

## Diary of a Season 2011-12

I have just agreed to coach a U18 AAA Female team. They play all around the Province of Alberta and the winning team goes to a National Tournament. It is the highest level of hockey for high school aged girls and the best players move on from here to playing college hockey at the CIS, NCAA, ACAC level. I coached in the WWHL which is the level after college the last two seasons but the league wasn't funded enough to pay the players, even though they called it a professional league; so it was hard to attract the top players or to get a full commitment to attend practices and games. The league folded and they will consolidate into one Western Canada team who will play in the CWHL and have 3 game home and home series vs. The three teams in the Toronto area and the one in Montreal and Boston. That league is trying to get the NHL to support it and pay the players some money so they don't have to work full time, like the NBA did with the women's basketball pro league until they got enough support to make it on their own, which is now the case. I don't know if that is going to happen. It surprised me that the Minnesota team isn't in the league. They had 9 current or former USA players and were the top team in the WWHL.

That being said the girl's may have a real professional league to aspire to in the future.

### Planning for the Season

I have only spoken to the organizers on the phone from the camp I was doing in Jasper last week. I got this information.

1. There is a general tryout with all of the players who want to play at this level.
2. You are allowed to protect a certain amount of players who played on the team last season.
3. You draft 15 skaters and 2 goalies. (I could be wrong here as we may be able to draft more and they are on the affiliate list but only 15 skaters and 2 goalies dress for games) This effects the kind of practices I can run because 12 F and 8 D allow you to do everything and have a proper W/R ratio.
4. We travel by bus and have a few long trips to Northern Alberta along with many 3 hour trips to Edmonton and smaller cities like Red Deer, Medicine Hat. Generally we play 2 games per week.

**Staff:** I have contacted a friend who played a lot of pro in Europe but he is going to coach his son. I have also contacted my former college women's goalie who won two championships with me and one for another college team. She is interested but hasn't committed yet. I need at least one female on the staff who knows how to handle herself in a competitive environment and has played a high level of hockey.

It is critical that a head coach has a staff that supports him and has no agenda.

**Practices:** We practice T-Th and once a month have 3 practices. They talked about getting dryland once a week which I consider to be a critical component. I will make we do dryland. I also want one classroom session per week hopefully the same day and place as the dryland.

With two practices a week the first will focus on Offensive Roles One and Two and the second on Defensive Roles Three and Four. We will progress through the individual and team play skills throughout

the season. My goal is that each player will have the skills and good playing habits to make our season successful and prepare them so college scouts will want players from this team because they have solid fundamentals, good playing habits and understand the game.

Data Base of On Ice Activities: I have posted the pdf's with diagrams and links to the drills and games I like to use. I am always adding to this and that is why the material is coded according to what is being worked on.

Basically the sections are: A-skating and individual skill work. B-individual and partner skills vs no resistance. C-team play situations i.e. 2 on 1 or team skills such as breakouts. D-full ice games and SAG . DT-transition games that work on team play situations with ONE puck and no whistles. E-shootouts and contests. T-teaching situations where the coach runs controlled scrimmage, walks through team play situations. A lot of these things are from when I coached in Europe and the pro's prepared for games.

These pdf's represent at least 1000 hours of preparation. Putting practice material and coaching ideas in a logical digital form makes it a lot easier to find when you need it.

#### [A - Skating Puck Handling Beginner Practices](#) **POP**

A activities include teaching skating and basic puck handling at the beginning level and doing the same skills with more speed and complexity at the more advanced levels.

A Formation activities include teaching skating and basic puck handling at the beginning level and doing the same skills with more speed and complexity at the more advanced levels.

Video clips of the skating and beginning games can be found in the Video section of this site. Hockey Coaching ABC Practice Videos (111)

For beginning Level 0 (non skaters)

For Level 1 (after they can move on the ice in all directions).

#### [B Formation Skill Drills](#) **POP**

B Formation Drills

In the Hockey Coaching ABC method we organize the drills and games according to where the players start and whether they are working on skills or game situations. B drills work on individual skills up to a 1-1 and team play without resistance. This method makes it easier for a coach to find a drill to work on the skills he/she wants to focus on.

These drills are from the B practice formations. Individual offensive and defensive technique, partner practice and offensive and defensive team play are practiced.

These drills are used in youth hockey to teach the skills and in more advanced hockey for review and practicing doing skills at full speed. There are about 120 drills posted. All have diagrams and most have videos.

It took hundreds of hours to put this together; There are drills from almost every hockey nation and many show international coaches running the drills.

B1-shooting skills

B2-shooting

B3-individual skills practice lined up opposite each other.

B4-full ice skills and partner practice from a line up in the middle.

B5-individual and team play from the middle circle.

B500-partner skills

B6-drills starting in the corners, these can be half or full ice.

B600-players start from the blue line on each side and do passing and game situations in the neutral zone finishing with shots.

B7-Face-off practice

### [C Game Situation Flow Drills](#)

These are full ice game situation drills starting from the C1, C2 or C3 formations. Individual technique and team play drills can be run effectively from this formation and situations from a 1 on 1 to a 5-5 can be practiced.

### [D Games to Teach the Game](#)

#### D Games to Teach the Game

The core of the entire ABC coaching method is using **GAMES TO TEACH THE GAME**.

Hockey is a **GAME** and it is critical to practice the important individual and team skills that players learn in the A-B and C drills. These drills isolate individual or team play situations that can be used to be successful in regular games vs an opponent. If we just teach drills that teach the **What** and **How** of a skill and never put the skills into game situations where the player must decide **Why**, **When** and **Where** the skills are effective then we only produce players who have skill with no context to use them in.

So small area and full ice games in practice are a critical step if we want to develop creative players who are independent decision makers.

This pdf gives the rational from the ABC's program and many full ice and SAG games that can be played to "Learn the Game."

New games that I have posted on this site are included with the original material.

This is the most important posting I have made on this site

### [DT Transition Games to Teach the Game](#)

Transition Games use only one puck and the players must switch between the 3 game situations of: 0-Loose Puck, 1-Offense and 2-Defense.

They must also constantly transition through the 4 Game Playing Roles of: 1-Player with the puck, 2-Players supporting the puck carrier, 3-Player checking the puck carrier, 4-Players covering attackers away from the puck.

Transition games enable the coach to create these realistic situations by adjusting the number of players and modifying the rules.

Players move in and out of the play on their own and this enables the coach to teach instead of focus on the flow of the activity.

Transition games are the natural progression between game situation drills and the actual game.

### [E Shootouts and Contests](#)

E activities are usually used at the end of practice. Many shootouts and contests can be done.

### [T - Teaching the Game with coach Directed Drills and Games](#)

T - Teaching the Game on Ice Coach Directed

I have gone through the posting about how to teach the various playing roles during practice. This pdf combines the four game playing roles and many on ice drills with pro and college teams that show how elite coaches run effective teaching practices.

T is the code for on ice activities with a lot of instruction.

T1 - individual offensive skills.

T2-team offensive skills.

T3 - individual defensive skills.

T4 - team defensive skills.

There are also some articles about evaluating play and how to organize the ice The first section has coach directed drills and games and the last part has articles on coaching ideas as well as drills and games from pro practices