



The Foundation for Hockey in Canada

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

An opening word...

"As a National Spokesperson for the CHA's Initiation Program, I believe it is important for every player to have access to the best program in the world for developing skills, while having fun.

Paul Kariya

Team Canada
Anaheim Mighty Ducks



DEVELOPING *Skills First*

An opening word...con't

" The Initiation Program sets the foundation for all future enjoyment and success our young players will have in the sport of hockey. "

Jayna Hefford
Team Canada
National Women's Team



An opening word (cont'd)

How a player gets that first taste of hockey is crucial.

If the beginner has fun, developing some basic skills and building confidence, there is a good chance that player will go on to enjoy hockey for many years.

But if a beginner has an unhappy, unrewarding experience, the chances are that he, or she, will quit at an early age and never discover the real joy of Canada's great game.

Every hockey beginner should have access to the Canadian Hockey Initiation Program!

The CHA Model

It comes down to this! A Minor Hockey Association's Initiation Program is its very foundation - the base upon which it builds its house leagues, and rep teams. Similarly, the CHA views its Initiation Program as the foundation of its Recreational Program, Competitive Program and the Program of Excellence.



DEVELOPING *Skills First*

History

- In 1985 the CHA's Hockey Development Council was tasked to develop an introduction to Canada's great game that put the emphasis on fun while learning the fundamental skills of the game.
- This challenge resulted in the creation of a team to develop a hockey program known as the '**Initiation Program**'
 - 1) Piloted in four communities in 1984/85
 - 2) Introduced nationally in 1986
 - 3) Implemented in over 1500 associations to date
 - 4) Over 170,000 participants and 20,000 instructors enrolled

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

CHA Vision

- Initiation program *philosophy* embedded in all local hockey association constitutions
- Program *curriculum* implemented nationally
- A *nationally and internationally* recognized and supported hockey development program



DEVELOPING *Skills First*

The Initiation Program:

- Is a progressive, learn to play teaching curriculum. Children learn through participating in practice drills and informal modified games
- Consists of four levels of instruction (A,B,C and D), designed for any entry level hockey player.
- Introduces the skills of skating, passing, puck control and shooting in a progressive one step at a time manner

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

The Initiation Program:

- Continues to be the most important development program of the CHA
- Has increased in notoriety since the Molson Open Ice Summit
- Promotes the philosophy of developing “skills first” prior to the introduction of formal games.
- Is poised to make even larger strides with the goal of becoming implemented in every Minor Hockey Association in Canada within 2 years



DEVELOPING *Skills First*

Philosophy and Goals

- To develop:
 - a fun and learning environment
 - a safe and positive experience for the child’s first contact with hockey
 - self confidence, experience a sense of personal achievement and team atmosphere
- To have fun playing hockey and engaging in physical activity
- To learn the fundamental skills
- To create and refine basic motor patterns
- To be introduced to the concepts of cooperation and fair play

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

Target Audience

- Parents:
 - volunteer their time as instructors and administrators, providing a positive, non-competitive experience for all children.
- Instructors:
 - responsible for effective leadership, teaching and acting as role models for co-operation and fair play.
- Administrators:
 - responsible for organising the details that lead to the on-ice sessions, including promotion of the program, registration, booking ice times and communicating with parents regarding schedules.

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

Target Audience (cont'd)

The "Under 9" Hockey Player

- Growth and development limitations (physical, mental, social/emotional) occur in early stages.
- The Initiation program addresses these "limitations" by:
 - 1) Focussing on **refining** basic movement patterns.
 - 2) Ensuring skills/activities/games are challenging yet not overly complex.
 - 3) Including lots of **variety** due to short attention spans of the participants.
 - 4) Ensuring instructors are trained on giving **short, clear explanations**.
 - 5) Focussing on **positive** comments, constructive criticism.
 - 6) Breaking down all skills into **small steps**.

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

Participant Numbers

- The primary users of the program are children aged 5 to 9.
- The number of registered players, at those ages, with the Canadian Hockey Association is 170,000.
- Additional numbers are as follows:
 - 2500 Minor Hockey Associations
 - 10, 000 Initiation Aged Teams
 - 170,000 Initiation Aged Players
 - 10,000 Initiation Certified Coaches

Components of the CHA's Initiation Program

- Administrators Workshop
- Administrators Guide
- Instructors Manual
- Lesson Plan Manuals
- The Initiation Clinic

Administration Workshop

- Content in a binder complete with an overview of the program, its goals and objectives, and the benefits of the program.
- A multi media presentation for professional delivery
- Contents
 - Promotional Video
 - Program Overview
 - Executive / Coach / Parent Presentations
 - Festival / Jamboree Guide
- Designed as an introduction to the program and the benefits to associations in why to implement it.

Administration Guide

- Designed to acquaint local hockey organizers with the CHA Initiation Program, and how to put the program to good use in each association.
- Includes an overview of the CHA model programs, information on setting up the Initiation Program, getting the parents onside, and the importance of instructor training.

Instructors Manual

- Designed to give coaches all of the necessary information needed to teach hockey skills to beginners.
- Some of the areas discussed are:
 - leadership
 - communication
 - teaching skills
 - lesson organization
- Each component contains valuable information pertaining to implementing each of the 4 Lesson Manuals (A,B,C and D)

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

Lesson Manuals

- Are a compilation of ideas from many top hockey people across the country
- Consist of four levels, each with 20 on-ice sessions which map out easy to follow planned lesson plans
- Are for use by instructors in each association as a framework for planning
- The Lesson Plans Develop **basic** hockey skills:

Skating	Stopping	Turning
Puck handling	Passing	Shooting
- Each skill is introduced and practiced in a **progressive, "one step at a time"** manner.
- The goal is to build a **foundation** for future years.

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

The Initiation Clinic

- A full day session devoted to delivering information to instructors:
 - the content of the program
 - how to effectively communicate to children at this young age
- Six hours spent in an off-ice facility with two hours of on-ice instruction.

Why the Initiation Program

- Majority of people believe games are supposed to be more fun than practice.
 - Although the preceding statement makes sense, it can be a misconception, especially based on the following stats
 - Statistics taken from a Pee Wee level hockey game
 - Players will have the puck on their stick for an **average of 8 seconds per game.**
 - Players will take an **average of 1 - 2 shots per game.**
 - 99% of the feedback coaches give players is when they have the puck. Ironically, players only have the puck on their stick for 0.2% of the game.
- ** Stats courtesy of Calgary Hockey Development**

Why the Initiation Program (cont'd)



“Practice is so important, because it allows the children to make more passes, take more shots on net and have the puck on their stick more than in any game.” Paul Kariya

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

The Proof is in the Numbers

- When you consider the above stats, are kids really having fun?
- When you consider the above stats, are kids really developing sufficient skills to be successful?

“ It makes no sense for kids to play organised games until they have reasonable mastery of skating, puckhandling, passing and shooting “

Dr. Murray Smith, Sport Psychologist
Edmonton Oilers
Kelowna Rockets

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

The Proof is in the Numbers (cont'd)

- The following stats show kids are more active, have the puck on their stick more, take more shots, and give more passes in practice than a game which equals more fun.
- *Practice By The Numbers*
 - *The following facts and figures relate to a 1 hour practice session.
 - 1 individual practice will give a player more skill development than 11 games collectively.
 - Each player should have a puck on their stick for 8 - 12 minutes.
 - Each player should have a minimum of 30 shots on goal.
 - Coaches should try to run 4 - 5 different drills/games/activities each practice. More is not better; execution of what you do is development.

DEVELOPING Skills First

The Future of the Initiation Program

- Promotional Campaign
- Designated Initiation Week
- Increase in the number of Jamborees/Festivals in each Branch
- More/better resources for coaches



DEVELOPING Skills First

Promotional Campaign

- An increased promotional campaign to inform Minor Hockey Associations and parents of the following:
 - A) The Benefits of the Program
 - B) The importance of continuing to implement the program
 - C) Why to implement the program for associations who do not currently run the Initiation Program

Jamborees/Festivals

- The most effective way to deliver the message of the program is to let people see it first hand. This will be done through an increase in the number of Festivals and Jamborees.
- Festivals/Jamborees offer the following benefits:
 - An atmosphere of fun and excitement
 - An opportunity to assist associations in running their Initiation Program.
 - An opportunity to talk to parents and explain the benefits as well as answer questions.
 - Shows Branches and associations the commitment of the CHA to the program.

Coaching Resources

- There is constant need for resources by coaches, and it is our duty to keep the resources up to date and to continue to develop new resources.
- Resources will include:
 - On line coaching tips and information
 - Updated teaching videos
 - Updated coaching manuals



DEVELOPING *Skills First*

Summary

For those of us who want our young hockey players of today and tomorrow to have fun, learn the skills, make lasting friendships, and enjoy the great game of hockey for many years to come; it all starts with the *Canadian Hockey Initiation Program*.

For those of us who also want our young players of today and tomorrow, to play a high calibre of hockey, whether it is on a competitive team, a Junior team, a College or University team, a National team or even the NHL, it also all begins with the *Canadian Hockey Initiation Program*.

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

Presentation

The following slides can be used as part of a presentation to Minor Hockey Executive Members, Coaches and Parents

An opening word...

"As a National Spokesperson for the CHA's Initiation Program, I believe it is important for every player to have access to the best program in the world for developing skills, while having fun.

Paul Kariya

Team Canada
Anaheim Mighty Ducks



An opening word...con't

" The Initiation Program sets the foundation for all future enjoyment and success our young players will have in the sport of hockey. "

Jayna Hefford
Team Canada
National Women's Team



An opening word (cont'd)

How a player gets that first taste of hockey is crucial.

If the beginner has fun, developing some basic skills and building confidence, there is a good chance that player will go on to enjoy hockey for many years.

But if a beginner has an unhappy, unrewarding experience, the chances are that he, or she, will quit at an early age and never discover the real joy of Canada's great game.

Every hockey beginner should have access to the Canadian Hockey Initiation Program!

What is it?

- A *structured, learn-to-play* hockey program.
- A comprehensive program for the development of young children as hockey players.
- Designed to introduce beginners to the game's *basic skills*.
- Designed to make children's first contact with hockey a *safe* and *positive* experience
- Focus is on skill development and fun without the pressures of competition.
- Aims to create participants and instructors who will continue in the game.
- Consists of four program manuals, an instructor's manual and a clinic for the instructors.
- Enables participants to become *contributing* members of a team effort, develop *self-confidence*, and experience a *sense of achievement*.

The **Foundation** for hockey in Canada

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

A Motion Passed by the CHA

(May, 1995)

- Name pre-novice hockey (8 years old & under) - Initiation.
- That each branch clearly show evidence in their constitution and by-laws that they adopt the program curriculum in their association..
- That each minor hockey association clearly show evidence in their constitution and by-laws that they adopt the program curriculum in their association..
- That the CHA mandate that all on-ice personnel in leadership positions in the divisions of novice and below successfully complete the Initiation Program Instructor Program.

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

How it has evolved

- Piloted in four communities in 1984/85.
- Introduced out nationally in 1986.
- Implemented in over (1500) associations to date.
- Over (170,000) participants and (20,000) instructors enrolled.

A **tested, proven** program in a wide variety of community settings.

CHA Vision

- Initiation program *philosophy* embedded in all local hockey association constitutions.
- Program *curriculum* implemented nationally.
- A *nationally* and *internationally* recognized and supported hockey development program.

A model program that fosters “**love of the game**” and growth of our national sport.

Ways in Which participants benefit

- Having *fun* in a physical activity.
- Learning the *basic skills* needed to play hockey.
- Creating and refining basic *motor patterns*.
- Learning the concepts of *co-operation* and *fair play*.
- Developing an understanding of *teamwork*.

Making hockey a very positive and fun-filled experience.

Our target audience

The “ Under 9 ” Hockey Player

- Growth and development (physical, mental, social/emotional) is in early stages.
- Initiation program addresses these "limitations" by:
 - Focussing on *refining* basic movement patterns.
 - Ensuring skills/activities/games are challenging yet not overly complex.
 - Including lots of *variety* due to short attention spans of the participants.
 - Ensuring instructors are trained on giving *short, clear explanations*.
 - Focussing on *positive* comments, constructive criticism.
 - Breaking down all skills into *small steps*.

Meeting the growth and development needs of young hockey players.

Enrolling Parents

- Parents must understand the *advantages* the Initiation Program offers their child.
- Conduct a special *parent orientation meeting* - fully explain the goals and operational procedure of the program.
- Parents need to understand how participants progress through the four levels, and how they are related.
- *Listen* to parents ... keep them informed.

Parental buy-in, commitment and support are essential to program success. **Sell the benefits!**

Enrolling Instructors / Coaches

The success of an Initiation Program depends largely on the leadership and teaching abilities of the instructors.

Instructor certification requirements

All instructors *must be certified* by the CHA in the Initiation Program.

Eight hour instructional clinic - six hours of classroom, two hours on ice.

Focus on leadership, skill analysis, lesson application and communication.

Instructors learn how to run drills and implement **one-on-one** skill development

Why to implement the IP

Learning the basic skills at young age, will set the foundation for everything a player will accomplish in the game of hockey.

These skills are learned in practice through the initiation program. Practice is where players become better hockey players.

“Practice is so important, because it allows players to make more passes, take more shots on net and have the puck on their stick more than in any game.”

Paul Kariya

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

Why to implement the IP cont'd

At first glance, the majority of people believe that games are supposed to be more fun than practice. Although, the preceding statement makes sense, it can be a misconception, especially based on the following stats.

The Proof in in the numbers (stats taken from a Pee Wee level hockey game)

- Players will have the puck on their stick for an average of 8 seconds per game.
- Players will take an average of 1 - 2 shots per game.
- Players will take an average of 18 shifts per game.
- 99% of the feedback coaches give players is when they have the puck. Ironically, players only have the puck on their stick for 0.2% of the game.

When you consider the above stats, is your child really having fun?

When you consider the above stats, is your child really developing sufficient skills to be successful?

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

Practice by Numbers

The following stats, show that kids are more active, have the puck on their stick more, take more shots, and give more passes in practice than a game which equals more fun for the ones that count – **The Players.**

The following facts and figures relate to a 1 hour practice session.

- 1 individual practice will give a player more skill development than 11 games collectively.
- Each player should have a puck on their stick for 8 - 12 minutes.
- Each player should have a minimum of 30 shots on goal.
- Coaches should try to run 4 - 5 different drills/games/ activities each practice. More is not better; execution of what you do is development.

No more than 5 minutes should be spent in front of a teaching board each practice.

If you have 10 players on the ice, strive to keep 2 - 3 players moving at all times.

If you have 15 players on the ice, strive to keep 3 - 4 players moving at all times.

If you have 20 players on the ice, strive to keep 4 - 5 players moving at all times.

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

Practice by Numbers (continued...)

If you want your child to have fun playing hockey, make lasting friendships, develop skills and participate in the game for years to come, it all begins with the Initiation Program.

In reality, if you want your child to play competitive, rep, junior, college hockey or even make the pros it also begins with the Initiation Program, as it provides the foundation for all future enjoyment, success and participation in the sport of hockey.

- Statistics provided by Calgary Hockey Development

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

IP Curriculum

- Each level consists of 20 on-ice practices.
- Practice sessions designed to develop these basic hockey skills in a fun and supportive, learning environment.
- Practice structure/elements:
 - warm-up exercises
 - ABC's - agility, balance and co-ordination
 - skill development - multiple stations
 - full/small group games (freeze tag, etc.)
 - total group activity (obstacle courses, pond hockey, etc.)
- Participants are grouped by skill level and supervised by 4-5 instructors.
- Ratio of 1 instructor for every 2-3 players...greater one-on-one attention for each player.
- Skill development drills tailored to the specific needs of each group.

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

IP Curriculum (cont'd)

- Overall more structured and better use of time.
- A head instructor monitors overall flow of practices.

Program is flexible and adaptable to all environments.

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

Program Focus

- Developing **basic** hockey skills

Skating
Passing

Puck Handling
Turning

Stopping
Shooting

- Each skill is introduced and practiced in a *progressive, “one step at a time”* manner.
- The goal is to build a *foundation* for future years.

“What children learn first, they learn best!”

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

Skill Proficiency Requirements

Level A

- Stance
- T-Push
- Glide turns
- Stopping (1 + 11 o'clock)
- Backward stance
- Puck handling stance
- Stationary puck handling
- Open-ice carry
- Sweep pass forehand (stationary)
- Receiving pass forehand (stationary)
- Backward sweep pass (stationary)

Level B

- Lateral movement
- Front start (acceleration)
- Two-foot stop
- Crossover pumping
- Backward V-stop
- Forward to backwards pivot
- Backwards to forward pivot
- Tight turn
- Use of feet to control puck
- Lead pass to moving target
- Forward and backhand sweep shot

DEVELOPING *Skills First*

Skill Proficiency Requirements

Level C

- Crossover start (forward)
- Tight turn
- Backward stop (one foot)
- Pivot (forward to backward)
- Pivot (backward to forward)
- Stopping with puck (forward skating)
- Stationary flip pass
- Backhand reception and pass (stationary)
- Puckhandling
- Sweep shot while moving
- Partner passing while moving

Level D

- Forward crossover start
- Front foot stop
- Lateral movement
- Backward crossover start
- Faking
- Flip shot
- Pass receiving in skates
- Reverse pivots
- Two foot parallel backward stop
- Backhand flip shot

DEVELOPING Skills First

Individual Skill Proficiency

Example: Level A - Stance

- Skates parallel, shoulder width apart
- Toes pointed straight ahead and knees bent
- Head up with body leaning slightly forward
- Stick close to ice, held in two hands

Example: Level B - Front Start Acceleration

- Does player turn skates to make "V" and lean forward to initiate start?
- Do skate blades on initial strides open to 70-80 degrees?
- Does player use partial leg extensions (running action) for the first 5-6 strides?
- Are skates low to the ice for quick recovery?
- Is player in full stride after six strides?

DEVELOPING Skills First

Association Responsibilities

- Provide leadership, direction and guidance.
- Provide resources.
- Be visible and supportive.
- Establish an implementation plan.
- Identify and recruit IP coordinator/head instructor.

The Initiation Program is a new paradigm. Major change always requires leadership - that's your role!

IP Coordinator / Head Instructor Responsibilities

- Administer hockey program ... on and off the ice.
- Identify and recruit enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers/instructors.
- Demonstrate commitment and leadership ... lead by example.
- Establish on-ice program ... timing, flow, drills, games, etc.
- Openly communicate with parents, participants, instructors and executive/directors.

Commitment and passion are necessary requirements for this "agent of change".

Coach / Instructor Responsibilities

To maintain a positive and enthusiastic attitude.

To establish good two-way communication.

To pass on their knowledge and skills (as well as learn themselves).

To analyze individual performance and provide positive feedback and one-on-one instruction.

To instill personal pride and satisfaction in each player.

Providing feedback and encouragement for each participant are the most important traits that instructors require.

DEVELOPING Skills First

Parent Responsibilities

Understand Initiation Program objectives.

Provide suggestions and feedback to coordinators/instructors.

Approach instructors if you have any questions on your child's progress.

Provide positive encouragement to your child.

Enjoy your child's hockey experience.

Moms and Dads have responsibilities too!!

DEVELOPING Skills First

Support Materials

- Implementation *direction* and *guidance* from the Technical Director of your branch.
- Administrators workshop that includes promotional video, multimedia CD, and presentations.
- A complete set of program guidelines consisting of *five booklets*:
 - first booklet provides the *organizational* and *administrative* details of the program.
 - remaining booklets provide instructors with *step-by-step lesson* plans - one book for each of the four levels.
- An Initiation Program *brochure* produced by the CHA, for distribution to parents, that explains the program and outlines the objectives.