

*As a coach, you have a major influence on your athletes. Not only will you affect the development of their skills and long-term enjoyment of the sport, you will also play a role in their development as individuals. It is important that you have effective resources to help you.*

*The Coaching Association of Canada, in partnership with the national sport organizations, compiled the following coaching tips.*

## Checking From Behind: Education and Prevention



The most common cause of serious spinal injuries in hockey is when a player is checked, pushed or bumped from behind, and goes head first into the boards. Such injuries have left some victims paralysed for life. As a coach, it is your responsibility to ensure that your players develop the proper attitudes and skills to protect themselves and opponents from dangerous hits from behind. Education must begin at the start of the season.

- Coaches at all levels, contact and non-contact, must help players develop respect for opponents and rules. Players must be aware of the consequences of checking, shoving, or bumping an opponent who is in the “danger zone”, the 3-4 metres of ice in front of the boards. Teach your players to treat opponents as they like to be treated themselves!
- Coaches in categories with contact should recognize that checking is an advanced skill which must be taught using proper teaching progressions, and only once the players have mastered all skating skills. Safety must be the first priority when teaching checking skills.

### **Here are more suggestions:**

- Ensure your players stretch properly before all games and practices.
- Make sure your players include exercises to strengthen neck muscles in off-ice training programs.
- Teach your players the proper technique for receiving checks, and to always be alert when in the “danger zone”.
- Encourage referees to enforce all rules that penalize checking from behind.

For more resources, go to [www.hockeycanada.ca](http://www.hockeycanada.ca)

