important facts about your child that team leaders should know (allergies, health issues, previous injuries, etc.).

** Please return the questionnaire at least one week before the parents' meeting.

Athlete's name

Parent/guardian's name

Date ____ / ____ / ____ (dd/mm/yyyy)

APPENDIX 4 — FIRST-AID KIT

A complete first-aid kit is essential. This kit must be carefully prepared to treat the most common injuries. Furthermore, it must be accessible to those responsible for the team. Here is a list of what a first-aid kit should contain.

Contents	Use
Medical Record	<input type="checkbox"/> important information in case of an emergency
Disinfectants	<input type="checkbox"/> all skin lesions
<input type="checkbox"/> soft antiseptic soap	<input type="checkbox"/> laceration requiring cleaning before a dressing can be applied
<input type="checkbox"/> antiseptic cream	
<input type="checkbox"/> antiseptic solution	
<input type="checkbox"/> peroxide	
Dressings	<input type="checkbox"/> cover and close the eye
<input type="checkbox"/> ocular	<input type="checkbox"/> dry compression
<input type="checkbox"/> aseptic (sterile gauze, 50, 75, 100mm rolls)	<input type="checkbox"/> protection of minor lesions
<input type="checkbox"/> adhesive bandages ("Band-Aid" type and butterfly closures)	<input type="checkbox"/> compression
<input type="checkbox"/> elastic bandages (100 and 150mm)	<input type="checkbox"/> multiple uses but primarily to act as an arm support in case of a fracture
<input type="checkbox"/> triangular bandages and safety pins	
Drug products and ointments	<input type="checkbox"/> scratches or blisters
<input type="checkbox"/> zinc ointment	<input type="checkbox"/> sore burns
<input type="checkbox"/> xylocaine spray	
Other useful items	<input type="checkbox"/> dislodge foreign bodies
<input type="checkbox"/> cleaning solution for foreign bodies	<input type="checkbox"/> common use
<input type="checkbox"/> scissors	<input type="checkbox"/> multiple uses
<input type="checkbox"/> tongue depressor	<input type="checkbox"/> check body temperature
<input type="checkbox"/> body temperature thermometer	<input type="checkbox"/> in case of trauma
<input type="checkbox"/> chemical cold bags (if you don't have access to real ice)	<input type="checkbox"/> for ice cubes
<input type="checkbox"/> plastic bags	<input type="checkbox"/> ensure quick response
<input type="checkbox"/> phone number list (cell phone, pen, quarters, paper, athletes' emergency records)	<input type="checkbox"/> minor repair of equipment
<input type="checkbox"/> tools	<input type="checkbox"/> support wounded joints
<input type="checkbox"/> adhesive tape (37.5mm)	

APPENDIX 5 — SAMPLE FACILITY INSPECTION GRID

Facility: _____

Date: _____

Inspected by: _____

Item	Adequate	Inadequate	Corrective Measures*	Observations
Stationary Equipment				
Team Equipment				
Individual Equipment				
First-aid Kit and Procedures				
Others				
*Corrections 1) add 2) replace 3) modify 4) discard 5) clean 6) repair 7) check				

Note: This document, once completed, should be given to the facilities manager, and the coach should keep a copy for his/her files.

Facilities Manager Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name of Coach: _____ Date (dd/mm/yy): _____

Signature of Coach: _____

APPENDIX 6 — LIST OF ATHLETES, COORDINATES, AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Telephones: 911 Service Available Yes () No () Ambulance _____
 Police _____ Fire Department _____

Name of Athletes and Sex (M/F)	Date of Birth (YYYY/MM/DD)	Address and Home Telephone Number	Known Medical Conditions	Specific Procedure to Implement	Person(s) to Contact in Case of Emergency	Telephone Number(s)

APPENDIX 7 — SAMPLE ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

Date of Report: ____ / ____ / ____
 dd mm yyyy

PATIENT INFORMATION

LAST NAME:		FIRST NAME:	
STREET ADDRESS:		CITY:	
POSTAL CODE:		PHONE: ()	
EMAIL:		AGE:	
SEX: ____M ____F	HEIGHT: ____ WEIGHT: ____	DOB: ____ / ____ / ____ dd / mm / yyyy	
KNOWN MEDICAL CONDITIONS/ALLERGIES:			

INCIDENT INFORMATION

DATE & TIME OF INCIDENT: ____ / ____ / ____ ____ : ____ AM/PM dd / mm / yyyy	TIME OF FIRST INTERVENTION: ____ : ____ AM/PM	TIME OF MEDICAL SUPPORT ARRIVAL: ____ : ____ AM/PM
CHARGE PERSON, DESCRIBE THE INCIDENT: (what took place, where it took place, what were the signs and symptoms of the patient)		
PATIENT, DESCRIBE THE INCIDENT: (see above)		
EVENT and CONDITIONS: (what was the event during which the incident took place, location of incident, surface quality, light, weather, etc.):		
ACTIONS TAKEN/INTERVENTION:		
After treatment, the patient was:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Sent home <input type="checkbox"/> Sent to hospital/a clinic <input type="checkbox"/> Returned to activity		

OVER...

Sample Accident Report Form (cont'd)

CHARGE PERSON INFORMATION

LAST NAME:	FIRST NAME:
STREET ADDRESS:	CITY:
POSTAL CODE:	PHONE: ()
EMAIL:	AGE:
ROLE (Coach, assistant, parent, official, bystander, therapist):	

WITNESS INFORMATION (someone who observed the incident and the response, not the charge person)

LAST NAME:	FIRST NAME:
STREET ADDRESS:	CITY:
POSTAL CODE:	PHONE: ()
EMAIL:	AGE:

OTHER COMMENTS OR REMARKS

FORM COMPLETED BY:

PRINT NAME: _____ SIGNATURE: _____

APPENDIX 8 — LEGAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The following are frequently asked legal questions about coaching. Answers to these questions have been provided by the Centre for Sport and Law.

1. What are the major differences between provinces/territories regarding the law and how does this impact me as a coach?

Laws in Canada can be divided into *public* laws (those laws that govern relations between the state and individuals) and *private* laws (those laws that govern relations between and among individuals and private entities – this area of law is also referred to as civil law). In Canada, public laws are generally in federal jurisdiction while private laws are generally in provincial jurisdiction.

The most well-known body of public law in Canada is the Criminal Code: this applies to everyone, regardless of province/territory of residence. Civil law varies from province/territory to province/territory, but not greatly. Examples of civil law relevant to coaches and varying slightly from one province/territory to another include human rights law, occupier's liability and the law of defamation.

An important distinction between criminal law and civil law is that there is a different 'standard' of proof, where the standard of proof refers to the certainty with which something must be proven. In criminal matters, guilt must be proven 'beyond a reasonable doubt' (a fairly high standard), while in civil matters, fault must be proven 'on a balance of probabilities' which means with a certainty that is greater than 50 percent. This is a lower standard of proof than the criminal standard. Thus, a person charged with a criminal offence could be found not guilty, while the same allegation made under civil law might be upheld.

In criminal law penalties are imposed and may include fines, restrictions on activities, restitution (paying back the person harmed), or imprisonment. In civil law, the penalties take the form of monetary compensation. The amount of compensation will depend on the cost to reimburse the harmed person for their expenses and lost income, and will also attempt to place a monetary value on any injury that the person sustains. The courts can also require a person to perform a certain service (such as following through with a contractual promise) or to refrain from doing something in the future.

2. Are paid/contracted coaches subject to a different standard than are volunteer coaches?

Yes and no. Paid and volunteer coaches of equivalent knowledge, skill and certification, performing equivalent duties within a sport setting, will likely be held to the same legal standard of care. They will, however, have different entitlements and privileges in other areas of the law – for example, a volunteer does not have the rights an employee has under employment standards legislation.

Depending upon the circumstances of a coaching activity, paid and volunteer coaches could be held to the same or similar standard. However, coaches who are paid and coaches who are not paid will usually have different duties, obligations, and scope of authority. This will influence the standard of care to which they will be held. This standard is not dictated by whether or not they receive payment for their services, but rather is dictated by the scope of the coach's responsibility and the nature of the relationship between the coach and the athlete. The standard of care is constant in that it is always a reasonable standard; however, what is reasonable will vary according to the circumstances in which the paid coach and the volunteer coach find themselves.

3. Are coaches who are also physical educators held to a different standard?

Yes and no. Children are required by law to go to school and when in school they are under the authority and care of school officials, including teachers. Thus, a teacher has a statutory duty to stand *in loco parentis*, a legal term meaning that he or she stands in the place of a parent with respect to his or her students. As such, teachers have duties and responsibilities equivalent to that of a 'prudent parent', and must behave as a parent would behave in caring for their child. Coaches who are not in a school setting do not stand "*in loco parentis*" in the same way that teachers do, and are not required to meet this statutory duty.

However, both coaches and teachers have specialized skills and knowledge and have a responsibility to provide a reasonable standard of care. The standard of care for anyone is determined by written standards, unwritten standards, case law, and common sense. The coach who is also a teacher will be held to written and unwritten standards that govern coaching (such as coaching manuals, rules of the sport, coaching code of conduct) as well as written and unwritten standards that apply to teachers (such as teacher manuals, school board policies, and duties imposed by statute upon teachers). The coach in the school setting must fulfil both roles and must adhere to standards that apply to both coaching and teaching activities.

4. How would a judge describe a "reasonable and prudent person" when referring to a coach?

A coach will be held to an objective standard of behaviour that is what an average and reasonable coach would do, or not do, in the same circumstances. *Black's Law Dictionary* defines 'reasonable care' as that degree of care which a person of ordinary prudence would exercise in the same or similar circumstance. A coach has special skills and knowledge and is not the same as a 'person of ordinary prudence', thus the reasonable standard for the coach will be that standard expected of a reasonably prudent coach having similar knowledge and skill and finding themselves in similar circumstances.

Keep in mind that the standard is objective, meaning that it is determined not by what a coach *did* or *did not* do in a situation, but by what a coach *ought* to have done, or *ought not* to have done. It might be tempting to believe that if a coach obtains less training and gains less knowledge, he or she will be held to a lesser standard. This is not the case, as the circumstances may well require a coach of greater knowledge and skill, and *that* will form the benchmark against which the coach's conduct will be measured.

5. Are there differences in liability if you are a head coach or an assistant coach?

Yes. The head coach and assistant coach have different degrees of responsibility and authority. The behaviour required to meet the standard of care is influenced by this.

6. What is jurisprudence?

Technically, jurisprudence is defined as the "philosophy of law" or the "science of law". For everyday purposes, jurisprudence refers to legal principles and how they have evolved over time. The law is not static; it continually evolves to reflect changing community standards. Jurisprudence refers to the principles that are reflected in our laws, both in legislation and in common law (also referred to as "judge-made" or the accumulated body of court decisions).

7. If I am required to sign multiple codes of ethics or conduct, to which will I be held, or will I be held to all?

You will be held to all of the codes you execute, within the specific jurisdiction in which they have been signed. In other words, if you sign a code with your provincial sport body it may hold you to it for the activities you undertake for it or within its jurisdiction. If you sign a code for a local sport club, it may hold you to it for activities you undertake with and for the club.

There may also be situations where your activity is subject to two or more codes at the same time, such as if you are coaching at the Canada Games. Unless the codes specify clearly which

one might take precedence, or “trump” the others, then all may apply simultaneously. This can create difficulties if any of the terms in different codes are contradictory.

8. Is special liability insurance a requirement for coaches?

Special liability insurance is not a requirement for coaches, but is highly recommended as a risk management measure. Ideally, organizations that employ or engage coaches should include the coach as an insured party under their general liability insurance policy. Coaches should confirm this is the case and if it is not, the coach should insist that the policy be revised accordingly. As a last resort, an individual coach can purchase his or her own insurance, but this may be difficult to obtain and expensive.

9. What happens if I am uninsured? Are my personal assets at risk?

The purpose of liability insurance is to cover the costs that an individual might have to pay in the event they are sued, or are required to compensate another person for loss or damage. Insurance may also cover the costs to defend oneself or to otherwise respond to an allegation of wrongdoing, even where such an allegation may prove to be untrue.

The vast majority of coaches never find themselves in situations where they need insurance. However, if they do and they are not covered by an insurance policy, then they will be personally responsible for paying these costs. This could mean tapping into savings and other personal assets.

It is also important to note that insurance policies and coverage vary widely and a given insurance policy may not cover all of the coach’s circumstances or all financial obligations.

10. What are my responsibilities if an accident occurs? Must I accompany an athlete to the hospital?

The coach’s responsibilities begin long before an accident occurs. The coach should have an Emergency Action Plan that identifies who does what in the event of an accident, and should have on hand all the necessary information to contact emergency and medical authorities as well as parents/guardians, and to inform medical professionals of the medical history of the injured person.

A coach does not necessarily have an obligation to accompany an athlete to the hospital; it will depend on the nature and severity of the injury, whether or not there is another responsible person available to accompany the athlete, and whether the remaining athletes can be properly supervised should the coach be required to leave. The coach will have to make informed decisions about these matters depending on the circumstances; the Emergency Action Plan provides guidance for this decision-making, which is why it is so important to have prepared in advance.

11. What are the most commonly occurring cases where coaches require legal assistance?


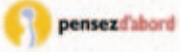
Coaches most frequently need legal assistance to deal with employment matters such as employment contracts and termination. They also seek assistance to deal with allegations of harassment and misconduct matters. On occasion, coaches require legal assistance when implicated in a lawsuit from a person who has been injured and is seeking compensation.

12. What are the key preventive measures a coach can take to protect himself/herself?

The competent, informed and prudent coach practises his or her own personal risk management as described in the NCCP materials. A ten-point plan is presented there that lays out an array of risk management techniques accessible to all coaches. A coach protects himself or herself through gaining knowledge about negligence and liability, and applying techniques to identify and control risks in the coaching environment.


APPENDIX 9 — CONCUSSION EDUCATION CHECKLIST

CONCUSSION EDUCATION CHECKLIST

Tips to Reduce Preventable Injuries and Manage Concussions	
PRE-SEASON Prepare your athletes with these resources!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Make concussion education a priority to talk about at meetings with athletes and parents. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide concussion handouts. <input type="checkbox"/> Make a Concussion Action Plan so you and your athletes know what to do when a concussion is suspected.
DURING THE SEASON Keep these on hand all season long!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Learn the Signs and Symptoms of Concussions so that you can identify a suspected concussion. <input type="checkbox"/> If you suspect a concussion, remove the athlete from play immediately. Follow your Action Plan and have the athlete medically assessed as soon as possible. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure concussed athletes follow the Return to Play Guidelines and are given the ok by a doctor before returning to practice and games. <input type="checkbox"/> Keep resources on hand to answer questions about concussions for athletes, families and coaches/trainers. <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage families to track any concussions so that they can provide medical professionals with an accurate concussion history.


www.parachutecanada.org



Source: Modified/adapted from Parachute. *Concussion Education Checklist*. Available at parachutecanada.org (www.parachutecanada.org/downloads/programs/activeandsafe/Concussion_EdChecklist.pdf).

APPENDIX 10 — CONCUSSION EDUCATION TEAM MEETING GUIDE

**CONCUSSION EDUCATION
TEAM MEETING GUIDE**



Athletes as well as families watching a game or practice play an important role in keeping everyone healthy. Work to ensure that everyone understands that a concussion is a brain injury; have everyone learn to identify the signs and symptoms of a concussion as a first step. Team meetings are a great way to do this.

WHEN:

Many teams already have pre-season meetings for registration and athlete safety where this additional concussion information could fit. These Concussion Education Team Meetings are helpful for the pre-season and can also fit within any team's schedule.


WHERE:

The venue for each team meeting could be a sports arena, team dressing room, the home of one of the athletes, a participating school or a community centre.

WHO:

The attendees at each team meeting should include the coach, trainer, safety person, all athletes and all parents. We encourage teams to invite officials and facility staff to attend these concussion education meetings so that everyone is prepared with the basic knowledge to recognize a concussion, know the steps to take when one is suspected and manage a recovery.

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Source: Modified/adapted from Parachute. *Concussion Education Team Meeting Guide*. Available at parachutecanada.org (www.parachutecanada.org/downloads/programs/activeandsafe/Concussion_TeamMeetGuide.pdf).

APPENDIX 11 — CONCUSSION GUIDELINES FOR THE ATHLETE

CONCUSSION GUIDELINES FOR THE ATHLETE



WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that cannot be seen on routine x-rays, CT scans, or MRIs. It affects the way a person may think and remember things for a short time, and can cause a variety of symptoms.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS OF CONCUSSION?

**YOU DON'T NEED TO BE KNOCKED OUT
(LOSE CONSCIOUSNESS) TO HAVE HAD A CONCUSSION.**

THINKING PROBLEMS	ATHLETE'S COMPLAINTS	OTHER PROBLEMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not know time, date, place, period of game, opposing team, score of game• General confusion• Cannot remember things that happened before and after the injury• Knocked out	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headache• Dizziness• Feels dazed• Feels "dinged" or stunned; "having my bell rung"• Sees stars, flashing lights• Ringing in the ears• Sleepiness• Loss of vision• Sees double or blurry• Stomachache, stomach pain, nausea	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor coordination or balance• Blank stare/glassy eyed• Vomiting• Slurred speech• Slow to answer questions or follow directions• Easily distracted• Poor concentration• Strange or inappropriate emotions (ie. laughing, crying, getting mad easily)• Not playing as well

WHAT CAUSES A CONCUSSION?

Any blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body which causes a sudden jarring of the head may cause a concussion (ie. a ball to the head, being checked into the boards in hockey).

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU GET A CONCUSSION?

YOU SHOULD STOP PLAYING THE SPORT RIGHT AWAY. Continuing to play increases your risk of more severe, longer lasting concussion symptoms, as well as increases your risk of other injury. You should tell your coach, trainer, parent or other responsible person that you are concerned you have had a concussion, and should not return to play that day. You should not be left alone and should be seen by a doctor as soon as possible that day. You should not drive. If someone is knocked out, call an ambulance to take them to a hospital immediately. Do not move them or remove athletic equipment such as a helmet until the paramedics arrive.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO GET BETTER?

The signs and symptoms of a concussion often last for 7-10 days but may last much longer. In some cases, athletes may take many weeks or months to heal. Having had previous concussions may increase the chance that a person may take longer to heal.

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CONCUSSION GUIDELINES FOR THE ATHLETE



HOW IS A CONCUSSION TREATED?

CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS ARE MADE WORSE BY EXERTION, BOTH PHYSICAL AND MENTAL. THE MOST IMPORTANT TREATMENT FOR A CONCUSSION IS REST. You should not exercise or do any activities that may make you worse, like driving a car, reading, working on the computer or playing video games. No snow shoveling, cutting the lawn, moving heavy objects, etc. If mental activities (eg: reading, concentrating, using the computer) worsen your symptoms, you may have to stay home from school. You may also have to miss work, depending on what type of job you have, and whether it worsens your symptoms. If you go back to activities before you are completely better, you are more likely to get worse, and to have symptoms last longer. Even though it is very hard for an active person to rest, this is the most important step.

Return to school should not happen until you feel better, and these activities do not aggravate your symptoms. It is best to return to school part-time at first, moving to full time if you have no problems. Once you are completely better at rest, you can start a step-wise increase in activities (see "When can I return to sport?") It is important that you are seen by a doctor before you begin the steps needed to return to activity, to make sure you are completely better. If possible, you should be seen by a doctor with experience in treating concussions.

WHEN SHOULD I GO TO THE DOCTOR?

Anyone who gets a head injury should be seen by a doctor as soon as possible. You should go back to the doctor **IMMEDIATELY** if, after being told you have a concussion, you have worsening of symptoms like:

1. being more confused
2. headache that is getting worse
3. vomiting more than twice
4. not waking up
5. having any trouble walking
6. having a seizure
7. strange behaviour

WHEN CAN I RETURN TO SPORT?

It is very important that you do not go back to sports if you have any concussion symptoms or signs. Return to sport and activity must follow a step-wise approach:

- STEP 1)** No activity, complete rest. Once back to normal and cleared by a doctor, go to step 2.
- STEP 2)** Light exercise such as walking or stationary cycling, for 10-15 minutes.
- STEP 3)** Sport specific aerobic activity (ie. skating in hockey, running in soccer), for 20-30 minutes. **NO CONTACT.**
- STEP 4)** "On field" practice such as ball drills, shooting drills, and other activities with **NO CONTACT** (ie. no checking, no heading the ball, etc.).
- STEP 5)** "On field" practice with body contact, once cleared by a doctor.
- STEP 6)** Game play.

NOTE: EACH STEP MUST TAKE A MINIMUM OF ONE DAY. If you have any symptoms of a concussion (e.g. headache, feeling sick to his/her stomach) that come back either with activity, or later that day, stop the activity immediately and rest until symptoms resolve, for a minimum of 24 hours. See a doctor and be cleared before starting the step wise protocol again.

YOU SHOULD NOT GO BACK TO SPORT UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN CLEARED TO DO SO BY A DOCTOR.


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Source: Parachute. *Concussion Guidelines for the Athlete*. Available at parachutecanada.org (www.parachutecanada.org/downloads/programs/activeandsafe/Concussion_Guidelines_for_the_Athlete.pdf).

APPENDIX 12 — CONCUSSION GUIDELINES FOR THE PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

CONCUSSION GUIDELINES FOR THE PARENTS/CAREGIVERS



WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?
 A concussion is a brain injury that cannot be seen on routine x-rays, CT scans, or MRIs. It affects the way your child may think and remember things, and can cause a variety of symptoms.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS OF CONCUSSION?
YOUR CHILD DOES NOT NEED TO BE KNOCKED OUT (LOSE CONSCIOUSNESS) TO HAVE HAD A CONCUSSION.

THINKING PROBLEMS	CHILD'S COMPLAINTS	OTHER PROBLEMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not know time, date, place, period of game, opposing team, score of game General confusion Cannot remember things that happened before and after the injury Knocked out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headache Dizziness Feels dazed Feels "dinged" or stunned; "having my bell rung" Sees stars, flashing lights Ringing in the ears Sleepiness Loss of vision Sees double or blurry Stomachache, stomach pain, nausea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor coordination or balance Blank stare/glassy eyed Vomiting Slurred speech Slow to answer questions or follow directions Easily distracted Poor concentration Strange or inappropriate emotions (ie. laughing, crying, getting mad easily) Not playing as well


WHAT CAUSES A CONCUSSION?
 Any blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body which causes a sudden jarring of the head may cause a concussion (ie. a ball to the head, being checked into the boards in hockey).

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOUR CHILD GETS A CONCUSSION?
YOUR CHILD SHOULD STOP PLAYING THE SPORT RIGHT AWAY. They should not be left alone and should be seen by a doctor as soon as possible that day. If your child is knocked out, call an ambulance to take him/her to a hospital immediately. Do not move your child or remove any equipment such as helmets until the paramedics arrive.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR MY CHILD TO GET BETTER?
 The signs and symptoms of a concussion often last for 7-10 days but may last much longer. In some cases, athletes may take many weeks or months to heal. Having had previous concussions may increase the chance that a person may take longer to heal.

HOW IS A CONCUSSION TREATED?
THE MOST IMPORTANT TREATMENT FOR A CONCUSSION IS REST. The child should not exercise, go to school or do any activities that may make them worse, like riding a bike, play wrestling, reading, working on the computer or playing video games. If your child goes back to activities before they are completely better, they are more likely to get worse, and to have symptoms longer. Even though it is very hard for an active child to rest, this is the most important step.

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CONCUSSION GUIDELINES FOR THE PARENTS/CAREGIVERS



Once your child is completely better at rest (all symptoms have resolved), they can start a step-wise increase in activities. It is important that your child is seen by a doctor before he/she begins the steps needed to return to activity, to make sure he/she is completely better. If possible, your child should be seen by a doctor with experience in treating concussions.

WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN TO SCHOOL?

Sometimes children who have a concussion may find it hard to concentrate in school and may get a worse headache or feel sick to their stomach if they are in school. Children should stay home from school if their symptoms get worse while they are in class. Once they feel better, they can try going back to school part time to start (eg. for half days initially) and if they are okay with that, then they can go back full time.

WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN TO SPORT?

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOUR CHILD NOT GO BACK TO SPORTS IF HE/SHE HAS ANY CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS OR SIGNS. Return to sport and activity must follow a step-wise approach:

- STEP 1)** No activity, complete rest. Once back to normal and cleared by a doctor, go to step 2.
- STEP 2)** Light exercise such as walking or stationary cycling, for 10-15 minutes.
- STEP 3)** Sport specific aerobic activity (ie. skating in hockey, running in soccer), for 20-30 minutes. **NO CONTACT.**
- STEP 4)** "On field" practice such as ball drills, shooting drills, and other activities with **NO CONTACT** (ie. no checking, no heading the ball, etc.).
- STEP 5)** "On field" practice with body contact, once cleared by a doctor.
- STEP 6)** Game play.
- NOTE:** EACH STEP MUST TAKE A MINIMUM OF ONE DAY. If your child has any symptoms of a concussion (e.g. headache, feeling sick to his/her stomach) that come back either during activity, or later that day, your child should stop the activity immediately and rest until symptoms resolve, for a minimum of 24 hours. Your child should be seen by a doctor and cleared again before starting the step wise protocol again.

WHEN SHOULD I TAKE MY CHILD TO THE DOCTOR?

Every child who gets a head injury should be seen by a doctor as soon as possible. Your child should go back to the doctor **IMMEDIATELY** if, after being told he/she has a concussion, he/she has worsening of symptoms such as:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. being more confused | 5. not waking up |
| 2. headache that is getting worse | 6. having any trouble walking |
| 3. vomiting more than twice | 7. having a seizure |
| 4. strange behaviour | |

Problems caused by a head injury can get worse later that day or night. The child should not be left alone and should be checked throughout the night. If you have any concerns about the child's breathing or how they are sleeping, wake them up. Otherwise, let them sleep. If they seem to be getting worse, you should see your doctor immediately. **NO CHILD SHOULD GO BACK TO SPORT UNTIL THEY HAVE BEEN CLEARED TO DO SO BY A DOCTOR.**


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Source: Parachute. Concussion Guidelines for the Parents/Caregivers. Available at parachutecanada.org (www.parachutecanada.org/downloads/programs/activeandsafe/Concussion_Guidelines_for_the_Parents:Caregivers_.pdf).

APPENDIX 13 — CONCUSSION GUIDELINES FOR THE COACH/TRAINER

CONCUSSION GUIDELINES FOR THE COACH/TRAINER



WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?
 A concussion is a brain injury that cannot be seen on routine x-rays, CT scans, or MRIs. It affects the way a person may think and remember things for a short time and can cause a variety of symptoms.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS OF CONCUSSION?
AN ATHLETE DOES NOT NEED TO BE KNOCKED OUT (LOSE CONSCIOUSNESS) TO HAVE HAD A CONCUSSION.

THINKING PROBLEMS	ATHLETE'S COMPLAINTS	OTHER PROBLEMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not know time, date, place, period of game, opposing team, score of game General confusion Cannot remember things that happened before and after the injury Knocked out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headache Dizziness Feels dazed Feels "dinged" or stunned; "having my bell rung" Sees stars, flashing lights Ringing in the ears Sleepiness Loss of vision Sees double or blurry Stomachache, stomach pain, nausea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor coordination or balance Blank stare/glassy eyed Vomiting Slurred speech Slow to answer questions or follow directions Easily distracted Poor concentration Strange or inappropriate emotions (ie. laughing, crying, getting mad easily) Not playing as well


WHAT CAUSES A CONCUSSION?
 Any blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body which causes a sudden jarring of the head may cause a concussion (ie. a ball to the head, being checked into the boards in hockey).

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF AN ATHLETE GETS A CONCUSSION?
THE ATHLETE SHOULD STOP PLAYING THE SPORT RIGHT AWAY. They should not be left alone and should be seen by a doctor as soon as possible that day. If an athlete is knocked out, call an ambulance to take them to a hospital immediately. Do not move the athlete or remove athletic equipment like a helmet as there may also be a cervical spine injury; wait for paramedics to arrive.

AN ATHLETE WITH A CONCUSSION SHOULD NOT GO BACK TO PLAY THAT DAY, EVEN IF THEY SAY THEY ARE FEELING BETTER. Problems caused by a head injury can get worse later that day or night. They should not return to sports until he/she has been seen by a doctor.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR THE ATHLETE TO GET BETTER?
 The signs and symptoms of a concussion often last for 7-10 days but may last much longer. In some cases, athletes may take many weeks or months to heal. Having had previous concussions may increase the chance that a person may take longer to heal.

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CONCUSSION GUIDELINES FOR THE COACH/TRAINER



HOW IS A CONCUSSION TREATED?

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT AN ATHLETE DOES NOT GO BACK TO SPORTS IF THEY HAVE ANY CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS OR SIGNS.

Return to sport and activity must follow a step-wise approach:

- STEP 1)** No activity, complete rest. Once back to normal and cleared by a doctor, go to step 2.
- STEP 2)** Light exercise such as walking or stationary cycling, for 10-15 minutes.
- STEP 3)** Sport specific aerobic activity (ie. skating in hockey, running in soccer), for 20-30 minutes. NO CONTACT.
- STEP 4)** "On field" practice such as ball drills, shooting drills, and other activities with NO CONTACT (ie. no checking, no heading the ball, etc.).
- STEP 5)** "On field" practice with body contact, once cleared by a doctor.
- STEP 6)** Game play.

NOTE: EACH STEP MUST TAKE A MINIMUM OF ONE DAY. If an athlete has any symptoms of a concussion (e.g. headache, feeling sick to his/her stomach) that come back either with activity, or later that day, he/she should stop the activity immediately and rest until symptoms resolve, for a minimum of 24 hours. The athlete should be seen by a doctor and cleared before starting the step wise protocol again. This protocol must be individualized to the athlete, their injury and the sport they are returning to.

WHEN CAN AN ATHLETE WITH A CONCUSSION RETURN TO SPORT?

It is very important that an athlete not play any sports if they have any signs or symptoms of concussion. The athlete must rest until he/she is completely back to normal. When he/she is back to normal and has been seen by a doctor, he/she can then go through the steps of increasing activity described above. When the athlete has progressed through these steps with no symptoms or problems, and has received clearance from a doctor, he/she may return to play. If you are unsure if an athlete should play, remember...**when in doubt, sit them out!**

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Source: Parachute. *Concussion Guidelines for the Coach/Trainer*. Available at parachutecanada.org ([www.parachutecanada.org/downloads/programs/activeandsafe/Concussion Guidelines for the Coach/Trainer.pdf](http://www.parachutecanada.org/downloads/programs/activeandsafe/Concussion%20Guidelines%20for%20the%20Coach%20Trainer.pdf)).

APPENDIX 14 — POCKET CONCUSSION RECOGNITION TOOL

Pocket CONCUSSION RECOGNITION TOOL

To help identify concussion in children, youth and adults



RECOGNIZE & REMOVE

Concussion should be suspected **if one or more** of the following visible clues, signs, symptoms or errors in memory questions are present.

1. Visible clues of suspected concussion

Any one or more of the following visual clues can indicate a possible concussion:

Loss of consciousness or responsiveness

Lying motionless on ground/Slow to get up

Unsteady on feet / Balance problems or falling over/Incoordination

Grabbing/Clutching of head

Dazed, blank or vacant look

Confused/Not aware of plays or events

2. Signs and symptoms of suspected concussion

Presence of any one or more of the following signs & symptoms may suggest a concussion:

- Loss of consciousness
- Seizure or convulsion
- Balance problems
- Nausea or vomiting
- Drowsiness
- More emotional
- Irritability
- Sadness
- Fatigue or low energy
- Nervous or anxious
- "Don't feel right"
- Difficulty remembering
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Feeling slowed down
- "Pressure in head"
- Blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Amnesia
- Feeling like "in a fog"
- Neck Pain
- Sensitivity to noise
- Difficulty concentrating

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3. Memory function

Failure to answer any of these questions correctly may suggest a concussion.

"At what venue are we at today?"

"Which half is it now?"

"Who scored last in this game?"

"What team did you play last week/game?"

"Did your team win the last game?"

Any athlete with a suspected concussion should be IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM PLAY, and should not be returned to activity until they are assessed medically. Athletes with a suspected concussion should not be left alone and should not drive a motor vehicle.

It is recommended that, in all cases of suspected concussion, the player is referred to a medical professional for diagnosis and guidance as well as return to play decisions, even if the symptoms resolve.

RED FLAGS

IF ANY of the following are reported then the player should be safely and immediately removed from the field. If no qualified medical professional is available, consider transporting by ambulance for urgent medical assessment:

- Athlete complains of neck pain
- Increasing confusion or irritability
- Repeated vomiting
- Seizure or convulsion
- Weakness or tingling/burning in arms or legs
- Deteriorating conscious state
- Severe or increasing headache
- Unusual behaviour change
- Double vision

Remember:

- In all cases, the basic principles of first aid (danger, response, airway, breathing, circulation) should be followed.
- Do not attempt to move the player (other than required for airway support) unless trained to do so
- Do not remove helmet (if present) unless trained to do so

from McCrory et al, Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport, Br J Sports Med 47 (5), 2013

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