

# U12

## Learning to Train

### Later Stage

## Coaches Manual

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At these young ages, the primary goal is to make the player's experience with Ringette so enjoyable that when she has a choice of activities, she will choose to play Ringette on her own.

On behalf of EFCLRA, I would like to thank you for taking the time to volunteer your services to all the young players who for many are taking their first crack at Ringette.

For many of you, we appreciate that this may be your first experience with Ringette, as well or at the very least your first experience as a coach. This manual is designed to serve as a tool that will help you get familiar with Ringette, and with coaching practices.

### **A Coaches Creed**

“The Primary responsibility of a Ringette coach is to help the young player to have fun, learn and improve.

This responsibility makes a youth coach different from any other official in the sport. We (coaches) coach for the joy and success of the players - and no other reason.”

Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues Ringette Association

Sources for this document include:

Ringette Alberta Instructor Program  
Ringette Canada Long Term Athletic Development Plan  
CSA Long Term Player Development plan  
USSF Best Practices  
USYSA National Youth Instructors  
St. Albert 's Head Start program  
UEFA Grass Roots Project

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## **Getting Started:**

You will receive a coaching handbook, from the EFCLRA executive with important information about coaching within the club. This handbook will include such things as lines of communication, contact information, club policy, possible tournaments, equipment guidelines and apparel.

Some essential items that you should have prior to your first practice are:

- Team list
- A phone list of association administrators
- Schedule
- Copies of medical forms or blanks to be filled out
- List of mandatory equipment
- Criminal records check
- Coaches handbook

You will also be supplied with all equipment necessary to run your team. This includes; rings, pinnies, cones, and goal equipment etc. At the very least you should have the following at every practice; rings, pinnies, cones to assist with drills.

## **Parents Meeting:**

Once you have your team list, you are now ready for your first parents meeting. We all know the value of a first impression so you will want to be organized for this meeting.

In this meeting, you will want to share with the parents your own coaching philosophy as well as the accepted philosophy of coaching U6 players. Some parents will have expectations that their children will all be able to take on players 1v1 and play the game like a world champion when they are finished this winter summer so be aware that you may have to do a bit of convincing at the meeting.

It is also very easy for a coach to volunteer to do everything, don't be afraid to ask for volunteers amongst your parents. Some positions you may want to consider are; equipment manager, social coordinator, time keepers, post game snack rotation etc.

Here is a sample list of what you may want to include in your first parents meeting:

- Introductions and coaching philosophy
- Season objectives/goals
- Schedule, a copy for all parents
- Contact information (get parents approval before adding them to a team list)
- Socials/fundraisers
- Volunteers for the Silver Ring
- Snack schedule

## General Objectives

Introduction of goalkeeper specific drills.

Concentration on, identification and development of maximum number of players interested and with ability.

Players interested in playing goal should start to play ½ time.

- To develop fundamental ringette skills in a fun, participation based environment
- To continue to develop physical and motor capacities
- To develop general physical fitness
- To introduce the development of mental skills
- To introduce and develop simple tactics
- To introduce game play with focus on application of skills learned in training
- To introduce and develop decision-making skills in standard/controlled conditions
- To encourage players to strive to succeed and do their best

## Guiding Principles

According to Ringette Canada's Long Term Athlete Development plan, coaches of Ringette players in the U12 stage should try to consider the following guidelines.

- Community-based programming
- Game play introduces an environment of competition, but there is no "competitive" program
- Teams are created based on equal abilities distribution – no tiering
- Practices should be well organized, varied, game-like and active participation of all
- Emphasize motor skill development, technical skill instruction, time-space orientation and team play
- Increase skill repertoire through a gradual progression of skill acquisition
- Include activities to develop flexibility during warm-up and cool down
- Ensure that players experience all positions
- In the U12 division, begin identifying players who show an ability and interest in goalkeeping
- Maintain high frequency of practice and number repetitions:
  - In order for learning to occur, a 70% success rate is necessary
- The coach to player ratio should be 1:6 or lower to provide quality supervision
- Throughout the year, encourage players to participate in a variety of school and summer sports

## Coaching the U12 player:

### Psychomotor Development

- Coordination and motor skills can be challenged to sustain more complex coordinated sequences
- Differences in physical maturity between and within genders
- Require full rest periods
- Time to introduce stretching
- Optimal window for speed training

### Psychosocial Development

- Begins to understand the concept of a team, will use teammates
- Requires positive reinforcement
- Starts to take sport more seriously
- Self-esteem can be derived from popularity

### Cognitive Development

- Understands concepts and starts to be able to think ahead
- Begin to think in abstract terms and address hypothetical situations
- Positive reinforcement and repetition will increase player performance
- Systematic approach to problem solving  
Ringette must present opportunities to think creatively and solve problems while moving.

**Some important considerations when dealing with your players:**

- The effect of the role model and peer pressure is very important at this age
- After skill demonstration, players will then learn best by “doing”
- Players are moving from self-centered to self-critical
- Players begin to appreciate basic tactical situations
- Important time to teach the principles of play
- Optimal window for technical development
- Be energetic and play while conducting your practice
- While other sports continue to play a role in the overall athletic development of a young child, it is at this age group that the balance now shifts in favour of Ringette
- Coach-guided as opposed to coach-directed
- Players should learn the game based on principles of play rather than positions on the field
- Rapid bone growth can cause painful conditions for athletes this age

**Some age specific factors to consider for the U12 player:**

- Your players are maturing at different rates
- This is the time to introduce stretching and a good warm-up
- Players at this age will like to solve problems
- Concerned about peer evaluation
- Players will play within the team concept
- Abstract awareness, players will begin to understand movement off the ring
- Will both be sensitive to criticism and enjoy being recognized for their efforts
- You will have some players that are bigger, stronger, and faster than the rest and it is very important that you do not encourage them to use their athleticism to solve their problems
- This is the time to introduce simple tactics

## Technical Skill benchmark

Objective: develop accuracy and consistency in skill execution

### Skating skills:

Players should have a basic foundation in the following skills:

- *Basic stance, falling and getting up, edges, balance on skates, starts, stops, forward/backward stride and glide*

Players in this stage should learn the following skills in addition to the above:

- *Acceleration, crossovers, sharp turns, double sculling, 2 foot slalom; transitions*

### Ring skills:

Players should have a basic foundation in the following skills:

- *Basic skills, grip, carrying and protecting the ring, passing, receiving and retrieving the ring, checking, shooting – all within a controlled environment*

Players in this stage should learn the following skills in addition to the above:

- *Deking within a controlled environment*

### Goalkeeping skills:

Identify and develop the maximum number of players interested in goalkeeping, although players should play goal no more than ½ the time at this point.

Players should all be rotated into a goalkeeping position, and learn the following skills:

- *Basic grip, stance, stick on ice, skating and ring skills, mobility and stick work, positioning and ring distribution*

Players who have learned the above basic skills and expressed interest in goalkeeping should be introduced to the following skills:

- *Mobility in all directions, stick work, positioning, ring distribution, communication/interaction*

## Tactical Skill benchmarks

### Offensive

Players should have a basic foundation in the following areas:

- *Acquisition of basic offensive skills and tactics,*
- *Individual 1v1 and team offensive skills,*
- *Individual skills for ring carriers and non-ring carriers,*
- *Basic team tactics,*
- *Creating open space and movement*

Players in this stage should be introduced to the following areas:

- *1v1 offensive skills/tactics*
- *2v1 skills*
- *Isolate 1 defender and pass or shoot*

## Defensive

Players in this stage should be introduced to the following areas:

- *Acquisition of basic defensive skills and tactics*
- *Individual 1v1 skills*
- *Maintain goal side positioning*
- *Basic team tactics*
  
- Build on these skills later in the stage by introducing:
  - *Decision making in competitive situations*
  - *Goal setting ~ team*
  - *Self-Awareness ~ positive training activities*
  - *Team dynamics – teamwork, fair play, sportsmanship, sense of values*
  - *Team building and social development activities*
  
- Build on these skills later in the stage by introducing:
  - *Decision making in competitive situations*
  - *Goal setting – individual and team, long and short term , process and outcome*
  - *Focus management / attentional control*
    - *Concentration strategies*
  - *Anxiety management / emotional control ~ visualization (mental rehearsal of game situations) strategies*
  - *Game preparation and routine*
    - *game strategies*

## Role of the Coach:

A coach today can be described as many things: Coach, Teacher, Mentor, Role-model, Counsellor and in a month or so, you will most likely have called yourself all of these.

## Coaching Essentials:

- be punctual
- be organized, have your session prepared before heading to the pitch
- look like a coach, be professional
- set standards and be consistent with them
- conduct age-appropriate training
- be enthusiastic, especially with young players
- have fun

## Guiding Principles for the U12 Coach:

This is a very important age for young players, they are becoming more aware of the games aware of higher levels, older and more experienced players, and their favourite teams. You will also notice some trying to mimic their favourite player. It is also an age when players will begin to learn the principles of play and establish a strong training ethic and discipline. While you will begin to teach technical excellence through repetition, you should always strive to achieve a fun yet challenging environment.

### *BODY LANGUAGE*

*BE VERY AWARE OF YOUR OWN BODY LANGUAGE. 80% OF COMMUNICATION IS NON – VERBAL AND PLAYERS WILL VERY QUICKLY PICK UP ON NEGATIVITY, DISINTEREST OR DISAPPROVAL FROM YOUR BODY LANGUAGE AND THIS WILL BE REFLECTED IN THEIR OWN PERFORMANCE.*

## **Poor Coaching Techniques**

- Have players stand in long lines
- Give long lectures on how to perform activities
- Using skating as a consequence
- Correct every mistake you see in a player (remember they are U12)
- Practices are not fun for your players i.e. all drills and no games
- Show up late or not prepared
- Create an environment where you are dictating every move of your players
- Do not have players rotate in a game or training session

## **The Good The Bad & The Ugly**

While we have all at times either coached or have been coached by the some of the techniques mentioned above, research today tells us that there is a better approach to player development.

If you notice that you have been doing some of the above techniques, it does not mean you are a poor coach, it is just suggesting that there may be another method that could prove more valuable to your players.

## **A few more Principles of Coaching:**

### **Development Appropriate**

When designing your practice, ensure that your drills are age appropriate.

### **Clear, Concise, Correct Information**

- Give clear information on what you expect in a particular drill or game
- Concise, get straight to the point
- Correct, the information you give players on how to do something must always be correct. Do not make up what you don't know.

### **Simple to Complex**

For this age group, you should start your practice with simple drills, and progress to more complex drills. Start with stationary partner passing, then add movement, and lastly add opposition and pressure to passing situations.

### **Decision Making**

Players at U12 should be given lots of opportunities to make decisions on their own and within small space games.

## **The Value of Demonstration**

Regardless of the sport or activity, a coach's demonstration is a must for player development.

With so many different types of learners that you will be addressing, a demonstration adds to the verbal explanation of how to do something. Not only will your players be able to see how a particular skill is accomplished, they will also look up to and respect your ability to coach them. For the U12 age group, you don't need a professional playing career behind you but you do need to know the proper technique of some of the basic ringette skills such as passing and shooting. If you know that you will be demonstrating a particular skill in your next session, ensure that you spend some time prior to that to ensure that your technique is correct. If you are not comfortable with your ability to demonstrate, you can get a really talented player to do that for you.

## **Planning your session:**

### **Playing guidelines:**

- Goalkeepers are used at this age
- Players should experience all positions throughout the season
- Game play introduces an environment of competition, but there is no “competitive” program
- Practices are well organized, varied, game-like, and active participation of all
- Emphasize motor skill development, technical skill instruction, time-space orientation and team play.

### **Important points in preparing your practice:**

- This is a very important time to begin teaching the basic principles of play and to establish training standards and discipline
- Repetition is important in technical development but keeping practices fun, yet challenging is still a requirement in a young players learning
- Technical training is used to add to a players skill set or repertoire of ringette related movements
- Tactical training is used to develop field and spatial awareness and to encourage the beginnings of on-ice problem solving.
- This is the stage where you can introduce basic combinations, defensive marking, and moving into open space.
- Max training time should be one hour.

**Competition is a central element in a player’s development. At the youth levels however, a competitive environment should not be a result-oriented environment. The differences must be clear.**

**A competitive environment at the youth level encourages decisions from player and coach alike that focus on performance rather than outcome (favoring ball skill and inventiveness as the means to find success within the rules and spirit of the game).**

**Competition can be positive and healthy. Scoring goals and winning the game are fundamental parts of soccer. Allow the children to enjoy this aspect without making it the focus.**

*USSF Player Development Guidelines*

**Remember, your games are just a means to evaluate your training!**

## Designing a Practice

Keep your practices simple to start and allow your players to opportunity to both solve problems and score goals

I would try to limit your practice to maybe three or four activities.

It is a good idea to begin each practice with a warm up that has players touching the ring.

As you move into your games you can now begin to introduce challenges for your players to solve.

Each of these games should differ slightly but should retain the essential qualities of ringette:

- one on one situations
- defending
- passing
- Receiving
- dealing with teammates and opponents
- scoring goals

Finally, you can end every practice with a game.

To help ensure that your practice will aid in your players' development, consider the following:

- Do your players have repeated opportunities to control the ring?
- Do they have repeated chances to score goals?
- Are they being asked to pass, receive and play in real game situations?
  - One that includes opponents, teammates, space, pressure, rules, and goals.
- Are your players having fun?

If you players are getting many opportunities to control the ring and to score, this will typically take care of itself.

- How many of your players are involved?