



# YEARLY PLANNING BASICS

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Coaches have abandoned the old crisis management method coaching. They have found not only success, but also peace of mind by constructing an organized method by which goals and objectives can be met during the season. The organized coach realizes the importance of planning beyond the immediate practice. To be effective and to ensure that both short and long-term goals are attained, you must carefully map out an overall master plan that includes a schedule of practices, training, competitions, and socials for the entire season, for example.

The coach can be faced with a number of limitations (e.g., no control over practice times or league schedules) when designing your master plan. However, when possible a thorough yearly plan should be developed providing alternatives for limitations that may occur.

This chapter discusses what steps to follow for planning before, during, and after the season, and some ideas on how to finish the season on a high note.

### Chapter Overview:

- develop a master plan for the season using the principles of seasonal planning,

### Dividing the Season

- *evaluate the season.*

### Designing the Master Plan

Seasonal planning means organizing yourself for the entire hockey season. The key is to plan and then be flexible! Start with an overall plan of the progression of skills you will teach, physical training, mental preparation, and time for fun and relaxation. Then feel free to make adjustments, as appropriate, throughout the season.

For good coaches, planning is a never ending process. They plan and evaluate all season long. The master plan is an indispensable tool which can be used in a variety of ways: as a commitment from the team and players; to conduct periodic evaluations; to motivate players by showing them their progress.

It will also permit you to gain credibility in the eyes of your players and parents since it will show you undertake coaching in a professional manner.

## Steps in Seasonal Planning

The master plan for the hockey season should be drawn up with the following principles in mind:

### Step I: Identify Your Long and Short-Term Goals for the Season

- When are the key competitions (e.g., tournaments and playoffs)?
- Past a chart highlighting major events for the year. This chart can also identify key performance goals (e.g., goals for and against, victories, and skill development).
- Establish an exhibition schedule that will contribute to your team's development and pursuit of overall objectives.
- Create a progressive time-table with which to measure seasonal development.

### Step II: Divide Your Season into Three Parts

A season can be divided into three basic parts:

- Pre-season
- In-season
- Post-season

The length of time for each part of the season is dependent on the age and category you will be coaching.

#### Pre-Season

Preparing yourself and your athletes for the upcoming year is the first step towards a successful and enjoyable season.

Administratively, acquaint yourself with your local association and with the league in which you will be playing. Learn league and association rules and guidelines.

#### In-Season

With your athletes, examine the progress you are making with respect to goals and objectives. It may be appropriate to modify previously set goals and objectives as well as develop and implement new objectives.

#### Post-Season

Carefully examine all aspects of the season and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your program. In so doing, both you and your athletes can finish the season on a positive note while establishing a solid foundation for the future.

## Step III: Identify Your Training Priorities

### Physical Preparation

It is important that the following physical training areas be designed to reflect the various age level requirements of hockey players:

- flexibility
- strength
- energy systems-aerobic, anaerobic lactic, and anaerobic alactic

Flexibility, strength, and energy system training can take place year round. When possible, provide your players with off-ice programs to enhance their physical conditioning.

Create a thorough program for each of these physical conditioning components. By establishing a complete plan, you will have a measuring stick with which to observe the progress of your athletes and thus ensure that all aspects of their developmental program are covered.

By providing your players with an organized, well balanced program, they too can observe the benefits of physical conditioning while measuring their fitness level improvements. Positive incentives such as this are important in establishing a successful program.

The essential elements of the physical conditioning component are covered in 12.1, How the Body Works, and in Module 13, Fitness. Read these modules in preparation for establishing your seasonal plan.

### Mental Preparation

Ensuring that your athletes are aware of the overall team objectives is important. Mapping out a program to measure the mental preparation objectives of your program is desirable.

Perhaps a questionnaire measuring both intrinsic and extrinsic components of motivation could be administered to each player. Examine and discuss the results with them to determine individual objectives.

Communication in this area should be given special attention. Arrange group and individual meeting dates to ensure that you are continually aware of the needs and desires of each of your athletes. Establishing such a calendar allows you to map out the development of your motivational programs, as well as to help control individual concerns and problems.

An excellent way to maintain communication and motivation among your players is to plan for regular informal discussion sessions with them. These sessions should be spaced throughout the season (e.g., once every two weeks) and could be held at the end of practice or the first time back together after a game. The sessions can be brief and can focus on any current areas of concern. In this way, the coach has a barometer on how well things are going at any point in the season.

You can then do something about minor problems or concerns before they become major issues. The feedback received through discussion sessions should be used by the coach to periodically evaluate and adjust some of the team and individual goals, as well as aspects of the seasonal plan.

Some questions for a discussion session might be:

- What went well this week?
- Did you complete any of your goals (e.g., playing good two-way hockey, being less anxious, having fun, or helping each other)?
- What did you learn?
- Where do you still need work?
- Is there anything I (coach) did that you wish I hadn't done?
- Is there anything that you wish I did more often?

Now that you have been introduced to some of the events which comprise the season, you are better prepared to create your master plan.

## Technical Training

Techniques or skills are often referred to as the basic fundamentals of hockey (e.g., skating, passing, and shooting).

Establishing the level at which your players are currently performing is essential when designing a plan for technical development. Determine strengths and weaknesses, then create your seasonal objectives accordingly. If, for example, your players are weak skaters, you may set up a general objective to improve their skating skills. To achieve this, specific objectives, such as improving stopping, starting, and turning, should be established. By practicing and perfecting these specific components of skating, you will be taking a positive step towards fulfilling your general objective – improving your team's skating skills!

Again, by mapping out player development, you can measure and adjust your program while providing your players with important feedback identifying their strengths, weaknesses, and improvements. Make sure that all of the basic skills are covered. By omitting one or two, you may leave a serious gap in the skill development of your players.

## Tactical Preparation

The development of tactical skills is dependent on the age of your players and their skill level. After determining their capabilities, introduce them to basic tactics; such as give and go and support. Principles of team play can then be developed. Gradually introduce more complex tactics while constantly reviewing and refining those already learned.

## Step IV: Determine Your Training Priorities in Each Part of the Season

During pre-season it is more important to improve physical conditioning and technical skills than to develop tactical skills. Therefore, if practices are one hour in length, you may devote 45 minutes to skill development drills and cardiovascular exercises and perhaps 15 minutes to one-on-one or team checking drills.

Use your seasonal plan to determine weekly practice objectives. As the season progresses, these objectives will change and adapt to player and team development.



### CHECKLISTS FOR PRE, IN AND POST SEASON PLANNING

#### PRE-SEASON TIPS:

Here is a handy checklist you can use to help you plan the pre-season. Add extra tips in the space provided.

- Talk to your athletes about their goals \_\_\_\_\_
- Decide what training you will need to supervise personally, and what your athletes can do on their own using your plan \_\_\_\_\_
- Continue emphasis on the development of a strong aerobic base before starting anaerobic lactic training \_\_\_\_\_
- For older players, strength training can also be included in Pre-season training \_\_\_\_\_
- Flexibility training, important for all age levels, should also accompany the strength training carried out by the older players \_\_\_\_\_
- Develop and administer a pre-season motivation questionnaire \_\_\_\_\_
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## IN-SEASON TIPS:

Here is a checklist of things to do during the season. Add extra tips in the space provided.

- Access goals and progress with athletes. Adapt previous goals or set new ones \_\_\_\_\_
  - Maintain the physical conditioning of your players that has been built up during the pre-season \_\_\_\_\_
  - Simulate the competitive situation in practices \_\_\_\_\_
  - Use the principle of over-learning in practices. If a player must perform a skill at any time during a game, let the player perform it once but repeat it numerous times in practices \_\_\_\_\_
  - The longer the season the more important is maintenance of physical conditioning. Use tests to periodically check the level of physical conditioning \_\_\_\_\_
  - Make sure athletes receive constant constructive feedback and emotional support \_\_\_\_\_
- Have a social gathering with team members \_\_\_\_\_
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**POST-SEASON TIPS:**

Wrap up the season properly by ending on the right note. Here are some tips to use in planning your post-season. Add extra tips in the space provided.

- Have a post-season discussion session about what went well, where players could improve, and where you could improve. Plan for post-season workouts. Access goals and progress with athletes. Adapt previous goals or set new ones \_\_\_\_\_
- Encourage participation in vigorous recreational sports to help with weight control and to provide some variety, diversity, and enjoyment \_\_\_\_\_
- Have athletes set individual post-season goals, such as working out a certain number of days per week, improving on a particular skill, and increasing their level of physical conditioning. \_\_\_\_\_
- Point out the positive improvements you witnessed over the season. End on a positive note, with athletes looking forward to coming back \_\_\_\_\_
- Have a post-season social gathering with team members (and perhaps their friends or families) \_\_\_\_\_
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Prepare, or have your team prepare, a year-end report for the athletes including, if appropriate:

- team goals achieved
- Individual goals achieved and statistics
- Tournament results
- Photos
- News clippings
- recommendations
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
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## For the Coach

**Designing Your Master Plan:** Complete the following master plan priority checklist.

### MASTER PLAN PRIORITIES

TRAINING ELEMENT	PRE-SEASON	IN-SEASON	POST-SEASON
<b>PHYSICAL</b>			
aerobic endurance			
anaerobic lactic			
anaerobic alactic			
strength			
flexibility			
speed			
power			
agility			
balance			
co-ordination			
other(specify)			
<b>TECHNICAL</b>			
forward skating			
backward skating			
puck control			
shooting			
checking			
goaltending			
face-offs			
other(specify)			
<b>TACTICAL</b>			
individual offensive			
individual defensive			
team offensive (2,3,4,5)			
team defensive (2,3,4,5)			
offensive team play			
defensive team play			
special situations			
<b>MENTAL</b>			
relaxation			
imagery			
concentration			
stress control			
coping			
motivation			





On this page is a Sample Master Plan for 3 weeks during the season

MASTER PLAN SCHEDULE				
SEASON	WEEK	DAY	ACTIVITY	COMMENTS
	14	Tues	Skill and Aerobic maintenance	Discussion session on questionnaire results
		Weds	Strength and flexibility maintenance	
		Thurs	Skill and anaerobic maintenance	
		Sat	Game	
		Sun	Game	
	15	Tues	Skill and aerobic maintenance	Discussion session on any concerns
		Weds	Strength and flexibility maintenance	
		Thursday	Skill and anaerobic maintenance	
		Sat	Game	
		Sun	Game	
	16	Tues	Skill and aerobic maintenance	Post-season questionnaire Discussion session Goal setting for post-season
		Weds	Strength and flexibility maintenance	
		Thursday	Strength	
		Sat	Game	
		Sun	Game	



## **Season Evaluation**

The feeling your athletes take away with them at the end of the season is the major factor determining whether they will return to participate again. Here are some tips for finishing the season on a high note:

### **Review Your Goals**

If pre-season goals were approached or reached, reinforce that. If they weren't reached, lay out a positive plan for making sure they can be reached next season or set new goals.

### **Highlight Positive Experiences**

Review enjoyable experiences such as trips, outstanding performances, and improved performances. Recall enjoyable or humorous incidents with anecdotes and stories to emphasize the value of those experiences.

### **Emphasize Real Progress That Has Been Made**

Refer to pre-season levels of skill, fitness, and performance. Compile test scores from the season to emphasize progress. Where appropriate, re-establish the link between tasks that were emphasized in practice and improved performances.

### **Praise Real Accomplishment and Effort**

Point out individual as well as team improvements. Encourage those who were slow in coming along. Try to find something positive about everyone. Above all, don't leave anyone out.