

*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.*

## Working With Your Defence: Initiating The Attack



To develop effectively, defence players must practice the specialized skills of their position. Do you consider defence's special needs when preparing your practice plans?

The goal for defence in the defensive zone is to gain possession of the puck and initiate the offensive attack. In order to initiate effective breakouts, defence must develop skating, puck control, passing, and read and react skills.

Teach your defence to move the puck to an open teammate as soon as they gain possession, using direct passes whenever possible. Defence should never hesitate when passing to an open teammate, and should use the net as a screen to avoid forecheckers if all teammates are covered.

### Here are a few more tips:

- Teach defence to use head and body fakes when making breakout passes to deceive forecheckers and to use puck protection tactics such as deception and skating agility to maintain possession.
- Defence should read forechecking pressure by looking back over their shoulders when skating back for the puck.
- Encourage defence to carry the puck as a last alternative, and only when there is little or no pressure from defenders.

### Here are some suggestions for practice:

- Use passing drills which force defence to pass and receive while skating forward, backward and laterally: they should never stand still with the puck.
- To develop read and react skills, utilize drills where the defence must skate back to their own end to retrieve a puck, read pressure applied by a forechecker and react with appropriate tactics.

For more resources, contact the CHA Resource Centre (1-800-667-2242) or your Branch office.

