

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.

Body Contact and Body Checking



If you coach hockey which involves body contact, one of your greatest challenges is teaching players proper checking skills.

Checking is an advanced skill which must be taught only after players master skating skills. To ensure players learn in a safe, non-threatening environment, checking should be taught using a four-step progression: positioning/angling, stick checks, body contact and body checking.

In positioning/angling, teach players to read the degree of puck control and control skating speed to force the puck carrier in the desired direction. The angle and speed of approach puts the defender in a position to utilize stick checks like the poke, sweep and hook checks and the stick press and lift.

Progress to body contact only when players can control and contain a puck carrier without body contact. To develop contact confidence, match players in size and ability and use drills like bumping in pairs. Players should never hit opponents by going in the opposite direction or push opponents into the boards.

Body checking should only be taught to skilled, mature players. You are responsible for instilling respect in your players, teaching them to never hit opponents from behind and to keep their arms, elbows and sticks down.

Teach players proper techniques for the shoulder, hip and roller checks and the hit and pin. Ensure your players are always aware of the "danger zone", the 3-4 metres in front of the boards, and teach them to absorb checks with the arms and body.

For more resources, contact your Branch about the video, "NCCP Checking".

